



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF TEMPERAMENT IN UNANI MEDICINE: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Unani Medicine or Tibb system is based on classification of humans personalities into four different mizaj based on dominance body fluids. The fundamentals of Unani medicine are mainly based upon the temperament (Mizaj) and Humours (Akhlat). It was described by various eminent Graeco-Arab physicians Jalinoo. Abu bakr Mohammad bin Zakaria Razi, Ali Ibne Abbas Majjosi, Rabban Tabri, Ibne Rushd and other eminent Unani scholar in their literatures.. According to them the specific temperament is present in every individual. In healing drugs as well as diseases are also classified according to the four humors. The four humors correspond to four bodily fluids ie blood (Dam), phlegm (Balgham), black bile (sauda) and yellow bile (safra). A typical diagnosis of a patient would take the balance of these humors into consideration, before giving any treatment. It is also very important to keep the temperament in mind while diagnosing a disease. The Mizaj (temperament) is a notion (concept) and a way by which physicians evaluate the deviation of the body or any of its organs from normal homeostasis in comparison to the patient's population, race, and species. Merely, it is the appearance that Unani physicians use to tell whether the whole body or one of its organs has the right temperature and has the right amount of moisture. There is no absolute temperament, that is, there is not one universal temperament to which we compare the health of an individual. Moreover, there is not one temperament that is the best or the optimum for all types of geographical locations. The dominance of one or more humours in the body vitiates humour itself and causes disease. Temperament (Mizaj) is also importance in the treatment of diseases with natural remedies derived from Herbo-animo-mineral sources. It is also taken into consideration for identifying the most suitable diet and lifestyle for promoting good health.

**KEYWORDS :** Mizaj, Temperament, Damvi, Safravi, Saudavi, Bhalgami.

### INTRODUCTION

The highest level of organization is the organism, the living human being. The organism level represents the sum total of all structural levels working together to promote life. According to Unani system of medicine structural levels composing human body are *arkan* (element) *mizaj* (temperament), *akhlat* (humours) *a'za* (organs) *arwah* (vital forces) *quwa* (faculties) and *afal* (functions). They work cooperatively to promote well being of entire body. Virtually every of seven plays a role to understand human being but temperament provides a concept that helps us to make diagnosis and treatment. It has been explained by all Unani physicians and it is most important fundamental concept of Unani system of medicine.

Temperament theory has its roots in the ancient four humors theory. It was the Greek physician Hippocrates (460-370 BC) who systemized and developed it into a medical theory. He believed certain human moods, emotions and behaviors were caused by body fluids (called "humors"): blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. Next, Galen (AD 131-200) developed the first typology of temperament in his dissertation *De temperamentis*, and searched for physiological reasons for different behaviors in humans. He mapped them to a matrix of hot/cold and dry/wet taken from the four elements.[1]

A lot was done and developed by Hippocrates and Galen, but the Arabs worked more assiduously on the theory of temperaments. They were the first to locate relationship between diseases, various humours and the disturbance of temperaments.[2]

The *mizaj* is defined as the new state of a matter having quality different from that of present in the elements or compound before coming into *imtizaj*; which results from the action and reaction among the contrary qualities and powers in the minute particles of different elements; when they are

combined together the resultant new quality in a uniform state or the state of equilibrium emerging after the combination of more than one element is called *mizaj*.

### The Literal Meaning of Temperament (Mizaj)

#### Mizaj

- The literal meaning of *mizaj* according to Nafis is "Intermixture" 8 as he says "The word *mizaj* originated from Arabic word *imtizaj* meaning intermixture".[30]
- *Mizaj* is derived from Arabic word "*mzj*" which means mixing of humors. At other places it is described that *mizaj* refers to the intermixture of four humors within human body, it is the basis of body. (*Lisan-ul-Arab*)
- Azmi says "*mizaj* is an admixture". He writes "*mizaj* denotes admixture, it is a verb but metaphorically used as tempered (*Mamzuj*)". [3]

### Temperament

Quoting the words of Rudolf E. Siegri, Azmi says: "The Greek used to call the mixture of humours as "*krasis*" which is derived from "*kerannyni*" meaning "to mix". The word *kerasis* is usually translated as temperament."

