

# Mizaj-E-Advia (Temperament of Drugs) in Unani System of Medicine: A Review

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## Abstract

*Mizaj* (Temperament) is one of the main basic fundamental principles of Ilmul-Advia (Unani Pharmacology). The concept of *Mizaj-e-advia* (Temperament of drugs) in Unani medicine is unique in its own way of describing the properties of drug substance. *Mizaj-e-advia* is a broad concept, which describes the pharmacological properties of crude drugs derived from plant, animal and mineral sources. Temperament is associated quality of heat, cold, moisture and dryness. There exists a concept that all the three natural sources of drugs (Mawaleed-e-salasa) possess four qualities in different proportions, i.e. *Hararat* (heat), *Burudat* (cold), *Yabusat* (dryness) and *Rutubat* (moisture); and a new *Mizaj* is formed by their interaction. This paper is an attempt to understand the concept of *Mizaj-e-advia* in the context of Unani Medicine.

**Keywords:** *Mizaj-e-advia*, Temperament, Unani system

## Introduction

*Mizaj* indicates the dominance of a humour in a person or a patient. In Unani System Medicine, the physiology of an organ, pathogenesis of a disease and mechanism action of a drug depends upon *Mizaj*. When different Kaifiate Arba (Blood/Dam, Phlegm/Balgham, Bile/Safra, and Black bile/Sauda) of Arkan (Element) acts and reacts by their powers, then previous qualities become diminished and a new moderate quality is developed which is known as *Mizaj*.<sup>1</sup> Every drug has its own temperament (*Mizaj*) due to its specific phyto-constituent. Before treating a disease of person Unani physician must aware of normal and imbalanced *Mizaj* of that diseased organ, so that physician can prescribe the drug according to that *Mizaj*.<sup>2</sup>

The Arab physician applied the concept of *Mizaj* on universal scale.<sup>3-5</sup> According to Avicenna, "*Mizaj* (Temperament) is quality developed by opposite action and reaction of components which broken down into smallest particles in order to facilitate the proper mixing of all these particles". When these components interact by virtue of their respective powers, a condition is developed which is found in equal proportion in all the components of the compound; this called as Temperament.<sup>6</sup>

## Concept of *Mizaj* (Temperament)

The concept of *Mizaj* is fundamental for the understanding

the drug action and disease processes as per Unani System of Medicine. The *Mizaj* not only helps in understanding the status of health and disease of a person but also guides in studying and researching of drugs of both single and compound nature. *Mizaj* is concerned about the humans and Advia (drugs).<sup>7</sup> *Mizaj* is the resultant of interaction between the qualities of the constituents of a compound irrespective of the reaction taking place in an animate or inanimate.<sup>8</sup>

Evaluation of the concept of *Mizaj* of drug is essential for understanding the pharmacological basis of Unani drugs. The new trend for understanding the concept of *Mizaj* is based on the knowledge of physics, chemistry, Phytochemistry, pharmacology etc. *Mizaj* is a broad concept, which arises after complex chemical reactions between the constituents, so it would be reasonable to correlate and interpret it in terms of chemical bonding and physical properties of drugs.<sup>9</sup>

The drugs of plant origin include; roots, barks, branches, leaves, fruits, seeds, stem, gums, flowers, resin etc. The knowledge of them was gained through keen observation, experiment, testing and serendipity. We know this fact very well that like all other objects in this universe the drugs also are composed of elements on the principle of interaction, mixing and interaction of their Kaifiyat.<sup>10</sup> Some drugs are hot, others are hotter, some cold while others are colder,

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some wet and others are more wet, and in the same way some may be dry while others are drier in *Mizaj*, in the same manner their primary and secondary *Mizaj* and other dependent functions are different among the drugs.<sup>10</sup>

Different drugs produce different effect on different human bodies as per their *Mizaj* (Temperament). The initial phase of drug development in Unani medicine is carried out through analogy based on certain organoleptic as well as physical properties of the drugs. The knowledge of *Mizaj* tells about possible actions of drugs in the body, dosage regime and about the duration up to which a drug can be continuously used by the patient. For instance, the drugs of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> degree can't be used in high doses or for longer duration, while as 1<sup>st</sup> degree and moderate drugs can be used safely for longer duration without any adverse effects on the human body.<sup>10,11</sup>

Ibn-e-Sina and others described *Mizaj* in Unani texts related to the *Ilmul Advia* (Unani pharmacology) amply seems a physical concept stemming out of the very intrinsic theory of the nature of bodies with supra physical connotations. Physical nature of the concept of *Mizaj-e-advia* warrants its critical evaluation, which is possible only when the physical correlate of the *Mizaj* is made comprehensive and empirical. The concept of *Mizaj* of drugs is used as a tool to assess the pharmacological, therapeutic and toxicological properties of Unani drugs.<sup>5,12</sup>

