

**RENOWNED UNANI PHYSICIAN OF AZIZI FAMILY IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: HAKEEM  
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**ABSTRACT**

Shifa-ul-Mulk Hakeem Abdul Latif Falsafi (1900–1961) was a distinguished Unani physician and scholar from the renowned Azizi family of Lucknow. Known for his clinical brilliance and deep philosophical understanding of medicine, he played a pivotal role in shaping Unani practice and education in India. After completing his studies under esteemed mentors, he joined Aligarh Muslim University in 1927, later serving as Principal of its Faculty of Medicine. His affiliations extended to prominent institutions including Jamia Tibbiya Delhi, Patna Tibbia College, and Darul Uloom Deoband. Hakeem Abdul Latif was widely respected for his diagnostic acumen, pulse expertise, and personalized treatment regimens. He opposed unnecessary surgical interventions, favoring natural, balanced remedies rooted in classical Unani principles. His prescriptions—crafted with meticulous care—often brought relief where conventional treatments failed. Honored with the title “Shifa-ul-Mulk” by the British government, Hakeem Abdul Latif remains a revered figure whose legacy continues to inspire Unani physicians across generations.

**KEYWORDS:** Abdul Latif Falasafi, Unani Medicine, Shifaul mulk, Azizi family.**BACKGROUND**

In the history of Unani medicine in India, two famous families stand out: Azizi family and Sharifi family. Both families have made significant contributions to Unani medicine, providing extensive academic, technical, and medical services. Among them, the Azizi family, which is renowned in Awadh and associated with the famous city of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, holds a special place.

Among all the great Hakeems of the Azizi family, one name stands out prominently: Hakeem Abdul Latif Falsafi. He was born in Lucknow on April 29, 1900 A.D. After his father's death in 1911 AD, his elder brother, Shafi'ul Mulk Hakeem Abdul Moeed, took on the responsibility of his education. Abdul Latif received his initial education in Lucknow before moving to Rampur, where he completed his studies under Maulana Fazal-e-Haq Rampuri. He was the first person in his family to receive a full education from outside the Lucknow. Returning from Rampur in 1917, Abdul Latif studied medicine under the guidance of the elders of the Azizi family. After completion of graduation from the

university in 1921, he began teaching at the same institution. He continued his teaching duties until 1927. In 1927 when the Faculty of Medicine was established at Aligarh Muslim University, Hakeem Ajmal Khan recommended Hakeem Abdul Latif to join the faculty. On October 13, 1927, Abdul Latif Sahib was appointed as a teacher at the Medical College of Aligarh Muslim University. He was later promoted to the position of Vice-Principal and then to Principal on September 3, 1947. He retired in 1961 after his tenure at Aligarh.<sup>[1,2,3]</sup>

**Achievements of Hakeem Abdul Latif:-** Hakeem Abdul Latif was associated with almost all major medical educational institutions in India. His expertise and advice were sought by institutions such as Aligarh College of Medicine and Lucknow College of Complementary Medicine, where he served as a member of the Managing Committee, later as Secretary, and finally as President.

- Member of the Board of Trustees of the Ayurvedic and Tibbiya College in Karol Bagh,
- Member of the Advisory Committee of the Patna Tibbia College,

- Principal of Jamia Tibbiya in Delhi, and President of the Medical Council of Darul Uloom Deoband. Additionally,
- Member of the State Committee established by the government for Hyderabad and played a significant role in the establishment of the Srinagar Tibbiya College.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

Hakeem Abdul Latif Sahab was a remarkable figure in ancient traditions and inventive excellence. His mastery of medicine, wisdom, and technical knowledge guided him in every situation. Not only did he have a profound understanding of ancient medical texts, but his study of foundational sciences such as logic, philosophy, and ancient science was also extensive. Consequently, while he gained extraordinary reputation for his medical and technical skills and healing hands, there was no one else equal to him in the theories and philosophy of medicine. He was officially awarded the prestigious title of Shifa-ul-Mulk by the British government. His therapeutic medical services as a physician were highly esteemed.<sup>[1]</sup>

In practice, his clinic was not just a medical facility but a renowned teaching institution, attracting crowds of students. Hakeem Abdul Latif excelled in diagnosis and pulse finding. Compared to other clinics, Lucknow's clinic was always considered superior. A notable feature of Lucknow's doctors was that they did not write prescriptions themselves; instead, they had their students write them. Hakeem Sahab would dictate the prescription to a student after examining the patient, carefully observing the student's work, and immediately addressing any issues. He was attentive to any mistakes and ensured they were corrected by consulting with senior students.<sup>[4]</sup>

