

## Concept of Akhlat-E-Arba and its Importance

Dr. Md. Tauhid Alam<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sultana Anjum<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Md. Tanwir Alam<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Jamal Akhtar<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PG Scholars Department of Kulliyate Tib, GTCH, Patna, India

<sup>2</sup>PG Scholars Department of Amaraze Jid wa Tanzeenniyat, NIUM, Bengaluru

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor Department of Kulliyate Tib, GTCH, Patna, India

<sup>4</sup>Associate Professor Department of Kulliyate Tib, GTCH, Patna, India

Dr. Md. Tauhid Alam, PG Scholar, Department of Kulliyate Tib, Govt. Tibbi College and Hospital, Kadam Kuan, Patna (Bihar), India.800003

Email: drtauhidalam25@gmail.com.

---

### Abstract

The concept of Akhlat-e-Arba (Four Humors) is rooted in the medical traditions of ancient Greece, Persia, and Islamic scholarship, profoundly shaping the understanding of human behavior, health, and temperament. This framework classifies human temperaments into four types—Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic, and Phlegmatic—each governed by the dominance of a specific humor: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. The paper explores the historical evolution, development, and present-day relevance of Akhlat-e-Arba within the Unani medical system. It emphasizes its foundational role in diagnosing and treating diseases by reestablishing the natural balance of humors. Furthermore, the concept aligns closely with Islamic moral and spiritual teachings, underlining its broader influence on ethical conduct and personal growth. In contemporary contexts, the principles of Akhlat-e-Arba offer valuable perspectives in personality psychology and individualized therapy, thereby enhancing interpersonal understanding. Despite significant advancements in modern medical science, this holistic model continues to be relevant by reinforcing the interconnection between physical, psychological, and spiritual health. This abstract highlights the enduring legacy of Akhlat-e-Arba and advocates for its integration into both traditional and modern medical paradigms to support a holistic understanding of human well-being.

**Keywords:** Akhlat, Akhlat-e-Arba, Humors, Unani System of Medicine (USM)

---

### INTRODUCTION:

The word Akhlat means the substance which is in mixture form. The moist and fluid regions of the body formed by the transformation and metabolism of food are known as akhlat.<sup>1</sup>

Khilt is a liquid substance and made up of Istehal Awwal (first metabolism) of food in Kabid (liver)<sup>2,3</sup>

### DEFINITION:

Khilt is a body's fluid and moist substance that is encased in vessels (urooq) to keep it from spoiling.<sup>4</sup> and to provide Badal Ma Tahallul through conversion into Jauhar Aza.<sup>3</sup>

Classification of Akhlat is according to their properties of being Mahmudah (good) and ghayr mahmudah (bad). Akhlat Mahmudah are those akhlat which are produced normally in the course of metabolism, but do not serve any specific physiological functions and Akhlat ghayr Mahmudah are those akhlat which are produced normally in the body, are needed to the body and serve specific physiological functions and therefore, are needed to be expelled out of the body.<sup>3</sup>

### MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The present study is a descriptive and analytical review of the concept of Akhlat-e-Arba (four humors) in Unani medicine. Data were collected through an extensive review of classical Unani texts such as Kulliyat-e-Qanoon, Kamil-us-Sana'a, Kitab al-Mukhtarat fil-Tibb, and Firdaus al-Hikmat. Additional references were sourced from research databases including PubMed, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using search terms such as "Akhlat-e-Arba," "humors," "Unani medicine," and "temperament." Relevant published books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and government publications were also consulted. The collected data were analyzed to elucidate the historical evolution, physiological basis, and clinical significance of Akhlat in human health and disease as per Unani principles.

### CONCEPT OF AKHLAT ARBA:

If the amount of any khilt present in the blood is elevated above its natural ratio, the body's colour may change, and the body becomes prone to diseases caused by that khilt.<sup>5</sup>

Harmony of Khilt may be altered by specific Mizaj, in different phase age and seasons, residences and different diets etc. For instances according to age, more production of Safra in young, Dam in children, Sauda in elder people and Balgham in elderly persons.<sup>4</sup>

Akhlat are formed in the Jigar (liver) through long processes that is, first of all digestion starts from mouth and passes to the stomach where Hrarat Gharizia acts upon food stuff and converts into Kailus (liquid substance, Hazm Awwal) after that Ajzae Latifa (diluted substances) absorbs from stomach and intestine through Uroq Masarika (mesenteric vein) and enters into the porta hepatis. In liver complete Nuzj occurs (hazm sani) and Akhlat as a blood are formed properly. After formation precipitated substance that is Sauda and at surface is Safra instead of Dam and Balgham are blending properly and reach to right atrium in the form of Dam and provides nutrition to the Aza<sup>4,6</sup>

There are four types of Akhlat present in human body, and each Khilt has its own characteristics according to its Mizaj (temperament). These four Akhlat are Dam, Balgham, Safra, and Sauda, procreate to all human organs.<sup>7</sup> Each Akhlat has a distinct Mizaj, such as Khilt-e-dam is har Ratab (hot and moist), Khilt-e-balgham is Barid Ratab (cold and moist), Khilt-e-safra is Har yabis (hot and dry) and Khilt-e-sauda is Barid yabis (cold and dry).<sup>8</sup>