The word "temperament" is derived from the Latin word "*tempero*" which means "to mix". This word temperament is used in the English language as a synonym of the Arabic word *mizaj*.

Azmi explains further saying, "there is another word constitution which is used as an equivalent of *mizaj*. This word means the natural condition of the body and mind and when it is used in chemistry, it denotes not only kinds and number of atoms but also the way they are linked. This meaning is fully in accordance with the elemental concept of temperament which I hold correct." [4]

But, Shah has a different opinion, he says, "in modern

medicine the terms "constitution" and "temperament" are often used synonymously but not so in the cannon of Avicenna. Constitution is *tabiyat* comprised of seven physical factors, *al umur al tabaiyah*, of which temperament is one." [5]

The Arab physicians described the concept of *mizaj* in a universal manner as compared to the modern concept of temperament that is limited to the psycho – somatic behavior only. Therefore, the word temperament does not hold the same meaning as *mizaj* meant in Greeco Arab medicine rather *mizaj* has broader meaning.

In this regard, Grunner says, "the word temperament is not satisfactory for the Arabic word *mizaj* which contains the idea of mixture so the medieval translators used the word "commixtio" or "complexio" which carry the idea of mixing or blending and weaving. But neither words fit in with modern usage. The word constitution is more meaningful to layman as referring to the makeup of physical body temperament as applies to the mental makeup.

The word constitution carries the idea of something stationary and unchanging. One has therefore to use the word temperament in a psychological sense and in the medical sense; it should imply a blend of humours, since all four are present in every individual." [6]

The literal meaning of the word "temperament" as given in few authentic dictionaries are as follows:

1. Temperament – People or animal's character or nature. (Oxford dictionary and Thesaurus)
2. Temperament – combination or predominance of humours. (Chamber dictionary)
3. Temperament is constitutionally based individual differences in emotion, attention, activity level and self-regulation. (New Concise Medical Dictionary)
4. Temperament – the combination of intellectual, emotional, ethical and physical characteristics of an individual. (Taber's encyclopedia medical dictionary)
5. Temperament – the peculiar physical character and mental cast of an individual. (Newman)
6. Temperament as noun means the part of our character that affects our moods and the way we behave. (Cambridge Advance Learner Dictionary)
7. Temperament – the physical organization peculiar to the individual, which influences one's metabolic process, manner of thought and action and the general view of life. (Stedman)

In psychology, temperament is the innate aspect of an individual's personality, such as introversion and extroversion.

Temperament is defined as that part of the personality, which is genetically based. Along with character and those aspects that are acquired through learning, the two together are said to constitute personality. [5]

### The Definitions of Temperament

The physicians of Unani medicine have dealt with temperament in detail and they defined it to the best of their knowledge and concepts. The Arab medical authors worked on the theory of temperament most assiduously and its description is found in the Arab medical literature under the heading "*mizaj*".

### Views of Ancient Unani Scholars

**Ali Ibn Abbas Majoosi** has defined the *mizaj*: "All sorts of bodies (light or heavy), which are found in this ever-changing world are formed by four elements (*ustuqussat*) after mixing in different or uniform quantities in accordance with the needs (of the body). As a result of this mixing, one or two qualities become dominant, over the body, and this is called '*mizaj*'. It is

derived from Arabic word 'imtizaj', meaning 'to mix with each other'. [7]

**Abu Sehal Masihi** describes temperament as: "Because there are so many primary components (*ustuqussat*) of the body which are mixed together not in close proximity, it is necessary that the qualities of primary components must be mixed as a whole new qualities arise from inter-mixing of primary components which will be in between the previous qualities, called *mizaj*." [8]

