



## **Balancing Temperament for Better Health: An Unani Approach to Preventive Wellness**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

In the Unani system of medicine (USM), the temperament (mizaj) of an individual plays a crucial role, as every person has a distinct temperament that sets them apart from others. Temperament forms the basis for the diagnosis, prevention, and the treatment of health conditions, guiding a more personalized and effective approach to care. Temperament of an individual is determined through various parameters relating to the individual's complexion, muscle/fat mass and distribution, bone structure, emotional profile, response to climatic conditions, dietary preferences, and several other features. Based on the Mizaj human beings have been categorized into four qualitative types: Damvi (sanguinous), Safravi (choleric), Balghami (phlegmatic), Saudavi (melancholic), which is supposed to result from predominant humour in the body. Any change in the temperament of a person brings about change in his state of health. For each temperament, specific dietary recommendations, and lifestyle practices are outlined to maintain balance and prevent illness. Thus, this personalized approach emphasizes on the importance of temperament in health promotion and disease prevention.

**Key words:** Unani, temperament, health, disease prevention

### **Introduction:**

Unani medicine, also known as Greco-Arabic medicine, traces its roots back to ancient Greece and is deeply influenced by the works of Hippocrates and Galen, along with later contributions from Islamic scholars such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina). It developed into a comprehensive system of healing over centuries, blending ancient knowledge with empirical observation. The fundamentals of Unani medicine are mainly focuses on temperaments and balancing the body's humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile) to maintain health. Hippocrates emphasized that it is more crucial to understand the nature and characteristics of the individual who is suffering from an illness, rather than focusing solely on identifying the specific disease they have<sup>1</sup>. This perspective highlights the importance of considering the person's overall well-being, lifestyle, and unique circumstances in the process of diagnosis and treatment. According to various eminent Unani physicians like Jalinoos, Abu Bakar Mohammad Bin Zakaria Razi, Ali Ibn-e-Abbas Majoosi, Rabban Tabri, etc., every individual has a specific temperament<sup>2</sup>.

### **Mizaj (Temperament):**

Temperament is the state that results from the interaction of opposite states of elements that are broken down into smaller components so that the larger components of each can be combined<sup>3</sup>. Temperament is the name of an intermediate and completely new condition<sup>4</sup>.

The temperament of an individual plays a crucial role in determining the most appropriate diet and lifestyle choices that will best support their overall health. By understanding a person's unique physical and emotional characteristics, one can tailor recommendations that align with their specific needs, fostering better well-being and preventing illness. Based on Mizaj (temperament) human beings have been categorized into four types: Damvi (sanguinous), Safravi (choleric), Balghami (phlegmatic) and Saudavi (melancholic)<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Features of Temperament**

1. Touch.
2. Muscles and fats.
3. Body hair.
  - I. Early or delayed hair growth.
  - II. Abundance and scarcity of hair.
  - III. Thinning or coarsening hair.
  - IV. Having straight or curly hair.
  - V. Hair color.

4. Body color.
5. Health of organs.
6. Early or late organ involvement.
7. Sleep and wakefulness.
8. Organ functions.
9. Body waste.
10. Psychological dysfunctions<sup>3,5</sup>.

### **Moderate Temperament:**

The touch of the skin of the body is in moderation in terms of heat, coldness, dryness, moisture, softness and hardness. The body color should be average in red and white. Moderation in fatness and leanness. The veins of the body are neither too prominent nor too compressed. Being in an intermediate state in terms of Shortness and abundance of hair and of straightness and curliness. Being moderate in terms of sleep and wakefulness. All the functions and all the powers of the body should be correct along with its development. Being on the middle ground in terms of imagination and to be in the best condition of morals and habits<sup>6,7</sup>.

