

ALAUDDIN QARSHI - A COMMENTATOR OF MANY CLASSICAL TREATISES

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the life and work of a commentator of six authentic works. He was a discoverer of pulmonary circulation of blood. He described it more or less accurately, almost three centuries before Harvey (1578-1657). The views of medical historians about this scholar have been given in this article.

Alauddin Abul Hasan Ali bin al Hazm al Qarshi is also called by some authors as Ibn al Nafis or An Nafis. He is to be distinguished from Nafis bin Awaz al Kirmani, who besides wrote a commentary on "Al Asbab wal Alamat" of Najeebuddin Samarqandi and gave it the title "Sharh Mojezul Qanoon". Medical historians have given different statements about his place of birth. According to Gulam Jeelani he was born at Macka while other have mentioned Damascus as his place of birth. He got medical education at the hospital of Nooruddin Zangi at Damascus. Among his teachers Mohazzabuddin Dakhwar and Imran Israili are the names worth to be mentioned. After completion of his medical education he entered in the service of Bimaristan of Cairo and got the post of "Raisul Atibba." There he started to teach medicine to students. Among his disciples the names of the following persons are found in history books with great praise.

1. Ibn al Quff (The author of "Kitabul-Umda Fil Jarahah," an arabic book on surgery. This book has already been published from Dairatul Maarif, Hyderabad).
2. Al Sadeed al Asyati, 3. Abul Faraj Al-Sikandari 4. Al Badr Hasan al Rais 5. Ibn ul Burhan Jerrai 6. Ibn Abi Useibia. (The well known author of "Uyoonul Anba Fi tabaqatil Atibba" an authentic arabic work of 13th Century A.D. containing the biographies of all world famous physicians including Indian physicians).

Qarshi died at the age of 78 years at Cairo on 16 December 1288 AD. As he was not married he endowed his own house and library to the Shifa Khana mansooria (Mansooria hospital) constructed by Sultan Qalauddin.

Qarshi had keen sight, research mind and command on Arabic language. Admitting the great value of his literary works some authors remembered him as Jaleenoos Sani (Galen the Second) also. Qarshi wrote following six commentaries on different eminent works which have attained classical status:

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1. "Sharh Qanoon Ibn Seena"
(a commentary on canon of Avicenna).
2. "Sharh Fusool Buqrat"
(a commentary on "Fusool," a book written by Hippocrate. According to Hasan Nigrami this commentary has already been printed in 1881 AD).
3. "Sharh Tashreeh Jalinoos"
(a commentary on Galen's work on Anatomy).
4. "Sharh Masaal Hunain bin Ishaq"
(a commentary on the propositions propounded by a Literary great scholar Hunain bin Ishaq).
5. "Sharh Taqdeematul Marifa"
(a commentary on "Taqdeematul Marifa" Written by Galen).
6. "Sharh Isharat Ibn Seena"
(a commentary on Isharat (Hints) compiled by Avicenna).

Gulam Jeelani says that "Qarshi wrote two commentaries on "Fusool Buqrat" written by Hippocrate. One is called "Sageer" in which he wrote the text first then his commentary on the same. Another one is called "Kabir which comprises the real text then the commentary of the Galen lastly submitted his remarks on both, the real text as well as the Galen's commentary.

Alauddin Qurshi wrote the following books in addition to the commentaries mentioned above:

1. "Kitab al Mohazzab Fil Kohl"
(a book on Ophthalmology).
2. "Kitab al Shamil Fil Tibb"
(It comprises 30 volumes).
3. "Kitab al Mukhtar minal Agzia"
(a book on diet).
4. "Taleeq Ala Kitab Ajinna Le Abqarat"
(marginal notes or interlinear explanatory work written by

Hippocrates entitled Al Ajinna which deals with semen, featus and formation of the feetal organs etc.).

5. "Tafaseer al Ilal wal asbab"
(a detailed discussion on causes and symptoms of the disease).
6. "Kitab al Shifa" (a book on cure).
7. Kitab al Mawaleed Salasa
(a book on three humours).
8. "Risala Awarizul Atfal" (On Paediatrics).
9. "Sharh Hidayah" (a treatise on logic).
10. "Jameul Daqaeq Fil Tibb"
(a comprehensive medical book).
11. "Mojizul Qanoon" (practical work which became popular through out the medical world. The work originally in Arabic, has been translated into Persian).

Medical historians have praised Qurshi very much for his talents and medical works. Such as : Dr.Usman Khan a historian in his article writes "Upon the whole earth there was not his equal nor had his equal been seen since Avicenna (according to his contemporaries)."

Shamsul Atibba Gulam Jeelani the author of Tareekhul Atibba says "No one was paralled to him at that time." M.Z.Siddiqui in the introduction of his book "Studies in Arabic and persian medical literature" writes "An Egyptian Physician (Taufiq Susa) has shown that ibn. n Nafis (Alauddin Abul Ala Ali bin Abi Hazm al Qurshi al Dimashqui) an Arab physician of the thirteenth century (607-687A.H., 1210-1288 AD), in his commentary on the anatomy of Avicenna, in striking contrast with him and Galen, described the lesser or pulmonary circulation almost correctly nearly three centuries before its discovery by Willam Harvey, who is regarded as the father of modern medicine."

Siddiqui under the footnote of his work mentioned above, gives a very good account of another scholar's statement which runs as follows "The Sunday Times (London) of the 11th June, 1957, reported that Dr. J. Blatham of the University of Manchester wrote in connection with the tercentenary of the death of William Harvey, the discoverer of the fact of the circulation of blood, that Ibn, n Nafis, an Arab Physician, had discovered the essential principle of the pulmonary circulation, which he described more or less accurately, almost three centuries before any European." The Doctor said that Ibn Nafis "recognised the fallacy of Galen's theory of invisible channels between the ventricles and also refuted Avicenna's supposition position that there was some visible link between

these two chambers. He similarly explained that blood was purified in the lungs where it was refined on contact with the air hauled in from the outer atmosphere..... it should not be assumed too readily that great discoveries in medicine were made only in Europe (Daily News paper the Statesmen of Calcutta the 11th June, 1957)."

Nigrani says "The commentators of Canon usually support the ideas stated by the Shaik (Avicenna). Nobody gave any new idea or never tried to contradict Shaik except Qurshi, whose unbiased criticism is found on every page of his commentary on Canon."

These opinions show us the greatness of Qurshi and improve our zeal to go through the works compiled by him.

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सारांश

अलाउद्दीन खर्षी - अनेक ग्रंथों के एक टीकाकार

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यह लेख अलाउद्दीन खर्षी नामक, छह कृतियों के एक टीकाकार की जीवनी तथा उनकी उपलब्धियों से संबंधित है। इनहोने हार्वे से करीब करीब तीन शताब्दियों पूर्व रक्त के फुफुसीय परिसंचरण को लगभग ठीक ठीक रूप में प्रस्तुत किया था। इस विद्वान के विषय में विभिन्न आयुर्विज्ञानीय इतिहासकारों के दृष्टिकोणों का यहाँ उल्लेख किया गया है।