Characteristics of Akhlat are Red in color, without any unpleasant odor, Sweet in taste occur in Dam, White transparent, moderate viscosity tasteless occur in Balgham, Reddish yellow, bitter taste in Safra and Reddish black, sour and astringent in taste in Sauda.<sup>4,9</sup>

➤ Khilt-e-dam gets superiority in all Akhlat.<sup>8</sup> The function of khilt-e-dam is to provide nutrition to the body, thereby energy is produced, and replacement of wear and tear is attained. It promotes growth. Dam is known as hamil al-ruh, ruh is absorbed into blood and carried to the tissues, it keeps the body warm and maintain the body's temperature constant, and also produces beauty and shine in the skin.<sup>6,10</sup>

➤ Khilt-e-balgham is second to dam in superiority.<sup>8</sup> In fact it is itself blood which has not been completely transformed into blood,<sup>8</sup> its maintenance of moisture in the organ and nourishes the brain.<sup>10</sup>

➤ Khilt-e-safra is next to dam and balgham in superiority.<sup>8</sup> The function of khilt-e-safra is to make the blood dilute and helps the blood to flow through the thin vessels of the body. It has detergent action on intestine hence it washes out the sticky and viscous secretion from the intestine. It also prevents the putrefaction in upper part of the intestine.<sup>8,10</sup>

➤ Khilt-e-sauda is inferior most amongst all the akhlat.<sup>8</sup> The function of khilt-e-safra is to provides strength to the bone, after complete formation it goes to the blood stream and spleen, It makes the blood viscous, Provides nutrition to Tehal (spleen) and acts as appetizer.<sup>9</sup>

❖ Symptoms of Ghalba-e-dam are red coloration of skin, Hotness of body, yawning, pandiculation, sleep increase, urooq mumtali, epistaxis, bleeding gums, heaviness on head, eye, and temple, hawas mukadar, nabz azeem, fatigue, localized itching on bleeding area, sweat taste, busoor wa Qurooh, red and ghaleez urine.<sup>11</sup>

❖ Symptoms of Ghalba-e-balgham are excess and whitish colored urine, soft pulsation, cold tactile, decreased thirst, sleepiness and laziness, excessive salivation, delayed digestion, Nisyan (forgetfulness), Drowsiness.<sup>11</sup>

❖ Symptoms of Ghalba-e-safra are Pale color skin, dryness and bitterness in mouth, nausea, decreased appetite, bilious vomiting, loose motions, burning micturation, tachycardia, increased thirst, fiery dreams and feeling of nibbling and laziness.<sup>11</sup>

❖ Symptoms of Ghalba-e-sauda are yellowish brown to black colored skin, dryness, increase appetite, anxiousness, sadness, reddish black urine, excess growth of hair on body along with pain at spleen, sleeplessness and dreams of black objects.<sup>11</sup>

❖ Any disharmony occurs in khilt-e-dam leads to Amraz-e-Damviya like Judari, Ha'sba, Humaa-ul-dam, Auram hadah surkh and different kinds of Gout.<sup>12</sup>

❖ Excess of Balgham develops Barid Amraz Amraz i.e., Fali (paralysis), Saktah (apoplexy), Laqwah (Facial palsy), Nisyan (Forgetfulness) and Hummae Balghami (phlegmatic fever), Lisarghus (type of meningitis), Rasha (tremor), Tashannuj (Convulsions), Dawar (vertigo), Sadar (Giddiness), Kabus (night mare), Sara (epilepsy), Khidr (paresthesia), Warm-e- Sulb wa Layyan (Type of Inflammation), Tahabbuj (Edema).<sup>4,13,14</sup>

❖ Safra is cause for Har Amraz i.e., Hummae Safrawia (bilious fever), Yarqan Asfar (Jaundice), Warme Kabid Safrawi (hepatitis), Sudae safrawi (Bilious headache), Qarha mathana (ulcer of urinary bladder), Sarsam Safrawi (Faranitus) (Akseer azam)<sup>15</sup> Melancholia, Juzam (leprosy), Sartan (cancer), Dawali (varicose vein), Da ul Fil (elephantiasis), Hummiyat Raba (Quarter fevers), Saqiroos, Qatrab are common disease

condition related to Khilt Sauda.<sup>7,8,14,16,17,18</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The concept of Akhlat-e-Arba or the Four Humors plays a pivotal role in Unani medicine, with its roots deeply embedded in ancient Greek, Persian, and Islamic medical traditions. This humoral theory offers a comprehensive view of human physiology, pathology, and psychology, which continues to influence both diagnostic and therapeutic practices in Unani medicine today.

The foundational principle of Akhlat-e-Arba is the balance of four humors: Dam (blood), Balgham (phlegm), Safra (yellow bile), and Sauda (black bile), each with distinct properties and functions within the body. The interplay between these humors and their relation to temperament (Mizaj) significantly affects the physical and mental health of an individual. According to this theory, diseases arise when the equilibrium between these humors is disrupted.

