

JAHANGIR'S INTEREST IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICINE

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ABSTRACT

Jahangir, after his accession on the 24th October, 1605 A.D. passed twelve orders, as we learn from his Memoirs (Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri). According to fifth order manufacturing and sale of Rice-Spirit and any kind of intoxicating drug were forbidden. The tenth order was for the foundation of free hospitals and appointment of physicians in all the great cities of the empire. We learn from Edward Terry who was in India from 1615-18 A.D. that the common diseases of the time included the venereal disease, which was possibly syphilis. In the twelfth year of his reign Jahangir passed orders prohibiting smoking tobacco. In Tuzuk we find that in the third year of his reign a doe was brought to Jahangir, it was milked. Here Jahangir says that the milk of a she-antelope was believed to be a remedy for asthma. In the eighth year of his reign he tried to test the milk of a tigress which was brought to his court. He, however, failed to get the milk of the tigress. Here he says that, it was heard from philosophers that the milk of a tigress was highly useful for brightening eyes. Jahangir's belief in spiritual help in curing diseases is reflected in the fact that in the ninth year of his reign when he fell ill, he took a vow that after recovery he would make holes in his ears to declare that he owed his very existence to Khawaja Muinu-ddin and so he was Khawaja's ear-bored slave. After recovery he did accordingly and wore a pearl in each of his ears.

Shaykh Hasan or Hassu whose father and grand father were surgeons of Akbar's times was a surgeon and a childhood friend of Jahangir. Jahangir after his accession made him governor of Gujarat and gave him the title of Mukarrab Khan, Another physician Hakim Ali whom Akbar had once sent as ambassador to Bijapur and was made a commander of 700 on his return, was made commander of 2,000 by Jahangir.

Jahangir after his accession on October 24, 1605 (Tuzuk,) gave twelve orders to be observed as rules of conduct (dastur-ul-amal) in all his dominions. The fifth order runs as follows - "They should not make wine or rice-spirit (darbahara) or any kind of intoxicating drug or sell them; although I myself drink wine, and from the age of 18 years up till now, when I am 38, have persisted in it. When I first took a liking to drinking I sometimes took as much as twenty cups of double distilled spirit; when by degrees it acquired a great influence over me. I endeavoured to lessen the quantity, and in the period of seven years I have brought myself from fifteen cups to five or six. My times for drinking were varied; sometimes when three or four sidereal hours of the day remained I would begin to drink and sometimes at night and partly by day. This went on till I was 10 years old. After that I took to drinking always at night. Now I drink only to digest my food (Tuzuk,)."

It is noteworthy that in this official order, Jahangir has given a

short account of his habit of drinking. It seems he wanted to make it known that though he himself used to drink, he found it harmful and he tried to lessen slowly the quantity of wine that he drank daily. Elsewhere in his autobiography (Tuzuk), Jahangir while narrating the history of the tenth year of his reign, when he gave wine for the first time to Khurram, describes his miserable condition due to excessive drinking. He says that, after he took to drinking and increased it from day and day until wine made from grapes ceased to intoxicate him; then he took to drinking arrack ('araq', spirits) and by degrees during nine years his portions rose to twenty cups of doubly distilled spirits, fourteen during the day time and the remainder at night. The weight of this was six Hindustani sirs. And matters went to such a length that as Jahangir says 'in the crapulous state from the excessive trembling of my hand I could not drink from my own cup, but others had to give it me to drink until I sent for Hakim Human' (Tuzuk,). And it was Hakim Human who gave him strong warning against excessive

drinking. His words made an impression on Jahangir and he says "that as sweet life was dear to me I began to lessen my allowance and set myself to take filuniya" (Tuzuk.) Jahangir further tells us how he slowly diminished the quantity of wine he took and he finally brought it down to six cups. And in the tenth year of his reign he says that "it is now fifteen years that I have drunk at this rate, neither more nor less" (Tuzuk.).

That the fifth order of Jahangir, prohibiting the making and sale of wine, remained effective, was noticed in the account of Edward Terry. Rev. Edward Terry who in his youth, was chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of James I to Jahangir, lived with his patron during the greater part of his embassy for more than two years from 1615 to 1618 and committed his impression to writing soon after his return (Smith, 1966). According to Smith, Terry was a good observer and his work is valuable for the notes on the social conditions and morals of the people (Smith, 1966,a). About Jahangir, Terry says "The King's disposition composed of extremes : very cruel -

very mild; often overcome with wine but severely punishing that fault in others" (Foster, 1985).

