

Concept of the Arkān, Its Physical Elements and Non-Physical Entity (Naar): A Critical Review

Farzana Khatoon¹, Ashfaque Ahmad², Prof Ashhar Qadeer³, Badrudduja Khan⁴

¹PG Scholar, Deptt of Kulliyat, AKTC, A.M.U Aligarh

²PG Scholar, Deptt of Moalejat, AKTC, A.M.U Aligarh

³Professor Deptt of Kulliyat, AKTC, AMU, Aligarh.

⁴Associate Professor, Deptt of Moalejat, AKTC, A.M.U Aligarh

Corresponding Author: Farzana Khatoon

ABSTRACT

Background: Arkān are primary constituents of human body and others. It is the first keystone of Umūr-e-Ṭabī'yya (the factors of physic), comes under the Asbāb-e-Maddiyya (Material Causes) which are the building blocks of everything in the universe.

Aims and Objectives:

To clear the classical theories about numbers of Arkān in the light of ancient as well as present concepts.

To consolidate the concept of ArkānArb'a (four basic elements) and evaluate the reasons for accepting Naar (energy) as an unsur (element) by Attibajamhoor.

To developed scientific literature about the Naar (Energy) as a non-physical entity.

To put forth a concrete and scientific logical concepts of Arkān, in the light of present perspectives.

Conclusion and Future perspectives:

After Scientific validation and strong literature of Arkān, there will be many doors are open regarding researches related to elementology (Physical elements and non-physical elements). With the knowledge of biological elements, we can restore the health, prevent & treat the diseases in future.

Key Words: Unani Medicine, Asbāb-e-Wujood (Causes of Being), Asbāb-e-Maddiyya (Material Cause), ArkānArb'a ((four basic elements), Non-physical entity & Naar (Energy).

Asbāb-e-Wujood (Causes of Being):

Aristotle's (384-320 B.C) gives concept of four causes of being. These are the material, formal, efficient, and final cause. According to him, the material cause of a being is its physical properties. The formal causes is the structure or direction of a being. The efficient causes are the primary source of the change or rest & the final causes are the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done. ^[1] If we discuss these Asbāb (Causes) regarding human body then we classified them into following types.

- AsbābMāddiyya (Material Causes): The first cause to create a being. It includes elements, humours, organs & pneuma. The immediate subjects are organs and pneuma. The remote is the humours & the most remote is elements. ^[2]
- AsbābFā'ila (Efficient Causes): The essential & non-essential factors which brings about a change or maintain the states of the body. ^[2]
- AsbābṢuriyya (Formal Causes): AsbābṢuriyya is the particular and specific forms of body which are come in existence, after actions & reaction of

efficient factors. It includes Mizāj (Temperament) & Quwā (Power).

- Asbāb Tamāmiyya (Final Causes): The cause's that is responsible for the actions and functions of the body. [2]

The essential constituents and the working principle of the human body classified into seven main groups which are called as "Umūr-e-Ṭabī'yya" namely Arkān (Elements), Mizāj (Temperament); Akhlat (Humors); Aza (Organs); Arwah (Life spirit, pneuma); Quwā (Faculty); and Af'āl (function). [3]

The first keystone of Umūr-e-Ṭabī'yyais Arkān, comes under the Asbāb-e-Maddiyya which are the building blocks of everything in the universe. It is the primary substance or matter of human body as well as non-human body. All properties of matter are found in Arkān like, "Matter is a substance that has inertia and occupies physical space. It consists of various types of particles, each with mass and size or matter is the material substance that constitutes the observable universe and, together with energy, forms the basis of all objective phenomena." [4]

In the ancient Unani literature there are more than one word, which is used for denoting Arkān, the primary substances of the body. [5]

- *Anasir* (singular: unsur) and *Ustuqissat* (singular: ustuqis) are frequently used in classical literature; Razi, Abu Sahl Masihi, and Ali Ibn-e- Abbas Majoosi used the term *Ustuqissat*. [6]
- Ahmad Tabri used "*Ummahaat*" for Arkān Arb'a. [7]
- Ibn-e-Sina prefers *Arkān & Anasir* and the other scholars of later period adopted *Anasir* (Element) in describing the primary substances. [8]

Arkān defined as,

Hippocrate (460-370 B.C.)

