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Pioneering Unani Medicine in Qutb Shahi Hyderabad: The Life and Work of Hakim al-Mulk Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani (1586-1669 AD)

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ABSTRACT

The Unani System of Medicine has its origins in Egypt and its sister civilization, Mesopotamia, with its earliest roots often attributed to Hermes (Idris A. S.). While it took on a more scientific form under the influence of Hippocrates in ancient Greece, it was further refined and developed by Arab and Persian physicians. Upon its journey to India, the Unani System underwent significant enhancement and refinement, owing to the substantial contributions of Indian physicians. The amalgamation of diverse influences and advancements from various cultures has enriched and shaped the Unani System of Medicine. Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani stands out as one of the eminent Unani physicians in India, having authored several important books on Unani medicine. The medical heritage of Hyderabad dates back to a period predating the European Dark Age. The mausoleum of the renowned physician Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani is situated in the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park in Hyderabad, serving as a testament to his contributions. He established extensive herbal gardens also. Hakim Nizamuddin held the esteemed position of chief royal physician under King Abdullah, Qutb Shah VII, in 1045 AH (1635 AD) receiving an annual salary of 6,000 Qutb Shahi Huns, equivalent to approximately 206 kilograms of gold coins. In modern currency, this amount translates to roughly Rs 62 crore per annum. His significant contributions led to the naming of two localities in Hyderabad after him: Hakimpet near Shamirpet and Hakimpet in Jubilee Hills. The latter features a special medical garden spread across hundreds of acres.

This paper aims to provide a substantial account of his legacy and the significance of this historical site.

Keywords: Mesopotamia, Mausoleum, Unani Medicine, Gilani, Qutb Shahi Heritage Park

INTRODUCTION:

Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani, a figure of notable repute, was not only a renowned author but also an accomplished physician and a distinguished architect. He was born as the son of Abdullah al-Sadidi al-Shirazi in 1586 AD to a family originally from Gilan, a region in Safavid province situated on the Caspian coast of northern Iran.

Under the guidance of Mir Muhammad Baqar Damad and the distinguished theologian Shaykh Baha al-Din Muhammad Amuli, he pursued studies in medicine and other sciences. Prior to his journey to India during Shah Jahan's reign, the Hakim served as an advisor to the ruler of Gilan. Upon reaching India, he entered the service of Mahabat Khan, who was then the supreme commander of imperial forces. The Hakim's skills and expertise earned him great respect and admiration from the king. He formed strong bonds with Mahabat Khan and accompanied the monarch on various military campaigns, including the conquest of Daulatabad.

His brilliant plan of warfare and strategic acumen played a pivotal role, leading to the successful capture of the fort in 1633 AD. The nobles and distinguished officers involved in the campaign praised the wisdom, acumen, and intelligence of Hakim Nizamuddin, attributing the victory to his exceptional contributions. Hakim Nizamuddin, in the preface of his book, "Shajra-i Danish" recounts a challenging period in Daulatabad during Shahjahan's reign.

The king ordered the commander-in-chief, Mahabat Khan, to conquer the fort, resulting in significant bloodshed. The aftermath saw the Moghul army arresting and seizing the wealth and property of Daulatabad's inhabitants, including Hakim Nizamuddin's library. This repository held invaluable commentaries and numerous books authored by Hakim Gilani himself. The burning of this literary treasure was a regrettable loss to the wealth of knowledge and scholarship amassed by Hakim Gilani. His book "Minhajul-Bayan" was among the casualties of this unfortunate event. Dejected and disheartened, Hakim Nizamuddin contemplated leaving India and set his sights on Iraq. However, fate took a turn when, at the seaport of Machli Patnam, he received an invitation from Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah to visit his royal court, promising a splendid welcome. Yielding to the invitation, Hakim Nizamuddin visited the court, where he was not only warmly welcomed but also honored and affectionately included in the king's special advisors. As part of this gesture, he received a library containing rare books on medicine. However, Nizamuddin succeeded in the royal court and received the title of "Hakim al-Mulk".

