



Life's Cornerstones: Unveiling Six Essentials of Life (Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya); Unani Perspective of Balancing Lifestyle

Adnan Ali*¹, Sadiya Khatoon², Sahiba², Shugufta Hamid²

¹ PG Scholar (MD), Department of *Moalajat*, Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, University of Kashmir, Naseembagh Campus, Hazratbal, Srinagar, J&K 190006

²PG Scholar (MD), Department of *Moalajat*, Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, University of Kashmir, Naseembagh Campus, Hazratbal, Srinagar, J&K 190006

ABSTRACT :

Modernization has led to increased risk of lifestyle disorders like hypertension, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, obesity, cancer, depression, and anxiety. According to World Health Organization (WHO), Noncommunicable diseases (NCD' s) cause 41 million deaths annually, accounting for 74% of global deaths. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes account for over 80% of premature NCD deaths. Factors like tobacco use, less activity, alcohol, unhealthy diets, and air pollution increase the risk. The Unani system of medicine since 2500 years, emphasizes a balanced lifestyle riveted on six essential factors: Air, Dietetics, Physical activities, Psychological activities, Sleeping patterns, Wakefulness, Elimination and Retention. Lifestyle diseases, onset and progression, are linked to lifestyle and behavior factors like dietary habits, physical activities, rest, smoking, and alcohol consumption. The two primary pillars of lifestyle diseases prevention and treatment are well-covered by the holistic approach of Unani medicine. It acknowledges the significance of each person's unique physical and mental aspects. Through changes to "Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya" the Unani system of medicine has a significant impact in preventing the initiation and progression of a number of lifestyle-related disorders. This review article aims to focus on the effects of Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya on individuals to choose a better regimen for longer and healthier life.

Keywords- *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya*, Balancing Lifestyle, Six essentials of life, lifestyle disorders, Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), Unani Medicine.

Introduction :

The Unani system of medicine is the oldest and most traditional medical practice in the world. It proposes a special mixture of six crucial elements known as *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya*, which can never be redeemed and which can aid in the prevention of many lifestyle disorders. The human body is divided into seven components according to the Unani medical system: 1.Elements(*Arkān*), 2.Temperament(*Mizāj*), 3.Humors(*Akhlāt*), 4.Organs(*A'ḍā'*), 5.Pneuma(*Arwāh*), 6.Faculties(*Quwā*), and 7.Functions(*Afa'l*). *Arkān* stands for Earth, Water, Air and Fire. The aetiology and pathology of diseases are highlighted by the fact that changing the ratio of these humors can result in altered temperament, which can then cause disease. In order to preserve the balance of these humors and other components, Unani physicians adopted and disseminated a set of essential principles known as *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya* or the six essential factors for healthy life^[1]. Patients under Unani treatment receive holistic care that attends to all aspects of their health, including the mind, body, family, and environment. Medical experts today address disease as a result of bodily disintegration, seeing the body as a collection of interrelated components. In Unani system of medicine, the ultimate objective is health, and the ultimate bodily power is known as *Ṭabi'at*, is in charge of all physiological and nutritional requirements. Disease causes are absorbed by the body, which retains them until they are neutralized or lost. Hippocrates' adage, "The physician treats, but the *Ṭabi'at* heals," highlights the integrative medicine theory in which medical professionals help the *Ṭabi'at* rather than treat the illness. Beyond *Ṭabi'at*'s capacity to preserve and replenish, all illnesses stem from improper management of the six basic components (*Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya*). To prevent these disorders, many people are adopting a balanced lifestyle based on the Unani system of medicine, which consists of these six essential factors. Awareness of these factors is necessary for maintaining good health and preventing lifestyle disorders.

Life style disorders :

WHO states that chronic lifestyle illnesses, also referred to as non-communicable diseases, are slow-progressing, long-lasting conditions that mainly impact diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory disorders. Ageing, fast urbanization, and the spread of bad lifestyles are some of the variables that affect these diseases. Obesity and poor diets are examples of intermediate risk factors that lead to cardiovascular disease, a lifestyle illness. Within the framework of the *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya*, the Unani system of medicine distinguishes between disorders that are exclusively related to lifestyle choices and those that are caused by imbalances that develop over time in the alteration in the *Asbāb Sitta Ḍarūriyya*^[2].

