

## *Istifragh* (Elimination) in Unani Medicine and its Role in Maintenance of Health and Disease Production - A Review Article

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### Abstract

### Review Article

**Background:** The Concept of *Istifragh* (Elimination) in Unani Medicine is of utmost importance and is a unique health promoting regimen or requirement for maintaining health. *Istifragh* (Elimination) is the Sixth (last but not the least) component of *Asbab Sitta Zaruriyya* (Six essential factors) which means elimination of abnormal *Mawad* (matter) from the body with its another component *Ehtibas* (Retention) that means the retention of essential matters inside the body.

**Objective:** This Paper provides an in-depth exploration of *Istifragh* encompassing its historical context, theoretical structure and diagnostic importance and various abnormal effects produced due to uncontrolled excessive elimination. There is no *Ghidh'a* (food item) which has completely beneficial nutrients that can be utilized by the body, so some amount of waste, abnormal and vicious matter is always produced as a result of *Hazm* (digestion) and that must be eliminated at the earliest. *Tabiya't* (physis) plays a pivotal role in differentiating among essential and non-essential component of food for body. **Method:** For the collection of data and literary support, we reviewed the classical Unani text, manuscripts and their translations i.e., *Kulliyat Qanu'n*, *Kulliyat Nafisi*, The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna, *Aksir-e-Azam*, *Firdaus al-Hikmat*, Medical Journals, proceedings, periodicals, thesis, reports, dissertations, gazettes, etc.

**Conclusion:** Strong and weak *quawate dafia* and *masika* respectively of a certain organ favors *Istifragh Ghayr Tabai'i*. The finding suggests caring for the general *quwate badan* and individual organs and taking all means to strengthen the *Quwat* while employing any of elimination methods.

**Keywords:** Elimination, *Istifragh*, *Hijamah*, Unani Medicine, Humours, Hippocrates, GTCH, Six Essential factors.

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## INTRODUCTION

Unani Medicine is based upon the theory of *Akhlat* (Humours), which anticipates the presence of four humours in the body, namely *Dam* (blood), *Balgham* (phlegm), *Safra* (yellow bile) and *Sauda* (black bile) along with *Asbab Sitta Zaruriyya* or Six essential factors" is another important concept in the Unani Medicine for maintaining or regaining *Sihhat* (health) [1].

The term "*Istifragh* (Elimination)" in Unani medicine refers to the natural removal of waste materials from the body such as through *Idrar-e-Bawl* (urination), *Ikhraj-e-Baraz* (defecation), *Tari'q* (sweating) and *Idrar-e-Haiyd* (menstrual bleeding). A variety of practices including *Hijamah* (cupping), *Dalk* (massage), *Fasd* (venesection) and *Ishal* (purgation) in order to

eliminate the *Istehalati-Mawad-e-Raddiya* (metabolic waste products). However, accumulation of metabolic waste leads to various illnesses [2]. The term "*Istifragh*" refers to the removal of waste or unneeded substances from the body as retaining of any waste material that need to be removed results in certain illnesses [2]. *Sharait-i-Istifragh* (Conditions of elimination): ▪ *Imtila* (Plethora). ▪ *Quwwat-e-Mariz* (Power of patient). ▪ *Mizaj* (Temperament). ▪ *Sahna-e-Mariz* (Physical condition of the Patient). ▪ *Awariz-e-Lazima* (Chief complications). ▪ Age ▪ Season ▪ *Aab-o-Hawa* (local climate) ▪ Profession ▪ Habits [3]. *Usul-e-Istifragh* (Principles of Elimination)

Matters that needs to be excreted should be taken out/eliminated only. ▪ It ought to face the outflow direction. ▪ It must be happen via/through a suitable organ and in the direction of the one where the morbid

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substance is slipping away. ▪ The selection of time should be based on whether or not there is any *Nudj* (Concoction) present. ▪ The amount of debris/abnormal matter that needs to be excreted ought to be calculated from the following factors.

- Amount of matter.
- Patient Power.
- Possibility of difficulties or complications [3].

There are many modes or types of *Istifragh* in Unani Medicine for example, *Ishal* (diarrhoea): to address the morbid matter. *Qay* (vomiting): Removal of stomach contents by oral means. *Tari'q* (diaphoresis): In order to lessen the *Hararat-e-Muffarit* (excessive heat). *Idrar-e-Bawl* (diuresis): To make *Dam* (blood) pure. *Hijamah*: To take out morbid matter of blood and gets better circulation. *Fasd*: To get better *Istehala* (metabolism). *Dalk* (Massage): Removal of morbid matter and enhance circulation. *Riyada't* (exercise): To get better metabolism and blood circulation. *Hammam* (Turkish bath): To lessen *Lazujat* (stickiness) in addition to take out the *Akhlat -e-Fasida* (morbid humours). *Takmid* (Fomentation): To raise the infiltration of apply lotion. *Nutul*: *Ta'dil-e-Mizaj-e-A'da* (organs). *Huqna* (enema): To eliminate the excesses from the intestine. *Zimad*: To address the *fasid mawad* (morbid matter). *Imala*: To change *Fasid Akhla't* (abnormal humours) [3]. *Kasrat-e-Tamth* (Menorrhagia) is the term used to describe heavy, frequent and irregular bleeding throughout the menstrual cycle that lasts more than seven days [4]. If *Dam-e-Nefas* or puerperal blood is excreted in excess, *Quwat* is exhausted in this case [5].