Immersed in his studies, the Hakim diligently perused these volumes day and night. The king, Abdullah Qutb Shah, bestowed upon Hakim Gilani such unparalleled honors that Gilani developed an enduring attachment to the court. He chose to remain in Golconda until his passing. In the vicinity of Golconda, atop a hill in the region known as Hakimpet, there is a tomb that some identify as the final resting place of Gilani. Ahmad Gilani passed away in Golconda.¹

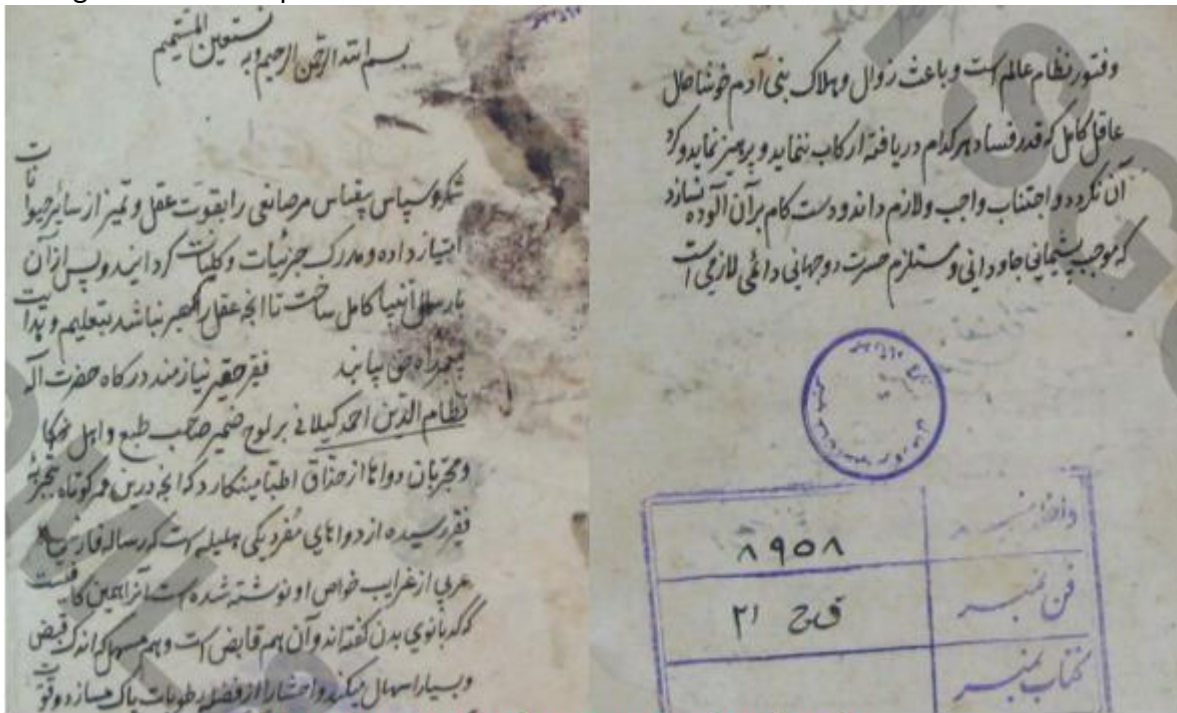
Works

As a highly educated individual, he possessed a comprehensive understanding of various disciplines, including philosophy, logic, physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, moral sciences, and metaphysics. Beyond his broad academic pursuits, Ahmad Gilani demonstrated a profound interest in medicine and literature. Renowned for his practical knowledge in medicine, he also distinguished himself as an excellent physician with a keen inclination towards writings and compilations. His noteworthy contributions to medical literature underscore his lasting impact in the field.