**Ibn Sina** says: "The temperament is that quality which results from the mutual interaction and interpassion of the four contrary primary qualities residing within the imponderable elements. These elements are so minutely intermingled as each to lie in very intimate relationship with the other. Their opposite powers alternately conquer and become conquered until a state of equilibrium is reached which is uniform throughout the whole; it is this outcome that is called as *mizaj*." [9]

Ibn Sina further writes that "Since the primary properties in the aforesaid elements are four namely hotness, coldness, moistness and dryness, it is obvious that the temperaments of the integrating bodies are the products of these very properties." [4]

**Ismaeel Jurjane** writes about *mizaj* that: "When different qualities of elements acts and reacts by their powers then previous qualities become diminished and a new moderate quality is developed which is known as *mizaj*". [10]

**Galen** says that: "Temperament is a quality produced by action and reaction of opposite qualities of body fluids (*Akhlat*). When these components interact by virtue of their respective powers (qualities) a condition is achieved which is found in equal proportions in all the components of that intermixture; this is called temperament". [11]

It may also be noted that the Galen's concept of temperament was founded on the humors while the elemental interpretation of temperament was dominant among Arab physicians. [12]

**Dawood Antaqi** gives his view that: "*Mizaj* is a uniform quality which originates by eth action and reaction of four elements which divided into smaller particles so that the maximum particles of each can mix with each other." [13]

**Ayyub Israili** explains the *mizaj* in following words: "*Mizaj* is such type of moderate quality which is originated by the action and reaction of different opposite particles. When elements mix with each other and one element affects the other then they break into small particles due to action and reaction process. This process should be of such type that the biochemical structure of each element breaks the strength of quality of other elements, resulting in generation of a moderate secondary quality. This moderate secondary quality is known as *mizaj*." [14]

**Allama Sadidi** writes that: "*Mizaj* is such type of *malmoosa* (touching) quality which is produced by the effects of different qualities of smaller particles of elements and the character to adopt the effects of these different qualities". [15]

**Ibn-e-Habal Baghdadi** states that: "When elements get admixed, most of the elements mix with each other and their various qualities act and react so heat breaks the cold and cold breaks the heat. Similarly dryness try to breaks wetness and wetness try to breaks dryness. Low grade Qualities mix with high grade qualities light weight Particles mix with heavy weight Particles until a new Quality is developed which is equally found in all the components of elements this new and

moderate Quality is known as *mizaj*". [16]

**Allama Nafees** says that: "When elements mix with each other they act and reacts which result in developing a new moderate Quality in between the all four previous Qualities and new Quality is known as *mizaj*". [17]

**Narain** Says that: The word temperament is derived from the Latin verb 'tempero' meaning to mix' or temper'. [18]

**Gruner** says that Arabic word *mizaj* contains the idea of mixture', medical translators used the word commixtio or complexion which carry the idea of mixing or blending or weaving". [6]

**Abdul Lateef Falsafi** writes that: "When Smaller particles of different elements mix with each other in such a way that the particles of each element mix with the particles of other elements it results in breakdown of qualities of all the elements due to which the qualities of the each particle convert into a moderate quality and this quality known as *mizaj*". [19]

**Shah** defines: "Temperament is the pattern of qualities as a whole which emerges from the action and reaction of the mass and energy and thus in the human organism of the structure and function. As the basic qualities of the energy are heat and cold and of the mass dryness and moisture their natural inter actions leads to the emergence of a new balance of qualities which varies with the quantitative proportion of the primary qualities". [20]

**Syed Ishtiyaq Ahmed** writes that: "*Mizaj* is defined as the new state of a matter having quality different from the present in the elements or compounds before coming in to *mizaj* (inter mixture of chemical combination) which result from the action and reaction among the contrary qualities and powers present in the minute particles (Atoms) of different elements (or molecules of different compounds) when they are combined together the resultant new quality a uniform state on the state of equilibrium emerging after the combination of more than are elements is called *mizaj*". [21]

