

AYURVEDA DURING ABBASID'S PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

This is a historical paper which deals with a brief account of Abbasid's period. In this article the existence of Ayurveda in Arab countries, arrival of Ayurvedic physicians to Baghdad, their eminence, authenticity and literary additions in medical field has been studied and presented.

Abbasides were the rulers of Baghdad in early Islamic period. After the demise of prophet of Islam, (Hazrat Mohammed S.A.S.)* in 632 A.D. Muslims were ruled by Khulafa-e-Rasheda (Caliphs) which were four in number i.e.

Hazrat Abu Bakr (Rz-An) **	632-634 A.D.
Hazrat Umar (Rz-An).	634-644 A.D.
Hazrat Osman (Rz. An)	644-656 A.D.

and Hazrat Ali (Rz-An) the son-in-law of the prophet 656-661. After Hazrat Ali (Rz-An) his son Hazrat Hasan (Rz-An) the first grand son of the prophet ruled only for six months and handed over the charge to Muawia saheb on some conditions to avoid schism in Islam. Muawia Saheb founded the dynasty of Ummaid Kingdom who ruled in hereditary succession. Fourteen kings of this dynasty ruled from 661-750 A.D. Later 'Ummaid kings (caliphs) started indulging in luxurious living. This gradually sapped the vitality of

Arab society. Thus second wave of the conquest began. One of the descendents of Hazrat Ali (Rz-An), Abul Abas al Saffah was proclaimed caliph by the inhabitant of Kofa in 749, A.D. upon which a battle was took place between him and Marwan II, the last king of Ummaids. Later was slain in 750 A.D. Abbas al Saffah laid the foundation of Abbasid's dynasty which also continued to be transmitted to his family from father to son for 524 lunar years during a succession of 37 caliphs till they were disposed by Halaku Khan in 1258 A.D.

Many of the Abbasid caliphs and their nobles were interested in the works of public welfare. They patronized medicine and medical men, established hospitals and mobile clinics and held the examination of the physicians to allow medical practice. In addition to these their appreciation of Ayurveda was also note worthy point.

In this article the historical details of existence of ayurveda at Arab countries,

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* S.A.S - "Sallallahu Alaihiwo Sallam" muslim use these words with the name of Hazrat Mohammed S.A.S".

** Rz - An - "Raziya'llaho Anho" muslims use these words with the names of the companions of the Prophet Hazrat Mohammed S.A.S.

arrival of Ayurvedic physicians to Baghdad during Abbasid's period, their eminence, their authenticities and literary addition in medical field may be studied.

Ayurvedic Accession in Arab Countries :

On philological and other grounds it can be proved that Arabs were at any rate in touch with India before the rise of Islam. The names of several Indian products, spices and other words of Indian origin like Kafur, Zangabil, Sandal etc., are found in Quran. Many references are found in history books with regard to the existence of Ayurvedic physicians in Arab countries even before the time of Abbasid's period.

The author of *Islami Tibb*, Rahber Farooqui with reference to Maulana Sulaiman Nadevi writes that "traces of beneficial services of this science were found in different countries even before the advent of Islam". He further referring another book "Al Adebul Mufred" writes, "Once Ummul Mominin Ayesha Siddiqa (Rz-An) fell ill. Her nephew called for a Jat physician to treat her."

Hasan Nigrami says "Since ancient times Indian Physicians have been called for treatment from various Arab countries. In the period of Kisra 531-570 A.D. (his other names are Naushirwan Adil and chosroe the great) there was an Indian physician pearztan al Hindi who use to treat his patients with Bhang (Hemp)". In another place Nigrami writes "the king of Faris use to call this physician for his treatment."

The relation between Arabs and Indians became firm in the period of Haroon al Rasheed (786-809 AD) the fifth Caliph of the Abbasids who granted the post of

ministry to Yahya bin Khalid Barmaki. He was very interested in the works of public welfare specially in medicine. He made the first endeavour to provide an opportunity for Muslims to ponder over the Indian Medicine, he ordered that a person should go to India and after reaching there he should conduct a thorough research on the vedic science and then collect rare Indian drugs and herbs and return to the capital and try his utmost to bring the scholars of this science from India to Baghdad by giving them hope of royal bounties and gifts. Thus on account of these efforts a team of Indian scholars came to Baghdad.