*Qay* (Vomiting): The movement of the stomach to evacuate gastric contents through the mouth is known as the vomiting. According to the Unani System of Medicine the *Madd-e-Qay* (vomitus) which is always located in *Jof-e-meda* (gastric cavity) [6].

*Ishal* (Purgation): It is the regimen used to excrete abnormal matter that not only comes from the intestines and their surroundings but also from other places such as lung phlegm, splenic black bile, bloody portions or other materials that need to be cleared through anal route [7].

*Fasd* (venesection): It is One of the most popular and widely used forms of treatment in regimental therapy or *Ilāj bit Tadbīr*. It offers a wide range of options for managing different illnesses. *Fasd* is a particular blood-letting method in which a blood vessel is cut to allow some blood to be removed from the body [8].

*Kathrat-i-Tamth* (Menorrhagia): Menorrhagia or heavy regular menstrual blood loss is the primary presenting issue in at least half of women undergoing hysterectomies and is one of the most frequent causes of referrals. Every effort should be made to determine whether menstrual blood loss is actually high because

many women who complain of heavy periods may not actually have excessive blood loss during their periods [9].

*Idrār-i-Bawl* (diuresis): This is also the human body's natural excretory pathway as well. This path is selected for the removal of morbid materials in numerous medical situations. When diuretic medications are added to this regimen it is recommended for patients experiencing joint discomfort, back pain, vertigo and ascites etc. It is always best to prevent excessive diuresis since it can harm the urinary tract [10].

*Jima / Ham Bistari* (Sexual Intercourse): Coitus is the process of eliminating seminal fluid whereas intercourse is a natural phenomenon of elimination to maintain harmony in the same way as urination and defecation. Greek-o-Arabic philosophers defined *Mizaj* (temperament). of Mani or the temperature of semen as being both hot and moist. *Jima* has an impact on people's health based on factors like seasons and *Mizaj* [11].

*Kathra al-Ihtilam* (excessive nocturnal emission/ overly nocturnal release): It describes a condition where a man ejaculates while sleeping and dreams about sensual or stimulating pictures. If this happens once or twice in a in early adolescence and in young adults [12].

*Dalk* (massage): *Dalk* has a long history that begins with the dawn of human civilization. In Babylon and Assyria, the main purpose of massage was to drive out the patient's evil spirit. Massage has been used for centuries in eastern cultures [13].

*Tari'q* (diaphoresis): It is the body's method of expelling waste materials through perspiration. This is accomplished by using specific medications in addition to certain procedures including hot fomentation, hot baths, poultices, exercises, massage and inhalation. In addition to increasing skin nourishment this regimen helps lower body temperature in cases of fever [14].

*Hammam* (Bathing): Asclepiions the healing temples that preceded scientific medicine were always constructed next to a river or spring and functioned similarly to clinics and hospitals today. By using water as a curative element, Hippocrates also talked about the various types of water and the healing qualities of *Hammam*. It was too common and a social custom during the Roman and Arabic Eras. The *Hammāms* (bathroom) were extremely complex structures. Medieval doctors also regarded the *Hammam* as a crucial component of their healing routine. They were explained as the many types of *Hammāms* and their significance in therapy [15].

*Hijamah* (cupping): *Hijamah* (cupping) has been used since ancient times. The Arabic term "Al-Hijamah" has multiple meanings, including: ▪ The process of removing scalp hair ▪ The application of cups

(Seenghi) Al-Hijamah (cupping) is a type of *tadabir* (regimen) that aims to restore humoral balance by redirecting or removing harmful substances. It has been used to treat various medical conditions since ancient times [16].

Hijamah is classified into two types based on its method of application:

- *Hijamah-Bila-shurt* (Non-invasive cupping or Dry cupping)
- *Hijamah-Bil-Shurt* (Invasive cupping or Wet cupping, which involves scarification) [16].

*Alqa* (Leeching): Leech is a kind of bloodthirsty hermaphrodite. We refer to the genus *Hirudo* as Medicinal Leeches. During feeding this small creature injects the host tissue with over a hundred bio-active chemicals, each of which has a unique application philosophy for a distinct part of the body. Leech therapy's benefits were also mentioned in the books of Iranian traditional medicine scholars including Avicenna Abdul Latif Baghdadi (Ibn-Sina 1593, Al-Baghdadi 1942-1944). A review of Iranian traditional medicine's sources revealed that leech therapy is utilized to treat Hundred twenty-five distinct ailments representing a broad range of illnesses and problems [17].

#### Methodology:

For the collection of data and literary support, we reviewed the classical Unani text, manuscripts and their translations i.e., *Kulliyat Qanu'n*, *Kulliyat Nafisi*, *The Canon of Medicine of Avicenna*, *Aksire-Azam*, *Firdaus al -Hikmat*, *Medical Journals*, *proceedings*, *periodicals*, *thesis*, *reports*, *dissertations*, *gazettes*, etc.

## CONCLUSION

To maintain the homeostasis between *Istifragh* (Elimination) and *Ehtibas* (Retention) which is an integral part of human health. The *Istifragh* is just like double edged sword in which one has to be extra cautious while employing it as even a bit of misjudgement in employing *Istifragh process* may produce various adverse effects on human body and it can produce imbalance in homeostasis that would lead to production of series of diseases. Needless to say that for attainment of complete health all components of *Asbab Sitta Zaruriyya* (Six essential factors) must be in complete harmony and in their proper ratio and proportion otherwise ill health and/or many other diseases may be produced.

We further recommend extensive and more precise research on this topic to get value added outcomes in the near future to validate and all pros and cons of employing the process of *Istifragh*.

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