**Altat Ahmad Azmi** described the *mizaj* as: "Temperament means final combination or form of elements (*Ustuqussat*) in the other word formation of temperament in a compound depends on the number, ratio and atomic sequence of elements in the compound the properties created in the compound differ from the properties of its constituents. A compound retains its properties so long as its elemental form is held together". [22]

**Mohd Ilyas Khan** describes that: "*Mizaj* is such type of moderate quality, which is produced by the action and reaction and chemical changes in the small particles of different elements, which occur due to the effects of their specific powers. This moderate quality may be different in different persons and in different species also." [23]

**Mehdi Hasan** described temperament along with the four elements, he says that: "The four elements are result of four qualities cold, heat, moisture and dryness. Two qualities in combination constitute an element e.g. Cold + Moisture = Water The ultimate units are pure qualities. These have been identified as follows:

Heat Oxidation  
Moisture Hydration  
Cold Reduction  
Dryness Dehydration

So the temperament can be understood by the following examples:

*Saudavi* or Melancholic temperament should be interpreted not as cold and dry but in which reduction and dehydration

are preponderating." [22]

**Taiyyab** suggest in "Greco-Arab Medicine" that: "The temperament is a synthetic concept which express the various physical as well as psychological tendencies of the individual in terms of matter and energy i.e. activity as, heat and cold reactivity as dryness and moisture". [24] Zaidi and Zulkifle writes that: "The temperament is an intrinsic state which enables an individual to survive and to procreate comfortability and is responsible for distinctive morpho-bio-physio-inimuno-psychological identity of an individual". [25]

**Bhika and Haq** explain temperament as: "Temperament is the quality that results from the interaction of the four primary qualities i.e. Hotness, coldness, dryness and moistness". [26] From all these definitions it is proved that the Temperament is a new quality which developed after inter mixing of the properties of particles of the elements which gives a new state to the compounds. For the formation of Temperament it is necessary that different elements get combine together and form a new compound.

**Intizaj:** *Intizaj* is intermixing in a meaning full way. In Unani Medicine *intizaj* has been described as a state of action and reaction of different elements.

**Types of intizaj:** There are two types of intizaj

**Simple Intermixing (*Intizaj Sazij*)** If two or more substances are simply mixed and their previous properties are maintained as before, as no chemical combination takes place it is known as *intizaj sazij* (simple intermixture) for example the mixture of sugar and water to form a syrup.

**Real intermixture or chemical compound (*Intizaj Haqiqi*):**

If the substances mix in such a way that their previous properties are changed altogether and quite new properties are developed, it is known as *intizaj haqiqi* (real intermixing), or in the other words, chemical combination.

**Causes of Intizaj:** The factors, operating in *intizaj haqiqi* are twofold.

**Chemical Affinity (*Ulfate Kimiyawiyah*)**

Some elements or compounds possess chemical affinity to combined with certain other elements or compounds. This property of a matter is known as *ulfate kimiyawiyah* (chemical affinity). Thus they combined together readily and form a new compound. This chemical affinity depends on the electro valiancy (*quwwat*) of the elements. The elements whose atoms are unstable are prone to react with other to form new compound.

**Chemical Repulsion (*Nafrat-e-kimiyawiah*)**

This is Contrary to the quality of chemical affinity; certain elements have no chemical affinity to combined with certain other compounds. The elements whose atoms in their outer orbits posse's eight electrons are chemically stable and hence they do not undergo chemical combination. [27]

From above description it is clear that after intizaj of two or more substances a new and moderate quality or *mizaj* developed which become dominant on all the basic parts. So *intizaj* is a procedure which results in ultimate *mizaj* formation of each individual.

