

## THE TUGHLAQs AND MEDICINE

APARNA CHATTOPADHYAY\*

### ABSTRACT

Muhammad Tughlaq established hospitals. A versatile scholar, Muhammad used to sit by the patients and watch the symptoms of extra ordinary diseases. His successor Firoz Tughlaq established a hospital where patients used to get free medical help and also food and drinks. This hospital was open to all. Though Firoz was known for his bigotry, we find no discrimination made between muslims and non-muslims in case of patients in this hospital. Firoz invented an eye-ointment in which, skin of black snake was used. It cured many kinds of eye diseases. This fact supports the Ayurvedic theory of and prescriptions for curing blindness with the ointment prepared with the flesh of cobras. Firoz himself was a good bone-setter.

Muhammad bin Tughlaq ascended the throne having killed his father. This king, highly learned, a genius, .... and also "guilty of acts which pen shrinks from rendering" (Smith, 1990) establish hospitals (Smith, *Ibid*).... He used himself to attend the sick persons for the purpose of understanding the symptoms of any extra ordinary disease (Smith, 1990, a). Though an amusing figure in history for his unpracticable plans of removing his capital from Delhi to Devgiri, introducing token currency, and invading China, (Ishwariprasad, 1939), Muhammad Tughlaq is found to be a person keenly interested in medicine and public health.

Next came to the throne Firoz Tughlaq, a cousin of Muhammad Tughlaq (Jauhri, 1968; Smith, 1990, b). He was well-versed in medical science. He established a hospital (Darul Shafa) in Delhi for the cure of the sick and the afflicted, whether Indians or strangers (Ishwariprasad, 1939, b; Jauhri, 1968, a).

Competent and skilled physicians were appointed and Unani medicines were distributed to the sick free of cost. The patients were supplied with food and drinks at the expense of the state (Jauhri, 1968,b). The poor and the helpless patients immensely benefitted from this hospital. The health of thousands of patients was restored (Jauhri, 1968, c), everybody got free medical aid and food and drinks. We do not find that it was not meant for the non-muslims.

In connection with Firoz Tughlaq's Darul Shafa, we learn that according to tradition prevalent in medieval times, there were eighteen thousand diseases in all. While six thousands of these diseases were not known even to the ablest physician, six thousands were known to the physicians but they did not know their cure. Thus only the remaining six thousands could be diagnosed by the physicians and proper medicines could be prescribed for them (Jauhri, 1968, d).

---

\* N. 11/58-A-6-1, Ranipur, Shilnagar Colony, Mahmooorganj, P.O. Varanasi.

We learn from the contemporary chronicle *Sirat-i-Firoz Shahi*, that the current diseases at that time were bile, cholera, piles, coryza, cough, cold, gastric troubles, itching, cavity of the breast and womb moradacity, speeleen, intestinal worms, belly worms, kidney troubles, bladder troubles, hair diseases, etc. Medicines for such diseases were supplied in the Darul Shafa. For the maintenance of Darul Shafa, rich and flourishing villages were given in endowment by the Sultan. (Jauhri, 1968,e)

Firoz was keenly interested in Ophthalmology and prepared a collyrium composed of the skin of black snake and other drugs; it was known as *Khul-e-Firuz Shahi* and proved effective in many diseases of the eye (Jaggi, 1977). This fact supports the Ayurvedic theory and prescriptions for curing blindness with the flesh of cobra (Chattopadhyay, 1969).

Firoz was a good bone-setter and is said to have successfully bandaged the fractures of several of his colleagues in hunting expeditions (Jaggi, 1977,a).

## REFERENCES

1. Chattopadhyay, A 1969 A Note on Cobras and Cure of Blindness, Indian Journal of History of Medicine, Vol.XIV, Dec 1969 No.2 Published for The Indian Association Of The History Of Medicine, 497 ; Poonamallee High Road, Madras-7, pp 58-59 Utility of Cobras in Curing Blindness, Nagarjun Vol. XIII, No.2, 17A Madan Dutt Lane, Calcutta - 12, pp 11-13.
2. Ishwariprasad 1939 A short History of Muslim Rule in India, The Indian Press (Publications) Private Ltd., Allahabad, 1939, Revised New Edition, pp 99-104.  
Idem, Ibid, P.114
3. Jauhri, R.C. 1968 Firoz Tughlaq (1351-1388), Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co., Hospital Road Agra 3, I Ed, 1968, p 8.  
Idem Ibid, a, pp 129-130  
“ “ b, p. 129  
“ “ c, p. 129  
“ “ d, p. 130  
“ “ e, p. 130  
“ “ f, p. 130
4. Jaggi. O.P. 1977 Medicine in Medieval India (Vol.8) 1977, Atma Ram & Sons, Kashmere Gate, Delhi - 110006. p.111  
Idem Ibid a, p.111
5. Smith, V.A. 1990 The Oxford History of India, English impression 1990 p.249.  
Idem Ibid a, p. 249  
“ “ b, p. 259  
“ “ c, pp.258-259  
“ “ d, pp.

## सारांश

### तुगलकों के समय चिकित्सा

- अर्पणी चट्टोपाध्याय

मुहम्मद तुगलक ने आरोग्यशालाओं (अस्पतालों) की स्थापना की। वह रोगियों के पास बैठकर बीमारियों का लक्षण समझने का प्रयास करता था। उसके बाद फिरोज तुगलक गद्दी पर बैठा। उसने एक अस्पताल बनवाया था, जहाँ रोगियों को निःशुल्क दवायें और भोजन पान आदि मिलते थे। वह अस्पताल सबके लिए खुला था। यद्यपि फिरोज तुगलक अपनी धार्मिक कट्टरता के लिए प्रसिद्ध था, तदापि इस अस्पताल में मुस्लिम या अन्य धर्म सम्प्रदायों के लोगों में कोई भिन्नता से देखा जाता था ऐसा नहीं मालूम होता। फिरोज एक फायदैमन्द आँख का अंजन बनाया था जिसमें काले साँप की चमड़ी मिलायी जाती थी। भारत के आर्युर्वेद में अन्धता दूर करने के लिए काले साँप के शरीर की चर्बी आदि का प्रयोग आँख के प्रलेप बनाने में बताया गया है। उस अंजन को बनाने की प्रक्रियायें भी बताई गयी हैं। फिरोज हड्डी ठीक से बिठाने में भी कुशल था।