

AURANGZEB'S BELIEF IN DIVINE HELP FOR CURE OF DISEASES

APARNA CHATTOPADHYAY*

ABSTRACT

Aurangzeb had employed the most learned and experienced physicians for himself, for the members of his palace and for his courtiers. During his reign many hospitals were established in the capital as well as in other cities. The reign of Aurangzeb was note-worthy for the composition and compilation of medical texts. So we can say that Aurangzeb had a very scientific attitude towards the problems of health. We find, at the same time, that he attached great importance to virtuous deeds and divine help for cure of diseases.

Aurangzeb had realised the importance of Ganges water for health. He used to drink Ganges water and his food also was prepared in Ganges water. Ganges water was taken even to the battle-field for him and one pot of Ganges water was supplied to each and every soldier. It seems, Aurangzeb had understood the utility of Ganges water for health by consultation with his physicians.

In the end of his letter to Bahadur, Aurangzeb expresses his full faith in God, who alone knows all the weaknesses and troubles of man and who is the Supreme Healer of all diseases.

Niccolao Manucci, a venetian traveller, who was in India from A.D. 1653-1708, says about Aurangzeb that "the Mughal (Aurangzeb) himself is extremely choicy and scrupulous over the selection of his physicians, appointing always the most learned and the most experienced in order the better to preserve his health. What is more, as there are so many people in his palace,

and his court extraordinarily numerous, he keeps, in his employ several physicians to whom names are given, which agree either with their knowledge or the treatment and cure they have accomplished" (Jaggi, 1977).

During Aurangzeb's reign many hospitals devoted to the service of the sick were established in the capital and the outlying cities and many wealthy nobles and citizens also built hospitals (Jaggi, a). Further we learn that the reign was specially noteworthy for the composing and compiling of medical books. There is special mention of eight distinguished writers on medicine, the most famous of whom was Hakim Muhammad Akbar -bin- Muhammed Muqin Arzani. (Jaggi, b)

Recitation of Surat -E- Ikhlas & Surat-E-Shafa :

In consideration of the above facts we can say that Aurangzeb had a very scientific attitude towards the problems of health. Still we find that he had firm belief in divine help for cure of dis-

* Reader in History (Retired) C/o Post Master, Malaviya Nagar post office, Central office, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi - 221005 (India).

eases. Aurangzeb writes in a letter to his grand-son prince Bedar Bakht, Azam's eldest son, who was given the title of Bhadur in 1691 (Bilimoria, 1972) that, for removing of physical diseases and avoiding dangers, he should continue the morning prayer which is "accepted by God." In this letter Aurangzeb further writes that all erudite and learned persons unanimously agree that to blow on water by reciting 'Surat-e-Ikhlās' and 'Surat-e-Shafa' and then to drink that water is the great and immediate cure of diseases (Bilimoria, a).

According to J.H. Bilimoria, Surat-e-Ikhlās is the 'Chapter on sincerity' and Surat-e-Shafa is the 'Chapter on cure'. (Bilimoria, b). But by another authority Sura-e-Ikhlās (or Surat-e-Ikhlās) is translated as 'Chapter of unity'. It is chapter C XII of the Holy Quran. It is given below:-

The Quran -
The Chapter of Unity

In the name of the merciful and compassionate God Say' He is God alone.

God the Eternal!

He begets not and is not begotten!

Nor is there like unto him any one!

(Palmer, 1965)

E.H. Palmer tells us that this chapter is generally known in Arabic by the name of Ikhlās 'clearing oneself', i.e. of belief in any but one God. (Palmer, a)

Surat-e-shafa perhaps can be written rightly as Surat-e-Shifa (or Sura-e-Shifa). It is commonly known as Surat-e-Fatiha or Sura-e-Fatiha and it is the very first sura of the Holy Quran. This Sura-e-Shifa may mean the 'Chapter on Cure' as told by J.H. Bilimoria. One of its names is "ummulquran" (mother

of the Quran)* which means the main substance of the Quran. The Surat-e-Shifa runs as follows:

The opening chapter

In the name of the merciful and compassionate God. Praise belongs to God, The Lord of the Worlds, the merciful, the compassionate, the ruler of the day of Judgement. Thee we serve & Thee we ask for aid. Guide us in the right path, the path of those thou art gracious to, not of those thou art wrath with nor of those who err (Palmer, b).