The body of the individual is composed of four basic elements, which together, are termed as 'Anasir-e-Arb'a (Fire, Water, Air and Earth). These four elements possess four different qualities i.e. hot, cold, dry and wet. The admixture of

these four elements results in the formation of four biological fluids or 'Humours' as. Blood, Phlegm, Bile and Black bile.

Zakaria Al-Razi (865 – 925), said in his book, Kitab-ul-Murshid,

Ustuqissat are simple substances which participate in the formation of the compounds. [6]

Ali Ibn Abbas Majoosi (930-994),

Ustuqissat is a single substances which is less in quantity and means which cannot be subdivided into new ingredients. [9]

Ibn Sina (980-1037 A.D.) said in his famous book 'The Canon of Medicine',

Arkān are simple substances which cannot be subdivided into new ingredients. It is their combination and organization that the various orders of things are formed in nature. [8]

Abu Hasan Ahmad Bin Ahmad Tabri said in his book Al Moalijat al Buqratiya,

Um (mother) precursor of child birth because a child comes to existence through mother so that *Anasir Arb'a* is called *Ummahaat*. Hence also their name is *Uss* or *Mubadi* because they are basis and treasure of universe. [7]

Different theories regarding Arkān:

Number of elements:

From the very beginning, philosophers have been thinking about elements and their numbers involved in the process of the creation of the universe. They have given different views about numbers of Arkān.

Theory of one element:

A group of ancient philosophers held the view that all things in this world were made of only one element; after passing through changes and metabolism, converted itself into different forms. But those philosophers differed in determining this element specifically. Some called it water and others named it earth, fire, air and vapour. [10]

Water: Greek philosopher, *Thales of Miletus* (640-546 B.C.), assumed that water, as the primary element responsible for the creation of all material things. He says that, other elements like earth, air, fire, were the changed forms of water. He argued that only

one thing which had the ability to be converted easily into different shapes could assume the state of an element; only those things had the ability to acquire different forms, which had mobility, wetness, liquidity and coldness; water possessed all these qualities. Therefore, water had the status of the primary element. It was water which became earth after condensation, and air and fire after refinement. [11-12]

Earth: Phrekaides(600 B.C.) was the leader of this concept. His statement was based on the fact that the earth was a resting place for all things of the universe; if a physical body was detached from its resting place, ultimately, it would return to the earth. He assumed on this basis that primary element was the earth.

Fire: Heraclitus of Ephesus (500 B.C.) says that, all heavenly bodies (sky and stars) are fire in their shape and nature. Therefore, it was presumed that earth including its bodies had been created from fire; it was fire which carried the whole universe. Air, water and earth were its condensed forms. In the other word if heat of fire decreased then it became air. Water was produced from condensation of fire or air, and earth was the most condensed form of fire.

But Heraclitus does not mean to say that all things literally come from fire. Instead, this world order, much like fire, is constantly changing, transforming eternally. This leads us back to the doctrine of flux. It is not unreasonable to say that fire is the physical incarnation of the abstract notion of a universe with constantly shifting elements. [11-13]

AIR: Anaximanes of militus (494 B.C.) believed that air was the primary substance and all things came into being from it and into it they were dissolved again; just as our soul which was air held us together and we breathed, in the same way air encompassed the whole world and it breathed. His statement was based on the assumption that without moistness nothing could have an existing shape and it was air which possessed moistness in greater abundance than other elements. [11-14]

Vapour: Some philosophers expressed the view that only that thing could be called primary element, which was equal in hollowness and thickness and this quality was found abundantly in vapours only; due to the production of thickness at different stages, water, air, fire, and earth were formed. [11]

Theory of two elements:

Theory of two elements was that, all things in the world have been created from two elements through the process of blending. Some claimed that they were fire and air, and in view of some others they were earth and water. [14]

Earth and Water: Xenophanes and a group of philosophers put forth the view that earth and water were primary elements. They argued that moistness and dryness both were necessary to create forms in compounds. Since moistness easily accepted various forms and in the same way gave them up, dryness was necessary to protect the form. The air was a vapour created from water and it became fire due to the production of heat by intense movement in the air.

Fire and Earth: Some philosophers believed that primary element were fire and earth. The argument advanced in support of this theory was that when the compounds were dissolved, they were normally returned into these two elements. The other two elements i.e. air and water, were in fact, their altered forms.