Hakim Nizam al-Din Ahmad Gilani stands as a prolific author, having written extensively across numerous disciplines. His literary contributions encompass philosophy, logic, poetry, literature, natural sciences, religion, and medicine. His impact is profound, as virtually every branch of knowledge owes a debt to his insightful and multifaceted works.²

1. Majmua-i Hakim al-Mulk Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani

This medical diary authored by Hakim Nizamuddin is before me. It serves as a comprehensive record detailing his medical experiments, teachings, and studies. Spanning from his student years to the age of sixty, the book has been transformed into a rare compilation due to the meticulous selection and arrangement of its topics.



First & last pages of Majmua-e-Hakimul Mulk

Contents:

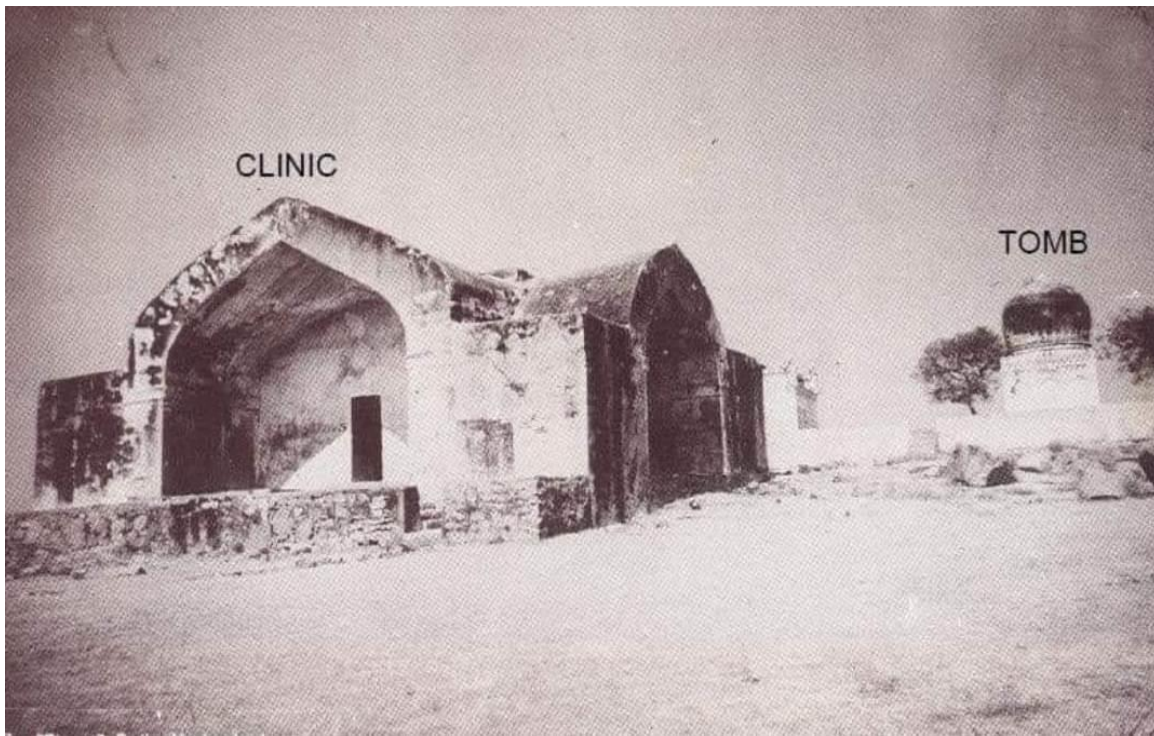
In this book, the author delves into the significance of medical science based on verses from the Holy Quran and Hadith attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the wisdom of sages intertwining it with religious studies.

Within its pages, this diary extends beyond the realm of medicine to encompass a diverse array of educational subjects. Covering an extensive range, it includes discussions on the human body, human temperament, human creation, the concept of Ruh (spirit), health preservation, as well as a comprehensive exploration of simple and compound drugs, diseases, and their corresponding treatments. The breadth of topics covered in the diary contributes to its significance as a comprehensive source of knowledge.

