



Review Article

## ILAJ BIL-TADBEER, A NON-MEDICAL THERAPY IN UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE- A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

According to classical literature of Unani Medicine, management of any disease depends upon the diagnosis of disease. In the diagnosis, clinical features, i.e., signs, symptoms, laboratory investigations and mizaj (temperament) are important. Any cause or factor is countered by Quwwat-e-Mudabbira-e-Badan (the power of body responsible to maintain health), the failing of which may lead to quantitatively or qualitatively derangement of the normal equilibrium of *Akhlat* (humors) of body which constitute the tissues and organs. This abnormal humor leads to pathological changes in the tissues anatomically and physiologically at the affected site and exhibits the clinical manifestations. The distinctive feature of the Unani system is its emphasis on the diagnostic importance of *Nabz* (the pulse). *Nabz* is the rhythmic expansion of the arteries which is felt by the fingers of the physician. Other methods of diagnosis include examination of *Baul* (urine) and *Baraz* (stool). After diagnosing the disease, *Usool-e-Ilaj* (principle of management) of disease is determined on the basis of etiology. The principle of management is decided which may be one or more of the four types of treatment lines such as *Ilaj bil-Tadbeer* (Regimental therapy), *Ilaj bil-Ghiza* (Diet therapy), *Ilaj bil-Dawa* (Pharmacotherapy), *Ilaj bil-Yad* or *Jarahat* (Surgery). Details about *Ilaj bil-Tadbeer* is described in this paper.

**KEY WORDS:** Ilaj bil-Tadbeer, Usool-e-Ilaj, Morbidity, Unani Literature

### INTRODUCTION

The distinctive feature of the Unani system is its emphasis on the diagnostic importance by examination of *Nabz* (pulse), *Baul* (urine) and *Baraz* (stool). After diagnosing the disease, *Usool-e-Ilaj* is determined on the basis of etiology. *Ilaj-Bil-Tadbeer* (The Regimental Therapy) is one of four principles of management in Unani system of medicine. The other three methods are *Ilaj-Bil-Ghiza*, *Ilaj-bil-Dawa* and *Ilaj-bil-Yad*. *Ilaj bil-Tadbeer* is synonym to Panchkarma in Ayurveda and it is the first method which is applied in the treatment then followed by others if the need may be. It consists of following methods,

*Riyazat* (exercise), *Dalk* (massage (or) friction), *Takmeed* (fomentation), *Natul* (Irrigation), *Hammam* (Turkish bath), *Hijamah* (cupping), *Fasd* (venesection), *Tareeq* (sweating), *Idrar-e-Baul* ( diuresis), *Ishaal* (purgation), *Qai* (emesis), *Huqna* (enema), *Ilam* (Pain induction), *Imala* (diversion of morbid material), *Taleeq* (leeching), *Kaiyy* (cauterization)

- i. The regimental therapy includes procedures like venesection, exercise, cupping, diaphoresis, diuresis, Turkish bath, massage, cautery, purging, emesis, exercise, leeching, etc. among others.
- ii. Dietotherapy aims at treating certain ailments by the administration of specific diets or by regulating the quality and quantity of food.

- iii. Pharmacotherapy deals with the use of naturally occurring drugs derived from plant, animal and mineral sources.
- iv. Surgery that has been in use in Unani practice for a long time employs surgical procedures for which certain instruments and techniques have been designed. Abul Qasim Zahravi (936-1036 AD) has described many instruments in his book *Al-Tasreef* which were the back bone for invention of many modern surgical instruments.

## ILAJ BIL-TADBEER (REGIMENTAL THERAPY)

"Tadbeer" is an Arabic word meaning 'regimen' or systemic plan, whereas *Ilaj*, means, therapy or treatment. So *Ilaj Bil-Tadbeer* means treatment through regimen, through which care of the sick person and maintenance of general health is performed with the help of certain procedures, tools and equipments described by eminent Unani physicians. Different methods of *Ilaj Bil-Tadbeer* in *Usool-e-Ilaj* are described here. [6]

- i. **Riyazat (Exercise):** - Riyazat is a voluntary movement with the aim of *Tanqiya-e-Mavad* (evacuation of unused material) for an individual. It plays an important role not only in maintaining good health and preventing diseases but also in curing certain ailments.[5]

