



A Science of Medicine  
The Art of Care

# Part 5: The link between Temperaments, Qualities and Colours and its Application in Tibb

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The Tibb approach to using colours is to recognise the specific qualities exerted by each colour. The warmth of the sun is displayed in vibrant colours of yellow, orange and red, which are associated with energy, warmth, optimism, passion and hope; whereas the coolness of the night is reflected in blue and violet, which are associated with calmness, coolness, passivity, relaxation, rest, peace and tranquillity. Green is synonymous with peace, harmony, calmness and bringing about balance.

Some of the methods used for colour therapy include aromatherapy, lights, coloured glass or plastic, wall colouring and clothing. Meditation is particularly useful for emotional problems, by visualising breathing in specific colours to achieve the desired outcome.

Tibb classifies food and drink according to their qualities and not by the temperature of a particular food or drink, such as hot milk. Milk has cold and moist qualities, which does not change when it is heated up on a stove, and its qualities will not change to be that of heat. The concept of heating and cooling foods is therefore linked to the effect they have on the body. Too much of the dominant quality associated with an individual's temperament, will have a negative effect.<sup>1</sup>

In the Tibb philosophy each person has a different colour of the complexion according to the physical constitution: the Sanguinous Temperament has a reddish or shiny complexion; the Phlegmatic temperament has a whitish or pale one; the Melancholic temperament has a greyish and pallid complexion; whereas a Bilious Temperament has a yellowish and ruddy one.

The qualities of colours used will depend on the ideal temperament of an individual, as well as the particular ailment, condition, or desired effect needed. Particular colours either enhance or reduce the effects of the qualities, by exerting opposing reactions, such as relieving stress and anxiety with the calming colours of blue or

green; or relieving lethargy and depression with the energetic colours of red and orange.

### The Effects of the Qualities of Colours in Tibb

The **Sanguinous/Bilious** temperament has a dominant quality of **heat**, and the **Sanguinous/Phlegmatic** temperament has a dominant quality of **moisture**. The **Phlegmatic/Melancholic** temperament has a dominant quality of **coldness**, and the **Melancholic/Bilious** temperament has a dominant quality of **dryness**.

The warmer colours of **red** (hot and moist) and **yellow** (hot and dry) are associated with the **Sanguinous** and **Bilious** temperaments respectively, and are extrovert, positive and energetic; whereas the cooler colours of **purple/violet** (cold and dry) and **blue** (cold and moist) are associated with the **Melancholic** and **Phlegmatic** temperaments respectively, and have opposite features, namely those of being introvert, negative and less energetic.

The colour **green** has moist and hot qualities, and is associated with balance. Green is calming, relaxing and soothing, and it is associated with nature, the outdoors and spring. The colour **orange** has dry and hot qualities, and it is associated with the temperament of the warmer colours.

Colours which exert opposite effects will balance the qualities, thereby preventing burnout or depletion of energy, depending on its stimulating or calming effects. Any excess or deficiency of the qualities in relation to the temperament of an individual will lead to physical, emotional, mental, and social imbalances.

### The Qualities of Colours in Relation to the Temperaments in Tibb

#### The Colour Red

The qualities of **red** are similar to those of the **Sanguinous** temperament, which has **hot and moist** qualities, and which is linked to the element of **air**. Sanguinous individuals are extrovert, optimistic, passionate, amiable, cheerful, easy-going, sociable, likeable, talkative, lively, playful, good-natured, carefree, persuasive, kind, empathetic, **eager**, and the **'life and soul'** of a party.<sup>22</sup>

The **stimulating** effects of red activate the **sympathetic** nervous system, due to its qualities of **heat**, and enhances metabolism (the liver has heat). It also enhancing circulation and increases respiration, heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature; the face may appear to be flushed and warm.

Red is linked to the **blood** humour, the **liver** and the **metabolic faculty**. The liver is crucial in food metabolism, as it produces enzymes that aid in digestion, and the liver is responsible for the **manufacturing of the humours**. Blood, which is hot and moist, is produced in the liver and which gives the body energy. Blood is known to be the essence of health and vitality, growth and nutrition, and it is the basic nutritional

and metabolic process. Blood has an **attractive** force, as all the cells, tissue and organs of the body rely on it completely for nourishment, and are thus attracted to it.<sup>2</sup> Blood promotes a feeling of wellbeing, enthusiasm, affection and joy.