In fact, earth for solid matter, and Nar for the matter which has been transferred in to heat energy, whose ultimate source is the Sun, whose energy is transformed into all kinds of energy in the universe. [16]

Theory of Three elements (Ahl-e-iksir):

Perphyrius (333 B.C.) laid down the foundation of this theory after observation of the natural phenomenon that an element would be always found in the one of the three forms i.e. liquid, gas, solid. They called the solid elements in their terminology as Milh (salt). The liquid

elements as zibaq (mercury) and gaseous elements as kibrit (sulphur).^[17]

Theory of five element:

Indian philosophers believed that elements were five in number; Teja (fire), wayu (air), prithavi (earth), Ap (water), Akash (sky). This theory is called panjmahabhut in Ayurvedic terminology.^[18]

Theory of Arkān-e-Kaseera (Indefinite Arkān):

Some philosophers known as Ashab-e-Khaleet (Scholars of admixture), who were of the opinion that there are a large numbers of elements or unlimited numbers of Arkān and said that all the substances in the universe are composed of different combination of Arkān.^[19]

Theory of ArkānArb'a:

As the above concept of three states of matter could not become general acceptance, the theory of four states (ArkānArb'a) was compounded. According to the concept, all the four Arkān contribute to the formation of things in nature. The human body also made up of these four Arkān.^[18]

According to Jurjani, "AnasirArb'a are four in number. Every part or body of Arkān are homogenous, there are no any fragment are different from each other's. Every part of Arkān keeps same Tabiyat and Functions.^[20]

Empedocles (504-448 B.C.): Greek philosopher Empedocles assumed that all material bodies were compounded of the four elements- fire, air, water, earth, in distinctive proportions and that these elements were fixed and unalterable entities which changed only in their quantity.

The exponents of this theory contended that fire, air, water and earth were four primary Arkān. This concept was widely accepted by Aristotle, Hippocrates, Avicenna and all other followers belonging to mashaiyin (pedestrians). According to this concept the four Arkān contribute to the formation of things nature. The human body is also made up of these four fundamental Arkān.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.): Contended this theory of four Arkān. He illustrated that, the binary qualities to each of the rukn to express their Mizājand properties, these are as follows.^[18]

- Al-hawa(Air) is primarily hot and secondarily wet.
- Al-nar (fire) is primarily hot and secondarily dry.
- Al-ardh (Earth) is primarily cold and secondarily dry.
- Al-ma (Water) is primarily cold and secondarily wet.

The above elements are four states of matter where; Hawa (air) stands for gaseous state, Ma (water) stands for liquid state, Ardh (earth) stands for solid state and Nar (fire) stands for the matter which has been transformed into heat energy.

Illustration (Dalael) Of Arkān-E-Arb'a:

Group of physicians and philosophers accepted the concept of Arkān-e-Arb'aby giving following illustrations-

Inferences drawn from Ancient philosophers:

It is mentioned in the Tibb that, all the botanicals composition is formed from Fire, Water, Earth & Air and the evidence for which is given as when a plant is dissolve, four types of components are achieved i.e. fluid, earthy, and vaporize materials (moist and dry) and all animals receives their foods from these plants. It proves that the animals are also composed of same elements.

Inferences drawn by Hippocrates:

There are four physical qualities i.e. Hotness, Coldness, Moisture and Dryness. Coldness is necessary for our body especially when we are affected from heat or temperature. Uneasiness from the moisture proves the existence of dryness in our body. The pain from the dryness makes sure that there is presence of contra property of dryness in our body. All these four properties despite of being arzi cannot come into existence without a particular location or position which are specified for coldness and dryness. In this way these two qualities viz. coldness and dryness altogether integrated or conjoined with earth and the

location of coldness and moisture are conjoined with water.

Galen:

According to Galen, that things which are in Baseet according to Tabiyat, in fact, that are Baseet like, fire, water, air & earth. [21]

He further said in his Book 'Kitab-Fil-Anasir', regarding composition and formation of body by Anasir-e-Arb'a, "we see that the solid (earth), liquid (water), Air and Fire participate at particular ratio in composition and formation of Human body e.g. bone and cartilage shows the presence of earth, phlegm (Balgham) or other body fluids shows the presence of water, sensation of warm on touch shows the presence of body heat (fire), and the presence of air space in tissue, bone and other to shows the presence of air in the body".

