

## Introducing Seyed-ol-Hokama and his manuscript works on

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**Abstract:** This text proceeds with introducing Seyed Mohammad Ali Mousavi Dezfuli entitled Seyed-al-Hokama, one of the Qajarian<sup>1</sup> era's physicians (died in 1307), and his surviving manuscript works. His works include two translations titled Qavabise Sha'ba and Bahre Amigh, both on alchemy medicine, and two compilations on medical science. His two translations' manuscript in one volume of 21cm\*15.5 cm dimensions had been translated from Arabic to Persian in India, but they had originally been in Greek language. His compilations include two manuscript dissertations called Asrar-al-Teb of 19.5cm\*15 cm dimensions and Qarabadin Mohammadi of 32cm\*20 cm dimensions.

**Key words:** Alchemy medicine; Seyed-al-Hokama; Dezful; Sadate Gushe

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### 1. Introduction

Although researchers and literary men have been involved in correcting manuscript drafts from the past times till now and they have made available the predecessors' rightful heritages for the futurity with ceaseless attempts, but there are still so many rightful reservations and works which had remained anonymous in public and private libraries. If any proper attempt for the sake of their revival is not performed, they possibly will fade away just like their creators. Hereupon, it is one of the most important scientific themes and national services to make known these works and their authors. A number of these works, with the help of researchers' attempts has emerged from the depth of libraries and has become a treasure for the science scanners, but attempts are always performed to identify other manuscript drafts.

Medicine is one of the most important sciences that Iranian people had proved paramount on that, some precious books such as The Wisdom's Paradise by Ali Ebne Rabn Tabari, The Law by Ebne Sina, The Masons of Medicaments' Truths by Abu Mansour Movafagh Haravi and Kharazmshahi's Reserve by Seyed Esmail Jarjani had been offered to the world. These books had been taught for years not only in Iran but also at Europe's scientific centers and schools.

While studying my familial manuscript works, I encountered two medical books called Qavabise Shoaba and Bahre Amigh. Considering their status in Qajarian Persian medical books' identification procedure and also Persian compilations and Shiite works in India, I decided to introduce these two books. Naturally, the prerequisite of introducing these manuscripts is to introduce their authors.

Identifying these authors for the first time is not easy. It requires some study and constant research on available texts and biographies and documents. Providing Seyed-al-Hokama's biography was not only exempt from this rule, but also it seemed more difficult than its other similar. Thereupon, a book or self-contained essay regarding his biography was not found, there was only some brief mentions of him in some books relating Dezful<sup>2</sup> city or Khuzestan province. It is obvious that these lines' writers have not had required sources to identify him. The access to the letters, scripts, documents, manuscripts, and notebooks found in my familial inheritance was the only thing that insisted me on this way. And now, for the first time, this figure's biography is made available for the scholars, even though there are still hidden aspects of his life.

### 2. Nativity

Seyed-al-Hokama was born in 1291 (Anno lunar Hegira\*) coincident with 1253 (Anno solar Heijra\*) on a clergy family in dezful city. He is from Sadate Gushe<sup>3</sup> clan, Seyed Mohammad Sadeq's child, and Seyed Mohammad Ali Aref's grandchild (Seyed Sadr-Al-Din Kashef<sup>4</sup>'s brother). From the early adolescence, he got familiar with his era's prevalent sciences such as Arabic Grammar, Quran Sciences, Hermeneutics, Hadith<sup>5</sup>, Islamic jurisprudence, and philosophy. His ample enthusiasm moved him to study medical books. Hereof, he has said: "... after acquiring the prevalent sciences, I was busy studying some rare medical books. The medicine is a noble science and the persuasive logic for its perfect nobility is that its subject is human being's body".

### 3. His Journey to India

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His scientific enthusiasm enforced him to leave his hometown and his clan. He traveled to India. Even his ample affection for his family, which is apparent from the surviving lines of his letter to his wife, could not prevent him from going to this journey. As the compiler of the book Sadate Gushe Clan has stated and as it is derived from the Seyed-al-Hokama's letters, he had traveled to India several times. His first journey to this land occurred on Rajab 1323 (Anno lunar Hegira). On this journey, he remained in Hyderabad Deccan and predisposed his education on medicine with the help of Iranian settlers.

He probably started learning Indian and English languages on this journey. Seyed-al-Hokama returned from this journey to Dezful perhaps after 18 months.

The reason for his returning is not clear; but considering his handwriting on the margin of one of his notebooks, it is obvious that he has lived in his hometown on Moharam, 1325 (Anno lunar Hegira).

He returned to Hyderabad Deccan on "Thursday night, Rajab 22th, 1326 (Anno lunar Hegira)" (the manuscript).