According to the author of "Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature", Zubair Siddiqui, "In addition to the Barmacides (Barmaki family) there were other courtiers of Haroon also like Abu Umar al Ajami, Ishaq bin Sulaiman al Hashimi and Abu Hatim al Balakhi who were interested in this branch of cultural activity. But Barmacides were the most influential and resourceful of all of them."

Indian Physicians at Baghdad :

Knowing the interest of Abbasid Caliphs towards Ayurvedic medicine, Indian Physicians flocked to Baghdad where they impressed the muslims by their eminence and perfectness. The names of such physicians which come across in medical history are as follows. Manka (Manikya), Kanka (Kankayan), Ibn Dhan (S/o. Dhanapati), Saleh bin Bahla (Sali S/o. Bhela), Shanaq (Chanakya or Saunaka) etc.

Regarding manka's arrival at Baghdad it is written that once Haroon al Rasheed fell ill. The physicians failed to cure him. In those days the fame of a great physician of

India pandit Manka had spread far and wide. Abu Amer Ajami, a courtier of Haroon requested him to call for Manka. In compliance with the firman Manka reached Baghdad and treated Haroon perfectly. Having recovered from his health Haroon showered gifts and honours on Manka. It was the effect of royal patronage Manka settled there only. He gained proficiency in Arabic and Persian Languages and translated Sanskrit books in Arabic and Persian.

About another physician, saleh, some informations are found in history books. Ibn Abi Useibia and other historians mentioned his name as saleh bin Behla but Zubair Siddiqui wrote about saleh that he was probably Sali, the son or descendent of the famous physician Bhela. His name is either Arabicized form of sali or he was converted to Islam which is more likely. However he was Indian physician, lived at Bagdad during the period of Haroon al Rasheed. He was not credited with any literary medical work. He did not held official position also. Probably he was a private practitioner in the metropolis of Islam. Many historians remembered him only in connection with the treatment of Ibrahim, a cousin of Haroon and a patient who was suffering from epoplexy. The graphic description of this case is found in a book, Uyoonul Anba (Arabic) by Ibn Abi Useibia on the ultimate authority of eye witness. He says that the physician, saleh cured the caliph's cousin who was suffering from apoplexy in a marvelous manner about whom *Jibrael* bin Baktishu, the then chief physicians of that time had declared that the patient was about to die and had said perhaps he (the patient) may not live till Isha prayer (The prayer which is offered by the muslims

in evening after one hour of the Sun set). On hearing this Jafer Barmaki, a courtier suggested Haroon to call for Saleh, Introducing Saleh, Jafar said he is as great master of Indian medicine as *Jibrael* is of Greek medicine. The caliph accepted Jafer's submission. Saleh went and examined Ibrahim. Having examined the patient he refused to disclose the condition of the patient to any one except the caliph. Accordingly Jafer Barmaki took him to Haroon, the caliph. Saleh swore upon his life and said "your brother Ibrahim will not definitely die of his disease tonight and if, Allah forbid, it happens all my properties, all my slaves and slave girls etc., may be confiscated as waqf and all my wives may be deemed to have divorced" He said "what I am saying is on the basis of my scientific knowledge and experience" On seeing his confidence Haroon kept quite. But when the time foreboded by the *Jibrael* came it was reported to Haroon that Ibrahim had died. Haroon reached Ibrahim's house. After a short interval Saleh also reached there and said as a matter of fact my wives will be divorced. Your majesty should not feel sorrow. Your cousin is alive, I request your majesty to permit me to examine the patient." Having got the permission Saleh reached the patient and with in a short time came out requesting Haroon to accompany with. Both went inside the room. Saleh pierced the muscle with a needle below the thumb of the right hand of the patient, where upon he pulled up his hand. Saleh said "Can it ever happen that a dead man moves on account of some pain"?, Having got the faith of Haroon Saleh demanded some arrangement to start his medical treatment. After treatment Ibrahim

fully recovered and became hale and healthy.