According to Avicenna “**blood is the second hottest** organ in the body, which, although produced in the liver, due to its contact with the heart, is hotter than the liver.”<sup>3</sup> (p. 24) When the Bilious humour is mixed with the atrabilious (Melancholic) humour, it becomes **red** in colour, which resembles blood, and it is only distinguishable by its consistency.<sup>3</sup> (p37)

Blood is associated with heat, life and vitality. If we burn a finger on a hot stove it will turn red and feel hot to the touch. When we get **warm** from exercising or from a fever, more blood is circulating at the surface of the skin to cool it, in order to protect the vital organs from overheating, which gives the skin a **rosy** colour. A red face can also reveal embarrassment, as in blushing.

### **Benefits of using red**

Red relates to our awareness of ourselves as human beings, and promotes physical strength and courage. It denotes the basic survival mode of the ‘fight, flight or freeze response,’ and increases muscle tension. It is useful to visualise red in times of distress, to give the body an extra boost of energy and courage. Red enhances human metabolism and circulation, increases respiration and heart rate, raises blood pressure and increases circulation and body temperature. It is useful in conditions which require an increase in metabolism and circulation, such as in lethargy, tiredness, poor circulation and low blood pressure. Colours which stimulate the circulation, such as red, orange and yellow, will exert qualities of heat. Heat expands and relaxes muscles, loosens tension and soothes pain. However heat may aggravate inflammation.

Red increases vitality and promotes excitement, increases interest, enthusiasm, as well as action and confidence. It is useful to include red in advertisements, media and entertainment, as it is eye catching and gives a sense of action. The connotation with love and passion would therefore include red colours in gifts, cards, roses, and seductive clothing. As red stimulates the appetite, many restaurants are decorated in red, with red lighting, which also creates an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness.<sup>4</sup>

Red can be used in conditions associated with cold and dry qualities of purple/violet (Melancholic temperament), because of its opposite qualities of heat and moisture. As heat dilates the blood vessels, by increasing circulation, it is ideal for sluggish or dormant conditions, such as osteoporosis, arthritis, backache and muscle cramps, which relaxes muscles, loosens tension and soothes pain. However, in acute arthritis, the heat of the inflammatory response would be aggravated by the colour of red and yellow, which would respond better to the cooling and soothing properties of blue; but too much coldness, will cause cramping. Red will also complement the introverted, pessimistic and passive nature of the Melancholic temperament, due to its extraverted, optimistic and active nature.

## Drawbacks

Because of the stimulating qualities of red, too much of it will be over stimulating, causing exhaustion, anxiety, stress, agitation and aggression. It can also increase blood pressure, pulse and respiration. It will aggravate any condition which is associated with heat, such as sunstroke, or inflammatory conditions. It should not be used too much in the bedroom as it can interfere with sleep. As the hot and moist qualities of the Sanguinous temperament are linked with the element of air, too much red may cause feelings of ungroundedness and dizziness.

## The Colour Yellow

The **Bilious** Temperament is associated with the colour **yellow** which has **hot and dry** qualities. Yellow **stimulates** the nervous system and the intellect, which has an **alkalising** effect and which **strengthens the nerves**. Yellow is linked to the element, **fire**, with characteristics of a fiery-temper, excitable, short tempered, impatient, and impulsive, with a restless nature and is prone to **behavioural** disorders.<sup>22</sup>

Yellow is associated with the energetic and stimulating effects of the **sympathetic nervous system** and its link to the **heart** and **vital faculty**. The vital faculty regulates the **immune/muscular** systems and it controls **muscular tissue**. It vitalises the organism so that it can function optimally, as well as co-ordinating the responses of the body. It governs the circulation, lymphatic system, cellular metabolism and the immune response, as well as respiration, and muscular skeletal systems. It also supplies blood to the limbs via the heart, thus increasing circulation and preventing necrosis.

The heart is composed mainly of muscular tissue (dry and hot), and it acts as a muscular pump, which moves the blood around the body via the two circulatory 'circuits', namely: the pulmonary circulation, whereby the right part of the heart delivers blood to and from the lungs; and the systemic circulation, whereby the left part of the heart carries blood to the rest of the body.