Risk Factors

There are two different kinds of risk factors that might cause lifestyle illnesses. i.e., Reversible and Irreversible risk factors that can be managed include obesity, illness, stress, diet, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, and sedentary lifestyle. However, some things, like age and gender, cannot be changed^[3,4,5].

Etiological factors

The following factors are thought to be its aetiology: sedentary lifestyle (*Qillate ħarkat-i-badani*), excessive sleep (*Ifrat nawm*), excessive rest (*Ifrat Sukūn*), and dyspepsia (*Su 'al-Haḍm*). Meat, fatty/oily foods, and sweets; predominance of phlegm (*Balgham*); cold temperament (*Mizāj Bārid*); excessive alcohol consumption post-meal (*Ghalba-i-Ifrate Sharāb bade Ghiz 'a*); hereditary and congenital; polluted air (*Hawā-i-Ghaliz*); contaminated water (*Aa'be Ghaliz*); excessive gratification (*Farhat*); music (*Naghma*); soft couch (*Narm wa mulaim bister*)^[6].

Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya

The Six Essential Factors, or (*Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya*), were first defined under this title by *Ali Ibn-i-Abbās Majūsi*, (930–994) in his well-known book "*Kāmil al-Ṣanā'a*"^[7] *Asbāb* is described as a specific component that either keeps the body in a condition of health or transforms it from one of disease to health. The Unani system of medicine was based on the idea that the body's homeostasis relied on the four humors being in balance and that disruption of six vital elements might lead to sickness. *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* is the cornerstone of preventative medicine in the Unani system. The following are these factors:^[8-11]

1. *Hawa' Muḥīt* (Atmospheric Air)
2. *Al-Ma'kulāt wa'l Mashrūbāt* (Foods and Drinks)
3. *Al-Ḥaraka wa'l Sukūn al-Badanī* (Physical activity and Repose)
4. *Al-Ḥaraka wa'l Sukūn al-Nafsānī* (Psychological activity and Repose)
5. *Al-Nawm wa'l Yaqza* (Sleep and Wakefulness)
6. *Al-Iḥtibās wa'l Istifrāgh* (Elimination and Retention)

Hawa' Muḥīt (Fresh Air)

Air consists of 78.09% nitrogen, 20.95% oxygen, 0.93% argon, 0.04% carbon dioxide, and trace quantities of other gases. Water vapour, as well as dust particles, make up various volumes of air. The molar mass of dry air or air with no/low amount of water vapour in it is 28.97g/mol. Out of the six necessary components, air is the most important one since life cannot live without it^[12-14]. Scholars from Unani medicine had long argued that clean, fresh air is essential for good health and that variations in air quality are the root cause of many illnesses. Homes that are open to the air and have a suitable ventilation system were stressed by ancient thinkers. They also provided excellent suggestions on the proper aeration for them, as well as information about the various seasons and how the air changes and the diseases that correspond with them.^[15-17] Through the exchange of air, air fulfills the role of *Ta'dīl-i-Rūḥ* during the inspiration. When it expires, it also functions as *Tanqīya 'i-Rūḥ* simultaneously. The majority of airborne illnesses are brought on by seasonal or natural variations in the environment as well as air pollution.^[18] Because the air has a different temperament with each season, seasonal changes are the typical alterations. Any alteration in the nature of the surrounding air causes modifications to the human body. Unbalance in humors is caused by polluted air.^[19] Air pollution builds up and causes lifestyle issues as well as major, perhaps deadly harm to the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.^[18,20,21] Pure, fresh air is essential to human existence in order to carry out physiological processes and preserve health. Strengthening *Rūḥ* (pneuma), or fresh and pure air, can help control and avoid the majority of chronic lifestyle problems.

Types of Air and its Seasons

Al-Hawā' al-Ḥārr (Hot Air)

Moderate hot air stimulates blood circulation and digestion, while excessive heat can produce perspiration, reduced urine, indigestion, *Sū' i-Mizāj Ḥārr* and fatigue.^[22,23]

Al-Hawā' al-Bārid (Cold Air)

It is ideal for normal digestion and absorption of nutrients in the gastrointestinal system, which leads to optimum metabolism.^[22,23]

Al-Hawā' al-Raṭb (Moist Air)

It is vital since it is responsible for healthy skin, but the risk of infection increases. Excess wetness should be avoided.^[22,23]

Al-Hawā' al-Yābis (Dry Air)

It affects the skin, making it dry and rough in texture.^[22,23]

Faṣl al-Rabī' (Spring season)