Abu-Sahl-Masihi:

The evidences drawn from the universe explains that all the things which are cropped up in this universe, no matter whether these are of plants origin or animals origin states the fact that, the genesis of all plants and animals (mawaleedsalasa) is from these four elements, and it happened the way, if we sow a seed of plant in soil and water and if it is prevented by reaching sun's heat and air then it will not sprout properly thus the seed will get dissipate early now if insemination is done again and if all the required premises are fulfilled i.e. Sun's heat, air, water then the seed will vegetate nicely. So this way it reasserts the witness and vindicates that the development or genesis of all the things is from these four above elements. [22]

IbneNafis:

Said in his famous book 'Kulliyat Nafisi' that, there are four types of matter needed for the formation of compound (Murakkab). Liquid is for the purpose of molding of solid into different forms and shape of compound. Air is for the purpose of porosity and lightness in the compound. Fire for intermingled & maturation of compound. [3]

Zakaria Al-Razi:

Said bodies gets derived from ArkānArb'a and become Arkān; deriving from Arkān is clear to all, e.g. Animal gets nutrition and its development depends on plants and water, and plants gets its nutrition from water and earth and mineral substances comes from soil and water. If any one of them is not supplied by their respective matter, their development & growth are retarded, e.g. human growth retarded by absence of food, similarly wheat growth retarded by absence of water. For the same if above three gets heated then they change into vapors (Bukharaat), these vapors due to water, fire, and air present in these bodies and ashes are due to earthy (Ardhi) particles. [6]

Ali Ibn-e- Abbas Majoosi:

Said in his book Kamil us Sanah; All the bodies on earth are produced by Ustuqissat-e- Arb'a. In other words if any animal died and deconstitutes, their Hararat-e-Gharizyah present in it dissolved to fire as a vapors and pneuma (Ruh) dissolved to air, moistness (Rutubat) become vapors and earthy (Ardhi) e.g. bones & cartilage dissolved to earth and become soil. [9]

IbneSina:

There are four primary qualities which occur in the universe i.e. Hot,Cold, Moist and Dry, the intermixing of which explains the quantity of Anasir or Elements. Heat and cold cannot be assembling simultaneously despite of being contra properties likewise moisture and dryness cannot be laid up in one element or unsur. According to Ibn-e-Sina, Arkān are not only four in number but these are four categories, based on four state of Arkān. [23]

Elements in present time:

The theory of four elements was prevalent till the 17th century and the study of physical bodies was carried out on the basis. The number of elements discovered began to increase and at present the number is 106. 92 of them are natural elements which occur in nature, the rest are manmade. Although the bulk of living matter consists mainly of five elements. e.g.,

hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen and sulphur. [14]

Elements found in the human body are divided into three categories:

1).Major elements

2).The micro-minerals, consisting of elements such as sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, chlorine, and phosphorus. [18]

3).Trace elements Almost 99% of the mass of the human body is made up of the six elements oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, and phosphorus. Only about 0.85% is composed of another five elements: potassium, sulfur, sodium, chlorine, and magnesium. All are necessary to life. The remaining elements are trace elements, of which more than a dozen are thought to be necessary for life, or play an active role in health.

Types of Human element:

Nineteen elements participate in elementary composition of the human body. The six basic anasir O, C, H,N, P, S contributes 97.25% of the total cell mass of living organism. [16]

(a). Essential elements: These are nineteen in numbers : out of nineteen, 12 are Major Essential Elements-these are H, Ca, C, O, N, Fe, Na, Cl, S, K, P, Mg and seven are Trace Elements Co, Cu, F, Mn, Mo, Zn, I .

(b).Possibly Essential: Si and Trace Elements (12) these are As, B, Ba, Br, Cr, Ge, Ni Rb, Se, Sn, Sr, &V.

(c). Non-Essential : There are 49 non-essential elements, Widely distributed six out of 49 and these are Ag,Al,Bi,Cd,Pb, &Sb.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Concept given by Empedocles, was on the basis of concept of “matter” that the 19th century physics went forward to analyses matter into chemical elements which cannot themselves be decomposed and which alone or in combination constitute all matter including the air, water, and earth. [24]

Evaluatory Concepts of Naar(Fire) from classical time till present:In classical

time, different inferences given by many physicians for justifying theory of ArkānArb’a& they believe that, Fire is an unsur. Unani physicians here are some brief descriptions about Heat.

Greek philosopher’s Heraclitus (535-475 B.C.)says that, all things are originated from fire. Air, water & earth are the condense form of fire. Anaxagoras suggested that, lots of Arkān are needed for the formation of Universe & fire is essential factor for their combination. Annaximenes also stated that, when the temperature (Heat) of air was intensified, it become fire, and when it was condensed due to decrease in temperature, it become water and after greater condensation it assumed the status of earth.