### Benefits of Riyazat

- a. To improve *Istehala* (metabolism) for proper functioning of the body, control weight, improve mood, boost energy, and promote better sleep.
- b. To remove waste products from body
- c. To tone up Individual organs
- d. To maintain and improve flexibility, coordination and balance of the musculoskeletal system and thus strength in the body as a whole
- e. To relieve anxiety, insomnia and depression<sup>7</sup>

- ii. **Dalk (massage or stroke):** - Dalk is a systematic manipulation of body tissue with the hands or tools. Several varieties of Dalk were recommended in Unani System of Medicine.[9]

- a. Hard massage (Dalk - e - Sulb )
- b. Soft massage (Dalk - e - Layyan)
- c. Rough massage (Dalk - e - Khashan )
- d. Prolonged massage (Dalk - e - Taveel)
- e. Moderate massage (Dalk - e - Motadil)

The hard rub or massage is *Mufatfeh-e-Sudad* ([deobstruent) and makes the body firm. Soft massage is sedative and relaxes the body while prolonged massage reduces body fat. Moderate massage develops the body as well as it improves and maintains the blood circulation of the particular organ; rough friction with a rough cloth

enhances vasodilation of the particular organ etc.[10]

### Benefits of Massage Therapy: <sup>4</sup>

- a. Reducing or eliminating pain
- b. Improving joint mobility
- c. Improving Circulation
- d. Improving lymphatic drainage
- e. Reducing muscular tension
- f. Weight gain in premature infants
- g. Pregnancy and labor support: In females, who were given massage therapy during the delivery, showed less agitation, faster delivery and less postpartum psychosis
- h. Relief from symptoms of anxiety, tension, depression, insomnia and stress as well as back pain, headache, muscles pain and some form of chronic pain, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, dislocation, fractures and edema, multiple sclerosis, muscle spasm,[3]
- i. Post-surgical rehabilitation
- j. Helpful in Sports injuries, tendinitis, strains and sprains, Fibromyalgia, Arthritis, bursitis, Kyphosis and Scoliosis[12]

- iii. **Takmeed, Kimad (Fomentation):** It is a particular mode of treatment in which the powder of drugs is tied in a piece of cloth (bag) and used for local fomentation after heating.

The objective of performing Takmeed is listed below

- a. To relieve localized or generalized pain
- b. To reverse inflammatory conditions
- c. To increase the penetration of massage lotion

- iv. **Natul (Irrigation):** It is a procedure in which the pouring of medicated lukewarm water is done slowly over an affected part from a distance.

Benefits of Nutool:[2]

- a. To disperse the matter from affected part
- b. To alter the temperamental state of the organ
- c. To achieve the astringent effect
- d. To relieve several chronic diseases like Paralysis, Sinusitis, Salpingitis, Arthritis, Mastitis, Sleeplessness, Migraine, meningitis, Depression, Tension, Polio, and even certain mental disorders

- v. **Tareeq (Diaphoresis):** Tareeq is the process to speed up the secretions of the sweat glands from the skin. Expulsion of humours by sweating is beneficial in certain fevers, ascites, obesity and joint pain. It is done by using some specific drugs which induce sweating or it can be done by hot chamber, *Hammam*. [11]

Benefit of Tareeq

- a. To excrete the Mawaad - e -Fasida (waste matter) from the skin, blood and other parts of the body.<sup>1</sup>
- b. To reduce the Hararat-e-Mufrit (excessive heat)
- c. To transfer morbid matter (Imala-e-Mawaad)
- d. To purify the blood
- e. To improve dermal nutrition and enhance body texture

vi. **Idrar:** The process of increasing the flow of any liquid from body e.g. urine, menstrual blood, saliva, milk etc. Idrar-e-baul (Diuresis) is the process of increasing the flow of urine. It is one of the important processes for evacuation.[1][2][9]

Benefit of Idrar -E - Baul ( Diuresis)

- a. To excrete poisonous matters, waste products and excess of humours through urine
- b. To purify blood and evacuate deranged humours
- c. To cure diseases of heart
- d. To cure hepatic ailments
- e. To cure pulmonary diseases as well as renal disorder[8]

vii. **Hamмам (Bath, Turkish Bath):** It is a place used for bathing, consists of several rooms with one room leading to the other with specific provisions and conditions customized according to the disease to be treated.