Noticing a decline in students' interest in medicine, Hakeem Sahab began to examine students in class and at the seminary. He often used aphrodisiacs and prescribed less-known medicines. On one occasion, when he asked a student to write a manuscript that mentioned *Kharnoob Nabati* (a term the student was unfamiliar with), the student was frightened and looked to Hakeem Sahab for guidance. Hakeem Sahab reacted: what do you think? Interest, dedication, and skill are essential in this field, without them nothing will come of it. If you seek success, put your heart into it and work hard; otherwise, choose another path and do not discredit medicine.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Prescription of Hakeem sahib:-** Regarding prescription writing, Hakeem Sahab had an almost intuitive sense beyond the five senses, which ordinary doctors could not comprehend. His prescriptions were never harmful, and even patients who had no relief from other doctors were often cured with his first dose. He took a keen interest in compiling prescriptions himself and often treated conditions such as coughs with remedies like *Jawarsh Kamuni*, *Sikanjabin Nanai* or *Lemoni*, *Zulal Aloo Bukhara*, and *Jawarish Ood Tursh*, which were effective for both the elderly and children.<sup>[5]</sup>

He placed great importance on diagnosing constipation and poor temperament. For patients whose medical history included frequent flatulence, alternating constipation and diarrhea, aversion to the environment, some melancholic tendencies, persistent complaints, and localized abdominal pain, he would diagnose the condition as *Reehul-bawaseer*. It is noteworthy that such patients often arrived at the clinic carrying extensive medical files after consuming numerous English medicines. He had a specific prescription for these cases, which included ingredients such as *Berg Suddab* (*Ruta graveolens*), *Satar farasi* (*thymus linearis*), Fennel, Dried Coriander, and Apricot. These were combined with a decoction of apricot and a repeated dose of *Sharbat Aloo Baloo* (*Prunus cerasus*). Additionally, he would prescribe pills of *Muqil* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Raswat* (*Berberis aristata*), and *Satte Pudina* (*Mentha piperita*) to be taken before bedtime. After using this treatment, patients would often return to the clinic a week or ten days later, lamenting their previous treatments and praising Hakeem Sahab.<sup>[5]</sup>

In the treatment of heart and kidney patients, He used remedies such as *Murabba Zard Tanranj* (*Citrus medica*), *Murabba Gazar* (*Daucus carota*), *Abe Gazar Fresh* (fresh *Daucus carota* juice), *Sharbat Sandal* or *khus* (*santalum album* or *Chrysopogan zizanoides*), *Gule Seoti* (*Glebionis coronaria*), *Abresham Khesanda* (*Bombyx mori* cold infusion), *Jawarish Mastagi* (*Pistacia lentiscus*), and primarily *Lapis Lazuli*. His treatment principles emphasized the correction of constipation first, with ginger being a primary remedy. The method for treating joint pain was distinct from common practices. While many doctors considered it a chronic condition caused by phlegm, he believed that pure phlegm alone could not cause edema in the joint membrane; a mixture of bile with phlegm in large quantities was necessary. Consequently, His prescriptions typically included ingredients like *Shahtara* leaves (*Fumaria officinalis*), *Suranjan* (*Colchicum autumnale*), *Aloo Bukhara* (*Prunus domestica*), *Mako khushk* (dried *Solanum nigrum*), *Tukhme Kasni* (*Chicorium intybus*), *Takhame Khyarin* (*Cucumis sativa*), *Tamarhindi* (*Tamarindus indica*), *Kharkhsak* (*Tribulus terrestris*), and *Berg Suddab* (*Ruta graveolens*), with the option to add others as needed. For knee edema, he used poultices made from *Murmaki* (*Commiphora myrrha*), *Chai Khatai* (Tea), *Gile Armani* (Armenian bole), and *Barge Hina sabz* (*Lawsonia inermis* leaves), which proved more effective than standard treatments.<sup>[5]</sup>

When patients visited the doctor, many would close their mouths and extend their hands toward him to have their pulse checked. However, he preferred to listen to the patient's verbal account and gave secondary importance to pulse diagnosis. His usual practice involved prescribing a combination of simple and complex medicines. However, if someone suggested prescribing medicine that did not require boiling and straining,

Hakeem Sahib would be irritated. He prescribed decoction definitely which is bitter in taste.<sup>[5]</sup>