### ***Mizaj-E-Advia* (Temperament of Drugs)**

Drugs used in USM are natural origin i.e. plant, animal or mineral. All are composed of four basic *Arkan* (Basic Elements) & these *arkan* possess various properties like heat, cold, moisture and dryness.<sup>10,13</sup> Different *Mizaj* & pharmacological properties of different drugs are the result of interaction of elements, which manifested on human body after administration. The *Mizaj* of drugs is composed of two parts; one-part is results of interaction of heat and cold while other part is interaction of moisture and dryness. Sometimes it also happens that the interaction of two opposite qualities (*Kaifiate*) i.e. heat with cold as well as moisture with dryness, takes place in such a manner that none of them dominates but both of two are equally effective. As this type of interaction lead to the formation of *motadil Mizaj* (moderate).<sup>13</sup> As per Unani medicine, drugs of *motadil Mizaj* are considered safe as well as least toxic. The potency & toxicity of other categories of Unani drugs are described in comparison with the moderate drug.

On the basis of interaction of different *Arkan* as well as the nature of their effect on human body, there are nine categories of unani drugs have been described.

- **Motadil:** Drug of Motadil temperament does not produce any perceptible effect after administration in therapeutic doses; even if consumed repeatedly.<sup>13</sup>
- **Haar and Motadil:** Drugs of this temperament induces hotness in the body after administration.

- **Barid and Motadil:** Drugs of *Barid & Motadil* temperament makes the body to feel cold after administration.
- **Yaabis and Motadil:** Drugs of this temperament produces dryness in the body after administration.
- **Ratab and Motadil:** Drug of this temperament produced moisture in the body after administration.

Drugs also consist compound *Mizaj* in nature, these are;

- Haar & Ratab,
- Haar & Yabis,
- Barid & Ratab
- Barid & Yabis.<sup>10,11,13</sup>

### **Grade of *Mizaj-E-Advia* (Degree of Drug Temperament)**

**First degree (1<sup>0</sup>) drugs:** If a healthy person takes drugs of 1<sup>0</sup> in its therapeutic dose, it does not produce any effect in the body. If the same drug is taken a few times (2-3 times) then a slightly increased effect is produced.

**Second degree (2<sup>0</sup>) drugs:** After administration, these drug shows some effect even at first dose; and this effect is similar to drug of 1<sup>0</sup> when given few times and in higher dose.

**Third degree (3<sup>0</sup>) drugs:** Produce unhealthy feeling and troubling situation in the body after administration of first proper dose.

**Four degree (4<sup>0</sup>):** Drugs are also known as poisonous drugs. The drugs of four degree are dose dependent; so, any change in the dose may lead to change in the *Mizaj*.<sup>13</sup>

### **Organoleptic Features of Drug Determined the *Mizaj***

**Taste:** On the bases of different combinations of *kaifiate* many types of tastes are formed. There are nine types of tastes have been described: (1) *Dasmi* (greasy), (2) *Hulwa* (sweet), (3) *Maleh* (salty), (4) *Hareef* (pungent), (5) *Hamiz* (Sour), (6) *Kabiz* (astringent), (7) *Murr* (bitter), (8) *Iffs* (acid), (9) *Tuffah* (tasteless) (Tabri, 1995).<sup>10,11,13-15</sup> Substance that taken orally it may be hot, cold or moderate. Hotness of drug is indicated by taste. Hotness of a drug in decreasing order according to taste: Hareef >Murr >Maleh >Hulu >Dasmi. The tastes indicating coldness in increasing order: Kabiz <Hamiz <Iffs.<sup>15</sup>

**Smell:** Smell is weak evidence as compared to the Taste. The substances along with smell are hot in nature according to rule that substance with light smell are less hot and this heat dispersed in the whole matter of substance.<sup>15</sup> However, substances with smell which is soothing in nature, don't possess heat, e.g. Neelofer, camphor etc. Bad smelling substance possess lot of heat and *Ufunah*. As smell is a weak parameter so, smell of a drug is not sufficient to judge its qualities.<sup>10,15</sup>

**Colour:** Assessment of drug's feature by colour is the

weakest of all. But it helps in differentiating between different forms of a single genus only.<sup>10,11,13</sup>

**Istihalah:** It is assumed that easily influenced drug by the heat will also easily acted upon by the innate heat produced by human body. As hotter drug will be more easily influenced by the fire. However, this happens only due to loose structure of the substance not due to its hot nature.

**Injimaad:** Two drugs are similar in term of fluidity and viscosity, lightness and heaviness; if the new drug freezes more easily as compare to the previous known drug, it means the new drug is colder in nature while if it freezes slowly as compared to known one, it means the new drug is hotter in nature.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

The concept of *Mizaj* is one of the distinguishing features of Unani System of Medicine. Naturally occurring *Mufrad* (single) drugs are composed of organic and inorganic component having diverse qualities and functions. The temperaments of active components dominate because of this, the properties of one drug differ from another. Temperament (*Mizaj*) of drug due to its specific phyto-constituent.

*Mizaj-e-advia* determined the pharmacological properties of crude drugs derived from plant, animal and mineral sources as well as to assess therapeutic and toxicological properties of Unani drugs.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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