

Studying the four temperaments in medical hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and comparing the results with temperament medicine

Abolfazl Saadati¹, Hasan Naghizadeh^{2*}, Seyed Hosseyn Seyed Mosavi¹

1- Department of Islamic Education, School of Theology and Islamic Education, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.

2- Department of Quranic Sciences and Hadith, School of Theology and Islamic Education, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.

*Correspondence should be addressed to Mr. Hasan Naghizadeh; Email: naghizadeh@um.ac.ir

Article Info

Received: Mar 17, 2018

Received in revised form:

May 8, 2018

Accepted: May 15, 2018

Available Online: Jun 23, 2018

Keywords:

Hadith

Medical hadith

Medicine

Temperaments

Temperament medicine

Traditional medicine

Abstract

Background and Objective: A major proportion of discussions in temperament medicine have to do with the four types of temperament, namely phlegmatic, melancholic, choleric, and sanguine. Similar titles can be detected in medical hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (AS). The question is: Are the temperaments proposed in hadiths equivalent to the ones explicated in traditional medicine? The current study sought to answer this question.

Method: Following an explanatory-comparative design, the study utilized content analysis to explain temperaments from the perspective of Ahl al-Bayt's hadiths. The results were then compared with Hippocrates' ideas in traditional medicine. The research focused on reference books in hadiths and traditional medicine. All ethical issues were observed in this study and the researchers declared no conflict of interests.

Results: The results indicated that, in hadiths, the term "temperament" refers to different mixtures of human body. The four mixtures of human body include rih, marrah, blood, and phlegm. No reference has been made to black bile and yellow bile in hadiths. On the other hand, some experts believe that black bile and yellow bile are subcategories of marrah. According to traditional medicine, the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire correspond to the four temperaments of melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine, and choleric respectively. Also, another subtle material, known as vapor spirit, originates from the four temperaments.

Conclusion: Based on the obtained results, there are similarities between what has been dubbed "four temperaments and vapor spirit" in traditional medicine and what has been discussed in medical hadiths about the body mixture of humans.

Please cite this article as: Saadati A, Naghizadeh H, Seyed Mosavi SH. Studying the four temperaments in medical hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and comparing the results with temperament medicine. J Res Relig Health. 2018; 4(3): 118- 128.

Summary

Background and Objective: A fundamental issue in understanding medical hadiths is the discussion of temperaments. Similarly, this theory constitutes a foundation of temperament (traditional) medicine. The question is: What kind of definition has been proposed in temperament-related hadiths for the term "temperament" and what are the similarities between this definition and the one proposed in temperament medicine? This study sought to find the answer to this question.

Method: This library based study adopted an explanatory-comparative design and utilized content

analysis for examining temperaments in the hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and temperament medicine. Thus, to clarify the concept of "temperaments", reference books on terminology were consulted. To examine the concept in hadiths, comprehensive software programs of hadiths and the Derayat al-Noor of Noor Computer Research Center were exploited. The relevant hadiths were extracted and examined, with all the hadiths being regarded as a family of temperament-related hadiths. Islamic jurisprudence was used to study the content of the hadiths. On the other hand, to gain an understanding of the term "temperaments", two major books – namely "Ketab Jalinus Fel Asghat Ala Ray el Boghrat" and "Description of Hoppocrates' chapters" – were consulted. At the end, a comparison was

conducted between the ideas emerging from hadiths about temperaments and the ones extracted from temperament medicine.

Results: The results indicate that the concept of “temperaments” has different meanings in terminology books of Arabic (1). According to one meaning, it refers to different natures based on which humans have been created by God (2). Thus, temperaments refer to the mixtures of human body created by God. The same meaning has been proposed in hadiths for human temperaments. In a hadith, it has been mentioned that people complained to Prophet Muhammad (AS) because of changes in water and rotten temperaments (3). Other hadiths have also referred to the mixtures of human body: food produces blood and water produces phlegm (4). Feyz Kashani uses the term “Kannah”, which apparently means that Imam (AS) has used heat and drought to refer to melancholy and phlegm (5). Also, in *Majmaol Bahreyn*, Tarihi believes that heat and drought of earth refer to melancholy and phlegm respectively (6). Allameh Majlesi has referred to the same thing (7). Other hadiths have been proposed with the same theme. For example, in a hadith, the four temperaments of phlegm, blood, rih, and marrah have been proposed (8). According to famous figures (Hippocrates, Galenius, and their disciples) of temperament medicine, the four elements that constitute body are fire, water, air, and earth leading to four different temperaments of choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine, and melancholic respectively. Furthermore, another subtle substance, namely vapor spirit, stems from the four temperaments (9). Ibn Sina believes that this vapor spirit is a subtle and penetrating material originating from temperaments and finding its way in all body organs (10).

Conclusion: Based on the mentioned hadiths, the four temperaments are phlegm, blood, rih, and marrah. According to some experts, black bile and yellow bile are subcategories of marrah. Thus, blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile along with vapor spirit constitute the temperaments in temperament medicine. Overall, there are similarities between what has been dubbed “four temperaments and vapor spirit” in traditional medicine and what has been discussed in medical hadiths about the body mixture of humans.

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