According to Avicenna, "the **vital force** and the **heart**, which is the centre of the vital activity, are the **hottest** in the body".<sup>3 (p 24)</sup> "In the liver, the burning of the thin and lighter portions of the blood produces pure Bilious humour."<sup>3 (p37)</sup> Avicenna explains that the quality of the Bilious humour may be impaired from an external factor or because of an alteration of its composition. Impairment from an external factor may be from the serous (Phlegmatic) humour, which may be either thick or thin; a mixture of which produces a vitelline yellow colour. However, the worst type of bile if derived from the oxidation of the Bilious humour, which remains in the bile instead of spreading out.<sup>3 (p36)</sup>

Yellow **bile** is the yellowish fluid which is produced in the digestive system to help **absorb digestive nutrients**, and its digestive force has a hot and caustic nature. Yellow Bile presents as a slight residue, or bilirubin, imparting a slight yellowish tint. This facilitates digestion with bile, assimilating and excreting fats and cholesterol, and aiding in peristalsis and defecation. Choleric residues in the bloodstream thin the blood, enabling it to penetrate through the finest capillaries; stimulates the inflammatory response; and opens up the lungs and respiratory passages as a surfactant. The humours can be seen after blood is allowed to have settled; the foam at the surface is the plasma - the clear yellow serum – yellow bile. The fatty

substance which is found in the bile is cholesterol. A xanthoma is a disease with formations of yellow neoplastic growths on the skin, composed of large numbers of fat-laden foam cells. A xanthelasma is a soft yellow spot found on the eye lids in a person with hypercholesterolemia.<sup>5</sup>

### **Benefits of Utilising Yellow**

Yellow is associated with laughter, hope, and sunshine, as well as being playful, cheerful, optimistic, joyful, and happy.<sup>6</sup> It is useful to paint playgrounds for children in yellow, as well as entertainment facilities and other areas which require an atmosphere of energy and vibrancy. Yellow promotes empowerment and increases confidence, vitality and energy, and enables a person to not be afraid to take risks.

Visualising yellow and wearing yellow clothes, as well as using yellow in banners, is useful for public speaking, and other areas which require a boost of confidence and energy. As yellow represents education, knowledge, wisdom and intuition, and stimulating the mind, yellow walls in the classroom may promote thinking, concentration and knowledge. A yellow coloured paper to study with enhances memory and retention.<sup>6</sup> It may also help a person to think more clearly, thereby giving clarity for decision making.

Yellow bile has a digestive force and an alkalising effect, with energetic and active qualities which **stimulate movement**, thereby **counteracting sluggishness**. It is useful to visualise yellow or to use yellow light over the stomach area to **help digestion**, relieve heart burn, and to strengthen a sluggish bowel, such as in constipation. It may also be useful to use yellow light over areas of the body which require improvement in muscular tone, especially post-surgery, or during convalescence, to improve circulation. Yellow also helps to **strengthen the nerves**, and is useful to relieve lethargy, tiredness and depression, especially during the dull days of winter, and particularly in seasonal affective disorders.

The extravert, energetic and optimistic qualities of yellow balance the introvert, less energetic and passive qualities of blue. Yellow can be used in conditions associated with cold and moist qualities, because of its opposite effects of heat and dryness, such as in colds and flu, hypotension, bladder weakness, and frigidity. The Phlegmatic humour has an **expulsive** force which flushes out impurities, transports vital nutrients, and helps eliminate wastes, which is useful for inflammatory conditions of the hot and dry Bilious temperament. The hot and dry qualities of yellow dries out the excess moisture from watery, bluish tinged eyes. Fever causes heat which expels excess phlegm into a thinner substance, which can be eliminated from the body as perspiration.<sup>2</sup>

### **Drawbacks of Utilising Yellow**

Too much yellow causes a loss of temper, anger, aggression as well as restless behaviour. It can also cause exhaustion from over-stimulation. If the body has too much dryness, the colour of yellow may be counterproductive, due to its hot and drying effects.

## The Colour Purple/Violet

**Purple/violet** has *cold and dry* qualities as it relates to the **Melancholic** temperament, and which is represented by **black bile**. The colour of black has negative connotations of doom and gloom, and therefore the colour of the Melancholic Temperament will be better represented by the colours of purple/violet. A very dark purple can be viewed as black.