#### **Damvi Mizaj (Sanguine temperament):**

The nature of this temperament is Hot and Wet. People with sanguine temperament look fair muddy complexion, with full muscular development. Veins are large and prominent, and pulse feels large and high. They are confident with positive thinking. Individuals with **Damviul mizaj** are very active, tense, have good appetite and moderately hypersexual. They have feelings of slight heaviness in their body<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Sign of Dominance of blood:**

The body will experience an increase in heat, and fever will develop quickly. Excessive thirst may occur, along with saliva flowing from the mouth and fluid from the nose. There will be discomfort when consuming both wet and dry foods. A sense of heaviness will be felt throughout the body, especially in the roots of both eyes, the head, and the temples. Even without exposure to hot air, the body will feel warm, the mind may become disturbed, and cognitive abilities will weaken. Dreams may feature red objects, flowing blood, or a sensation of being immersed in blood. The tongue will usually appear red, and ulcers may form on it. Occasionally, drops of blood may drip from the nose, and there may be bleeding from the gums or anus.

Due to dominance of blood these people are predisposed to the diseases like Headache, Inflammation, Synochus fever, Bloody diarrhea, Chronic diarrhea, Diphtheria, Epilepsy, Epistaxis, Haemoptysis, Tonsillitis, Gout, Acute meningitis, Hypertension, Conjunctivitis etc<sup>3,8</sup>.

#### **Preventive regimen:**

To maintain their health and minimize the risk of future health issues related to blood dominance, such people are advised to adopt preventive regimen as-

- They should avoid extremely hot weather.
- Persons engaged in professions in hot environments e.g. – blacksmiths, cooks, potters, glass workers, should move away from this environment periodically while working.
- They should avoid hot foods and beverages such as coffee, alcohol, meat, spices, nuts, and hot medicine of class IV.
- People with a sanguine temperament should avoid strong and short movements because such movements produce more warming than dissolution in the body.
- They should stay balanced during intense emotions like anger or happiness.
- They should establish moderation in sleep and wakefulness, in case of insomnia, use cold and wet measures such as cold baths, sedatives, hypnosis, etc.
- Venesection, wet cupping and purgation are beneficial measures in those with blood dominance<sup>9,10,11</sup>.

### **Safravi Mizaj (Choleric temperament):**

The nature of this temperament is Hot and Dry. It is characterized by slim build and yellowish or pallor complexion. They are hyperactive and passionate people. They quickly get excited and just as quickly forget their excitement. Anger is dominant in nature. Pulse tends to be sharp and quick<sup>2,8</sup>.

#### **Signs of dominance of bile:**

There will be yellowing of the eyes and body, accompanied by a bitter taste in the mouth and dryness and roughness of the tongue. The skin will become dry and hot, and the body will quickly absorb and accept warm water. Excessive thirst, loss of appetite, and diluted urine are common. Individuals with bile dominance are more prone to biliary vomiting and bilious diarrhea, often accompanied by a stinging sensation. The pulse will be fast, frequent, and dull. Dreams may involve yellow objects, such as fire. Conditions like bilious fever, bilious headache, tuberculosis, urticaria, hyperacidity, hypertension, stress, and cardiovascular disorders are more likely to occur in cases of bile dominance<sup>3,9</sup>.

#### **Preventive regimen:**

To preserve their health and reduce the risk of future health problems associated with bile dominance, individuals are advised to follow a preventive regimen.

- They should live in cool, fresh and properly ventilated environments.
- Those who work in hot places should be provided with proper protection.
- To avoid dehydration, they should consume more water. Using barley water in hot season is beneficial.
- They should avoid spicy, salty and fatty food.
- Food with moist temperament such as cucumber, pumpkin, mint, fennel, lemon, watermelon, cantaloupe, grape juice, orange juice should be used by these people.
- They should avoid hot baths (hammam ha'ar),

- They should avoid vigorous movements and strong as well as prolong austerities. Time of exercise should be early morning and late evening hours.
- They should control their emotions in intense conditions.
- In case of excess bile, one should adopt eliminative measures such as emesis, purgation or both. For this purpose, Banfsha, Tamar Hindi, Hallelah Zard etc. should be used<sup>10,11,12,13</sup>.

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### **Balghami Mizaj (Phlegmatic temperament):**

Nature of this temperament is Cold and Wet. It is characterized by fair complexion, light hair, laxity and general softness tissue. The pulse is soft and wide. They are slow and sluggish, apathetic, not readily excited and become easily flabby and overweight. They feel excessive heaviness in the body<sup>2,5</sup>.

