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EXPLORING THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNANI MEDICINE: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Greeco-Arabic medicine is demonstrated through the Unani medicinal system, which originated in ancient Greece under Hippocrates in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. The contributions of Arabian and Persian philosophers including Rhazes, Avicenna, Al-Zahrawi, and Ibn Nafis permitted this medical tradition—which was based on the theories of Greek physician Hippocrates and Roman physician Galen—to experience major change. It was subsequently developed in the Persian and Arab countries, integrating significant philosophical and scientific concepts. Approximately 90% of Unani medicine's 2,500-year history depends on plant medicines, with just four or five percent using animal and 5-6 % including mineral elements. It provides an entire healthcare system improved with concepts and principles that are helpful for research in medicine in addition to general scientific knowledge. In Unani medicine, health is seen as the balanced functioning of the body's natural elements. The concept of health involves understanding the interaction of Arkan (basic elements), Umar Tabiya (basic principles), Mijaz (temperament), Akhlat (humours), Arwah (spirits), Quwa (faculties), and Tabiyat (nature). Disorders are believed to interrupt this balance, prompting pharmacological (Ilaj bi'l-Dawa) and regimenal (Ilāj bi'l-Tadabīr) treatments. Surgery (Ilāj bi'l-yad) is considered as an alternative when these methods fail to succeed. This review analyzes the key points related with philosophy of the Unani System of Medicine as explored by various Unani physicians and scholars to understand treatment strategies for various ailments.

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INTRODUCTION

Hippocrates and his associates worked to develop the medical knowledge in Greece around 400 years before the author Roman Empire later adopted it. The initial century AD featured the appearance of Dioscorides' remarkable pharmacologic book, which eventually made its way into Arabic as "*Kitabul-Hashayash.*"Greek medicine was first introduced to Arabs in 600 A.D., which was a little earlier the establishment of Islam. Arab healing traditions in the early 7th century remained influenced by the teachings of the Islamic prophet. *Baital-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom), an immense learning facility founded in Baghdad by Harun Rasheed (786–809) throughout the time of Abbasid rule, became the centre for medical education. Greco-Arab medicine developed in the Roman and Persian Empires by Arab conquest.[1][2][3][4]

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Al-Qanūn fit-Tibb, or The Canon of Medicine, was authored by Ibn Sina, also referred to as Avicenna (AD 980–1037), the most significant scholar and physician of his era. It is still the most consulted and translated work on medicine and was studied in European medical schools up to the 17th century. Famous anatomist *Abdul-Latif Baghdādī* (AD 1163–1231) published an additional fifty-seven works about different medical topics, whereas *Ibn Baitar* (AD 1197–1248) published "*Kitāb Jamia-ul Mufradāt*," which described medicinal plants and their properties in extensive detail. Ibne Nafees (AD 1210–1288) wrote 24 books and a commentary on Avicenna's The Canon of Medicine. He published his findings on pulmonary blood circulation with appropriate images much earlier than William Harvey (AD 1578–1657). [5] [6] [7], [8]

Basic philosophy and science of Unani medicine:

According to the "four-element theory" (*Kullia Arkān Arba*), which was proposed by the Greek philosophers Empedocles (504–443), Hippocrates (460–370 BC), and Aristotle (428–348 BC), fire, air, water, and earth possibly of the indicating heat/energy, gases, liquids, and solids, respectively) are the basic elements of the human body. [1]The four-element theory being generally followed by by Hakims, or Unani physicians. However, the term "element" was completely defined in the 17th century as a material consisting of only one kind of atom, and nowadays there exist up to 118 recognised elements. The four key components of the old theory are therefore no longer appropriate in using the term "element," as each of them is now comprised of several elements. [9] According to the Unani concept, the four basic elements (*Arkān*) of the human body—fire, air, water, and earth—are hot and dry, hot and wet, cold and wet, and cold and dry, respectfully. [10]. Their various combinations create four humours, which determine individuals so-called "temperament" (*Mizāj*). [11] [12].The concept states that all that exists in the world has a temperament which is reflected in its functions. The human body has the perfect temperament to provide the highest level of efficiency because it has the optimal combination of constituent ingredients. Unani implementation aims to remove the ailment by restoring the patient's temperament back to normal. [13] [14].

In Unani medicine, the holistic approach for health management provides an expansive viewpoint on the human body's structure and functions, hence focused on (a) the basic elements *Arkān;* (b) humour (*Akhlāt);* (c) temperament *(Mizāj);* (d) vital spirit or pneuma (*Rūh);* (e) energies or strengths *(Al-Quwwā);* and (f) organs and their functions (*Al-A'azā wa Af'āl*). [15], [16].This paper reviews key texts and historical contexts, highlighting the contributions of notable figures and the enduring legacy of Greek medical philosophy. By examining the interplay between medicine and philosophy in ancient Greece, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these disciplines co-evolved, shaping the principles that continue to underpin modern medical practice.

