

LOKMAN HAKIM

As the word “Lokman” is not originated from Arabic language, it is assumed that this name has come from some other language. Lokman Hâkim, a myth in Islamic and Turkish culture, was a medical doctor and pharmacist of his age. Much that is said about him is legendary. The Arabs say that he lived around 1100 B.C., was a coal-black Ethiopian with woolly hair, and the son of Baura, who was a son or grandson of a sister of Job. Some westerners claim that Lokman is often confused with Aesop, who was also a negro, and who, it appears, adapted some of Lokman’s fables for his own use. Aesop lived 500 years after Lokman.

Lokman Hâkim was perhaps the most famous for his longevity times, which was supposedly equivalent of seven eagles’ lives (approximately 560 years) as well as his belief that he found the secret of immortality. He had collected all cures for diseases and the elixir of immortality in a black book. One day, Lokman Hâkim met the angel of Death on Misis Bridge. The angel envied and pushed him and the black book dropped into the Ceyhan River in Adana, which is the southern part of Turkey. After that, it is believed that he decided to travel and later on stayed in a cave in Aswan (Egypt). He died in Bagdat (Iraq) or Ramla (Palestine) according to Arabs, while Turks believed that he died in Tarsus (Turkey) or Uskup (Macedonia) and buried there.

In Islamic culture, his fame equals that of Solomon in the Christian-Jewish world. Prophet Mohammad quoted him as an authority and named the thirsty-first chapter of Kur’an after him. Of Lokman’s intimate life, all we know is what may be deduced from his proverbs and from anecdotes. But he was accepted as both a wiseman, known as “hâkim” in Turkish, and doctor, also known as “hekim” in Turkish. In Turkish culture, he has been accepted as the master of all doctors and knows the plants very well, from which he made a lot of herbal preparations for any kind of disease. Therefore, in Turkey, most of the unlicensed herbal shops are inspired by his name and mission and called them “Lokman Hakim’s store”.