



## ḤAKIM 'ALAWI KHAN

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**ḤAKIM 'ALAWI KHAN**, MOḤAMMAD-HĀŠEM ŠIRĀZI (b. Shiraz, Ramaḍān 1080/January-February 1670; d. Delhi, 5 Rajab 1162/21 June 1749), an Iranian physician and author in the service of the Mughal Emperor Moḥammad Shah as his chief physician with the title of Mo'tamen-al-Moluk.

His family, originally from Khorasan, had moved to Shiraz, where both his grandfather, Moẓffar, and father, Moḥammad-Hādi, practiced medicine. Moḥammad-Hāšem studied medicine with his father, who also wrote poetry, and some other physicians of Shiraz, such as Mirzā Loṭf-Allāh Širāzi and Ākund Masiḥā'i Fasā'i (Kašmiri, p. 248). Shortly after his father's death in Shiraz in 1106/1695, Moḥammad-Hāšem migrated to India in 1700/1111 and presented himself to Awrangzēb (r. 1658-707), who assigned him to the retinue of his son Prince Aẓam as his personal physician. His proficient command of medical knowledge was soon appreciated, and he was promoted to a high position at the royal court. He received the title 'Alawi Khan from Shah 'Ālam Bahādor Shah (r. 1707-12), Awrangzēb's son and successor in Delhi (Kašmiri, p. 251).

We have little information about Moḥammad-Hāšem's life during the period between the end of Shah 'Ālam's reign and the beginning of Moḥammad Shah's rule (r. 1719-48). We know, however, that, upon successfully curing Moḥammad Shah of a severe disease, the latter bestowed upon him the title of Mo'tamad-al-Moluk along with the salary of 3,000 rupiahs a month (Kašmiri, p. 251; Elgood, p. 416). The last ten years of Moḥammad Shah's government coincided with the complete dominance of Nāder Shah Afšār over India.



Nāder Shah captured Delhi in 1151/1739 and heard about the fame of Moḥammad-Hāšem, the chief court physician. Nāder Shah enlisted him in his own service as chief physician (*ḥakim-bāšī*) to cure him of a disease that he had contracted before the invasion of India. 'Alawi Khan returned to Iran in the retinue of Nāder Shah as his personal physician, but on the condition that he would eventually be allowed to leave the royal service for a pilgrimage to Mecca. The historian 'Abd-al-Karim Kašmiri, a personal friend and companion of 'Alawi Khan, provides a good deal of information about him during his tenure in the service of Nāder Shah until the time that he obtained Nāder's permission to make the pilgrimage. 'Alawi Khan left Nāder Shah's service in 1154/1741 and went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by Kašmiri, who had joined Nāder's service about the same time.

As the personal physician and confidant of Nāder Shah, 'Alawi Khan enjoyed a distinguished status in the royal court. He is also credited with providing the shah with words of advice "that were more bitter than the remedy," thus improving his psychological condition and restraining him from issuing cruel orders in his frequent outburst of rage (Kašmiri, pp. 172-73; Elgood, p. 416; Lockhart, p. 275; Tājbaḳš, II, p. 507). According to Kašmiri (pp. 57-58), he was one of the five people receiving the largest amount of rewards from Nāder in Nowruz 1153/1741.

'Alawi Khan's treatment had successfully relieved the symptoms of Nāder Shah's illness, but, some time after his departure, Nāder became sick again and ordered him to return. We do not know why he decided to disregard Nāder Shah's recall and return to India. He left Mecca after a long residence and a trip to Yemen and entered Delhi in 1156/1744 (Kašmiri, pp. 165-56, 172-73). He spent the rest of his life in Delhi, where he died and was buried in 1162/749 (Kašmiri, p. 262). Other dates are mentioned for his death (Imān, p. 297; Dāvar, p. 425), but the date mentioned by Kašmiri is confirmed by a chronogrammatic poem (Kašmiri, p. 253) composed on the occasion of his death. According to Kašmiri (p. 253), he suffered from tuberculosis during the last twenty years of his life.

Moḥammad-Ḥosayn 'Aqili 'Alawi Širāzi, a grandson of 'Alawi Khan's sister, presented an account about his ancestors' medical profession up to two generations before 'Alawi Khan, tracing the profession back to Hipocrate and King Solomon ('Aqili, p. 564). Like many other Iranian immigrants to India, 'Alawi Khan also wrote poetry, and notices about him are included in biographical dictionaries (*tadkera*) about Persian-speaking poets of India (e.g.,



Ṣabā, pp. 558-59; Āftāb Rāy Laknawi, p. 42). Of all the poetry that he may have written only four couplets, mentioned by Kašmiri (p. 252) and repeated by all other biographers (e.g., Sandilvi, p. 156), have reached us.

*Works.* No comprehensive lists of his works are known to have reached us. It seems that some of his works, including most of those named by 'Abd-al-Ḥayy Ḥasani (VIII, p. 346), have not yet been definitely identified. We know of two Arabic works by him, namely *Resāla fī 'elm al-musiqi* and *Ketāb fī aḥwāl a'zā' al-nafas* (Brockelmann, *Suppl.* II, 626). The most important Persian book of him is *Jāme' al-jawāmi'*, a pharmacopoeia described by Kašmiri as a complete and unique collection of materials about medicine (Kašmiri, p. 251, where it is mentioned as *Majma' al-jawāme'*). It is a large volume divided into five books, each one bearing a different title (Monzawi, I, pp. 689, 727-30). This book was not completed until Moḥammad-Ḥosayn 'Aqili used it as the basic main source for his *Majma' al-jawāme'* (Storey, II/2, p. 274). That is why some sources (e.g., Monzawi) refer to 'Alawi Khan's book as *Majma' al-jawāme'* (for a report about completing *Jāme' al-jawāmi'* by 'Aqili, see Kāẓemi, pp. 281-83).

*Ṣefā' al-badan* is the name of another medical treatise of 'Alawi Khan. It was translated into Urdu and published (Monzawi, V, p. 3515; Rāhi, p. 322). He is also the author of a Persian treatise on fevers, called *Resāla-ye ḥomayyāt* (Keshavarz, p. 220; Monzawi, V, pp. 3423-24), but it is probable that this book is a part of a larger book, perhaps *Jāme' al-jawāme'* (for his other works, see Storey, II/2, pp. 274-75; Monzawi, V, p. 4048; Mošār, IV, col. 4791).

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