Benefits of Hammam[13]

- a. To reduce *Lazoojat - e - Akhlat* (Viscosity of the humors)
- b. To improve health of the debilitated individuals
- c. To strengthen body
- d. To cure obesity
- e. To increase *Hararat - e - Ghariziya* (Innate heat of the body)
- f. To improve *Istehala* (Metabolism)
- g. To evacuate waste products through skin in the treatment of Falij (paralysis) and Zubool (Muscular wasting )

Types of Hammam:[9][12]

**Hamмам Ramli** (sand bath): A type of Hammam, in which extremities or the whole body up to the neck is buried in the dry sand for few minutes. It is an effective treatment for several diseases, such as chronic ascites, arthralgia, stiffed joints etc.

**Hamмам Dawai** (medicated bath): A type of Hammam, in which medicated water (hot or cold) is used. It is recommended in various diseases.

**Hamмам Bawraqi** (borax bath): A type of Hammam, in which borax mixed water, is used for bathing. It is useful in skin disorders.

**Hamмам Bahri** (sea bath): Hammam, in which sea water is used for bath. As the sea water contains various salts, it is beneficial in certain skin diseases.

**Hamмам Khardali** (mustard bath): Hammam in which, mustard powder is added in the hot water in a dose of 1.75-3.5gms per gallon and the patient is advised to take bath for 5-10 minutes. It is useful for skin diseases.[15]

**Hamмам Harr** (hot bath): Hammam in which hot water is used. This kind of Hammam, softens skin, increases blood circulation, relaxes muscles and reduces pain. It is beneficial in diseases such as arthralgia, hepatalgia. Duration of this bath is 5-10 minutes.

**Hamмам Shamsi** (sun bath): Hammam in which, the person is advised to expose the body to the sunlight. It causes perspiration, resolves flatulence relieves headache and useful in vitiligo etc..

**Hamмам Barqi** (thermal bath): Hammam in which, the person is advised to take bath in hot springs. It is beneficial in the weakness of nerves.

**Hamмам Zaiti** (oil bath or immersion in oil): Hammam in which, the affected part of the body is immersed in lukewarm oil. It is beneficial for fatigue, nervine pain, joints pain, convulsion, tetanus and urinary retention.

**Hamмам Kibriti** (sulphur bath): Hammam in which, the water containing sulphur is used. It is beneficial for skin diseases, purifies the nerves, and relieves the pain due to distension and convulsion.

**Hamмам Qabiz** (astringent bath): Hammam in which, water containing astringent drugs like alum or green vitriol is used. It is beneficial for haemoptysis, and excessive sweating.

viii. **Fasd (Venesection / Blood Letting):** It is the evacuation of blood by incising specific veins or arteries for the treatment of different disorders and pains.[9]

The purpose is evacuation of Madda-e-Fasida (Waste material), it removes excess humours in the same proportion as present in the blood vessels. It is applied for the purification of vitiated humours in Sarsaam (Meningitis) Zaat-ur-Riya (Pneumonia) Zaat-ul-janb (the pleurisy) Irqun Nisaa (the Sciatica) Niqras (Gout) Waja-ul Mafasil (rheumatic Arthritis), Subat (Coma), Maalekholia (Melancholy) Khunaaq-e-wabaai (Diphtheria) Bawaseer (hemorrhoids) Nisyaan (Amnesia), Waja'a al-Qalb (angina pectoris), etc.[14]

Benefits of Fasd:

- a. To maintain normal volume of blood in people who are predisposed to develop the diseases due to excess of blood
- b. To stimulate *Istehala* (metabolism)

- c. To check Kasrat-e-Tams (menorrhagia) and Ru'af (Epistaxis)

To cure Malaria and splenic disorders, Haemorrhoids, Warm-e-Khusiya (Orchitis), Iltehab Rahem (Metritis), Jarb-wa-Hikka (Scabies and Pruritus), *Khuraj* (boil), Hepatitis

- ix. **Hijama (Cupping):** It is a form of local evacuation of humors which is accompanied with *Imala* and attraction of humors from the diseased site to other site with the help of a cup. A cup or horn is attached to the surface of the skin of the diseased part through which negative pressure is created by vacuum. The vacuum is created by the introduction of heat or suction.[9]

*Mihjama* (cupping instrument): An instrument which is used to do *Hijama*. It is made of horns of animals, wood, glass or metal etc. It is a cup shaped instrument in which vacuum is created by fire or suction.