Terry's observation gives the idea that Jahangir strictly enforced the order against the manufacturing of wine and drinking which he had passed along with other eleven orders soon after his accession in 1605. Terry was in India during the period between 1615 and 1618. So during the ten years from 1605 to 1618 the order against wine remained effective and Jahangir severely punished those who indulged in drinking. Terry, however, has taken a superficial view of the matter as he has written that Jahangir was a person whose temperament was composed of 'extremes'. Since he himself used to drink but punished others for drinking. But we have seen that Jahangir has given the account of his habit of drinking and its sad results. So it is clear that being a victim of the evil results of drinking, he strongly forbade it for his subjects.

In connection with Jahangir's narration of the facts of the tenth year of his reign we find that this

year when his son Khurram (Shah Jahan) was twenty four-years old and was married and had children, Jahangir for the first time gave wine to Khurram. It was on the day of the Weighing ceremony of Khurram when the assembly for the ceremony was held, Jahangir gave wine to Khurram who had never drunk before until that age and Jahangir said to him "Baba, thou hast become the father of children, and kings, and kings' sons have drunk wine. Today, which is the day of thy being weighed, I will give thee wine to drink and give thee leave to drink it on feast days and at the time of the New Year and at all great festivals. But thou must observe the path of moderation, for wise men do not consider it right to drink to such an extent as to destroy the understanding and it is necessary that from drinking only profit should be derived' (Tuzuk,). Here Jahangir refers to the opinion of the great physician Avicenna about wine. Jahangir says, "Bu Ali (Avicenna) who is one of the most learned of hakims and physicians has written this quatrain - "Wine is a raging enemy, a prudent friend; A little is an antidote -

but much a snakes' poison. In much there is no little injury, In a little there is much profit".

Jahangir is quoting here the favourable views of Avicenna about drinking in moderate dozes, and further he is narrating here his own sad condition due to too much of drinking when he could not raise the cup to his lips with his own hand, which we have already described.

In Tuzuk we find Jahangir distributing wine among the Amirs and servants on the eleventh New Year's festival after his accession. (Tuzuk), and again on the twelfth New Year's feast after his accession, we find him giving wine to most of the servants who were engaged in waiting on him and he 'made them all heated with the wine of loyalty (Tuzuk,). And in the same year there was a grand feast. On this occasion along with all sorts of roasted meat and fruits cups of all kinds of intoxicating drinks were given to people there (Tuzuk,).

The above descriptions show that Jahangir gave wine to people only on special occasions. Otherwise

people were not permitted to manufacture wine or drink wine. Terry's statement gives this impression.

We have seen that according to the fifth 'dastur-ul-amal' Jahangir forbade making and selling rice-spirit (dar bahara) or any kind of intoxicating drug. It has been suggested that 'dil bahara' must be the correct term and not 'darbahara'. 'Dilbahara', that is, exhilarating drink probably was forbidden to be made and sold by Jahangir 'who would have known little about 'rice-spirit' that is 'darbahara' (Tuzuk,). But it is to be noted that Jahangir forbade manufacture and sale of rice-spirit ('darbahara') along with every kind of intoxicating drug. Rice-Spirit, that is, an intoxicating drink prepared from rice is the cheapest wine in India and poor people drink it. Jahangir, who himself had suffered from his habit of drinking and had tried his best to get rid of this habit, must have tried to save his subjects, both rich and poor, from the evil effects of drinking. So it seems 'darbahara', that is, rice-spirit is the correct term.

It has been observed that Jahangir's order prohibiting the production of intoxicating liquors was not seriously meant and in any case it was not carried out. In the south they were prepared mainly from the sap of the palm tree, while the mahua flower and molasses were used farther north. (Moreland.1974). But Terry's observation shows that the prohibition remained effective to a great extent.

Among the twelve orders passed by Jahangir after his accession, the tenth order ran as follows:- "They should found hospitals in the great cities and appoint physicians for the healing of the sick; whatever the expenditure might be should be given from the Khalisa establishment.(Tuzuk,).

In Tuzuk, the diseases which were common or which needed special care and treatment, are not mentioned. We, however, learn from Terry that the common diseases of the country are bloudie fluxes, hot fevers, and calentures; in all of which they prescribe fasting as a principal remedy. The filthy disease in con-

sequence of incontinencies, is common among them. (Foster, 1989, a). The filthy disease was the venereal disease, in all probability syphilis, which had by this time reached India and had spread among the people. Syphilis called 'firangaroga' is noticed in the Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra. It is a work of the 16th century A.D. (Keith, 1973). We are told that in earlier works on medicine in India this disease called "firangaroga" (disease of the firangis that is the people who came from Europe) is not noticed. It was a new disease in India. Still the author of Bhavaprakasha has described the disease and its treatment in an excellent manner (Bhavaprakasha 1961). The facts given by Terry suggest that by the 17th century when Terry visited India, syphilis had widely spread among the people.