Key Concepts of the Humoral Theory:

Hippocrates' humoral theory suggests that four fundamental body fluids, or humours (*Akhlāt*), are produced by various combinations of the basic four *Arkān*. These include blood *(Dam),* phlegm (*Balgham*), yellow bile (*Safra*), and black bile (*Sauda*).

Blood: Blood is considered as hot and wet

Phlegm: cold and wet

Yellow bile: hot and dry

Black bile: cold and dry in nature. [17]

Functions of Humors:

Balance and Health: When the proportion of these *akhlāt* is disturbed regardless of the the quantity or quality, disease emerges. Health is maintained until these humours are maintained in proportion to their quantity or quality. Whenever the correct equilibrium among the four humours is dissatisfied a person's usual *mizāj* deteriorates into an ill condition which suggests illness. [18]

Individual Constitution: The temperament of each person is established on their specific combination of these humours (*Mizāj*). Such temperaments of choleric (*Safravī),* melancholy (*Saudavī*), phlegmatic (*Balghamī*), and sanguine (*Damvī*) individuals are defined either an excessive amount of yellow bile, black bile, phlegm, or blood, respectively.[17]

Diagnosis and Treatment: In order to detect diseases, physicians will look at the body's humoral balance. *Damvī*, *Balghamī*, *Safravī,* and *Saudavī* are the four *akhlāt* which might predominant in the temper of the disease which is formed. The fundamental principle of Unani medicine is "*Ilāj bil zid,*" or anti-temperamental treatment, which indicates that "a certain disease entity with certain degree of abnormal quality and quantity of *akhlāt* begets drug of corresponding degree and opposite quality and quantity to counteract a disease."[19], [20] [21]

Principles of disease management:

According to the Unani system, a bio-socio-psychological equilibrium indicates health, and any imbalance in this "whole" indicates diseases. Individuals therefore serve as an essential component of the universe[22]. Diseases are believed to develop due to (a) internal factors, like a bad temperament or an organ or tissue's anatomical deformity, or (b) external factors, such environmental influences or microbial interventions. These causes are affected by (a) the air in the atmosphere, (b) food and drink, (c) sleep and wakefulness, (d) the excretion and retention of bodily waste, (e) movement and rest, and (f) movement and rest of the mind[10]. Human health is therefore believed to be influenced by an individual's nutrition, psychology, physiology, ecology, and method of life[23]. These components have to be carefully adjusted to allow humours to remain in equilibrium, which is a sign of a healthy human body. Disease incidence results from any imbalance of humours brought on by their continuous thinning or thickening, inappropriate activity, or putrefaction[15] [24]. The basic concept behind Unani therapy is the principle of contrast, which suggests using a medicine with opposite properties (*Ilāj bil Zid*) to treat a medical condition caused by an abnormal quantity or quality of humours. Tonics and rejuvenating medicines are administered to strengthen the organ if it continues to be sluggish even after the normal temperament had been re-established. Dietotherapy (*Ilāj bil Ghiḍa),* Pharmacotherapy (*Ilāj bil Dawā*), Regimental therapy (*Ilāj bil Tadbīr*), and Surgical therapy (*Ilāj bil Yad)* are the typical classifications for Unani treatment[25]. Dietary management for maintaining health, improving internally resistance, or treating diseases is the basis of diet therapy. Natural medicines, especially herbal ones, are usually employed for pharmacotherapy. Regimental therapy is used to remove harmful materials from the body or divert them to less functioning parts of the body from vital organs like the liver, heart, and brain. Purgation (*Ishāl*), emesis (*Qai*), diuresis (*Idrār*), cupping (*Hijāma*), massage (*Dalak*), exercise (*Riyāzat),* enema (*Huqna),* irrigation (*Nutūl),* inhalation (*Inkabāb*), expectoration (*Tanfīs),* fomentation (*Takmīd*), diversion (*Imāla*), cauterisation (*Amal-e kai*), diaphoresis (*Tarīq),* venesection (*Fasd),* Turkish bath (*Hammām*), foot-bathing (*Pashoya*), and leeching (*Irsāl-e-alq*) are just a few of the exercises and procedures it includes[22]. Surgery is applied in rare cases, when it becomes unavoidable.

Hippocrates Contributions:

Hippocrates is widely recognised as the founder of modern medicine, which is predicated on the observation of clinical symptoms and logical inferences. Hippocrates believed that the body was composed of up of four elements (cold, hot, dry, and wet) and four fluids, or "humours": blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Therefore, when these humours and properties were in balance, a state of health existed. Whenever an individual is sick, the physician had to show the humoral imbalance and facilitate the healing process of useful nature by using purgatives, emetics, haemorrhages or even surgery.

Hippocrates believed that a physician had to closely track symptoms, conduct a physical exam to diagnose the patient, and then provide therapy. As an outcome, Hippocrates established the basis for clinical medicine as it is still used today. He promoted several medical terminologies that are now used by physicians all around, including sepsis, trauma, diagnosis, therapy, and complaints.