Ibn Dhan (Son of Dhanapathi) was also an important Indian physician who lived at Bagdad simultaneously with Manka (Manikya). He was called to Bagdad by Yahya Barmaki and was appointed as the director of a hospital. Ibn Dhan was the same who translated several Indian works into Persian and Arabic languages at the suggestion of Yahya.

Gauther (Jaudher or yasodhara) was one of the excellent philosopher and learned man of India. He had insight in the science of medicine. He compiled several books on scientific subjects. One of these books is the Kitabul mawaleed (The book of nativities or Alchemy). One of the medical historians says that it was the translation of author's own book. But he did not mention the language of original book. Gauther died in 1269 AD.

Ayurvedic Literary Works of Abbasid's Period :

Many medical informations and lists of medical works found during Abbasid's period. However it is proved that the Ayurveda was not only existing there but it was progressing day by day. According to Zabair Siddiqui the following Indian medical works, however were rendered into Arabic and Persian languages during the Abbasid caliphate.

(i) Charaka : It was translated into Persian (Pahlawi) by Manka (Manikya) and then it was rendered into Arabic by "Abdullah bin Ali."

(ii) Susrud (Susruta). It was rendered into Arabic by Manka (Manikya) at the suggestion of Yahya, the son of Khalid the Barmacid. It consisted of ten discourses.

(iii) Astankar (Astangahridaya). It was rendered into Arabic by Ibn Dhan.

(iv) Nidan (Nidana). The name of the Arabic translator of this book is not known. But it has been described as containing the symptoms and description of 404 diseases without giving the methods of their treatment.

(v) Sindhastaq or Sindhshan (Siddhahyoga). The meaning of the term has been described by Ibnu 'I-Nadim as safwatun-Nujh which means the purity of success which is the Arabic rendering of Sidhahyoga which means Elixir of success. It was translated into Arabic by Ibn Dhan.

(vi) Kitabu's Sumum (The book of poisons). It is in five discourses. It was translated from the Indian language into Persian Language (Pahlawi) by Manka (Manikya) at the suggestion of Khalid the Barmacid and was copied in Persian (Pahlawi) by Abu Hatim of Balkh. It was translated at a later period into Arabic by Abbas bin said who read it out to the caliph al Mamun.

(vii) The book of Rusa, the Indian women dealing with the treatment of women.

(viii) The book dealing with the opinions of Indians about the various kinds of snakes and their poisons.

(ix) A short treatise on drugs.

(x) The book of treatment of pregnant women.

(xi) The book of intoxication (intoxicants).

(xii) The book dealing with one hundred diseases and one hundred medicaments by Tugasthal (?).

(xiii) The book on the effect of mania or Hysteria.

(xiv) The book giving names of drugs in ten different languages.

(xv) The book dealing with the drugs about the properties and nature of which the Indians and Greeks differ.

Unani Medical Books Containing Ayurvedic Information Compiled or Translated During Abbasid's Period :

The following account of literary works suggests that the natives of Bagdad, the head quarter of Abbasid Caliphs had at their access not only the Greek medical books but also the important Ayurvedic medical works. Ofcourse they were largely influenced by the Greek system of medicine but they were not ignored Ayurveda. They spared many pages in their medical books giving separate chapters for Ayurvedic information or quoting the statement of Ayurvedic authorities with regard to their own theories. For example the great intellect of Abbasid's period, Abul Hasan Ali bin Sahl Raban Tabari (Date of birth 810 AD) compiled a book "Firdausul Hikmat" in the year 838 AD. This book contains a short account of whole system of Indian medicine on the basis of four important medical works.

(1) Charaka (2) Sushruta (3) Nidana and (4) Ashtangahridaya

The author referred to the book of an Indian women medical writer with regard to the prescription for some of the uterine problems. Ofcourse the major portion of the book is on Greek medicine. It also given us a short, clear and coherent exposition of the whole system of Indian Medicine. The author began the composition of this book about the year 830 AD., and compiled it during his secretaryship of Mazyar bin

Quarin, the ruler of Tabaristan in his leisure hours and almost finished it in the year 838 AD.

