

Muslim heritage in India – the Hakims - Part I

Hakeem Abdul Hameed - Exchanges between India and Central Asia in the field of Medicine

Hakims of during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605)

HAKIM SHAMS AL-DIN GILANI (d. 1581)

The Hakim came from Gilan to India during the reign of Emperor. Besides being an expert physician, he had unique knowledge of philosophy, logic and other secular sciences of his time. He was also well-versed in theology and jurisprudence.^{"1"} Mulla 'Abdul Qadir Badayuni has called him the "Christ and Galen" of his time.^{"2"}

Due to his vast scholarship and extraordinary skill, he soon became a good companion of Emperor Akbar who bestowed on him the title of Hakim al-Mulk. He was the student of Shaykh Muhammad Shahabadi and was a man of practical acumen, known for exemplary behaviour with common people. He was himself an affectionate teacher, he used to pass most of his time in the company of students; and used to take his meals with them.^{"3"}

He was deeply religious and did not like the way Emperor Akbar used to hold religious disputations. In his opinion, it was a clear disregard of principles of Islam and Islamic law. He tried to express his dissatisfaction by preaching, advice, discussion and finally by leaving for Hijaz in 1580/81 where he died in 1581.^{"4"}

Hakim al-Mulk's son `Abut Qasim also came to India and was one of the distinguished physicians in the court of Emperor Jahangir (reign: 1605-1627) and Emperor Shahjahan (reign: 1627-1658). He also held the title of Hakim al-Mulk.^{"5"} His grandson Mir Muhammad Hashim came to India from Gilan during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (reign 1658-1707) and served as personal physician of the Emperors.^{"6"} His second grandson, Mir Muhammad Ja°far came to India in the days of Emperor Muhammad Shah (reign 1719-1748). He was court physician of the Maharaja of Jaipur.^{"7"}

HAKIM AMIR FATHULLAH SHIRAZI (d. 1584)

Hakim Amir Fathullah Shirazi was the son of Shukrullah Shirazi.^{"8"} He was born and brought up in his native town Shiraz. He studied medicine and other sciences with Khwaja Jamal al-Din Mansur Shirazi.^{"9"} Shah Nawaz Khan has also mentioned Mawlana Kamal al-Din Shirwani and Mawlana Kurd as his teachers.^{"10"} After completing his education, he worked at the schools of his teachers for some time.

By that time, his reputation had crossed the frontiers of Iran. `All `Adil Shah, the ruler of Bijapur invited him to India. On arrival in Deccan, he was received with great respect and honour by the said ruler who made him his special companion. Ali Adil Shah was murdered in 988 A.H./1581 A.D. and his successor Ibrahim Adil Shah was a pleasure loving king, fond of music and dance. Hakim Fathullah Shirazi did not like his un-Islamic ways and began to think about leaving the court. When Akbar came to know about the intention of the Hakim, he immediately wrote letters to Ibrahim Adil Shah and Raja Ali Khan, ruler of Khandis, to send the Hakim to his court. Finally, Hakim Amir Fathullah Shirazi left Deccan in 991 A.H./1583 A.D., and reached Fatahpur in the month of Rabi` al-Awwal the same year. He

was received by Khan-i Khanan and Hakim Abul Fath. Emperor Akbar showered great honour and respect on the Hakim who soon became a close companion of the Emperor. In 993 A.H./1585,A.D., he was given the exalted office of *Sadarat*.^{"11"} He married the daughter of Muzaffar-Khan Tarbiyati.^{"12"}

On account of his wisdom, sagacity and insight, the Emperor bestowed on him the titles of Amin al-Mulk; `Add al-Dawlah and `Add al-Mulk one after another. He was also included in the Council of Ministers and Raja Todar Mat was ordered to consult him about all financial and state matters.^{"13"}

As mentioned before, Hakim Amir Fathullah Shirazi was a man of extraordinary intelligence with full knowledge of various sciences. According to Shah Nawaz Khan, "he had no `second' in Iran and India, rather in the World."¹⁴ And Shaykh Abul Fadl writes about him: "If all the medical works of earlier scholars are destroyed, he has the power and ability to compile them again."¹⁵

Hakim Amir Fathullah Shirazi had invented a wind-mill, and a gun firing 12 rounds consecutively. He also invented a mirror which used to show strange faces even at a distance.^{"16"}

Amir Fathullah Shirazi wrote many books. Some of his works are given below:

1. Risala-i `Aja'bat-i Kashmir (Treatise on Wonders of Kashmir): It has been incorporated in Akbar Nama by the order of the Emperor.
2. Khulasat al-minhaj: It is a commentary of Quran in Persian, which was quite famous.
3. Minhaj al-sadiqin: A detailed commentary of Quran, not extant in India.
4. Tarikh-i alfi: He was the co-author of this book. Events of the second year of Akbar's reign were mainly written by him.

5. Tarikh-i Jadid: This is a part of Tarikh-i Ilahi-i Akbar Shdhi which was compiled under his guidance.

Hakim Amir Fathullah Shirazi died in 992 A.H./1584 A.D., while he was returning from Kashmir. Emperor Akbar was much grieved on this news and remarked: "Amir Fathullah was my advocate, counsellor, physician and my astronomer. No one can gauge our sorrow. Had he been arrested by foreigners and had they asked all my treasure for his release, I would have considered it as a profitable transaction."¹⁷

He was buried at the monastery of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, later his dead body was shifted to Kuh-i Sulayman by the order of the Emperor.