On one occasion, an Anglo-Indian woman brought her 21-year-old daughter, who was suffering from a severe cough and breathing difficulties to Hakeem Sahib, she requested that the medicine be simple, but Hakeem Sahib prepared a prescription that included *Tukhme Khtami* (*Althea officinalis*), *Tukhme Katan* (*Linum usitatissimum*), *Persiaushan* (*Adiantum capillus*), *Gule zoofa* (*Hyssopus officinalis*), *Gilo* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Anjeer zard* (*Ficus carica*), *Khaksi* (*Sisymbrium irio*) for decoction and qairooti (ointment) for local application. After two days she felt better and came in the clinic with praising to him.<sup>[5]</sup>

Although Shifa-ul-Mulk Hakeem Abdul Latif was a highly accomplished physician, he remained uninterested in commercial or professional gains. During his tenure, the Aligarh Medical Center did not permit the appointment of doctors from the Lodge (NPA), and both physicians and students were free to practice medicine without the obligation to run a pharmacy or dispensary.<sup>[5]</sup>

When a patient direct came to his clinic then he charged a nominal fee of ten rupees per consultation. If a course of medicine was prescribed, a predetermined amount was charged—neither reduced nor increased under any circumstance. Though patients often appealed for a discount, he would either waive the fee entirely or accept the full payment, without engaging in negotiation.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Cases of treatments:-** Shifa-ul-Mulk Hakeem Abdul Latif was definitely a physician of exceptional skill and esteemed reputation. The depth and diversity of his medical expertise and daily practice were so extensive that they could easily fill an entire volume. The following are merely a few selected accounts from his distinguished career in the healing arts.

- (1) Hakeem Nisar Ahmad Alvi of Karachi relates the case of a gentleman from Lucknow who was struck by severe cholera and failed to improve despite treatment by several eminent physicians. Upon consultation, Hakeem Sahib prescribed small, measured spoonful's of lemon ice cream at regular intervals. Astonishingly, the patient's fever began to abate within an hour, and by the fourth hour the cholera had completely resolved.<sup>[1,6]</sup>
- (2) A four-year-old child was admitted to a hospital in Aligarh after suffering from smallpox for four days. Despite being administered a renowned remedy, the child's condition worsened, and signs of cardiac weakness began to appear. Observing this, Hakeem Sahib decided to introduce figs into the treatment. Some students expressed concern that figs might induce diarrhea. Hakeem Sahib calmly explained that while supporting the weakened heart and stabilizing its rhythm was paramount, any resulting diarrhea would be comparatively easier to manage.<sup>[1]</sup>

- (3) During his first visit to Karachi in 1961, Hakeem Sahib treated a patient suffering from a persistent cough and fever. He prescribed a simple yet effective remedy: sweet dates, after removing the seeds, should be crushed it and blended with an equal amount of honey. The mixture was to be taken daily for four days. Upon follow-up, the patient reported a 50% improvement. Hakeem Sahib advised him to continue the regimen for a full month, at the end of which the patient had made a complete recovery.<sup>[1]</sup>
- (4) A lawyer in Karachi was suffering from chronic tonsillitis and had exhausted all available treatment options, with surgery being considered the only remaining solution. Hakeem Sahib, however, opposed surgical intervention and prescribed a natural remedy: six grams of *maghze Amaltas* (kernel of *Cassia fistula*), to be taken twice daily in half a cup of milk. After one month of consistent use, the pain subsided, and remarkably, there was no recurrence of the condition for over 15 years.<sup>[1]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Shifa-ul-Mulk Hakeem Abdul Latif Falsafi was a distinguished luminary in the realm of Unani medicine, revered for his exceptional diagnostic acumen, profound mastery of classical medical texts, and unwavering commitment to holistic healing. His far-reaching contributions to medical education, institutional development, and clinical practice significantly enriched the Unani tradition across India. As an educator, he championed intellectual rigor, philosophical inquiry, and the cultivation of clinical excellence. His prescriptions, deeply rooted in traditional knowledge and refined by intuitive precision, often succeeded where conventional treatments had failed, earning him immense respect among peers and patients alike. Unmotivated by material gain, Hakeem Abdul Latif exemplified a life devoted to ethical medical practice and public welfare. Through his leadership, scholarship, and healing touch, he upheld and advanced the scientific ethos of Unani medicine. His enduring legacy continues to guide and inspire future generations of practitioners, ensuring the vitality of this ancient healing tradition.

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