#### **Signs of dominance of phlegm:**

The body color will be moderate to white, with loose, soft skin that feels cold to the touch. There will be less muscle and more fat in the body. Excessive, lacy salivation, lack of thirst, sour belching, and scanty urination are common symptoms. Digestion will be delayed, and there will be general dullness of the mind and body, with slow movements such as walking, talking, and eating. An increased need for sleep and a relaxed state of the nerves will also be present. Dreams may involve water, streams, or a sensation of being in cold air or cold water. People with phlegm dominance are more prone to diseases such as the common cold, asthenic fever, pneumonia, asthma, ascites, edema, obesity, paralysis, and Phlegmatic meningitis.<sup>2,8,12</sup>

#### **Preventive regimen:**

To maintain overall well-being and reduce the risk of phlegm dominance, individuals are encouraged to adopt a preventive lifestyle regimen.

- Residents of cold areas and those working in cold environments should wear appropriate warm clothing and avoid working continuously for long periods.
- Occupations that involve heat and physical efforts such as blacksmithing and cooking are considered useful for maintaining the health and vitality of individuals with a phlegmatic temperament
- They should consume hot food like meat, nuts, eggs, duck meat, greens etc., frequently. They Should avoid extreme deficiency and excess of food.
- They should consume fewer cold drinks such as wine, syrup, sugarcane water, ice water while hot drinks like tea, coffee, and hot water are very beneficial.
- They should keep moderation in movements.
- They should get moderate sleep, wake up early in the morning and avoid sleeping after sunrise.
- They should avoid excessive mental engagement as it can lead to mental dullness.
- They should take hot baths (hammam ha'ar), steam inhalation (inkibab), massage (dalak)<sup>10,13,14</sup>.

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### **Saudavi Mizaj (Melancholic temperament):**

The nature of this temperament is Cold and Dry. Individuals of Saudaviul mizaj has dark complexion and are emaciated in appearance. The pulse is narrow and thready, tissues are hard and dry. They are more prone to frequent episodes of pessimism and depression<sup>2,5</sup>.

#### **Signs of dominance of Sauda:**

The skin will be dark in color, with dryness and roughness to the touch. There will be an abundance of hair on the body, along with excessive worry, grief, disturbing thoughts, and obsessions. A burning sensation may be felt in the stomach, along with a false appetite. The urine will appear dark blue or greenish black. There will be an abundance of black, painful boils and potential diseases of the spleen. Nightmares may occur, involving dark, ominous, and frightening images. People with this condition are more prone to diseases such as melanotic or quartan fever, leprosy, constipation, splenomegaly, anorexia, arthritis, and neuromuscular and psychiatric disorders.<sup>8,11</sup>

#### **Preventive regimen:**

To safeguard their health and lower the risk of future ailment associated with sauda (melancholic humour), individuals are advised to follow a proactive and preventive health regimen.

- The individuals of old age, and people who use a lot of mental thinking, such as teachers, philosophers, writers, doctors, etc., often have a dominance of sauda. These people should perform spiritual actions in moderation.
- People who are dominated by sauda should live in pleasant environment and open climate. These people should avoid living in darkness and solitude and should associate with cheerful people.
- These people should avoid spicy, fatty food and such foods that contribute to production of sauda such as meat, nuts, beans, tomatoes, brinjal and rancid fats etc. Seasonal fruits and vegetables should be included in the diet.
- Physical activities such as moderate exercise, morning and evening walks, spending time in the garden also increase mental health.
- They should get the right amount of sleep at the right time.
- They should take warm baths (hammam ha'ar) and warm oil massage (dalak)<sup>13,14,15</sup>.

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### **Conclusion:**

Understanding temperament is essential for both personal well-being and effective management of health. By recognizing the different temperaments – such as sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic – one can tailor regimental therapy, which includes lifestyle modification such as diet, exercise, and stress management techniques.

Future Prospective: The integration of temperament-based approaches in therapy can provide a more personalized and holistic path to maintaining health, promoting emotional stability and improving overall wellness.

**Conflict of Interest:**

The authors certify that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this article.

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