



## Individual Temperaments and Diet Patterns

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**Received:** September 30, 2019; **Published:** October 10, 2019

**DOI:** 10.31080/ASNH.2019.03.0491

### Abstract

Individual temperament refers to those aspects of one's personality that are often regarded as innate rather than learned. This study is a humble effort to understand the preferences and relationship if any of diet patterns and the dimensions of Individual personality and four classical temperaments in light of classical Unani literature (Greco Arabian medicine). The findings indicated the existence of significant relationship between food habits and four classical individual temperaments (Phlegmatic/Balghami, Melancholic/Saudawi, Choleric/Safrawi and Sanguine/Damwi). It was found that individuals with different temperaments needs and likes different diets which are sometimes entirely opposite to the temperament of that particular individual.

**Keywords:** Diet; Food; Phlegmatic

### Introduction

#### Human temperament

The essential constituents and the working principle of the body according to Unani can be classified into seven main groups which are called as Umoor-e-tabiya namely Arkan or elements, comprising earth, water, air and fire as different states of matter and the building blocks of everything in the universe; Mizaj (temperament); Akhlat (humours); Aza (organs); Arwaah (life, spirit or vital breath); Quwa (energy); and Afaal (action).

Among these the major pillar of Unani system of medicine is the concept of temperament. This concept was originally introduced by Hippocrates when he stated that:

“It is more important to know what sort of person a disease has then to know what sort of disease a person has”.

The literal meaning of mizaj according to Nafees is 'intermixture' [1].

According to Azmi it is 'admixture'. He writes;

“Mizaj connotes admixture: It is a verb but metaphorically used as tempered” (Mamzuj) [2].

Hippocrates described four such dispositions he called temperaments—a Bilious (Safrawi) temperament with an ease of emotional arousal and sensitivity; a Phlegmatic (Balghami) temperament with cool detachment and impassivity; a Melancholic (Saudavi) temperament with a very serious, dour, and downcast nature; and a Sanguineous (Damvi) temperament full of impulsivity, excitability, and quick reactivity [3].

Several parameters which are described by Unani physicians with whom the states of temperament of individuals are diagnosed to be applicable clinically. Jalinoos, Ali-ibn-e abbas Majoosi, Zakaria Razi and Ismail jurjani were of the opinion that these parameters are only five (Ajnas-e-khamsa) but the most viable, acceptable and complete is the one given by Avicenna who described ten parameters known as Ajnas-e-ashra which are:

- Touch (Malmas), Fat and muscles (Shaham wa Laham), Hairs of the body (Sha'r), Body complexion (Laun-al Badan), Physique (Haiyat-ul-Aza), Responsiveness of the organs (Kaifiyat-e-Infe'al), Sleep and wakefulness (Naum-wa-Yaqza), Functions of the organs (Afal-ul Aza), Excreta of the body (Fuzlat-e-Badan) and Psychic reactions (Infialat-e-Nafsaniyah).

### Individual temperament

Temperament has generally been divided by Unani physicians into two parts and named as mizaj-e-dhahni (mental temperament) and mizaj-e-tibbi (medical temperament). Mizaj-e-dhahni can be found only in minds and not elsewhere. It is of two kinds: (1) mutaddil-i-haqiqi (real moderate) (2) mutaddil-i-ghayr haqiqi (unreal moderate). Tibb has nothing to do with mizaj-i-dhahni; it is concerned only with mizaj-i-tibbi. It is also called as mutaddil-i-tibbi. Mizaj-i-tibbi is also of two kinds: (1) mizaj-i-mutadil (2) mizaj-i-ghayr mutaddil [4].

Ibn-e-Sina says that "It must be known that 'equable' (mutaddil) a term used by physicians in their discussion does not mean a balance in weight but equitable distribution (Adl fil Qisma). That is, the elements mix up qualitatively and quantitatively in the human body as a whole or any of its organs, so as to produce equipoise in relation to the human temperament. It so happens that the equitable disposition of human beings with which they are endowed is very close to the absolute and real equability (mutaddil haqiqi) described in the beginning [4].

Modern concepts have integrated temperament strongly with the interaction of hereditary dispositions and environmental influences. According to Benjamin J. Sadock and Virginia A Sadock, personality can be developed into character, psyche, and temperament, where temperament involves basic emotions, character involves rational concepts about self and interpersonal relations and the psyche involves intuitive self awareness and intelligence [5].

They further write that: "Temperament refers to the body's biases in the modulation of conditioned behavioural responses to prescriptive physical stimuli".