Types of Cupping:[16]

- Hijama bil Shart* (cupping with scarification): *Hijama* in which the skin of that part is cut superficially and deeply by scalpel before applying the instrument. This is done for local evacuation.
- Hijama bila Shart* (cupping without scarification): *Hijama*, in which the skin is not incised and this is done only for diversion of morbid humors from the affected site.
- Hijama bil Nar* (cupping with fire): A type of cupping, vacuum is created by igniting fire.
- Hijama bila Nar* (cupping without fire): A type of cupping, vacuum is created by sucking either by mouth or by suction pump.
- Hijama Ma'i*: A type of cupping in which the decoction of certain drugs are used

Benefits of Cupping:

- It reduces or stops pain by drawing blood away from the area of pain to the surface of the skin.
- Cupping is the best deep tissue massage.
- It allows tissues to release toxins and remove toxins through surface of the skin. The skin is the largest organ & surface and it can clean body toxins quickly and efficiently.
- It activates the lymphatic system, the veins, the arteries and the capillaries. It supplies blood and warmth to an effected organ and therefore promotes healing.
- It enhances blood circulation, reduces stress and depression by releasing chemicals in the brain.
- Magnetic stimulation increases the therapeutic effectiveness of cupping.
- Draws underlying blood and fluid away from the area of inflammation to the surface of the skin and therefore relieves congestion from the inflamed area.
- It stimulates tissues and internal organs.

- It triggers and stimulates immune system.
- It draws local congestion from deep muscles to surface of the skin.
- It improves physical and mental health conditions.
- It enhances general health of body.
- Local stimulation builds up body's natural resistance to illnesses.
- It prevents muscle atrophy (Shrinking of muscles).
- It helps supply more oxygen, hormones and essential enzymes to the local tissues and joints, thus keeps the local tissues warm and increases elasticity and flexibility of the muscles and joints.
- It Benefits muscular pains by relaxing spastic muscle fibers.
- It stimulates tissues metabolism.
- It allows 80% elimination of substances that cause pain.
- It relieves stagnation and congestion.
- It removes poison from bites etc.
- Cupping on the back points can treat corresponding internal organs. It cleans body of accumulated irritants that cause inflammation.[17]
- It may increase activity in fighting infections and attack tumor.
- It relieves muscles spasms, hardening or stiffness of muscular tissue.
- It promotes metabolism within skin tissues and accelerates the function of both sweat and sebaceous glands which leads to secretion of salts, sebaceous material and the excretion of sweat.
- It reduces unwanted side effects of drugs, removes their residue and reduces risk of drug toxicity.
- Dry cupping is 10 times more effective than acupuncture.
- Cupping works in a radius of 10 cm and depth of 10 - 12 cm.
- Massage cupping: Massage cupping on the back is the equivalent of walking 2km. Massage cupping on the liver aids the liver to detoxify the body. Massage cupping over the intestines increases absorption and nutrition uptake
- Massage cupping over the digestive system stimulates the inner organs, their peristaltic movement and secretion of digestive fluids, strengthens the power of digestion and absorption of nourishment and the power of secretion.

The best days for cupping:

The best days for cupping are the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of the Islamic month which coincide with Monday, Tuesday or Thursday.

Area of the body to avoid cupping:

- Ulcerated area

- b. Severe skin allergies / conditions ego Boils
- c. Open skin / wounds
- d. The private parts
- e. Varicose vein
- f. Bone fractures
- g. Pulled muscles (May perform dry / massage cupping only)

However, the greatest benefit of cupping (Hijama) is reviving and following the Sunnah.

- x. **Ishaal (Purgation):** It is a free evacuation of faeces by some drugs either as a part of treatment or as a manifestation of some disease.[9][16][17]

Objectives:

- a. To resolve the morbid matter
- b. To activate the derivative effect
- c. To achieve antispasmodic and detoxifying effect

- xii. **Qai (Emesis):**Qai is the evacuation of gastric contents through mouth. The main purpose of vomiting is to eliminate toxic/morbid material from the gastro intestinal tract.[9]

Muqi: It refers to the drug which induces vomiting. These drugs are useful in case of ingested poisons.

Benefit of Qai

- a. To cure disease like *Suda'a* (Headache), *Shaqqeqa* (Migraine), *Tonsillitis*
- b. To cure *Zaat-al-Riya* (Pneumonia)
- c. To cure *Zeeq al-Nafs Shu'bi* (Asthma)
- d. To cure mental disorders, e.g. *Junoon* (Mania) and *Maalikholia* (Melancholia)

- xiii. **Huqna (Enema):** It is a method of evacuation of waste products from the intestines by the administration of drugs through anal canal. Apart from this it is also used to get rid of pain of intestinal and renal colic. *Huqna* is also used in the cases when the patient is unable to take the drugs or diets through the mouth.