Hippocrates and his followers created an extensive collection of literature which are now part of the Hippocratic Corpus, a compilation of works related to medical theory and practice. The fact that some of them include dissident views on philosophy and ancient language styles indicates that they were written centuries after the establishment of clinical medicine. Hippocrates most certainly created directly a sacred promise with similar ethical norms related to correct medical conduct, but the famous Hippocratic Oath was likely written down at least two centuries after Hippocrates. [26:], [27], [28], [29], [30], [31]

Approximately 60 medical treatises have been assigned to him, though they clearly reflect the contributions of multiple authors with divergent viewpoints which wrote over a long period of time. The Hippocratic Corpus, which was compiled during the height of the classical era, is another name for it. It is evident that Empedocles' ideas had a significant impact because the Hippocratic Corpus contains the best known description of the four humors—blood, phelgm, yellow bile, and black bile[32]

Galen's Contribution:

Galen (*Jalinoos* 130-201 AD) was another prominent individual in the development of Roman medicines. He was competent in pharmacology, anatomy, physiology, surgery, medicine, and even Gynaecology

[33]. Galen additionally utilised polypharmacy for his medicinal approach, composing various kinds of plants to complex compounds known as galenicals. One example of this is his passion for the Theriac of Andromachus. The body, he preserved, was able to select whatever element to correct the humoral imbalance. Galen's followers were attempting to figure out what additional ingredients to add in the hopes that they might have the right qualities to correct certain qualities that were thought to be either in excess or not present whenever a remedy did not achieve cure[32]. According to Galen, Tabiyat having the ability to prevent any decline in the body's fundamental state by bringing out appropriate modifications. As a result, it closely resembles the "immunity" that defines modern medical science[22].

Asclepius and Hygea:

The Greek god of medicine, Asclepius, signifies the divine component that constitutes healing. Asclepius mastered the art of healing through the centaur Chiron, and tradition had said that he became so talented that he was capable to rise from the dead. Asclepius temples, or Asclepieia, were healing facilities where patients received care mostly through rituals and dream interpretation. Personalising cleanliness and health, Hygea, the daughter of Asclepius, highlighted the importance of hygiene in conserving health[34].

Discussion and Conclusion:

After approximately 700 years of getting assistance from both the Persian and Arab Empires, the Unani medicinal system, which has started out in Greece some 2400 years ago, came in India in the 14th century. The body of a person is seen as a product of four basic parts that come together to form four humours. These determine an individual's temperament; their natural balance indicates health, and any alteration to it leads to illness. By the combination of medication, nutrition, and regimental therapy, it provides a holistic approach to preventing illnesses, health maintenance, and effective therapy. Its treatment philosophy, *Ilāj bil Zid*, takes the patient's characteristics into consideration. The concept of personalised medicine that currently appears nowadays appears to be a developed and advanced version of the historical fundamental concept of temperament. It's primarily centred on medicinal products and provides a permanent cure based on principles rather than superficial symptom relief. It additionally has little, if any, adverse effects. The Unani treatment produces minimal, if any of them, adverse side effects and treats ailments completely in comparison to simply reducing symptoms. It includes both the medicine used and the patient's specific temperament. The traditional Unani concept of personal temperament seems having a few similarities with the modern concept of personalised medicine. In light of new data, the outdated concepts of traditional systems, which originated from basic observations, may now be revisited for potential enhancement where needed. Some of the ancient Unani medicinal hypotheses, including those regarding blood composition, *Mizāj, Tabiyat, Nafs, pneuma*, etc., must be correctly changed to make them easier for the current age to understand and accept. Traditional Unani formulae include excessive amounts of sugar, which makes them unsuitable for diabetics. Therefore, the recently initiated trend of producing such products as sugar-free powder, tablets, or capsules is encouraging. The rapidly declining art of pulse reading, which has historically been a defining feature of Unani medicine, is another deeply troubling issue. In recent years, the number of Hakims who are skilled at reading pulses has significantly decreased. It is preferable to use observational studies, factorial designs, and preference trials to gather data on the results of Unani treatments. Utilising pharmaco-epidemiology and reverse pharmacology can produce trustworthy information about a drug's safety, mechanism, bioavailability, and epigenetics. Determining the dosage of medications, the duration of drug use to treat acute and chronic conditions, and the shelf life of both single and compound drugs requires careful consideration because environmental factors and pollutants also impact the growth and yield of medicinal plants as well as the quantity and quality of secondary metabolites. The security and efficacy of regimental therapy techniques may also be verified. Unani medicine has the potential to emerge as the most common and preferred option for everybody experiencing medical problems globally following achieving all of this.

This comparative analysis aims to bridge the gap between ancient and modern perspectives on dreaming, offering a nuanced understanding that could enrich both traditional and contemporary approaches to mental health and wellness. The paper also discusses the therapeutic applications of Philosphy interpretation in Unani practice, particularly in diagnosing and addressing imbalances

within the body and mind. Yet, there is a need for further review of the theories proposed by Unani scholars to derive benefits from the system for mankind.

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