

Muslim heritage in India – the Hakims - Part II

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

Hakims of the Sixteenth & early Seventeenth Century

HAKIM `AYN AL-MULK SHIRAZI (d. 1595 A.D.)

The Hakim was an Iranian physician who was married to Faydi's sister. From mother's side, his lineage reached the famous Hakim Dawa'i.

He was a distinguished physician, surgeon and ophthalmologist.^{"1"} He was also a good poet. He was a good-natured, witty and courageous person. He was a man of both peace and war.

Hakim Shirazi began his career in the court of Emperor Akbar and accompanied the Emperor on various expeditions. Akbar was convinced about his medical expertise. When the Emperor was accidentally injured by an arrow shot by Qatlaq Khan, he was operated upon and treated by Hakim `Ayn al-Mulk and the wound healed in a week.^{"2"}

He also showed his valour in battles and exhibited statesmanship in the various errands entrusted to him. In 1565 (9th year of Akbar's accession to the throne) he delivered a Farman from Emperor Akbar to Chingez Khan who was an influential man in Ahmedabad. In 1573 he went to Itimad Khan Gujrati and delivered to him the message of condolences from the Emperor. In 1575, he accompanied the Emperor on his visit to the eastern provinces of the empire. Thereafter, he was sent to Deccan to guide Adil Khan of Bijapur. On his return, he was appointed as the commander of the Army of Sanbhal in 1578 (the 22nd year of Akbar's accession to the throne). Four years later, Ayn al-Mulk Shirazi was sent to Sanbhal to suppress the rebellion of Nayabat Khan which he did successfully. The same year, he was appointed to the high office of Sadarat (governership) of Bengal. In 1587, he was made District Officer in the province of Agra.

Hakim Ayn al-Mulk Shirazi died at Hadhia in 1003 A.H./ 1595 A.D.

HAKIM NAJIB AL-DIN HUMAM (d. 1596)

He was the younger brother of Hakim Abul Fath Gilani, as mentioned before. In the beginning, he was known by his real name Humayun or Humayun Quli but later on, he changed his name to Humam as a mark of respect to Emperor Akbar whose father's name was also Humayun.

Hakim Humam was held in high esteem by Emperor Akbar who in one of his letters, called him "the source of learning and wisdom" and "a man of extraordinary personality among his [Akbar's] friends"³. His position and status can also be judged by the fact that in 1588 he was sent as the envoy of Emperor Akbar on return embassy with valuable presents to the court of °Abdullah Khun Uzbek, ruler of Turan. Further, Hakim Humam, in his letter of credentials, was introduced as "a truthful and sincere confidant of amiable nature and of good disposition

who has never been kept away from us since our coronation and who has the permission to talk to us without any intermediary"⁴".a In fact, Hakim Humam was very dear to Akbar. When he had gone on an expedition, the Emperor used to say that "his food has lost its savour ever since Hakim Humam had gone away". Likewise, once addressing Hakim Abul Fath, the Emperor said: "Do not think that Humam is your brother and that is why you are to be more perturbed than ourself. One cannot find a second Humam."⁵

Hakim Humam was also held in high esteem by Prince Salim (later known as Emperor Jahangir). Once Jahangir got seriously ill due to his addiction to alcohol and the long treatment by the three famous court physicians Hakim Ruhullah, Hakim Rukna and Hakim Sadra did not bear any fruits. So Hakim Humam was called to attend on the Emperor. According to Jahangir: "I called Hakim Humam, the brother of Hakim Abul Fath who was the special adviser and confidant of my respected father and told him my condition. He gave me his advice without any fear and hesitation which was the outcome of his utmost sincerity and affection to me and began the treatment. On his advice, I began mixing Philonium Romanian in my drinks and gradually increased its quantity, reducing the quantity of wine to the same degree and thus I was cured of my alcoholic addiction by his treatment."⁶

Hakim Humam died of tuberculosis after an illness of two months. He was buried by the side of the grave of his brother, Hakim Abul Fath at Hassan Abdal."⁷
None of the works of Hakim Humam is known to be extant to-date.

HAKIM NUR AL-DIN QARARI (d. 1596)

He was the youngest brother of Hakim Abul Fath Gilani. He came to India with his brothers in 982 A.H./1574 A.D. and entered the court of Emperor Akbar using the influence and recommendation of his brother. He was not only an expert physician but also an exquisite poet. He used to compose excellent verses in Persian"⁸ under the nom de plume of Qarari. Some of his sayings have become proverbial, "⁹" e.g. "expression of motivation before other physicians is an expression of greed", "why should I blame or accuse death while I am struck by the arrow of your modesty which shall kill me even if I die a hundred year hence".

It has been reported that Qarari led a simple and care-free life without worrying about this world and the world after death."¹⁰

He had gone to Bengal by the orders of Emperor Akbar, where he died on 6th Rabital-Awwal 1004 A.H./1596 A.D.

HAKIM LUTFULLAH

Hakim Lutfullah was the younger brother of Hakim Abul Fath Gilani. He left his native place Gilan in Iran, after his three brothers had already arrived in India where he joined them. He entered the court of Emperor Akbar on the recommendation of his brother Abul Fath.