Weighing Ceremony ('Tula-Dana' - Weighing Charity) :

Aurangzeb advises Bahadur in his letter mentioned above, to practice tula-dana' which also helped curing physical and mental ailments. Aurangzeb says that to weigh the entire body of a person against gold, silver, copper, corn, oil and other commodities was not a practice of the country of the ancestors of Aurangzeb and also not of the Mohammedans of India; but many needy & poor persons are benefitted by the practice and therefore the practice should be observed. Here Aurangzeb also adds that "His Majesty (Shah Jahan) also used to weigh (against gold silver etc.) his auspicious body twice a year and then he distributed the gold and silver equal to the weight of his body among the poor."

Aurangzeb says" if the light of my eye (that is, his grand son Bahadur) will weigh his body against various commodities, which are mentioned in the letter, fourteen times a year, it will be efficacious for removing mental and physical calamities" (Bilimoria, c).

From the Ain-e-Akbari we learn that from reasons of auspiciousness, and as an opportunity of bestowing

* According to Dr. Hateem, Sr. Lecturer, Dept, of Arabic, Banaras Hindu University.

SURA-E-FATHIA OR SURA-E-SHIFA

سورة الفاتحة أو سورة الشفاء
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين ۝ الرحمن الرحيم ۝ ملك يوم الدين ۝
آياتك نعبد و آياتك نستعين ۝ اهدنا الصراط المستقيم ۝
صراط الذين انعمت عليهم ۝ غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين ۝

SURA-E- IKHLAS
سورة الاخلاص
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قل هو الله احد ۝ الله الصمد ۝ لم يلد ولم يولد ۝
ولم يكن له كفوا احد ۝

presents upon the poor, Akbar was weighed himself twice a year. On the first day of the month of Aban (15th October) which was the solar anniversary of Akbar, he was weighed twelve times against the following articles gold, quick silver, silk, perfumes, copper, ruh-e-tutiya' drugs, ghee, iron, rice milk, seven kinds of grain, salt;.....

Akbar was weighed a second time on the 5th of Rajab (the lunar birth day of Akbar) against eight articles, that is, silver, tin, cloth, lead, fruits, mustard oil, and vegetables. On both the occasions the festival of salgirah' (birth day) was celebrated (Ain, 1965).

We further learn that the imperial princes, sons and grandsons of his majesty (Akbar) were weighed once in every solar year (Ibid). They are for the first time weighed when two years old, but only against one thing. Every year, however, a new additional thing is put on the scales. When grown up they are generally weighed against seven or eight things, but not against more than twelve. (Ibid). In Shah Jahan Nama we find the lunar weighing of prince Aurangzeb when he became fifteen years old (Begley and Desai, 1990).

Jahangir in his Memoirs describes his solar weighing in the first year of his reign. He says "the first time the weight in gold came to three Hindustani maunds and ten seers. After this, I was weighed against several metals, perfumes and essences, upto twelve weighings Twice a year. I weigh myself against gold and silver and other metals..... once at the beginning of the solar year and once at that of the lunar. The weight of the money of the two weighings I hand over to the different treasurers for faqirs and those in need." (Tuzuk, 1989). In Tuzuk Jahangir describes lunar weighing (wazn-e-qamari)

for his 40th year. (Tuzuk, a). Jahangir says that "late emperor Akbar approved of this custom." (Tuzuk, b).

We learn from Shah Jahan Nama that the weighing ceremony (Jashn-e-wazn) was introduced by emperor Akbar (Begley and Desai, a). Aurangzeb also weighed himself on his birthdays against gold and silver which were distributed among the poor (Bilimoria, d; Sarkar, 1973; Ain, a). It is pointed out that 'tuladana' (weighing charity) was a practice among former Hindu rajas. Shivaji also practiced it (Bilimoria, e). This practice introduced by Akbar, at first took place once a year, on the birthday of the emperor; but with the introduction of Akbar's Divine (Solar) Era, we find in the history of every year the record of wazn-e-Shamsi, or solar weighing and wazn-e-qamari or lunar weighing.... The solar weighing was even retained by Aurangzeb.' (Ain, b).

In the eleventh year of his reign Aurangzeb stopped the ceremony of weighing of the Emperor against gold and silver on his two birthdays (according to the lunar and solar calendars). Sarkar, a).