#### **4. The medical documents and The Charters:**

Studying the manuscript documents and scripts, I encountered several charters which according to them Seyed-al-Hokama had been authorized to medicate by some Indian medical professors and physicians such as Mohammad Mansour Ali Sadr, the Great Greek School's professor, Mohammad Ajmal, The Delhi's physician, The physician Emtiaz-al-Din Hossein Arastou Elahi Sharifkhani, Seyed Afzal-al-Din Alikhan Bahador. These charters prove that his education was not confined to the Asfie School and as the Sadate Gushe Clan book compiler has written, he had enjoyed from other schools and other professors in different Indian cities.

Finally, after 14 years of education, Seyed-al-Hokama received his medical document from Asef Jah Bahador's medical council on Tir 28<sup>th</sup>, 1323 (Anno solar Hegira), coincident with Rajab, 1332 (Anno lunar Hegira). This document's text is as follows:

" Since the physician, Seyed Mohammad Ali Dezfuli's capability, potency, proficiency, and skill on the noble science of Greek medicine was affirmed by my Excellency's high grade school's professors' scripts and charters and the other skilled Indian physicians and my Excellency's medical council's justification, so my Excellency's medical council according to the medical law, 4<sup>th</sup> position, legislated in 1312 (Anno solar Hegira) permitted this person to institute a clinic in my Excellency's lands and treat patients, anytime and anywhere he intended to, and his name has been put in my Excellency's register book of physicians. Written on Tir 28<sup>th</sup>, 1323 (Anno solar Hegira), coincident with Rajab, 1332 (Anno lunar Hegira)".

Among the available documents, I found a rubricated plate of 32cm\*21cm dimensions, on

which 11 distiches of Mola Mohammad Reza Shushtari's poetry, pseudonymously Jouza, was written. Regarding its title, this poem has been dedicated to Seyed-al-Hokama's medical document reception from Asaf Jah Bahador's medical council. It starts with this distich:

#### **5. Prophet-descendent Mohammad Ali transcended from the rivals by the pleasant behavior**

Despite his nostalgia for his hometown, he has lived in India for the purpose of research and study for several years after his graduation. The outcome is translating and compiling some books which are reviewed in the following.

#### **6. His return to Iran**

Eventually, from one side his separation from the hometown and the family, and from the other side his compatriots' request made him return to Iran and to Khuzestan province. He left India on Shaval 1338 (Anno lunar Hegira) for the destination of Iran. After returning to Dezful, Seyed-Al-Hokama got engaged in medicating patients; because of his proficiency and skill on treatment, he got famous very soon and gained a national reputation. Hereupon, after about one year of his arrival to home, because of his fantastic capability in treating illnesses and his welfare services, on demand of the Home Office and on behalf of Ahmad Shah Qajar, he was entitled Seyed-al-Hokama on Rabio-al-Aval 8<sup>th</sup>, 1340 (Anno lunar Hegira). Although this title had been applied for him in some surviving texts before this date, but it was authenticated in the forenamed date. I did not find the original commandment among the familial documents, but I encountered a letter which has announced him the emission of this commandment by this phrase: "the honorable title of Seyed-al-Hokama has been endowed to your Excellency"

I also found a 17-distich-ode on his eulogy which has been composed of this pertinence and it starts with these distiches:

The Time's Christ, O philosophizer philosopher  
Greece land has generated no generation like you  
Deserves that from now on, the pure land of  
Khuzestan

#### **7. Reproach to Greece land due to coquetry and it alludes to Seyed-al-Hokama title by this distich**

How much it is deserved, it is suitable and proper  
That Seyed-al-Hokama has become your title  
After this, Seyed-al-Hokama was likewise engaged in medicating patients. He also established a pharmacy called "Mohammadi Davakhane", in which he made available several medications for people and he invented some of them by himself.

Finally this potent physician passed away due to Diabetes in Ahwaz on Monday, Zi-al-Haje 1346 (Anno

lunar Hegira) coincident with Khordad 4<sup>th</sup>, 1307 (Anno solar Hegira).

Seyed-Al-Hokama has spoken Arabic language and several Indian dialects such as Gujarati. Moreover, there are some clues in his works which are indicative of his familiarity with English language:

"Grab some salt which in English they call it Salt"

"Grab cinnamon or anything they want sufficiently and soak in two-fold wine's spirit which in Iran they call it Araq and in English they call it Sprite"

In addition to his scientific figure, he has composed poetry occasionally. The quatrain which is ornamented with Fourteen-Masoomen's names, as he himself has mentioned in the poem, is a remembrance of him:

I uttered Fourteen-Masoomen's names in one distich

For this shall be a memorial of me on the earth

Mostafa and three Mohammads, Morteza and three Alis

Jafar and Mousa and Zahra, one Hossein and Two Hasans

The Works:

The surviving manuscript of Seyed-al-Hokama's works can be divided in two parts:

Translations

Compilations

Translations

I found a collection including two translations by Seyed-al-Hokama with the following characteristics in the familial works:

Qavabise Shoaba: it is a translation of the book Asagharba by Broclesious which is corrected and translated from Arabic to Persian by Seyed-al-Hokama. He wrote about his book's correction and translation: "anyway I chose different copies from distant lands and various cities, and corrected any possible present error and arranged a corrected privileged copy and translated from Arabic to modern Persian. (Qavabise Shoaba's manuscript text)

The book's subject is "alchemy medicine craft's totality and operation in mines' correction, dissociation, subtraction, analysis, combination, purgation, distillation, spirits, mouths, beneficial noble waters, and from alchemy craft".