Majmua-e-Hakimul Mulk, as indicated by the title, is a collection of medical & non-medical articles, letters, and poetic works by Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmed Gilani. Regarding its compilation date, it can be inferred to belong to the 11th century AH as three different dates, i.e., 1028, 1053, and 1055 AH, are mentioned in three distinct articles. The text is primarily in Persian, but some sections are written in Arabic.³

The arrangement of the articles concerning Unani medicine is as follows:⁴

1. Advia Mujarraba (tested remedies)
2. Chobcheeni, China Root (Smilax china Linn.), Qahwa (Tea, Coffee, and Tobacco)
3. Asl & Abresham (Honeybees and Silkworms)
4. Zikr-i-Manī (Description of Sperm) (Truth About Body Temperature and Physical Ailments)
5. Ruh (the Spirit and the Theory of Transmigration of Souls)
6. On the signs of death (Arabic)
7. On Properties of Medicine for Heart, Liver, Stomach, etc.
8. Abstract of 'Barus-Saa' a book of Rhazes (Arabic)
9. On different kinds of poisons with their effects.
10. On Tiryaaq Faruq (a famous compound antidote). Written in 1055 AH at the age of 60 years.
11. On Hippocrates, Galen and Hunein etc.
12. On Miscellaneous Medical Anecdotes, Problems, and Theories, etc.
13. About single and compound drugs
14. Treatment of headache



2. Shajra-i Danish:

His works were compiled in two books, Shajra-i Danish and Auraq-i-Danish wa Binish. These books were authored in both Persian and Arabic languages during the early period of his life.

Shajra-i Danish is the collection of numerous journals and topics based on science of intellectual and reasoning and medicine. Most of its parts are related to medicine, where an interesting information related to medical education have been discussed. Few of them are of Hippocrates containing prescription of medicine, the medicine which improves the existence of life, physiognomy, causes of death etc.

3. Ḥadīqa al-Salāṭīn Quṭbshāhī

This is another remarkable work by the Hakim, detailing the history of the Qutb Shahi dynasty. The book is written in Persian. Four manuscripts of this book still exist, housed in the British Museum, India Office Library in London, and the office of the Archaeological Department in New Delhi. It was published from Idārah-'i Adabīyāt-i Urdū, Hyderabad in 1961. The manuscript is preserved in Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad, India

4. Khawass al-Advia:

This book elucidates the functions and properties of simple drugs, providing a comprehensive exploration of their characteristics and applications. The manuscript is preserved in Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad, India



**A couple of white buildings with domed roofs
Mausoleum of Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani (1586-1669 AD) and
Hakim Abdul Jabbar Gilani**

5. Sifat wa Khawass Momiya:

As evident from its name, this book is related to the functions and properties of a drug called Momiya (Bitumen, mineral pitch). A copy of manuscript is available at TSGOM Library, Hyderabad, India. It was written in 1045 AH (1635 AD)

6. Al-Hararah al-Ghariziyyah:

It is a separate chapter on topic of Hararat Ghariziyya which is the innate heat of the body regulated by medicatrix naturae for the normal functioning of the body. The manuscript is preserved in Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad

It was edited by HS Zillur Rahman with his preface and published from Association of Islamic treasures (Majma'-i Zakhā'ir-i Islāmī) Bonn: Dānishgāh-i Firīdrīsh Vīlhilm, Qum in 2012.

7. Risala dar Sharh Fad Zehr:

It is a commentary on the efficacy of antidote written in 1053 AH (1643 AD). A copy of manuscript is available at Raza Library, Rampur, India

8. Ahwal-e-Anasir:

It is about the quality of the elements written in 1045 AH (1635 AD).

9. Risala Chobchini:

It is about the functions and properties of Chobchini, China Root (Smilax china Linn) written in 1045 AH (1635 AD).⁵

Therapeutic Properties and Clinical Applications of Chobchini

Part Used: Tuberous root

The herbal remedy Chobchini is derived from the tuberous root of Smilax china L. (Liliaceae), a deciduous climber characterized by a stem with sparse prickles or being unarmed. It is sourced from China and Japan. Temperament: Compound of Strength (Murakkab-ul-Quwa), Hot and Dry in Nature (Mayil ba Hararat wa Yabusat).