We learn that late in life Aurangzeb allowed it in the case of his sons, in the belief that as the money was given away in charity, the prayers of the poor would do good to the princess. (Sarkar, b). So, for the sake of health, Aurangzeb recommends this Hindu custom, though, as it has been significantly pointed out, he condemned Hindu customs and rites (Bilimoria, f). It is also noteworthy that though after his formal accession in 1659 Aurangzeb had discontinued that Ilahi era of Akbar and reverted completely to the Muslim lunar calendar (Smith, 1990), in the matter of weighing ceremony we find that it

was performed both on his solar and lunar birthdays upto the eleventh year of his reign.

Aurangzeb's second and final coronation took place in 1659 AD; and then in the eleventh year of his reign he stopped the weighing ceremonies. Then after 1691, the year in which his grandson Bedar Bakhta was given the title of Bhadur, Aurangzeb, is advising him in the latter to perform that ceremony and that also not once or twice a year but fourteen times in a year, for removing mental and physical calamities. How Aurangzeb realised the efficacy of this practice after a long gap of time since its stoppage in the eleventh year of his reign, is not noted anywhere.

We notice here a very rational attitude of Aurangzeb in matters of health. It is particularly noteworthy that Aurangzeb recommends its performance to his grandson Bahadur, not twice but fourteen times a year. It means it was to be performed every month and in addition, it was to be performed every month and in addition, it was to be performed on the solar and lunar birthdays of the prince. That Aurangzeb was not a blind follower and that for the sake of health he could adopt practices as further noticed in the facts given below.

Ganges water for Aurangzeb:

Francis Bernier who was in India from 1656-1668 A.D., tells us about Aurangzeb's habit of drinking Ganges water. Bernier says - He (Aurangzeb) keeps in Delhi and Agra from two to three thousand fine horses always at hand in case of emergency, eight or nine hundred elephants and a large number of baggage horses, mules and

porters intended to carry the numerous and capacious tents, with their fittings, his wives and women, furniture, kitchen apparatus, Ganges water and all the other articles necessary for the camp.....(Bernier, 1968).

While Aurangzeb was proceeding to Kashmir and Bernier was accompanying him, several camels were laden with 'Sourais' of Ganges water. Every person attached to the court used Ganges water (Bernier, a). Even in the battle field a 'Sourai; of Ganges water was carried for a soldier. Because Bernier says, it is only in the field that this tin flagon is used. When at home, we put the water into jars made of a certain porous earth (Bernier, b.) Bernier, in this connection, refers to Akbar's habit of using Ganges water for cooking food which we have noticed in the Ain-e-Akbari (Bernier, c). Abul Fazal tells us about Akbar in his Ain-e-Akbari that both at home and on travels he (Akbar) drank Ganges water. Abul Fazl says - 'some trust-worthy persons are stationed on the banks of that river, who despatch the water in sealed jars. When the court was at the capital Agra and in Fathepur, the water came from the district of Sorun, but now * that his Majesty is in the Punjab, the water is brought from Hardwar. For the cooking of the food, rain water or water taken from the Jamna and the Chenab is used, mixed with a little Ganges water (Ain-e-Akbari, c).

Edward ferry who came to India as chaplain of Sir Thomas Roe and was in India at the court of Jahangir at Mandu and Ahmedabad from 1617 to 1618, says about Jahangir... It is remarkable that "One pinte of the water of Ganges

* (A.D. 1596. As in 1586 Fathepur, had ceased to be the Capital, Akbar resided mostly in the Punjab (Ain-e-Akbari, d.)

weigheth less by an ounce than in the whole kingdom" and therefore the Moghal, wheresoever he is, hath it brought to him that he may drink it" (Foster, 1985). In this connection Foster adds that Ovingtom (Voyage to Surat, 1689) says that 'a quart of it is lighter by much than any other water.

It is clear that the efficacy of Ganges water for health was fully understood by Aurangzeb and so he drank it. Thus we find that though an orthodox Muslim, Aurangzeb was quite scientific in his outlook and like Akbar and Jahangir, he continued the practice of drinking Ganges water. And while in the cases of Akbar and Jahangir we do not know if Ganges water was supplied to the soldiers, in connection with Aurangzeb we have seen that even to the battlefields a 'Sourai' of Ganges water was carried for a soldier and that every person attached to the court of Aurangzeb, used Ganges water, as noticed and recorded by Bernier. Thus a very specific importance attached to the Ganges water by Aurangzeb, is noticed. It is note-worthy that while Hindus probably did not use Ganges water excepting for purifying articles and in religious purposes, Aurangzeb and his soldiers and courtiers used it, in all probability, for its efficacy for health. It is clear that Aurangzeb was not blindly following the practice introduced by his predecessors in drinking Ganges water.