Hakim Lutfullah was an expert physician with a very good knowledge of his subject."¹¹

HAKIM 'ALI GILANI (d. 1610)

He was the nephew (sister's son) of Hakim al-Mulk Shams alDin Gilani and a close relation of Amir Fathullah Shirazi. He was born and brought up in Gilan (Iran). He was well-versed in

all the arts and sciences of his time and had an in-depth knowledge of medicine and mathematics.^{"12"} He had learnt medicine from Fathullah Shirazi and religious sciences from Shaykh 'Abdul Nab!."^{13"}

Hakim Ali Gilani came to India in pecuniary circumstances. When he joined the court of Akbar,^{"14"} he secured great honour and respect from nobles and courtiers. He rose to the rank of Haft Sad (Officer having 700 horsemen under his command). He also held the office of Sadarat of the province of Bihar.^{"15"} During the reign of Jahdngir, he held the rank of Do-Hazari (2000 horsemen under his command). He was given the title of Galen of his time.^{"16"} In 1580, he was sent as an ambassador to the court of Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur where he was received with great pomp and honour.^{"17"}

The Hakim was undoubtedly a skillful medical practitioner. He was the personal physician of the royal family. Emperor Akbar was convinced of his intelligence, practical knowledge, and particularly of his ability to diagnose. He had successfully treated patients who had lost hope of their life. Jahdngir called him "an incomparable physician who had full knowledge of Arabian sciences."^{18"}

For instance, when Emperor Akbar got sick in his old age, he called Hakim Ali Gilani for treatment. Earlier in 1004 A.H. (1596 A.D.), when Akbar's poet laureate, Faydi was down with asthma, dropsy and hematenesis and his condition deteriorated at mid-night, the Emperor chose him from many other famous court physicians to attend on Faydi.

Hakim All Gilani was also a mathematician of a high calibre. In 1594, he built a remarkable tank (20' x 20' x 9') in Lahore .^{"19"}

Hakim All Gilani is the author of the famous commentary on Ibn Sind's Qanun, written in Arabic in 4 volumes: Shark-i Gilani. This commentary is considered to be one of the most authentic sources of Unani medical literature. Jahangir has also mentioned this work in his Tuzk. According to '-Abdul Qadir Badayuni, it was this book which led Hakim Lutfullah Gilani to write his own commentary on Al-Qanun of Ibn Sind.^{"20"}

Hakim All Gilani has many new prescriptions to his credit. The most famous one is the use of Juniper (Cedrus Deodara or Himalayan Cedar) oil for pain in muscles and joints as well as treatment of nerves with singular results. This oil is being used by Unani physicians even today.

Hakim Ali Gilani died on 5th of Muharram, 1018 A.H./1610 A.D.

Hakim Ali Gilani had only one son, named Hakim Abdul Wahab, but many pupils. Mir Hashim and Hakim Sadra were his famous students. The latter Hakim was bestowed with the title of Masih al-Zaman.

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- 1) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.559.
 - 2) Tarikh-i Farishtah, by Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Farishtah (Nawal Kishore Press), Kanpur, 1874., p.388.
 - 3) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.565.
 - 4) Ibid, Vol. I, pp. 561-562

- 5) Ibid, Vol. I, pp. 562
- 6) *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, by Nuruddin Muhammad Shah Jahangir (Matba Urdu), Aligarh, 1864. Another edition by Syed Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur, 1863. p. 151.
- 7) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III p.168
- 8) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.558.
- 9) Ibid
- 10) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. I p, 561
- 11) Ibid, Vol III, p.169.
- 12) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.566.
- 13) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III p.144
- 14) It is said that he first came to Deccan and thence called to Agra by Akbar on the recommendation of Faydi. (Atibba-i Ahd-i Mughaliya, by Sayyid Ali Kauthar Chandpuri (Hamdard Academy), Karachi, 1955), p. 134.
- 15) Akbar Nama , by Abul FAdi (Mazhar al-Aja'ib), Calcutta, 1877. Vol. III, p. 357
- 16) Ma'athir al-Umara (Urdu Translation), by Shah Nawaz Khan, Lahore, 1968, Vol. I, p.569
- 17) Akbar Nama , by Abul FAdi (Mazhar al-Aja'ib), Calcutta, 1877. Vol. III, p. 261
- 18) *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, by Nuruddin Muhammad Shah Jahangir (Matba Urdu), Aligarh, 1864. Another edition by Syed Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur, 1863. quoted in (Atibba-i Ahd-i Mughaliya, by Sayyid Ali Kauthar Chandpuri (Hamdard Academy), Karachi, 1955) p.135
- 19) It has been reported that in that tank, he had built an under-water room with a minaret and with a bridge on each side. However, there was only one underwater entrance to this room and the door of which was kept open. The strange thing about this room was that despite the open door, not a drop of water entered the room. Akbar had himself dived into the tank and examined the room (Akbar Nama , by Abul Fadi (Mazhar al-Aja'ib), Calcutta, 1877., Vol. 111, p. 688). Emperor Jahangir has also mentioned in his Memoirs a similar tank with an under-water room built in Agra by Hakim 'Ali Gilani (*Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, by Nuruddin Muhammad Shah Jahangir (Matba Urdu), Aligarh, 1864. Another edition by Syed Ahmad Khan, Ghazipur, 1863., p. 74).
- 20) *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, by Mulla Abdul Qadir BAdayuni (College Press), Calcutta, 1865, Vol. III, p. 168