

# Concept of Temperament (*Mizaj*) And Its Various Dimensions

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**ABSTRACT:** *The concept of temperament is the pillar of Unani Medicine. This concept was originally introduced by Hippocrates when he stated that "It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know that sort of disease a person has". Galen considered that one pair of qualities out of four possibilities was dominant leading to the temperamental categories that he called Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Choleric and Melancholic temperament. Temperament (*Mizaj*) is denoted as a uniform quality created in the compound by interaction of opposite qualities of elements. The elements divide in to minute particles to secure intimate contact with one other, since the primary qualities of the elements are four namely heat, cold, dryness and moisture. Temperament of a newly organized body is a product of these qualities. Each and every atom, molecule, humour, organelle, cell, organ and body as whole furnished with a Temperament upon which their properties function life depends.*

**Key Words:** *Unani Medicine, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Choleric, Melancholic, Humour*

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## Introduction

The temperament theory has its origin in the ancient four humour theory of the Greek physician Hippocrates, who believed certain human body characteristics are caused by body fluids, called humours – blood (*dum*), yellow bile (*saфра*), phlegm (balgham) and black bile (*sauda*). Next, Galen developed the first typology of temperament in his dissertation – *De temperamentis* and searched for physiological reasons for different characteristics in humans.

The concept was further development by Ibn Sina. The most distinguished feature of the temperament is its approach of individuality.

In this regard Ibn Sina says "Allah most beneficent has furnished every one and each of its member with a temperament which is entirely the most appropriate and best adopted for the performance of its functions and passive state".

While According to Narain 'It is a matter of daily observation that Even in one family we observe that one child is strong and muscular, another weak and slender. One is sharp another dull. One is excitable another calm. They are brought up under same regimen and died, even then it so happens that in one large amount of fat accumulates beneath the skin and abdomen (belly) becomes prominent, while in the other, the muscles get firm. These differences in humans are attributed to certain constitutional peculiarities which are called as temperament'.

The temperament of an individual is not an incidental phenomenon. One attains temperament while in the womb by hereditary from parents and intrauterine environment and after birth by extra uterine environment. Once a temperament is established during foetal life it will be modified only by ambient environmental factors. It means that every human being is born with a congenital temperament and encounters environmental assaults while interacting with changed atmosphere in the second phase of life i.e. post – natal. The resultant of this inevitable interaction is acquired temperament and this very temperament is responsible for myriads of functions of the body, a pre-requisite for normal health, since concept of temperament is as applicable to organs as to the whole body, every organ possesses its own temperament, and thus, works distinctively.

## The literal meaning

The meaning of word temperament is described in some Dictionaries are given below:

- In Taber's Cyclopedia Medical Dictionary, meaning of temperament is given as "The combination of intellectual, emotional, ethical, and physical characteristic of specific individuals".
- In Chamber dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century, "Temperament is combination or predominance of humors".
- In Newman Dictionary, "The Peculiar Physical character and mental cast of individual".

- “*Mizaj*” actually derived from the Arabic word “*Mzj*” which in turn mean mixing of humors; at another place “*Mizaj*” refers to the intermixing of four humors with human body and which is the basis of the body (*Lisaan-ul-Arab*).
- The literal meaning of *mizaj* According to Nafis is “Intermixture”
- The Arab physicians applied the concept of *Mizaj* on universal scale as compared to the modern concept of ‘temperament’ which is restricted to psychosomatic aspect only, therefore the word temperament, as understand in modern behavioral science is not exactly the same as “*mizaj*” meant in Greco Arab System of Medicine.