*Huqna Ghidha'iyya* (nutritive enema): In case of coma or any pathology in the throat, nutrition can be supplied to the body in the form of enema. This type of enema includes meat soup, milk, eggs etc.

Objectives:

- a. To get rid of the superfluties from intestine
- b. To relieve kidney and bladder pain
- c. To resolve inflammatory condition of the adjacent
- d. To relieve colic pain
- e. To relieve constipation particularly in the case of intestinal atony

- xiii. **Ielam (pain induction):** To simulate the nerves, sometimes pain is induced by pressing or tying the organ or cupping of the organ etc.

- xiv. **Imala (Diversion of Morbid Material):**Imala means 'diversion' of morbid humours from the affected site to the other site or increase in the flow of humours towards a specific site.

*Imala Qareeb:* Diversion of morbid humours towards the adjacent organs or parts of the body lying adjacent to the affected site or organ[9]

*Imala Baeced:* Diversion of morbid humours towards a distant organ or part of the body distant to the affected site or organ

For the purpose of *Imala*, different techniques are used for treatment of conditions where *Imala-e-Damvi* (Hyperemia) causes certain problems. Through this method, the flow of matter is diverted to the other side, as a result, the congestion of the affected part is reduced in a natural way.

Benefits of *Imala*:

- a. To relieve pain and nervous irritability
- b. To relieve burning sensation
- c. To relieve the *Qai - e - Hawamil* (Hyper emesis gravidarum)
- d. To dissolve (subside) inflammation
- e. To dissolve lipoma and tumors
- f. To absorb fluids or matter accumulated in hypodermic spaces or cavities

- xv. **Taleeq al-Alaq (Leeching/ Hirudatherapy):** It is a method of evacuation of bad humours from the body with the help of leeches. Leeches draw blood from deeper tissues. The selected point of treatment should be washed with a solution of borax and rubbed until get red. Leeches should be washed first and then applied. A little clay or blood should be smeared in the selected point to enable them stick better. After achieving the target and when they get distended, leeches should be detached by dusting salt borax or the ashes of burnt cloth, wool or sponge.[9]

It is used for treatment of skin diseases e.g. *Sa'fa* (Baldness and favus), *Qooba* (Ringworm), *Kalaf*, *Namash*, *Thaleel* (Moles), *filariasis* (*Da al-Feel*), *Meningitis* (*Sarsaam*), *Pneumonia*

- xvi. **Kaiyy (cauterization /cautery)**

It is the process in which the body tissues are destroyed as a part of treatment by caustic agent, hot iron rod etc.[9]

*Mikwat* (diathermy instrument): An apparatus or instrument used for the purpose of cauterization. It is usually made up of iron, copper, silver and gold. Gold is considered to be the best for cautery.

Cauterization is an effective method of treating several conditions e.g. destructive lesions, removal of putrefactive matter and bleeding etc.

The place to be cauterized must be visible so that the cauterization is done satisfactorily after good observation. However, in the case of deep located organs e.g. mouth, nose and anus, suitable speculum is required. It should be coated with talcum and Armenian bole, soaked in vinegar, wrapped with a piece of cloth. The speculum should be subsequently cooled with rose water or several other juices.

Benefit of Kai (Cauterization):

- a. To prevent the spread of putrefaction
- b. To alter the cold temperament or to rectify the temperament of a particular organ
- c. To disperse and remove the putrefactive matters, firmly adherent to the particular organ
- d. To arrest hemorrhage as it retains the flow of blood
- e. To prevent the accumulation of catarrhal matter

## CONCLUSION

Thus, *Ilaj bil-Tadbeer* is a method, through which care of the sick person and maintenance of general health is attained through modulation or modification in *Asbaabe Sitta Zarooriya* (six essential factors for life). In other words, regimental therapies are mostly non medicinal techniques / procedures by which we modulate the life style, dietary habits and habitat of the patient and practice some other therapeutic regimens for the treatment of various diseases. The eminent Unani scholar, *Ibn Sina* has mentioned 36 regimes in his famous book "Canon of Medicine". These regimes are actually meant for the *Istefragh* (evacuation) of *Akhlate radiya* (morbid fluids), from the body. These morbid humors are true culprits responsible for the genesis of disease. As soon as these morbid humors are removed from the body, normal health gets restored. It has been utilized for preventive as well as therapeutic measures for thousands of years by ancient Unani physicians.

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