This season is ideal for its moderate temperament, similar to *Dam* i.e hot and wet. It enhances blood quality, quantity, and digestion. Although it minimizes illnesses caused by Coagulation of Morbid Materials (*Injimād Mawād*), it can also cause paralysis, melancholia, arthritis, pharyngitis, Haemoptysis, epistaxis, melena, and abscess during this season^[22,24,25]. This season's risk factors include stress, anxiety, anger, and an excessive consumption of hot and junk foods. Therefore, these things should be avoided throughout this season. To promote health and prevent illnesses, it is recommended to do Venesection (*Faṣd*) vomit voluntarily, avoid hot baths and limit overeating. The use of cotton cloths is also encouraged^[22,23,25].

Faṣl al-Ṣayf (Summer season)

Its hot and dry disposition causes *Sū'-i-Mizāj Ḥārr* and excess thirst, resulting in excess yellow bile and ailments such as measles, vomiting, chicken pox, ascites, and conjunctivitis. Excess heat increases the production of black bile (*Sawdā'*) and yellow bile (*Ṣafrā'*) through combustion. At the conclusion of the season, black bile (*Sawdā'*) increases and blood decreases.^[7,22,25] To minimize summer difficulties, eat cold beverages, take cold baths, limit sun exposure, and drink plenty of water. Consuming citrus fruits such as oranges, pomegranates, and lemons is encouraged. To prevent indigestion, choose easily digested foods and avoid spicy and dry fruits. Wear cotton fabric clothes and rest more during this season. Applying Mace (*Javitri*) paste on the forehead is also advised.^[22,23,25]

Faṣl al-Kharīf (Autumn season)

It has a *Ḥārr-Yābis* temperament, similar to hot seasons, with minimal difference in day and night temperatures, resulting in *Sū'-i-Mizāj Ḥārr* and excessive *Ṣafrā'* leads to *Ṣafrā'wi* disorders, such as joint pain, sciatica, back pain, ringworm, pruritis, tonsillitis, intestinal worms, dysuria, and IBS, are caused by indigestion and retention of yellow bile in the body. During the warm season, *Sawdā'* increases while blood decreases.^[22,24,25] To maintain good health, promote digestion, drink lots of water, and avoid cold drinks and quick meals. Dry fruit consumption is prohibited, as is excessive sexual behaviour. To lessen the danger of colds and respiratory disorders, cold water should not be consumed or used for bathing. Avicenna recommended covering one's head, particularly in the early morning and late night, to prevent respiratory difficulties^[22,23,25].

Faṣl al-Shitā' (Winter season)

Its chilly and damp temperament causes excessive phlegm, which can cause respiratory and phlegmatic disorders such as rhinitis, common cold, cough, pneumonia, pleurisy, joint discomfort, and various *Balghamī Awrām* like lipoma.^[22,24,25] To prevent colds, dress appropriately, consume hot meals and beverages, and engage in physical activity to maintain a healthy body temperature. Exercising vigorously can help eliminate dissipated material through skin pores. Consuming pulses with meat (*Haleem*), meat increased blood production. Applying clove paste (*Dimād*) on the forehead is also recommended.^[22,23,25]

Al-Ma'kulāt wa'l Mashrūbāt (Foods and Drinks)