It seems, he knew well the value of Ganges water for health. The remarkable activities in the field of medical studies and research in his times and his close association with a large number of medical experts, suggest that Aurangzeb had clear and scientific knowledge about the value of Ganges water for health.

Aurangzeb's supreme Faith in God, the Greatest Healer :

The letter of Aurangzeb to his grandson Bahadur ends with the following couplet" you (that is God) know our (man's) weakness, anxiety and invalidity, and you also know the remedy and cure of our diseases" (Bilimoria, h) "God is the curer and healer of disease, God is perfect and God is holy.' says Aurangzeb (Ibid).

So according to Aurangzeb the final faith is to be placed in God alone. He is the real curer and healer side by side with the establishment of hospitals, composition and compilation of medical texts and appointment of expert physicians, both foreign and Indian, emperor Alamgir expresses his ultimate faith in the Grace of God, the Al-mighty, for cure of all ailments.

Note: Please see the following remarks of the referee : In this article the author highlighted certain practices of Aurangzeb which he used to adopt himself and recommend his grand son Bhadur to cure diseases. Among them the first one was the recitation of Quran (Sura Ikhlas and Sura Fateha). The second one was the practice of 'Tuldana' and the third one was of using the Ganges water for himself and his soldiers. While presenting these thoughts the author repeatedly wrote that Aurangzeb was not the blind follower but his approach was always scientific and wherever he found useful practices he adopted, for example the practice of 'Tul-dana' which is a Hindu rite, and also the use of Ganges water. However, the author wrote these lines with good faith but it may doubt about Aurangzeb's Belief and Faith. As it is universally accepted that Aurangzeb was the strict follower of Islam and never tolerated any transgresses from

anybody however great he might be against the teaching of Islam here two points need clarification.

Recitation of Sura Ikhlas and Sura Fateha is a pure Islamic practice and so has no need for any explanation. About 'Tul-dana' and use of Ganges water the author thoughts that these two are pure Hindu practices while it is not so.

According to Hadith the 'Sadqa' cools the Anger of Allah. Sacrificing the animals and distributing among poor as a Sadqa on behalf of a sick person is a common practice. Likewise the Sadqa in the shape of any useful item (from gold to grain) equal to weight of a sick person is not against the Islamic teachings (In Quran in Sura Aal-Emran Ayat 91, it is mentioned that any disbeliever if gives gold equal to weight of

Earth as a Fidya (to get rid of his punishment by this way) will not be accepted from him on the day of Judgement. Hence the practice of giving Sadqa or Fidya equal to weight of particular thing or a person may be just think of Sadqat are highly recommended and praised in Islam. About the use of Ganges water, as the author herself stated, Aurangzeb was a very wise person and had number of top Unani physicians around him in his Court. As a matter of fact there is a special chapter of 'water' in Al-Qanoon the famous book of Avicenna in which he (Avicenna) recommended different waters for use according to health point of view. Thus the choice of Ganges water was from the health point of view, not under any Divine belief.

REFERENCES

- Ain, (1965) The Ain-i-Akbari, Abu'l-Fazl Allami, Tr. into English by H. Blockmann, edited by S.L. Goomer, Published by Naresh. C.Jain for New Imperial Book Depot, 53/D Dev Nagar, New Delhi 5, 1st edition 1871 second edition 1965 pp. 276-277, fnl.
- Idem Ibid, a, p.277, fn.2.
- Idem Ibid, b, p.277 fn.2
- Idem Ibid, d, p.58 fn 1& 2.
- Bernier 1968 Francis Bernier Travels in the Mughal Empire, S.Chand and Co., N. Delhi Calcutta Lucknow, 2nd edition, 1968 pp. 221-222.
- Idem Ibid, c, p. 356
- Idem Ibid b, pp. 356.
- Bilmoria (1972) Ruka' al-i-Alamgiri or Letters of Aurangzeb Translated from Original Persian into English by J.N. Bilimoria, Idarah-i- Adabiyat-e-Dehli 2209/ Qasimjan street Delhi-6, 1972, p.77
- Idem Ibid, a, pp. 78-79
- Idem Ibid, b, p.78, fn.1
- Idem Ibid, c,p.78
- Idem Ibid d, p.78, fn.2
- Idem Ibid, e.p. 78, fn.2
- Idem Ibid, f, p.78, fn.2
- Idem Ibid, g, pp.5-6
- Idem Ibid, h.,p. 78-79.
- Begley & Desai (1990) The shah Jahan Nama of Inayat Khan, edited and completed by W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai, Delhi, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1990. Published by S.K. Mookherjee Oxford University press, Y.M.C.A. Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110001, p.96
- Idem Ibid, a, pp.28-29.
- Foster (1985) Early Travels in India, edited by William Foster First Indian edition 1985, published by Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, 54 Rani Jhansi Road, N. Delhi-110055, p.299.
- Jaggi (1977) O.P. Jaggi, Medicine in Medieval India, Published by Ramlal Pury of Atma Ram and Sons.(H.O.) Kashmire Gate Delhi-110006, 1977, p. 201.
- Idem Ibid, p.a 194.
- Idem Ibid, b, pp. 194-196.

