



The Concept of *Nozj*

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Abstract

Nozj is a unique heterogeneous complex phenomenon discussed extensively by Traditional Persian Medicine (TPM) scholars, as a rheological change in matter for better consumption or excretion. Nozj is closely related to the many stages of digestion and affects many aspects of health and disease. Nozj status in different parts of body may be assessed and monitored using many signs and symptoms regularly not considered fairly important to other schools of treatment especially the mainstream medicine. Uncompleted process of Nozj leads to accumulation of different substances in different parts of the body. This process, generally be named as the "*Bad-anbaasht*" syndrome, predisposes a wide variety of famous known medical conditions.

Key words

Nozj, Traditional Persian Medicine (TPM), Rheology, Digestion, Hakim, *Bad-anbaasht Syndrome*

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Introduction

One of the unique phenomena's described by the Traditional Persian Medicine (TPM) scholars, known as the Hakims, is the *Nozj* (آزج). The issue starts from the point that biological matters trespassing body spaces and entering different bodily organs including the humors should reach a certain consistency and to have optimum physical characteristics in order to be able to be used by the body as food or to be able to be excreted from the body as waste products [1, 2]. Very hard and dense non-degradable matter named *Ghaleez* (غلیظ) or very fluid and dispersible matter named *Rhagheegh* (ریغیغ) and the last but not the least, very viscous adhesive matter named *Lazej* (آزج) may not be suitable or prepared for usage or deletion [1, 3].

Definition of Nozj

Although each of the aforementioned types of consistency are useful in some parts of the body, mostly during transportation and circulation they should have a suitable fluid form. The process in which these three unpleasant states of matter are turned into much more usable or excretable form of matter is named generally as *Nozj* [4]. Therefore *Nozj* might be explained as the change in rheological properties of matter [1]. It has been described that the dense *Ghaleez* matter must get more fluid and more *Rhagheegh*, the very watery fluid *Rhagheegh* matter should harden more and become more *Ghaleez* and the viscous adhesive *Lazej* matter must be cut and degraded into smaller pieces [5, 8].

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Causes of Nozj

Hakims as philosophers realized four causes for the existence of any being or phenomenon (6) including the heterogeneous phenomenon of *Nozj*. These four causes include the agent, the material, the formal and finally the objective causes and especially for *Nozj* are discussed as follows [2, 3]:

1. The agent cause: The inner inherited heat named *Harre-Gharizi* [2, 3, 7] (اﻟﻪﺭﺭﺓ ﻏﺎﺭﯨﺰﯨﺔ)
2. The material cause: The formable matter named *Zel-Rhotobat* (ﺯﻩﻝ ﺭﻫﻮﺗﻮﺑﺎﺕ) including the humors etc. [8]
3. The formal cause: The optimal change in the consistency of matter [1,2]
4. The final cause: The preparation for reaching the optimal destiny of matter including usage or discharge [2]

Classification of Nozj

The *Nozj* process is also classified into four different types mentioned bellow [2, 3, 4, 7]:

1. The *Nozj* of fruits: The ripening process
2. The Industrial *Nozj*: The bakery process
3. The *Nozj* of foods: The four food digestion stages in the body
4. The *Nozj* of residues: The preparation of waste matter for discharge

Digestion: the most typical Nozj

As mentioned, the *Nozj* of food is called digestion which has been divided into four stages [2,9]:

1. The first digestion, starting from the mouth and ending up in the stomach, leading to the useful Chile and the residue of stool,
2. The second digestion, performed in the liver, leading to the formation of humors and the residue of urine,
3. The third digestion, performed in the vessels,
4. The fourth digestion, the process of food and also waste products carried out in the tissues.

The wastes of the third and fourth stages are mainly urine and sweat and other sensible or insensible body discharges and excretions.

The role of healthy digestion should be emphasized in the completion of the *Nozj* process because the undigested material with incomplete *Nozj* will cause defect in the next stages of digestion as well leading to end organ deprivation of food or accumulation of wasted undigested matter [10]. In accordance to the importance of the gastrointestinal tract and especially the stomach in health and disease, several quotations has been narrated from the prophet Mohammad p.b.u.h that the stomach is the pool of the body which all the organs receive health and disease from it [11] and that the stomach is the house of all diseases and that the abstinence from harmful foods is the head of all treatments [12].

Semiology of Nozj

It is notable that the Hakims monitored the process of *Nozj* and assessed its completion by the use of many symptoms and signs including the consistency, color, smell, quantity of sputum for respiratory system, the characteristics of urine for liver diseases and stool characteristics for the gastrointestinal disease etc. [5, 8, 13].

Consequences of uncompleted Nozj

The *Nozj* of the matter in the tissues are very important in keeping the tissue clean and clear. One of the consequences of uncompleted *Nozj* process is the stasis of undigested food remains in the interstitial space. This will cause obstructions in the way of mediators, transmitters and hormones causing all sorts of malfunctions. This diverse bad accumulation of matters in between tissue spaces is named by the current authors as the group of *the Bad-anbaasht Syndromes*, (ﺑﺎﺩ ﺍﻧﺒﺎﺍﺷﺖ ﺳﯩﻨﺪﺭﻭﻡ) according to similar concept nomination in the traditional medical manuscripts [14]. These vast heterogeneous groups of above mentioned syndromes differ from each other depending on the characteristics and consistency of the accumulated substance. Another consequence of uncompleted *Nozj* process is the invasion of matter by the unusual heat or the *Hararate Ghareebe* (ﺣﺎﺭﺍﺭﺍﺗﻪ ﻏﺎﺭﻩﺑﻪ) which

succeeds the inner inherited heat and subsequently causes infection [5]. In future articles we like to discuss the above mentioned syndromes in detail.

The Monzej (intrinsic & extrinsic)

In TPM, there are certain drugs categorized under the name of *Monzej* which means the drugs that facilitate the *Nozj* process [3]. Despite the existence of such extrinsic drugs, still one of the most important factors influencing the *Nozj* will be the proper blood production, circulation and tissue blood perfusion. This is because that the blood acts as the main vehicle for the inner inherited heat - the intrinsic and most suitable, specialized *Monzej*- to reach from the heart to the matter [15] and it also carries orally administered extrinsic *Monzej* drugs to the target organs.

Conclusion

Nozj, as a rheological change in matter for better consumption or excretion, is a unique heterogeneous complex phenomenon discussed and widely used by TPM scholars. It is closely related to the many stages of digestion and may affect many aspects of health and disease. It can be assessed and monitored by many signs and symptoms of which may not be so important to other schools of treatment especially the mainstream medicine.

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