Alexander Thomas and Stellachas conceptualised temperament as the stylish component (how) of that behaviour, as differentiated from motivation (why) and content (what) of behaviour.

### Melancholic (Saudawi) or Melanomorph

Thin and short stature, Narrow joints, relatively smaller bones and Rough and dark coloured skin. Cold and rough skin, lean & thin body built, blackish skin complexion, straight black and white mixed hairs which show excessive growth and distribution, suitable weather is warm and moist (autumn), functions like appetite, thirst, and digestion are irregular or diminished, sleep is less and undisturbed, urine is turbid and less in quantity, physical activity and speech are less, cowardly responds to the external stimuli and psychic conditions are infrequent but persist, The person is deep thinker having bad memory condition but retention is excellent, In dream fearful and black objects are seen and the melancholic temperament exhibits a long response delay and the response is sustained at length, if not seemingly permanently [6,7].

Feeding is slow but moderate and main foods are chow mien, noodles, lots of sauces, meals with sweet and sour taste, preferred fruits are small, red blueberries etc. [8].

### Choleric (Safrawi) or ectomorph

Slender individuals with below average or average height with cylindrical chest, Narrow shoulders and joints, Hairs are straight, long, sparse and of brown colour and Skin is slightly pale colour. Warm and dry skin, moderate body built, pale skin complexion, thick, curly and black hairs which show rapid growth and profuse distribution, suitable weather is cold & moist (winter), functions like appetite, thirst and digestion are strong, sleep is less and disrupted, urine is pale and less in quantity, physical activity is more and speech is quick (hyperactive), bravely responds to the external stimuli and psychic conditions come on frequently and persist for long time, mental condition is good but can't retain anything for long time, In dream yellow objects (like fire) are seen frequently and the choleric or bilious temperament manifested a shoot response delay, but the response is sustained for relatively long time [7].

Main foods are Pizza, Spaghetti, Parantha, high carbohydrate foods, lots of salt, lots of chillies, fast food, sour and astringent foods e.g. grape fruit, lemon, Orange etc. [8].

### Sanguine (Damwi) or mesomorph

Muscular individual with broad shoulder and conical thorax, average or above average height, prominent joints, brown or whitish skin with red tone, according to race and creed and brown or dark thick hairs. Warm & soft skin on palpation, muscular body built, reddish or pinkish complexion, thick lusty and blackish hairs which shows rapid growth and average distribution, suitable weather is cold & dry, functions like appetite, thirst and digestion etc. are average, sleep is average (6-8 hrs/24 hrs), excreted urine is concentrated and in moderate quantity, physical activity and speech are average, psychological aggressiveness and psychic conditions (as anger, joy etc.) comes on easily and easily lost, mental condition is good, in dream red objects (e.g. Blood) are seen frequently and the sanguine temperament typically is said to show quick, impulsive and relatively brief reactions [6].

Main food is Meat, mainly grilled with bitter and heavy spices, ice creams etc. These people are especially interested in fruits and Apples are among the most preferred [8].

### Phlegmatic (Balghami) or endomorph

Two typed, the taller persons called hyperesthenic and smaller stature persons are placed in hypoesthenic group, Round bodied, overweight individuals, Joints are buried and Skin colour is white or colorless. Cold & soft skin, fatty body built, whitish complexion, thin straight, brownish or whitish hairs which shows slow growth and scanty distribution, suitable weather is hot and dry (summer), functions like appetite, thirst and digestion are poor, sleep is excessive (more than 8 hrs/24 hrs), urine is colourless and more in quantity, physical activity and speech are dull, responds to external stimuli is weak & psychic conditions comes on hardly, mental condition is dull & sluggish, in dream white cold objects (water, snow etc) are seen frequently and the phlegmatic temperament is characterized by a longer response delay but the response is also short lived [7].

No any particular main food but prefers mixed tastes, feeding is comparatively long and plenty of food is preferred. Prefers juicy and sweet fruits, apricots, peach and pear etc. [8].

### Conclusion

It can be concluded that foods people prefer can decontaminate their basic temperament and sometimes even a choice of fruits only can show the temperament of a particular person. Some

foods sooth and some foods activate human activity both mental and physical. So, keeping in mind the personalities of different temperament individuals it is good for Phlegmatic/Balghami and Melancholic/Saudawi individuals to focus on activating foods and the Choleric/Safrawi and Sanguine/Damwi individuals should focus on calming foods. So, it can be said that temperament of an individual is associated primarily with type of food stuff which effects nervous activity in him and which ultimately effects physical, hormonal and mental activity levels.

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**Volume 3 Issue 11 November 2019**

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