HAKIM MASIH AL-DIN ABUL FATAH GILANI (d. 1589)

Among the famous early physicians who came to the court of Emperor Akbar and gained popularity at the court, was Hakim Masih al-Din alias Abul Fath. He was the son of Abdul Razzaq, a learned man of Gilan and a close associate of the ruler of that territory. When Shah Tahmasp Safawi invaded and annexed Gilan in 974 A.H./1567 A.D., he imprisoned Abdul

Razzaq who died in prison.¹⁸ His was one of the famous Shiite families of Gilan in Iran¹⁹ Hakim Abul Fath was the eldest of the four sons of °Abdul Razzaq. His other brothers were Hakim Najib al-Din Humayun, Hakim Nur al-Din Qarari and Hakim Lutfullah Gilani, all experts in the field of medicine.

Hakim Abul Fath studied various branches of learning from his father and acquired in-depth knowledge in sciences of his time. He was a good poet and writer²⁰ but medicine was his speciality. His extraordinary knowledge of medicine can be judged from his book *Fattahi*, a commentary on Chaghmani's *Qanunche*, which shows his high intellectual calibre and expertise. Hakim Abul Fath was a man of kind nature known for generosity and sympathy to his fellow men.²¹ It is alleged that he was immoral and was an atheist.²² This is incorrect according to Azad who vouchsafed his deep religiosity.²³

Abul Fath left his native place, Gilan, along with his brothers Humayun and Qarari and came to India during the reign of Emperor Akbar (reigned 1556-1605). They were received with great honour and were given high positions in the court. Gradually, the Hakim rose to the position of a courtier having 300 horsemen under his command and to the office of *Sadr al-Sadur* of Akbar and wielded great influence with the Emperor. His status in the Darbar can be judged from the remark of Mawlana 'Abdul Baqi Nahawandi²⁴ according to whom: "He enjoyed greater influence with Emperor Akbar than J'afar Barmecide had with Caliph Harun al-Rashid."

Abul Fath Gilani was well-versed both in medicine and theology. Following works of the Hakim are known to us to-date:

1. *Fattahi*: It is a detailed commentary on *Qanunche*²⁵ of Chaghmani, pp. 300.
2. *Qayasiya*: A commentary on *Akhlaq-d Nasiri* ca 1400 pp.
3. *Char Bagh*: It is a collection of personal letters of the Hakim to his family and friends like Faydi, Abul Fadl, Khan-i-Khanan, Humayun etc. These letters are a fine example of simple and unadorned language and their literary value is not less than that of the writings of Faydi.²⁶

Abul Fath Gilani died of diarrhoea at Damtur²⁷ on his way from Kashmir to Kabul where he was assigned by Emperor Akbar to proceed for a campaign. By the order of the Emperor, he was buried at Hassan Abdal.²⁸ The burial was arranged by Khwaja Shams al-Din Khawafi. Later a dome was built on his tomb. Hakim Abul Fath had a son whose name was Abu al-Wafa.²⁹

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- 1) *Nuzhat al-Khawatir* (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p. 140.
 - 2) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III, p. 161.
 - 3) *Ibid*
 - 4) *Nuzhat al-Khawatir* (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p. 141. But

according to Abul Fad], he went to Mecca at the order of Emperor Akbar; AN, Vol. III, p. 287.

- 5) Badshah Nama, by Abdul Hamid Lahore (Asiatic Society of Bengal), Calcutta, 1868. Vol. I, p.248
- 6) Ibid, p. 245.
- 7) Rumuz al-Atibba by Hakim Muhammad Firozuddin, Lahore. Vol. I, p.130
- 8) Nuzhat al-Khawatir (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p. 254. also (Science and Technology in Medieval India - A Bibliography of Source Material in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, by A. Rahman et al, (Indian National Science Academy), New Delhi, 1982.), p. 70
- 9) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.110
- 10) Nuzhat al-Khawatir (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p.254
- 11) Ibid
- 12) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.111
- 13) Nuzhat al-Khawatir (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p.254
- 14) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.112.
- 15) Ain-i Akbari, by Abdul Fadl (Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal), Calcutta 1883 Translation by Blochmann, Calcutta, 1939. p. 100.
- 16) Science and Technology in Medieval India - A Bibliography of Source Material in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, by A. Rahman et al, (Indian National Science Academy), New Delhi, 1982., p. 70; MU, p. 113; NKH, Vol. iv, p. 255.
- 17) Akbar Nama =, by Abul Fadi (Mazhar al-Aja'ib), Calcutta, 1877.
- 18) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, p.27
- 19) Nuzhat al-Khawatir (Arabic), by Abdul Ha'i bin Fakhruddin al-Hussayni (Matba Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyah), Hyderabad, Vol. 1 (1947), Vol.8 (1970). Vol. IV, p. 10.
- 20) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III, p. 167.
- 21) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p. 557.
- 22) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III, p. 167.
- 23) Darbar-i Akbari, by Mawlawi Muhammad Hussayn Azad, Lahore, 1921. p. 660.
- 24) Ma'athir-i Rahimi, by A.B. Nahawandi (Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal), Calcutta 1924-26, Vol. III, p. 847
- 25) This is not the only commentary on Chaghmani's work. Another was written by Sayyid 'Abdul Fath . For others commentaries see pp. 33-3
- 26) She'r al-Ajam, by Shibli Na'mani, (Matba Fayd-i-am), Aligarh, 1810. Vol. 111, p. 60.
- 27) A place 5 miles from Abbotabad in N.W.F.P. of Pakistan.
- 28) Ilassan Abdal is a place near Peshawar in Pakistan also known as Baba Hassan Abdal whose monastery (house of dervishes) was located nearby.
- 29) *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, by Nuruddin Muhammad Shah Jahangir (Matba Urdu), Aligarh, 1864. Another edition by Syed Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur, 1863. p. 76.