According to Zubair Siddiqui, this book has been divided according to the subject matter into seven main parts each of which is divided in to a number of discourses which are again sub divided into chapters. In Siddiqui's book all the contents of "Firdausul Hikmat" have been given.

Avoiding the details of all contents only the headings of all chapters of fourth discourse of seventh part (The ending discourse of last part) are being submitted here for the scholars who are interested in Indian medicine and as a proof of the Arab Medical Scholar's interest towards Indian Medicine.

- Chap. 1. Indian medicine
- Chap. 2. Classification of this science
- Chap. 3. Qualifications necessary for a student of medicine.
- Chap. 4. The physician should not be hasty in under taking the treatment of patients.
- Chap. 5. Procreation of men and animals
- Chap. 6. Embryo and its formation.
- Chap. 7. The function of the humours and the effects of their excess or deficiency.
- Chap. 8. Measures to be taken for the preservation of health and their advantages.
- Chap. 9. The superfluous matters of the body and the harm caused by suppressing them.
- Chap. 10. The harm caused by taking different things in excess.
- Chap. 11. Different kinds of waters and their properties.

- Chap. 12. Different tastes, and what the physician should know about them.
- Chap. 13. Food and the arrangement of different courses.
- Chap. 14. What should be taken with different kinds of wine.
- Chap. 15. Wine and how it should be drunk, and persons who should abstain from it.
- Chap. 16. The milk of different animals and its properties.
- Chap. 17. Measures to be taken in the different seasons of the year for keeping healthy.
- Chap. 18. On universal morals (based on the works of the Indian physicians).
- Chap. 19. General causes of diseases
- Chap. 20. Different kinds of diseases
- Chap. 21. How to know the different stages of diseases in a patient.
- Chap. 22. Particular causes of diseases.
- Chap. 23. What is caused by the preponderance of each humour.
- Chap. 24. Methods of treatment.
- Chap. 25. Hic cough
- Chap. 26. Cough and its treatment
- Chap. 27. Thirst
- Chap. 28. Symptoms of relaxation of the bowels and the Consumptions.
- Chap. 29. Fever and its symptoms
- Chap. 30. Treatment of fever
- Chap. 31. Vanesection and when it should not be resorted to.
- Chap. 32. Symptoms of convelesence and death.

- Chap. 33. Evil spirits
- Chap. 34. Purgative and emetics
- Chap. 35. Medicine for diseases of uterus.
- Chap. 36. Compound medicine

After Abul Hasan Ali bin Raban, the great Muslim physician Mahammed bin Zakeria Razi also enriched his gigantic book, *Al Havi* and his other compilations quoting the statement of Indian authentic works such as 1. Charaka, 2. Sushruta, 3. Nidana, 4. Ashtangahridaya, 5. Siddhayoga, 6. The books of drugs about the nature and properties of which greeks and the Indians differed, 7. The book on the treatment of pregnant women, 8. The booklet on the Indian drugs, 9. The book dealing with hundred diseases and one hundred medicaments by Tugastal (?). 10. The book on the treatment of women by Rusa, the Indian women. 11. The book dealing with intoxication by an Indian. 12. The book dealing with the opinion of the Indians about the various kinds of Snake and their poisons. 13. The book on the effect of mania on various disease.

These informations show as the stamp of Ayurveda in the period from 750 to 1258 AD and the eminence of Ayurvedic scholars of that period, the translations of Ayurvedic works done and what are the works that contain Ayurvedic information along with Unani Medicine.

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सारांश

अब्बासिया काल में आयुर्वेद

- एस. ए. हुसेन
पी. के. जे. पी. सुभक्ता

यह एक इतिहासपरक लेख है जो अब्बासिया काल के संक्षिप्त विवरण से संबंधित है। इस लेख में अरब देशों में आयुर्वेद का अस्तित्व, बागदाद में आयुर्वेद के चिकित्सकों का आगमन, उनकी श्रेष्ठता, उनकी अधिप्रामाणिकता एवं चिकित्सा के क्षेत्र में उनके साहित्यिक योगदानों का अध्ययन कर यहां प्रस्तुत किया गया है।