**Factors Affecting Temperament (*Mizaj*)**

The factors affecting temperament of the human body are classified into two categories:

- 1- Hereditary factors (*Khilqi Awamil*)
- 2- Acquired factors (*Iktisabi Awamil*)

**Hereditary factors (*Khilqi Awamil*)**

Zulkifle writes, "When newly formed temperament lies in

human limit, this result in successful conception and zygote that is implanted in uterus where further development would occur. Anytime if this interaction exceeds the limit of human temperament, the uterus can no more serve the zygote and miscarriage occurs. Therefore, foetus cannot grow in uterus until temperament harmony is not established between foetus and uterine temperament". [24]

According to Unani physicians, there are the factors which are transferred from the parents to their off springs through *rutubat-e-manwiyah* (seminal fluid). These factors determine the specific quality and quantity of *rutubate- ula or rutubat-eghariziyah* (protoplasm) of the fertilized ovum upon which the future development of the child and future intermixture (*mizaj*) of different akhlat depends. Kabiruddin believes that *quwwat-e-musawwirah* prepare the organs as per their specific dimension and shape.[11]

Therefore the alteration in the temperament of seminal fluid or in the fertilized ovum, alter the temperament of the offspring. This alteration may be localized that can affect an organ or it may be generalized that can affect to the whole body. Various kinds of malformations and hereditary diseases are the example of this alteration.

#### Acquired factors (*Iktisabi Awamil*)

These factors depend upon the environmental conditions in which the man is living. These are of two types i.e. the *asbab-e-sittah zaruriyah* (six essential factors) and the *asbab-e-ghair zaruriyah* (non-essential factors).[13]

**A. Asbab-e-Sitta Zaruriyah:** The six essential causes are:

1. Atmospheric air (*Hawa-e- Muheet*)
2. Food and Drink (*Makul-wa- Mashrub*)
3. Physical or Body movement and repose (*Harkat wa Sukun badani*)
4. Mental or Physic movement and repose (*Harkat wa Sukun nafساني*)
5. Sleep and Wakefulness (*Naum- wa- Yaqzah*)
6. Retention and Depletion (*Ehtebas wa Istafraagh*) [28]

**B. Asbab ghair zaruriyah:** The non-essential causes are:

1. Age (*Umr*)
2. Sex (*Gins*)
3. Habitat (*Maskan wa Balad*)
4. Habits (*Adaat*)
5. occupation (*Sana't*)
6. Other remote causes (*Umoor-e-baeeda*)

**Razi**, while discussing the factors influencing the temperament, says that age, dwelling and diet play a very important role in the change of temperament." [29]

**Ibn Rushd** was also agreed about the effects of environmental factors on human temperament, He says that there may be variations in temperament due to external factors like the occupation and dietary habits.[30]

**Khairallah** has another opinion, he says, "These temperaments differ in different seasons, regions, ages, individuals and organs." [14]

**Bhika and Haq** explains: "At birth when functional causes affect particular qualities, then changes occur partially or totally, temporarily or permanently. Naturally, hereditary factors play a vital role. Environmental factors do not contribute in the formation of a person's temperament, but influence it overtime." [30]

Thus, we can say that apart from genetic influences the ultimate physiological and anatomical set up of an individual

is also influenced by external factors.

#### CONCLUSION

The physical state, heat, and water are three criteria that can describe the conditions of a biological entity- organs, structures, biochemical compounds, liquids, and such. The combinations of the three physical characteristics of the four elements give rise to the temperaments. Abnormal temperament, called *dystemperament*, occurs when the body or its organs deviate in one or two of the temperamental qualities. Here is where the Unani physician has to determine the qualitative deviation (i.e., which quality is affected, the heat or the hydration) and amount of deviation (the quantity). The physician's assessment of deviation will determine the types of medication to use and their potency. People of one type of temperament are prone to a particular group of diseases in different phases of their life and under different climatic conditions due to dominance of particular humor in particular temperament. This susceptibility can be checked by adopting the temperament specific regimens given by Unani physicians. Hence, temperament based preventive approach of Unani medicine can offer a better way for promotion and preservation of health with least cost. Unani philosophers explicated the diversities in life in the context of four basic constituents (*Ark n Arba a*) and their *Kayfiy t* (hot, cold, dry and moist). So, researchers may reach to the exact causes of biodiversity with the help of ancient Unani philosophy.

#### Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to this work and this work is a review or overview paper, and has not been published previously.

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