From Terry's account we also learn that leprosy was a common disease in India. Terry says that the people of India "are of a tawny of olive colour.... They love not a man or woman that is very white or fair because that (they say) is the colour of lepers (common among them).

(Foster, 1985, b).

In the twelfth year of his reign, that is in 1617, Jahangir passed orders against smoking tobacco and he refers to the efforts of Shah Abbas of Iran also to stop the practice of smoking. In this matter Jahangir says in Tuzuk-, "In consequence of the disturbance that tobacco brings about in most temperaments and constitutions, I had ordered that no one should smoke it. My brother Shah Abbas had also become aware of the mischief arising from it, and had ordered that in Iran no one should venture to smoke, (Tuzuk,). It has been observed by an author that Jahangir possibly made a relaxation in his order against smoking, because within a few years from the date of Jahangir's order prohibiting smoking, tobacco began to be cultivated on an extensive scale and by 1623 it became an article of export from the port of Surat. (Srivastava, 1973).

It is to be noted that Terry who was in India from 1615- 1618 also said that Indians grew tobacco in abundance. (Foster, 1985, c). The order of Jahangir against smoking tobacco was issued in 1617. As

during this period when the order was issued tobacco was grown in India and it became an article of exports by 1623 as pointed out by Prof. Asirbadilal noted above, we can not say that Jahangir had to make any relaxation in his order. It is possible that though Jahangir issued Prohibitory to or order for the manufacture of wine, he did not prohibit cultivation of tobacco, as it is not explicitly mentioned in his Tuzuk. He issued order forbidding the smoking of tobacco but not the cultivation of tobacco, since it was a commodity of export Jahangir possibly did not issue any order against its cultivation. Jahangir was interested in the health of his own subjects. He was probably not worried about the health of the people of other countries where tobacco reached from India.

Tobacco was introduced in India during the reign of Akbar (Chattopadhyay, 1993, Smith, 1990), sometime in 1604 A.D. or 1605 A.D. (Srivastava, 1973, b). It is note worthy that within a short time its bad effects were noticed by Jahangir and he passed orders against smoking.

In the third year of Jahangir's reign a female antelope in milk was brought to Jahangir. Jahangir says- "... a female antelope in milk was brought that allowed itself to be milked with ease and gave everyday four seers of milk. I had never seen or heard of anything of the kind before. The milk of the antelope, of the cow, and the buffalo in no way differs. They say it is of great use in asthma" (Tuzuk,). In this narration it is clear that Jahangir himself had tasted the milk of the she-antelope. The fact that he has mentioned in his Memoirs the above facts shows his special interest in health and medicine.

While narrating the facts of the eighth year of his reign Jahangir says that it so happened that a tigress became pregnant and after three months bore three cubs; Jahangir says that it had been heard from philosophers that the milk of a tigress was of great use for brightening eyes. Although Jahangir made every effort that the moisture of milk should appear in the breasts of the tigress, he could not accomplish it (Tuzuk).

Here we find Jahangir making efforts to experiment the true efficacy of tigress's milk.

In the ninth year of his reign, Jahangir was ill. He had headache and fever. Jahangir says, "During my illness it had occurred to me that when I completely recovered in as much as I was inwardly an earboard slave of the Khawaja (*Muinu-d-din*) and was indebted to him for my existence, I should openly make holes in my ears and be enrolled as his ear-marked slave. On Thursday, 12th Shahriwar, corresponding to the month of Rajab, I made holes in my ears and drew into each a shining pearl. When the servants of the palace and my loyal friends saw this, both those who were in the presence and some who were in the distant borders diligently and eagerly made holes in their ears, and adorned the beauty of sincerity with pearls and rubies which were in the private treasury, and were bestowed on them, until by degrees the infection caught the Ahadis* and others'. (Tuzuk,).

Though the practice of wearing pearls in ears was thus introduced in the ninth year of the reign of Jahangir, that is by 1614, the list of jewels daily worn by Jahangir as given by Terry does not include pearls in his ears. Terry says about Jahangir, His jewels, with which he is daily adorned about his head, neck, wrists and hills of his sword and dagger are invaluable. (Foster, 1985,d). It is possible that no specific mention is made in Terry's list either because the pearls were not clearly visible being covered by his head-dress or because the jewels worn on his head, as mentioned by Terry, included those pearls. Jahangir's belief in divine help for cure of diseases is noticed in the above case.

Jahangir's special interest in medicine and surgery is noticed as William Hawkins who was in India during the period of 1608-1613 says that when he reached the port of Surat, the said port was for customs purposes under the control of certain Mukarrab Khan who was also in charge of the port of Cambay. This

*About the Ahadis'Abul Fazl says that the Ahadis were immediate servants of is Majesty " and are dignified by their independence" (Ain,p.259).