Idem Ibid c, pp. 194-196.

Lane Poole (1984) Stanley Lane Poole, Extracts from the Kuran.. Published in India by B.R. Publishing Corporation, 461, Vivekananda Nagar, Delhi-110052. First Published 1879, Reprinted 1984, p.5. Palmer (1965) The Quran Translated by E.H. Palmer, Part-II Motilal Banarasidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 7, First published by the Clarendon Press, 1880. Reprinted by Motilal Banarasidass, 1965 p. 344.

Idem Ibid, a, p. 344, fn.2

Idem Ibid, b, The Quran translated by E.H. Palmer Part I, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, Varanasi, Patna, First published by the Clarendon press, 1880, Reprinted by Motilal Banarasidass, 1965.p.I.

Sarkar (1973) Jadunath Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, Vols I and II, Orient Longman's First Impression, 1973, p. 381.

Idem Ibid, a, pp. 55-56.

Idem Ibid, b, p.56.

Smith (1990). V.A. Smith, the Oxford History of India First Indian Impression 1974 Eighth impression 1990 p.404.

Tuzuk. (1989) Tuzuk -i-Jahangiri or Memoirs of Jahangir Tr. by A. Rogers, edited by H. Beveridge, Ist published 1909-1914, Reprinted 1989. Published by Low Price publications, 425 Nimri, Ashok Vihar, phase IV Delhi 11052, pp. 77-78.

Idem Ibid, a, pp.111-112.

सारांश

रोग मुक्ति के लिये परमेश्वर की कृपा पर औरंगज़ेब की आस्था

- अपर्णा चट्टोपाध्याय

औरंगज़ेब ने बहुत ही काबिल एवं अभिज्ञ चिकित्सकों को अपने लिये, अपने राजमहल के अन्य सदस्यों के लिये एवं अपने बहुसंख्यक दरबारियों के लिये नियुक्त रखा था। उसके समय में राजधानी में एवं साम्राज्य के अन्य नगरों में बहुत से अस्पताल खोले गये और इस समय बहुत से चिकित्सा ग्रन्थों की रचना एवं संकलन हुये। अतः मालूम होता है कि औरंगज़ेब का चिकित्सा के विषय में बहुत ही वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण था। फिर भी वह रोग मुक्ति के लिये धार्मिक एवं देवी सहायता को काफी महत्व देता था।

यहां यह भी उल्लेखनीय है कि औरंगज़ेब गंगा जल का महत्व अवश्य ही समझा था क्योंकि वह गंगा जल पीता था एवं गंगा जल से ही उसका भोजन बनता था। रणक्षेत्र में भी अन्यान्य आवश्यक वस्तुओं के साथ उसके लिये गंगा जल पहुँचाया जाता था एवं प्रत्येक सैनिक के लिये एक-एक सुराही गंगा जल पहुँचाया जाता था। गंगाजल अन्य प्रकार के जल की तुलना में हल्का है यह बात एडवार्ड टेरी ने कहा है। टेरी ने जहाँगीर के गंगा जल पीने के विवरण के प्रसंग में यह बात कहा है। सम्भव है कि औरंगज़ेब अपने हकीमों से गंगा जल की उपयोगिता के बारे में समझा हो।

औरंगज़ेब अपने पत्र के अन्त में बहादुर को यह लिख रहा है कि ईश्वर ही मनुष्यों के सब कमजोरियों को एवं कष्टों को समझते हैं एवं वही सारे कष्टों को दूर करने वाले हैं।