Ma'kul means meal, while *Mashrūb* means drink, and they are ranked second. Individuals require varied diets based on their physical condition, temperament, age, eating habits, and habitat. In healthy conditions, food is consumed to maintain health and support *Ṭabī'at*. However, this is not the case in abnormal circumstances, Unani physicians recommended distinct diets for specific illnesses.^[26-29] *Ibn Sīnā* classic work '*Al Qānūn Fi'l Ṭibb'* described this. Dietetics and Nutrition are significant medical subjects.^[26,27] Gruner describes the importance in his book "A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of *Avicenna*" by saying that "The stomach is the site of sickness, and nutrition is the source of healing."^[11] Hippocrates, Galen, and *Ibn Sīnā*, the original *Ṭibb* pioneers, all referenced this. Malnutrition is a contributing factor to many chronic illnesses nowadays. Diabetes, obesity, heart disease, inflammatory diseases, skin disorders, and cancer can all be linked to junk food consumption, including excessive salt or fat, lack of fibre, lack of fruits and vegetables, unhealthy eating habits, tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and more.^[30,31] A balanced diet promotes good health, preventing malnutrition and other irregularities.^[32] Galen recommends limiting meal consumption to allow the stomach to operate efficiently. Food's quality and amount might affect the body's temperature. Excessive food consumption can lead to digestive issues, blockage, and imbalance of humors (*Akhlat*).^[33,34] Consuming insufficient amounts might result in emaciation. Avoid drinking water shortly after meals since it might interfere with digestion. Take it after descending foods from the upper digestive tracts or during intense thirst to aid digestion.^[35] Due to a lack of awareness, many people consume little amounts of water alongside their food. Lifestyle problems can be avoided with simple dietary modifications. Nowadays, high-fat, energy-dense diets have supplanted conventional low-calorie, high-quality ones. Many individuals prioritize eating "correct food" and seek the advice of dietitians.^[36,39] However, access to this facility is limited, particularly in rural regions. Due to a lack of dietary education, the community suffers from obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular ailments. To prevent lifestyle problems, ingest fibre foods and avoid excessive non-vegetarian diets.^[18,28] According to Galen, a well-known Unani physician, there are four conditions to consider while forming eating or drinking habits: Food timing, Food type, Quantity, Food temperament.^[16,40]

Al-Ḥaraka wa'l Sukūn al-Badanī (Rest and Physical activity)

Every time a person experiences mild, moderate, or severe *ḥarkat*, their body releases *Ḥarārat* which activates *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya* and melts the waste products the body produces. The *Unani Ṭibb* states that *Ḥarārat* is the tool used for all *Quwā*, particularly *Quwā Ṭabī'iyya*. These *Quwā* break down and metabolize the food, removing waste products from the body in the process. When waste products build up within the body and are not eliminated, the *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya* stops. *Sukūn* following *ḥarkat* is essential for maintaining health. The dissolution of *Ruḥūbat* caused by continuous *ḥarkat* without *Sukūn* further disturbs the *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya*. A subnormal *Ḥarārat Gharīziyya* prevents the normal metabolic process from happening. *Sukūn* aids in the process of digestion, which produces high-quality humor; humoral balance is necessary for good health. Over indulgence in either *ḥarkat Sukūn*, or both results in *Burūdat*, or cold, which impairs cognitive function and ultimately causes abnormal bodily functions. For this reason, maintaining a balanced *ḥarkat* and *Sukūn* is crucial for overall health.^[27,41]

Al-Ḥaraka wa'l Sukūn al-Nafsānī (Mental Activity and Repose)

The dominant *Khilṭ* and *Mizāj* of an individual impact psychological factors known as *Nafsiyāti 'Awāmil* which affect both their body and mind. *Nafsiyāti 'Awāmil*, which include happiness, sadness, fear, and fury, have a substantial influence on a person's health. Excessive happiness and rage can widen cutaneous blood vessels, causing the skin to turn red, as well as increase heart rate, which can lead to a variety of CVS issues. Unani physicians also think that emotional stress and maladjustment can cause certain diseases and mental issues. *Ibn Sīnā* first highlighted the relationship between psychology and medicine.^[8,42] Stress and sadness have become increasingly frequent worldwide in recent years, resulting in a variety of extra health conditions and a shorter life expectancy for individuals. As a result, it is possible to conclude that proper physical stimulation and relaxation can help to sustain mental health.^[43]

Al-Nawm wa'l Yaqza (Sleep and Wakefulness)

The amount of sleep you need depends on various factors — especially your age. While sleep needs vary significantly among individuals, consider these general guidelines for different age groups:^[49]

Table. 1

Age Group	Sleeping Hours
Infants 4-12 months	12 to 16 hours per 24 hours, including naps
1 to 2 years	11 to 14 hours per 24 hours, including naps
3 to 5 years	10 to 13 hours per 24 hours, including naps
6 to 12 years	9 to 12 hours per 24 hours
13 to 18 years	8 to 10 hours per 24 hours
Adults	7 or more hours a night

In addition to age, other factors can affect how many hours of sleep you need. For example:

Sleep quality: If your sleep is frequently interrupted, you're not getting quality sleep. The quality of your sleep is just as important as the quantity.

Previous sleep deprivation: If you're sleep deprived, the amount of sleep you need increases.

Pregnancy: Changes in hormone levels and physical discomfort can result in poor sleep quality.