Qavabise Shoaba's manuscript copy of 21cm\*15.5cm dimensions and of 154 42-line pages belongs with the late Seyed Mohammad Sadeq Pezeshki's library. Considering its margin, the book has been translated in 1333 (Anno lunar Hegira). Although the book's manuscript is unique for the time being, but considering that this book had been dedicated to Hossein Khan Bahador Hyderabad Deccan's science ministry, the existence of one or more copies of it in India is possible. The book, after some Arabic phrases of hymn to God and Hail to the prophet Mohammad (peace is upon him) and his holy clan, starts this way:

"but next: the least of Mousavi's men and the physicians and doctors' servant, Seyed Mohammad

Ali, the son of Seyed Mohammad SadeqDezfuli, after acquiring the prevalent sciences, I was busy studying some rare medical books. The medicine is a noble science and the persuasive logic for its perfect nobility is that its subject is human being's body. One day a sufficient book..."

BahreAmiq: A translation of the book Basliqa's Alchemy by the physician Qrolious on medicine "It includes two articles... the first article is generally about the treatments and the second article on the specific treatments" which Seyed-al-Hokama has translated it from Arabic to Persian "for the sake of philanthropy and advantaging people" (the manuscript's preface); and like QavabiseShoaba, it has been dedicated to Hossein Khan Bahador, Hyderabad Deccan's science ministry. The book has been written in a same volume with the previous translation and the same characteristics in 109 pages. After hymn to God and Hail to the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and his holy clan, the book starts with this phrase:

"but next: a dignified book called Basliqa's Alchemy compiled by the skilled physician and proficient doctor the physician Qrolious, which is contained of all the problems and issues and the general and specific treatments' quality and all the quotes and mysteries of Hermus and Broclesious and etc. this book which has been authored for the king, was scrutinized by the least of the physicians and doctors, Seyed Mohammad Ali, the son of Seyed Mohammad SadeqDezfuli..."

## 8. Compilations

In addition to the forenamed translations, his compilations are as follows:

Asrar-al-Teb: Seyed-al-Hokama possesses a book on "the combinatory experimented medications' properties" called Asra-al-Teb (meaning the medicine's mysteries). This book has been written in 1329 (Anno lunar Hegira). The important point about his compilations is that the words are not punctuated (pointed), so the reading is difficult and even impossible; just the chapters' titles and beginnings are often punctuated and arranged alphabetically. It can be said that this book is an encyclopedia of that time's available medications; the manuscript copy of 15cm\*19.5cm dimensions belongs with the late Seyed Mohammad Sadeq Pezeshki's library.

Qarabadin Mohammadi: this book is also like Asra-al-Teb with the same subject and the alphabetical arrangement and without punctuation (pointing). This phrase has come with the title: "The lofty garden on the famous pure combinations by Qarabadin Mohammadi". The book starts with hymn to God and Hail to the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) and his holy clan. The words used for hymn and eulogy in this preface are somehow appropriate to the medicine; on the top of the book's first page, the date of writing has been recorded with the compiler's handwriting. This book is defective

and has continued to the Persian letter "س" and the last title is "Sonun-al-Ahmar".

Although the book starts from the page 1 and ends with the page 639, but regarding the many blank pages left in the middle it should not be considered 639 pages. The page's format is 32cm\*20cm.

\*the Islamic calendar which its beginning is the date of Islam Prophet's Hegira. It is calculated in two ways, solar and lunar

## 9. Footnotes

1. The Qajar dynasty is a Persian royal family of Turkic origin, which ruled Iran from 1785 to 1925.
2. One of the Iran's old cities, located in the south-west of Iran, in Khuzestan province.
3. It is one of Dezful's large Sadat (descended from the prophet) clans, descended from the Shiite Imam MousaKazem. The Gushe term has been derived from the name of a place from Dezful's northern mountains, in which their ancestor called KamaledinVali, pseudonymedValiedin, has been buried and it has become a shrine for the visitors and pilgrims.
4. For awareness of the biography SeyedSadre-al-Din Dezfuli, pseudonymedKashef, please refer to the book Meraat-al-Gheib by the writer. Also refer to the article KashefeAsrar by the writer, the month book of literary and philosophy, 7<sup>th</sup> year, no.5, Esfand 1382.
5. A Hadith is a saying or an act or tact approval or disapproval ascribed either validly or invalidly to the Islamic Prophet Mohammad and/or the twelve Shiite Imams.
6. Hyderabad was located in the south-central region of the Indian subcontinent
7. Fourteen-Masoomen include the Islamic Prophet Mohammad and his daughter Fatemea, plus the twelve Shiite Imams.

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