



The concept of temperament is found in every object in the world. When speaking of temperament, most of us think of it as either hot or cold. In the practice of Tibb, two more qualities have been recognized i.e. moisture and dryness. For example, a dry stem of a flower has more dryness and is therefore hard and brittle, but a fresh stem has more moisture, and for that reason, it is flexible and soft. The above mentioned four qualities have been noticed in all things, although in different ratios, with some having more heat and others more cold, or some being drier and others more moist.

Our bodies are also made up of these four qualities. The body temperature is generally about 37°C. This means that it has more heat and less coldness. It also has a water content of about 70% which makes the body more moist. Hence, dryness is found to a lesser extent. It is for this reason that the body is flexible enough to allow movement, but dry and firm enough to maintain a posture. The heat found in the body is to allow the moisture to move throughout the body and also to facilitate the function of metabolism and all other functions as well.

Thus, every person's body is generally hot and moist with lesser ratios of dryness and coldness. If any change occurs to this basic temperament of hot and moist, it will adversely affect the body. However, this basic ratio and temperament may differ slightly from person to person, with some people having slightly more heat, cold, dryness or moisture than others. Thus, if any change occurs in the natural levels of a person's temperament, it will adversely affect that particular person and not necessarily another.

Similarly, edibles such as plants, animals, etc., have their own temperaments, and by consuming these foods, our own temperaments are affected. For example, to counter excess heat and replenish the lost moisture through perspiration, we tend to drink more water. Another example is the effect of perspiration after eating chillies or drinking ginger tea.

For a person to remain healthy, he has to maintain his original temperament as well as remedy any alteration to the original temperament. Hence, a person's diet should be regulated

to maintain his/her temperament. On the other hand, if anything is consumed that will imbalance the temperament, it could lead to various ailments.

An important note is that a healthy person can eat anything in moderation. This means that even if a little harmful food is consumed, his healthy body should be able to digest and rid itself of its excessive qualities. However, if harmful foods are taken in excess, the body will not be able to cope with it and it will result in sickness.

It is extremely important for one to consult a Hakeem to determine one's temperament, because despite the signs of determining temperament being many, changes in health, etc., complicate the matter and create confusion.

Adapted and summarized from "Your Health" by Moulana Hakeem Jalil Muhammad Pandor (An Nasihah vol. 95)