Purple/violet is an **introvert** colour, negative, withdrawn, pessimistic, moody, gloomy and apprehensive, and which encourages deep contemplation, thinking and meditation. Purple is a rare colour in nature, which can be interpreted as artificial. Purple symbolises nobility, mystery, and a strong sense of self. It is also associated with a sense of purpose. Violet is also philosophical, logical, enquiring and analytical. Purple is the colour of good judgment, as well as being sceptical and anxious, as is the Melancholic temperament.<sup>4</sup>

The Melancholic temperament is linked to the element of **earth**, connective tissue and the skeletal system. In Tibb the bones have cold and dry qualities which are hard because its blood supply contains some hard and black bile material.<sup>3 (p.39)</sup> Because the Melancholic humour has a thick, earthy aspect, it is subjected to the forces of gravity. Melancholic residues in the bloodstream thicken the blood, enabling it to clot, as well as aiding wound granulation, scar tissue formation, and all structural repair of the body. It is present as brownish sediment with platelets and clotting factors.<sup>8</sup>

The humours can be seen after blood is allowed to have settled; the heavy matter which settles down at the bottom is the atrabilious humour, or black bile.<sup>39</sup> According to Avicenna, in the liver, the burning of thicker portions of the blood produces pure atrabilious (Melancholic) humour; while burning of the thin and lighter portions of the blood produces pure Bilious humour. Oxidation destroys moisture and makes objects white; just like with burning wood, heat turns wood into dark charcoal and then into white ash. This is because heat makes moist objects dark, and the dry ones white, while cold whitens the moist objects, and darkens the dry ones.<sup>3 (p37)</sup>

## Benefits of Utilising Violet

Purple/violet is used for spiritually-related problems, as it connects one to one's spiritual self, and it brings guidance, wisdom, as well as it purifying one's thoughts and inner strength. It is used for meditation in order to heighten psychic awareness and connection with the higher self. Leonardo da Vinci once wrote that meditation and prayer is ten times more powerful while sitting in the violet light shining through a stained glass window. Violet can also help to develop imagination and creativity. Richard Wagner surrounded himself with violet while composing his operas.<sup>9</sup>

Purple/violet can be used in conditions associated with hot and moist qualities of red, because of its opposite qualities of coldness and dryness, such as allergic asthma, skin allergies, athlete's foot, hypertension, and acute arthritis. Yellow will also be beneficial to thin the blood, due to its qualities of heat, and its effects will complement

the thickness of the blood of the Melancholic humour. Violet may be used to relieve a Sanguinous headache by reducing the qualities of heat and moisture.

### **Drawbacks of Utilising Purple/Violet**

As the cold and dry qualities of the Melancholic temperament are linked with the element of earth, too much violet may cause feelings of heaviness and stagnation, both physically and mentally. It has the connotation to mourning, and as such, it should be avoided under those circumstances. It may lead to an increase in pessimism and introversion.

Violet and blue suppress appetite; and whilst it may be beneficial for people who wish to lose weight, due to its unappealing associations with food, it should be avoided if losing weight is not the intention.

### **The Colour Blue**

The qualities of blue are related to the **Phlegmatic** temperament, which has **cold and moist** qualities, and which is linked to the element of **water**. Blue represents depth, stability, reliability, efficiency, and sincerity. It is peaceful, calming, soothing, patient, cool-minded, loyal and honest. Dark blue is the colour of truth and moderation, and it is often used by artists to give perspective and a feeling of distance. Lynda Goldman, a business communications and etiquette consultant, says: "Studies show that navy blue is the best colour for a suit to wear for a job interview, because it inspires confidence". She says that it is more likely for a person to get the job when one wears navy blue to an interview than any other colour."<sup>10</sup>

The **Phlegmatic** temperament is linked to the **psychic faculty**, which regulates the **nervous system**. It governs sensation and perception through sensory, motor and intellectual functioning, via the external senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, as well as the internal senses of cognition, memory, common sense and imagination.<sup>2</sup> It has **electrical energy** and it controls nervous tissue (central, peripheral, autonomic and somatic nervous systems).<sup>11</sup>

The **brain** has **moist and hot** qualities, and it is soft because of the soft and moist material in its blood supply.<sup>3 (p.39)</sup> Nerve tissue makes up the central and peripheral nervous system. It receives stimuli and is also able to conduct impulses to and from all parts of the body. It contains neurons, glial cells and other supporting cells, such as neuroglia and extracellular material. Nervous tissue has a **moist and hot to cold and moist** temperament. The quality of moistness is essential for the effective functioning of the nervous system. Any interference with the conduction of electrical impulses throughout the body will impact severely of its functioning.