Razi assumed that fiery elements are responsible for the generation of body heat. Therefore HararatGhariziyah (Innate heat) is the type of HararatNariya.

Jalinoos&Razi also says that badnihararat (body heat) present inunurnaria (fiery elements) which is an unsuriHararat (elemental heat) produce by metabolic mechanism of the human body. AllamaGelani also suggested that, Heat produces after the intermixture of elements. Mahmood Amlī explain with the reference of Galen, that when fiery substances mixed with elemental substances then, moderate heat are produce which is innate heat.

If we observe above theories regarding fire, then we find it that, ancient physician assumed that heat and fiery elements are two different things. Fiery elements are responsible for the production of heat or energy. Hippocrates, Anaximenes, Ibnesina considered the energy is an important and essential factors for existence of every compound. Therefore that is the reason; ancient philosophers considered fire as a materialistic thing.

Jalenoos, Razi, Amlī believe that energy produces by the unsur-e-naaria, it indicates that heat &unurnaar (fiery elements) are two different things. Every matter found into three forms: solid, liquid and gas. Every compound is formed with

the combination of above three state of matter. Heat or energy is an inseparable entity that is essential for the formation of compound which is the reason that, ancient physicians believe that energy is an unsur. They may have observed that without presence of energy the existence of unsurhawa, unsurmaa, unsurardhi was meaningless.

But, energy is not a physical element, it is a non-physical entity. It is a spirit or being that exists outside the physical reality. In periodic table fiery elements are listed. But matter (substance) of those elements are either airy like Hydrogen to Radon, earthy (Lithium to Ytterium) or watery (Gallium to Mercury). As per the definition of all elements, Heat is also indivisible. Due to this quality of Heat, Unani physicians assumed in classical time, that fire was an element. [24]

In fact, Matrix (Matter) is the basics or Roots of all compounds. Those matrix are discovered and found in periodic table. Matrix like solid, liquid and gaseous elements of periodic table comes under the heading of ArkānArb'a. Heat are exist in Active & Non Active formed. Non active heat found in Jamadat (Minerals), semi-active heat found in Nabataat (Plants) & Active heat found only in Haiwanat (Animals). Active heat or working energy are differentiate the living organism to non-living organism. So there are two basic causes through which we can assume energy as an unsur (element). First one is, it is a perceivable things and second one, it is a ManviRukn (Essential), because without energy there are no existence of ArkānSalasa. (Solid, liquid, gas).

Fire (Heat) is a power or energy, which describes the ability to do work. Energy is a conserved quantity; the law of conservation of energy states that energy can be converted in form, but not created or destroyed & all compounds comes in existence through energy. When the same compound gets destroyed energy remains as such in its free form.

The universe consists of both matter and energy. Matter includes anything that has mass. Energy describes the ability. While matter may have energy, they are different from each other.

One easy way to describe matter and energy apart is that ask yourself whether what you observe, it has mass and if it doesn't, it's energy. Examples of energy include any part of the electromagnetic spectrum, which includes visible light, infrared, ultraviolet, x-ray, microwaves, radio, and gamma rays. Other forms of energy are heat (which may be considered infrared radiation), sound, potential energy, and kinetic energy. Another way to distinguish between matter and energy is to ask whether something takes up space. Matter takes up space. We can put it in a container. While gases, liquids, and solids take up space, light and heat do not. [25]

Usually matter and energy are found together, so it can be tricky to distinguish between them. For example, a flame consists of matter in thkme form of ionized gases and particulates and energy in the form of light and heat. We can observe light and heat, but we can't weigh them on any scale.

So, energy is not a physical element or materialistic thing. It is a ManviRukn (Essential) without which there are no existence of living organisms are found.

Suggestions for Further Advancement:

Through this paper, it is almost clear that Arkān are materialistic things. That is the reasons for accepting theory of ArkānArb'a. Although energy is not an element but classical physicians accepted it as an element in ArkānArba for their functional important. Theory of ArkānArba'a may be more consolidated in future that why Attibajamhoor accepted, in respect of three physical elements as Air, Water and Earth and one non- physical entity i.e. fire.

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How to cite this article: Khatoon F, Ahmad A, Qadeer A et.al. Concept of the arkān, its physical elements and non-physical entity (naar): a critical review. Int J Health Sci Res. 2019; 9(2):251-258.