Mukarrab Khan, says Hawkins "was a great favourite with the reigning Emperor Jahangir (the son of Akbar, whom he had succeeded in 1605), having won his regard by his skill in surgery and by his usefulness in the field of sports to which that monarch was so much addicted". (Foster, 1985, e). About Mukarrab Khan we also learn from *Ain-E-Akbari* that Shaykh Hasan of Panipat and his son Shaykh Bina were renowned surgeons of Akbar's times. Shaykh Bina's son was Shaykh Hasan or Hassu who afterwards received the title of Mukarrab Khan from Jahangir. He was a physician to Jahangir when

he was a prince and Jahangir was much attached to him. After his accession, prince Salim that is emperor Jahangir made Hassu a commander of 5000 and governor of Gujarat and in that capacity Hassu came in contact with the English at Surat. He was also made governor of Bihar and Agra. (*Ain*, 1965, a).

Hakim Ali another physician of Akbar was sent by Akbar as ambassador to Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur. On his return he was a commander of 700. After his accession Jahangir made Ali a commander of 2,000. (*Chattopadhyay*, 1979, *Ain*, 1965, b).

APPENDIX

Manucci, a Venetian traveller came to India in the time of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. He reached India in 1653 A.D., and remained until 1708 A.D. from Manucci's account it is inferred that tobacco was widely popular in the country because Manucci mentions Rs. 5,000/- as tobacco duty for a day in Delhi alone. So it has been observed by Prof. Chopra that the decree of Jahangir prohibiting smoking remained a dead letter (The Mughal Empire, *Bharatiya Vidya*

Bhawan's History and culture of the Indian people Vol. VII, General Editor R.C. Majumdar, Edition II, p.683).

Jahangir in 1617 A.D. has passed orders against smoking tobacco. And we have already noted that Edward Terry, who was in India from 1615 to 1618, had noticed cultivation of tobacco in India and by 1623 it was an article of export. Jahangir, though he prohibited smoking, had not prohibited its cultivation as we

have discussed. Further though he had become aware of the pernicious effects of smoking tobacco, his prohibition of smoking tobacco was not enforced by any kind of penalty, as it was done by Khalil Pasha, whose decree against smoking was accompanied with his announcement that anybody caught smoking would have his lips cut and eyes taken out (vide autho's article "Harmful Effects of Tobacco Noticed in History:), *Bull. Ind. Inst. Hist. Med. Vol. XXIII*, pp. 53 to 58). Jahangir was certainly somewhat mild, in this matter, though he was very stern in the following cases. In the third year of his reign Jahangir declared that capital punishment would be inflicted for making eunuchs of Young Boys., (Rogers and Beveridge, *Tuzuk*, Vol. I, Low Price publication,

pp. 150-151).

Again we learn from Francisco Pelsaert, an employee of Dutch East India Company, who was in Agra from December, 1620 to the end of 1627 that oxen and cows were not slaughtered... their slaughter was strictly forbidden by the king on the pain of death., (W.H. Moreland and P. Gyle-Jahangir's *India*, translation of the *Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*, P. 49).

So in the above case Jahangir had ordered very stern measures to be adopted, but in his effort to stop the vice of smoking he did not adopt any such strong measure. It is, however, laudable that within twelve years from the introduction of tobacco Jahangir had noticed the bad effects of smoking and he tried to prohibit it.

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जनस्वास्थ्य एवं आयुर्विज्ञान में जहांगीर की रुचि

— अपर्णा चट्टोपाध्याय

जहांगीर की आत्मकथा तूजुक—ए—जहांगीरी से मालूम होता है कि 1605 ईसवी में सिंहासन पर बैठने के बाद जहांगीर ने बारह अध्यादेशों को जारी किया। जिनके अनुसार सारे साम्राज्य में चावल से शराब बनाने पर तथा सभी नशीले पदार्थों के बनाने पर निषेधाज्ञा थी एवं साम्राज्य के सभी बड़े नगरों में निःशुल्क अस्पताल खोलने का एवं चिकित्सकों की नियुक्ति का प्रबन्ध किया गया। अपने राज्यकाल के दसवें वर्ष में जहांगीर ने तम्बाकू पीने पर निषेध लगाया, इस बात पर जहांगीर को पूर्ण विश्वास था कि मनुष्य के रोग निवारण में दैवी शक्ति भी सहायता करती है। जहांगीर ने अपने मित्र एवं शल्यचिकित्सक हसन को गुजरात का प्रन्तीय शासक तथा इसी प्रकार दूसरे चिकित्सक हकीम अली को दो हज़ारी मनसब्दार बना दिया।