The Role of Ṭabī‘at in the Treatment of Disease

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Abstract
Unani Medicine is a comprehensive system and it possesses its own chronological background. It deals with the status of health and disease. Hippocrates says that health and disease states depend on akhlāt (humoral) balance. In Unani Medicine the concept of tabī‘at is a pivotal concept and it plays the core role in the preservation of existing health and restoration, if health is lost. Ṭabī‘at with the help of their different Aala (tools) and tadbir maintain the physiological functions of the body and physician acts as supporter of tabī‘at. The objective of this paper is to focus and elucidate the role of tabī‘at and physicians in the treatment of disease.

Keywords: Akhlāt, Ṭabī‘at, Aala, Tadbir.

1. Introduction
The human beings are encircled by numerous factors which are opportunistically disturbing the healthy condition. Even though all the population are not equally affected i.e. some of them remain healthy and some are affected. What is the reason behind this? The Unani Medicine believes that there is a faculty called as tabī‘at in every individual which varies from person to person. Ṭabī‘at is also called as quwwat-e- mudabbira badan (supreme planner of the body) means it is liable for the entire planning and works for the welfare of the body and also combat with disease. When tabī‘at is strong enough to resist the abnormal circumstances, it does not need any help of physician. Therefore, it is clear that the individual in the population with strong tabī‘at are not affected at all and whose tabī‘at is debilitated become affected. When tabī‘at becomes debilitated, physician assists tabī‘at so that, it can again become powerful enough to combat the situation. Above discussion clearly indicates that the physicians role starts when tabī‘at become feeble or defeated with the causative matter.

Explanation
As the change is the worldwide phenomenon. The same cycle can be seen in the process of disease causation. Whatever the changes taking place, can be tolerated up to the potency of tabī‘at which fights to eradicate the causative materials out of the body. When it fails to conquer and to dissolve the morbid materials the disease appears. In relation with disease appearance and its eradication Hkm. Syed Ištīqaq Ahmad says that tabī‘at protect the body by variety of measures and eliminate the disease when it arises through different normal channels. Now, the relation between tabī‘at, disease occurrence and its eradication is clear from above explanation.

In Unani Medicine the disease consists of four stages which are as follow:

- **Zamane Ibtida (Onset Phase):** In this stage tabī‘at, not started the process of nuzj (concoction) in the causative matter.
- **Zamane Tazaiud (Increasing Phase):** In this stage tabī‘at, starts the process of nuzj in the causative matter. The slight change in colour of urine and appearance of ‘gumam’ in or over the surface of urine is the diagnostic change of this stage which indicates tabī‘at giving nuzj in causative matter.
- **Zamane Iniha (Climax Phase):** In this stage the appearance of more rasāb (sediments) in urine is the evidence that tabī‘at, has completed the process of nuzj.
- **Zamane Inhiat (Convalescence Phase):** In this stage all the symptoms reduce and dominancy of tabī‘at, over disease occurs. As soon as the process of nuzj is completed by tabī‘at, patients becomes safe and the eradication of causative matter is started and ultimately expelled out of the body through normal channels. As tabī‘at performs its own role in different stages of disease. The role of physician is to adopts such regimens which favour the action of tabī‘at. If any adopted regimen is against the urge of tabī‘at that may
prove fatal for patients.

If ṭabi’at is overwhelmed then the disease process is evolved [7]. Therefore, in such state it needs assistance from physician. The physician assists ṭabi’at by adopting appropriate treatment modalities which are of three types:

- Regimen and diet
- Use of drugs
- Manual operation [8].

Management with regimen and diet

The word regimens stand for the supervision of the ashab-e-sittah Zarooriyah (six essential factors) [8]. Therefore, the regimenal management includes the modification in six essential factors because when these six factors are in favour of ṭabi’at, health is maintained otherwise abnormalities can arise. The six essential factors are as follows:

- Hawa-e-Muhit (Atmospheric Air)
- Makool-wa-Mashroob (Food and Drinks)
- Harkat-wa-Sakoon-e-Nafsani (Psychological activity and Repose)
- Naum-wa-Yaqzah (Sleep and Wakefulness)
- Istifragh-wa-Ihtibas (Elimination and Retention) [9].

These six essential factors either directly or indirectly influences the ṭabi’at. In relation with these factors Galen delineates that sue tadbir i.e. any malpractice in any essential factor may be the causative of “Fasaade ṭabi’at” [10]. Therefore, the role of physician is to supervise and modify these factors according to the requirement of the body, so that ṭabi’at can easily maintain the normalcy.

In the treatment of any disease food management play very important role. Because, in the healthy condition food is taken for the preservation of health and for aid of ṭabi’at, but in diseased state the purpose is not the same [11]. Therefore, the physicians recommended the dietary regimen in healthy or in disease state which are favourable for ṭabi’at. In dietary recommendation sometimes physician desires to stop food or increased or reduced or allow in moderate quantity. All these recommendation are based on strength of patients with the demand for medicine [16]. So we can say that whatever the response appear in placebo trial is the consequence of action of ṭabi’at because actually patients is taking inactive substance. This placebo response is an evidence that there is a hidden power (ṭabi’at) inside every individual which works for the welfare of human beings.

As the disease management is based on “Ilaz bil Zid” therapy while conservation of health is accomplished through “Ilaz bil Misl” therapy [8]. Therefore, the physician by understanding these three principles is in position to choose such drugs which either favours the “Ilaz bil Zid” or “Ilaz bil Misl” therapy. Whatever, the drugs he chooses that must be in accordance with the nature of ṭabi’at [8]. While prescribing any drugs, its dose management is very essential because higher the potentiality of drugs, higher the toxicity to ṭabi’at. Therefore, higher potential drugs should be used in rare condition or can be used with precaution [8].

In a clinical trial, placebo response is an important fraction. A placebo is an inactive substance given to satisfy a patient’s demand for medicine [16]. So we can say that whatever the response appear in placebo trial is the consequence of action of ṭabi’at because actually patients is taking inactive substance. This placebo response is an evidence that there is a hidden power (ṭabi’at) inside every individual which works for the welfare of human beings.

From the above discussion of drugs therapy, it is concluded that firstly, drug boosts ṭabi’at, so that it can maintain normalcy. Secondly, drug prevents the defeat of ṭabi’at from the initial stage of disease. In treatment of any disease, the Unani physician has a vast confidence on this hidden power (ṭabi’at).

Conclusion

It is concluded that ṭabi’at plays an important role in preservation and restoration of health. The disease is the consequence of defeat of ṭabi’at because when ṭabi’at is strong, it can easily combat the causative matter and maintain normalcy. In healthy condition ṭabi’at does not need any assistance from physicians and preserve the existing health but when it is defeated, it needs to be assisted from the preliminary stage. Therefore, in Unani Medicine physician acts a servant or assistant of ṭabi’at and he must not let the circumstances to ṭabi’at to overcome because in case of defeat the patient’s condition becomes worst.

References

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