### Definition of Temperament (*Mizaj*)

- *Ali Ibne Abbas Majoosi* writes that all sort 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, this is called temperament (*mizaj*). It is derived from Arabic word “*imtizaj*” meaning to mix with each other.
- Abu Sehal Masihi described *Mizaj* as “Because there are so many primary components (*ustuqussat*) of body which are mixed together not in close proximity. Thus it is necessary that the qualities of primary components must be mixed as a whole. Now qualities arise from inter – mixing of primary components which will be in between the previous qualities called temperament”
- *Ismail Jurjani* 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*”.
- According to Ibne Sina “Temperament is a quality produced by action and reaction of opposite quality of components, which are broken in small particles. In order to facilitate mixing of the entire particle. When these components interact by virtue of their respective powers (qualities) a condition is achieve which is found in equal proportion in all the components of the compound this is called temperament.
- *Allama Nafis* 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, this new moderate quality is known as *Mizaj*”.

From these definitions it is proved that the temperament is a new quality which developed after intermixing of the properties and particles of 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.

### *Imtizaj* (Intermixture)

Literary meaning of *Imtizaj* is intermixing, in Unani literature it has been described as a state of action and reaction of different elements.

There are two kinds of *Imtizaj* described in Tibb.

#### 1. *Imtizaj Sazij* (Simple Intermixture)

If two or more elements (or compounds) are simply mixed and their previous properties are maintained as before, as no chemical combination takes place it is known as *Imtizaj Sazij* (Simple Mixture) e.g. the mixture of sugar and water to form a syrup.

#### 2. *Imtizaj Haqiqi* (Real intermixture as chemical compound)

If the elements or compounds mix in such a way that their previous properties are changed altogether and quite new properties are developed, it is known as *Imtizaj Haqiqi* (Real Intermixture) or in the other words, chemical combination.

### Causes of *Imtizaj* (intermixture)

The factor operating in *Imtizaj Haqiqi* is two folds.

#### 1. *Ufat Kimiyawiyah* (Chemical Affinity)

Some elements and compounds possess chemical affinity to combined with certain other elements or compounds. This property of a matter is known as *ulfat Kimiyawiyah* (Chemical Affinity). Thus they combine together readily and form a new compound. This chemical affinity depends on the electro valency (*quwat*) of the elements. The elements whose atoms are unstable are prone to react with other to form new compound.

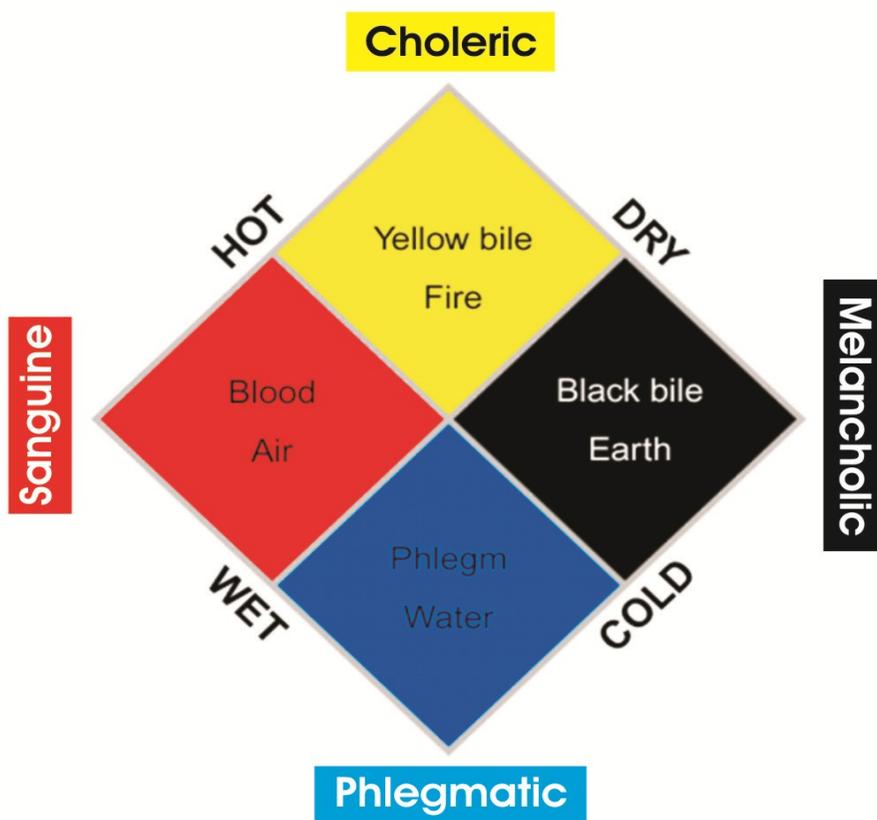
## 2. *Nafrat Kimiyawiyah* (Chemical Repulsion)