Older Age: Older adults need about the same amount of sleep as younger adults. As you get older, however, your sleeping patterns might change. Older adults tend to sleep more lightly, take longer to start sleeping and sleep for shorter time spans than do younger adults. Older adults also tend to wake up multiple times during the night.

For kids: getting the recommended amount of sleep on a regular basis is linked with better health, including improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, the ability to control emotions, quality of life, and mental and physical health.

For adults: getting less than seven hours of sleep a night on a regular basis has been linked with poor health, including weight gain, having a body mass index of 30 or higher, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and depression.

Normal sleep and wakefulness are required for good health. Sleep helps to maintain regular blood flow and physiology, as well as strengthening the body. It is an ideal type of bodily and mental rest, whereas alertness mimics motion.^[16] Sleep rejuvenates the soul and organs, promotes digestion, and improves overall health. Inadequate sleep can disrupt these processes. also not only reduces the capacity to think, perceive, and move, but also steadily deteriorates them, making it difficult for the individual to make judgments.^[44] "According to a study titled Sleep Disorders and Sleep Deprivation: An Unmet Public Health Problem, hundreds of billions of dollars are spent annually on direct medical expenditures associated with sleep disorders, including doctor visits, hospital treatments, prescriptions, and over-the-counter drugs.^[45] Everything from behavioral and relational issues to personal and professional productivity can be impacted by sleep disorders and insufficient sleep. A major risk factor for obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health issues is thought to be getting too little sleep. It's possible that getting six to eight hours of good sleep each night is just as crucial to health and happiness as eating well and exercising.^[32,44]

Al-Iḥtibās wa'l Istifrāgh (Retention and elimination)

According to Unani medicine, maintaining health requires a delicate balance between a substance's *Iḥtibās wa'l Istifrāgh* (retention and elimination). Certain disorders result from the body retaining substances that need to be removed while expelling superfluous or waste items.^[46] An abnormal retention of waste products can result in piles, colic pain, gas, anal fissures, intestinal blockage, and rectal prolapse, among other issues. Similar abnormalities arise when chemicals that must be maintained are eliminated, such as in loose motion. Abnormalities are brought on by the stool losing an excessive amount of moisture, salts, and nutrients. Normal pathways for elimination should be used, such as the passage of urine, feces, perspiration, menstrual blood, etc.^[48] Excessive removal of any substance immediately contributes to a dry and chilly disposition as well as a weak and sluggish

physique.^[12,47]Therefore, *Ihtibās wa'l Istifrāgh* (retention and elimination) are helpful and preserve health if they are balanced and occur when needed.^[34]

Some preventive advice suggests avoiding lifestyle disorders

Monitoring the risk factors associated with an illness is a crucial strategy for managing non-communicable illnesses. The Unani system of medicine believes that several factors, rather than just one, can help avoid sickness. In order to delay the emergence of lifestyle illnesses, Unani *Tibb* places emphasis on reducing the buildup of toxins by suitable modification of the individual's *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya*.^[30]

Ghidhā' (Balanced Diet)

Ghidhā' has a direct relationship to health and is one of the main causes of lifestyle problems. Healthy eating habits that include a range of nutrient-dense meals in the right amounts are advised in order to promote general health, and more especially to meet each person's unique blood pressure, cholesterol, and glycemic objectives.

Riyāḍat (Exercise) or Sufficient physical activity

Unhealthy eating habits and less activity (*Qillate ḥarkat-i-badanī*) hastened aging, caused illnesses of the body and brain, and decreased life quality overall. Conversely, sensible exercise combined with a balanced diet helps heal *sehat*. Exercise boosts power and strengthens the organs, according to *Majūsī*. Exercise causes perspiration to rise, which is how *Fuḍalāt-i-Badan* is eliminated. *Fuḍlat* accumulation is inferior for the neurological system. Consequently, skipping workouts might increase your chance of developing nervous system problems. *Harārat Gharzīyya*, the hormone linked to improved digestion and overall health, is increased by exercise.^[49]

Conclusion :

Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya are the six essential factors responsible for preserving or balancing current state of health. To avoid lifestyle disorders, the health plan suggests making modifications to one's diet, exercise routine, smoking cessation, stress management techniques, and alcohol intake. Our lives are in danger from non-communicable diseases, which *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* can stop. A personalized approach, such as avoiding hot foods and drinking water before or after meals, should be given by the doctor to the patient. Retaining homeostasis in *Asbāb Sitta Darūriyya* might lower the chance of several lifestyle problems considerably.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable.

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