Phlegm is related to the fluid of the lymphatic system. When it is healthy the phlegm is a clear colour, but when the fluid or mucous becomes thick, it may become infected, giving it a yellowish or greenish colour.<sup>3</sup> Phlegm is present as the clear plasma portion of the blood, including mucous, saliva, plasma, lymph, and serous and interstitial fluids. Together, these fluids cool, moisten, nourish, lubricate, protect, and purify the body. The blue colour of the Phlegmatic humour has an **expulsive** force which flushes out impurities, transports vital nutrients, and helps eliminate

wastes, which is useful for inflammatory conditions of the hot and dry Bilious temperament. Fever causes heat which expels excess phlegm into a thinner substance, which can be eliminated from the body as perspiration.<sup>2</sup>

### **Benefits of Utilising Blue**

The cold and moist qualities of the ***Phlegmatic Temperament*** are linked to the element of ***water***, which is essential for life, and moisture protects dryness from crumbling, and dryness prevents moisture from dispersing.<sup>2 (p22)</sup> According to Avicenna, the oxidation of bile destroys the moisture, resulting in dryness, and the colour changes to white, as does a piece of burnt wood on a fire. This is because heat makes moist objects look dark, and the dry ones white; whereas cold whitens moist objects, and darkens the dry ones.<sup>3 (p37)</sup>

When one gets ***cold*** from freezing or from poor circulation, as in cyanosis, the body tries to conserve heat by diverting blood away from the surface of the skin in order to supply more blood to the vital organs, giving the skin a ***bluish*** appearance. Blue is associated with anaemia, due to a lack of haemoglobin in the blood; cold extremities on the body reveal a bluish colour of the skin. The opposite colour of yellow of the Bilious temperament can be utilised to increase the circulation of blood and to increase heat in the body (vital capacity).

Blue can be used in conditions associated with the hot and dry qualities of yellow (Bilious temperament), because of its opposite qualities of coldness and moisture, such as rhinitis, post nasal drip, bleeding nose, anaemia, hyperacidity, gastric, peptic and duodenal ulcers; as well as hyperactivity, mania, stress, anxiety and agitation. Yellow can be utilised to increase the circulation of blood (vital capacity), and to restore blood to the skin and organs.

Blue is used for any condition of a hot, thermal nature, as it promotes coolness. The inflammatory response after an injury, resulting in a hot, red and swollen skin, will benefit from the colour of blue, due to its cold and moist properties. Ice causes contraction of the circulation which reduces inflammation. The antiseptic and anti-inflammatory qualities of blue will aid in all inflammatory diseases, and reduce heat and swelling.

Blue is useful for any condition of hyperactivity or heightened emotions, such as restlessness, anger and aggression, associated with the hot and dry qualities of the Bilious temperament, due to its cooling, moistening and calming effects. It has a sedating, digestion-activating, sleep-inducing effect.<sup>12</sup> An excess of Phlegm and moisture may result in colds and flu, wet coughs and sinusitis.

Blue reduces blood pressure, heart rate and body temperature and reduce bleeding. The excitable, short tempered, impatient, restless and impulsive nature of yellow (hot and dry), would benefit from the cold and moist colour of blue, with its calming, controlled, and passive qualities of blue. It relaxes the muscles, reducing muscular

tension and it aids in relaxation, and relieves physical tension and stress. It is ideal for hyperactive children as well as sleeping problems.<sup>4</sup>

### **Drawbacks of Utilising Blue**

The colour blue is contraindicated for any conditions which have cold and moist qualities, such as colds or pneumonia. Blue is associated with aloofness, unfriendliness and lack of emotions.

If there is too much moisture in the body, the colour of blue may be counterproductive, due to its cold and moistening effects. Too much moisture results in depression (moist and hot) and too much coldness results in fear (cold and moist). Watery, bluish tinged eyes reveal an excessive of moisture (Phlegmatic humour), which would benefit from the colour of the hot and dry qualities of yellow to reduce the excess moisture.

### **The Colour Orange**

Orange has ***dry and hot*** qualities, and it represents heat, energy, vitality, and courage, joy and playfulness.<sup>6</sup> Orange is optimistic, and extrovert, but more assertive than aggressive, and more light-hearted and less intense than those people who love red.<sup>13</sup> Orange relates to self-respect. It is the colour of creativity, and it is warming, energising and stimulating. It is the colour of fun and sociability.<sup>6</sup>

According to Ibn Sina, ***brown bile*** is formed from the oxidation of the green bile, which is the ***hottest*** and most ***poisonous*** of all varieties of bile. It is said to be formed from the hot, vapory material.<sup>3 (p37)</sup> It is useful as an antibacterial agent and to ease digestive discomforts. Orange stimulates creativity and it may alleviate depression, but too much orange over a prolonged period of time may cause uneasiness and can be overpowering. Due to its stimulating and energising nature, too much orange may be overpowering and may cause exhaustion.