Throughout the literature review and classical texts, it becomes evident that Akhlat-e-Arba serves not just as a medical theory but also as a holistic approach to human health, encompassing mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. The temperament theory also informs various social and psychological dimensions, influencing behaviors, emotions, and moral disposition.

Despite advancements in modern medical science, the principles of Akhlat-e-Arba offer a unique perspective on understanding diseases like arthritis, diabetes, and mental health disorders from a humoral imbalance point of view. Modern studies examining the relevance of this theory have shown that while the molecular and mechanistic understandings of the body have evolved, the holistic framework of Unani medicine provides a complementary approach, particularly in personalized healthcare.

However, certain challenges arise when integrating ancient theories like Akhlat-e-Arba into modern medicine. The language, tools, and paradigms of contemporary biomedicine differ vastly from those of traditional systems. Yet, with careful adaptation and evidence-based approaches, this ancient theory could find renewed relevance, especially in areas like psychosomatic disorders, lifestyle diseases, and preventive medicine.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of Akhlat-e-Arba remains a cornerstone of Unani medicine, providing an essential framework for understanding both health and disease. Its holistic approach to the human body, encompassing physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects, continues to offer valuable insights. While there are limitations in directly applying this ancient theory to modern medical paradigms, it still holds significant potential in complementary and alternative medicine, especially in the management of chronic diseases and lifestyle-related disorders.

The timeless legacy of Akhlat-e-Arba demonstrates that health is not merely the absence of disease but a harmonious balance of all aspects of life. As we continue to explore the integration of traditional and modern systems, the humoral theory can inspire innovative approaches in personalized and preventive healthcare, emphasizing the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit.

**Declaration by Authors:**

**Ethical Approval:** Not Applicable.

**Acknowledgement:** - The authors are grateful to the Department of Kulliyat, Government Tibbi College and Hospital, Patna, for providing academic support and encouragement. The authors also wish to thank the library staff for their assistance in accessing classical Unani manuscripts and texts. A special note of appreciation is extended to the scholars and authors whose foundational work in Unani medicine has enriched the present study.

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** - The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

## REFERENCES:

1. Kabeeruddin M. Kitab-ul-Akhlat. New Delhi: Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM); 2009. p. 64.
2. Qarshi MH. Jame ul Hikmat. Ed. 1, Vol 1, Idara Kitab us Shifa, New Delhi, 2011, 42-43
3. Kabiruddin M. Kulliyat-e-Qanun. Vol.I,II. idara kitab-ul-Shifa, New Delhi; 2015: pp. 44.
4. Masih Abu Sahl. Kitab-ul-Miah (Urdu Translation by CCRUM) vol.1, New Delhi 2008; p 101-107.

5. Razi, Kitabul-Murshid(Urdu Translation by Moaziul Islam Nadvi) 1<sup>st</sup>Edition, NewDelhi,Taraqqi Urdu Beuro, 2000; p.56.
6. Shah MH. The General Principles of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine. Vol 1, Idara Kitab-u-Shifa, New Delhi, 2007, 43-44.
7. Majoosi Ali Ibn Abbas, Kamilus Sana (Urdu Translation by Hkm Ghulam Husnain Kantoori) Vol 1. 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. idara kitab-ul-Shifa, New Delhi; 2010: p 109.
8. Nafis BU. Kulliyat Nafisi. New Delhi: Daftar Al-Masih; 1935. p. 60-63, 68, 70, 73.
9. Baghdadi IH. Kitab Al Mukhtarat fil Tib. Vol. I, CCRUM, New Delhi, YNM, 27-29.
10. Kabiruddin M. Ifada-e-Kabir. Faisal publications jama masjid Deoband, New Delhi; 2010. P. 22.
11. Razi, AMBZ. Kitabul Mansuri (Urdu translation) CCRUM, New Delhi; 1991: p. 75,76.
12. Rabban-Al Tabri. Firdaus-ul-Hikmat, New Delhi, 2010; p 51,124
13. Arzani MA. Mizan-u-Tib. Faisal Publication, Deoband, 2001, 56-57.
14. Jurjani Ahmed Al Hasan, Zakhira Khawarzam Shahi(urdu translation by Hakeem Hadi Husain) vol 1, 2010, idara kitab-ul-Shifa, New Delhi; p 24-28.
15. Khan A. Akseer Azam. Vol-1,11. Lucknow: Matab Munshi Naval Kishore; 1917: 29,83,511,542,724, 885.
16. Tabari, A.M. Moalijat-e-Buqratiya (Urdu translation by CCRUM). Vol I, CCRUM, New Delhi; 1997: pp. 374,431.
17. Tabari, A.M. Moalijat-e-Buqratiya (Urdu translation by CCRUM). Vol II, CCRUM, New Delhi; 1997: pp.244, 249,371.
18. Kabiruddin H. Humiyat Qanoon. Ejaz Publishing House. New Delhi; 2007: pp. 199.