Actions: Chobchini acts as a tonic for vital organs (Muqawwi-e-Azaa-e-Raeesa), a blood purifier (Musaffi-e-Khoon), a resolvent (Mohallil), an attenuant (Mulattif), a diaphoretic (Moarrriq), an aphrodisiac (Muqawwi-e-Bah), a diuretic and emmenagogue (Mudirr-e-Baul wa Haiz), as well as a hypnotic and sedative (Munawwim wa Musakkin).

Therapeutic Uses: It is employed in the treatment of chronic headaches (Suda Muzmin), migraines (Shaqiqqa), catarrh (Nazla), coryza (Zukam), sexual debility (Zof-e-Bah), abnormalities of the blood (Fasad-e-Dam), and polyarthritis (Waja-ul-Mafasil).

Dosage: 5 - 10 grams.

Important Formulation: Majoon Chobchini



Grave of Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani (1586-1669 AD)



Grave of Hakim Abdul Jabbar Gilani

Mausoleum

Qutb Shahi Heritage Park in Hyderabad is home to the tombs, Hammām (bathhouse), and mosques constructed by the kings of the Qutb Shahi dynasty. Notably, among the tombs, the paired pavilions of Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani and Hakim Abdul Jabbar Gilani, both esteemed Physicians of Sultan Abdullah Qutb Shah, stand in proximity, open on all sides for visitors to explore. The sarcophagi within these domes are crafted from highly polished black basalt. While the graves do not bear the names of the Hakims, local tradition asserts that Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani and Hakim Abdul Jabbar Gilani were esteemed physicians favored by Sultan Abdullah. These tombs are commonly associated with Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani, known as Hakimul Mulk. He was appointed as a Royal physician by Sultan Abdullah.

Apart from his medical role, his striking appearance earned him the responsibility of reciting Hadith in the presence of the King during the month of Moharram. Constructed in the mid-17th century, the twin mausoleums of Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani and Hakim Abdul Jabbar Gilani exhibit lavish ornamentation.

Their strategic placement within the Royal necropolis underscores their esteemed status within the Sultan's court. These nearly identical structures feature a square outer plan and an inner octagonal chamber, providing support for ribbed domes. What distinguishes them is the intricate stucco work, surpassing the usual embellishments found in structures within the necropolis. The lime stucco patterns adorning the facades boast a captivating blend of geometric, floral, and animal representations.

In addition to his roles as an expert physician, Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani distinguished himself as an adept architect and town planner. Notably, he designed and constructed a locality named Hakimpet, which stands as a living testament to his artistic vision. This vibrant area is situated within the breathtaking northern part of Golconda fort, serving as a magnificent mountain resort. Furthermore, Ahmad Gilani erected a castle atop a hill, christening it Qasr Jabal, also known as Jabal-e Nur (Mountain of Light).^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12}

The castle reflects a harmonious blend of Iranian and Indian architectural influences, showcasing Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani's expertise in design.

Hakimpet, situated near Tolichowki, derives its name from Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani, the distinguished royal physician of the Qutb Shahis. Approximately 400 years ago, he served as the head of Dar-us-Shifa hospital. Notably, Hakim Nizamuddin Gilani cultivated a herbal garden in what is now Jubilee Hills,

dedicated to the cultivation of medicinal plants for the preparation of medicines. His contributions left an enduring mark on the historical and medical landscape of the region.



Inscription: Incomplete Dome:

Mirza Nizamuddin Ahmad Died on 26-02-1085 AH (01-06-1674 AD)

There is another incomplete tomb in the heritage park which bears the name of the Hakim Nizamuddin Ahmad Gilani.^{13, 14}

Conclusion:

There are many medical heritage sites in India needs to be explored and written about their existence their benefits and their uses for the next generations

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