This is contrary to the quality of chemical affinity. Certain elements have no chemical affinity to combine with certain other compound. The elements whose atoms in their outer orbits possess eight electrons are chemically stable and hence they do not undergo chemical combination.

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

### Classification of Temperament according to humours

The human body, as Greco-Arab system of Medicine quote, comprises four body fluids namely –*Dam* (blood), *Balgham* (phlegm), *Safra* (yellow bile) and *Sauda* (black bile), constituted by initiation of different proportion of all four *arkan*. *Dam* is hot and wet in temperament, *Balgham* is cold and wet, *Safra* is hot and dry and *Sauda* is cold and dry. The temperament of a man is characterized both by the fluid element and its physiological and physiognomic effects, and it is expressed by the preponderance of a particular *khilt* present in his body. Thus a man may be *damvi* (Sanguineous), *Balghami* (Phlegmatic), *Safravi* (Choleric) or *saudavi* (Melancholic) in nature according to the preponderance of *dam*, *balgham*, *safra* or *sauda* respectively.



### Elements and Temperament

According to modern chemistry, the main force behind the combination of different elements is inner structure of the atoms. Every atom is formed of three types of particles – electron, proton and neutron. The maximum mass is condensed in the central portion called nucleus of the atom. The neutrons and protons are present in the nucleus around which electrons encircle. The electrons are negatively charged and they move in the outer shells to take part in the chemical bonding forming various compounds. The protons are positively charged particles that hold the electrons giving the atom its particular configuration, which is called as *surat-e-nauiyah* in Unani literature. The number of particles in the atoms of different elements is different. The atoms which possess less than eight electrons in their outermost shell remain anxious until they combine with other atoms to complete their octave. As their octave is completed their

anxiety disappears and a new compound is formed. This newly formed compound will exhibit new qualities totally different from its constituent atoms.

This new quality is the temperament (*mizaj*) of the compound. Thus, the constitution of temperament in a compound depends on the number, ratio and characteristics of its atoms. A compound retains its properties so long as its elemental form is intact but when disintegration begins in this form the properties of the compounds are also affected in proportion of the disintegration. If the elemental form is totally broken the compound will lose its existence. This applies to human temperament also.

### The factors affecting *mizaj*

The factors affecting *mizaj* of the human body are classified into the following two categories:

#### 1. *Khilqi Awamil* (Hereditary Factors)

These factors are transmitted from the parents to their off springs, through *rutubat manwiyah* (Seminal Fluid). Therefore any alteration in the temperament of seminal fluid or fertilized ovum alters the *mizaj* of the offspring. This alteration may be limited or localized one or may affect the whole body. Various kinds of malformations and hereditary diseases are the example of this factor.

#### 2. *Iktisabi Awamil* (Acquired Factors)

These factors depend upon the environmental conditions in which the man is living. These are popularly known in Tibb as *Asbab Sittah Zaruriyah*, and some other non-essential factors are known as *Asbab ghayr zaruriyah*.

### Conclusion

The temperament theory has its origin in the ancient four humour theory of the Greek physician Hippocrates. But the most distinguished feature of the temperament is approached by Ibne Sina. Temperament is established during foetal life and modified only by ambient environmental factors. The Arab physicians applied the concept of *Mizaj* on universal scale as compared to the modern concept of 'temperament' which is restricted to psychosomatic aspect only.

Temperament is a new quality which developed after intermixing of the properties and particles of 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. *Imtizaj* is a procedure which results in ultimate Mizaj formation of each individual. The constitution of temperament in a compound depends on the number, ratio and characteristics of its atoms.

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