### **The Colour Green**

Green has ***moist and hot*** qualities. It is associated with the growth of trees, plants and nature, as well as the outdoors and spring, due to moisture and heat for growth. It relates to self-love and the ability to give and receive unconditionally, as well as environmental awareness and peace. It is linked with harmony and balance, and it is in the middle of the colour spectrum.<sup>6</sup> Clothing with darker greens may show power, class, strength and conservatism. Brighter greens reveal a sporty and casual feel, with an element of cheerfulness. Green is calming, relaxing and soothing.

According to Ibn Sina, bile produced in the stomach may be either green or brown. ***Green bile*** is formed by the mixture of the dark, viscid burnt out bile with the normal atrabillious bile.<sup>3 (p37)</sup> Green regulates the pituitary gland, fights depression as well as psychosomatic conditions affecting the gastric system. It is useful in calming the

nervous system, fights irritability and insomnia, and can be used to assist in the recovery of burnout.<sup>14</sup> It is an antiseptic, germicide and an antibacterial agent, and it may facilitate the healing of broken bones and the repair of tissues in the body. It brings about balance, peace, harmony and calmness.

### **Colour therapy**

The particular protocol to be used will depend on what outcome one wishes to achieve; whether one requires stimulation or relaxation. The application of colours has both positive and negative effects. Too much of a particular colour will have negative effects. Colours which exert opposite qualities will bring about balance and harmony.

The colour which best suits an individual is based on his/her temperament, and this will depend on whether or not the qualities associated with the temperament are in balance or not. In Tibb the relationship of heat, moistness, coldness and dryness has a direct bearing on the health status of an individual. Heat is generally more favourable than cold for maintaining the proper balance and general health of the body. Health will only be maintained as long as the overall quality of the humours is in harmony with the overall quality of the individual's temperament.<sup>11</sup>

When the qualities are in balance the physical, emotional, mental and social characteristics, which form part of the temperament, will be in harmony with one another; however, an imbalance of the qualities will result in changes to the functioning of the physical, emotional, mental and social characteristics, resulting in disharmony.

When the ***qualities are in balance*** the individual may instinctively choose ***colours which represent his/her temperament***, in an effort to sustain the levels of stimulation or relaxation that is necessary to maintain equilibrium. For example, the Bilious temperament may choose yellow, orange or red; the Sanguinous temperament may choose red, yellow or green; the Phlegmatic temperament may choose blue, green or purple/violet; and the Melancholic temperament may choose purple/violet, orange or blue.

When the ***qualities are out of balance*** the individual may feel the need to ***choose colours which have the opposite effect***, in order to balance the qualities of dryness, heat, moisture or coldness. For example, the Bilious temperament may choose blue, green or purple/violet; the Sanguinous temperament may choose purple/violet, blue or orange; the Phlegmatic temperament may choose yellow, red or orange; and the Melancholic Temperament may choose red, green or yellow.

### **Guidelines for Colour Choices**

Colours must be chosen judiciously, as in the following guidelines:

- The colour must be in the right ***intensity*** so that it does not become too overwhelming and in excess. For example: very bright and intense colours may be too overpowering, especially those of red, yellow or orange, due to

their stimulating effects; as opposed to lighter and more calming colours of blue, violet or green, unless one is trying to create an atmosphere of more extreme stimulation, such as in a playground.

- The colour must be in the right **quantity** and for a **specific period of time** if it is to be used for therapeutic purposes. For example: too much yellow over a prolonged period of time can lead to exhaustion and aggression; too much red can lead to anxiety and raise blood pressure; too much blue can lead to depression and a decrease in blood pressure; and too much purple/violet can lead to an increase in pessimism and introversion.
- The colour must also be chosen to reflect the particular **mood** or **ambience** so that the effect of the colour suits the situation. For example: rather choose pale yellow walls in a classroom to facilitate the intellect and concentration, rather than red walls which will be overpowering and can cause anxiety or even exhaustion.
- The colour must be chosen to create a **sense of balance** if the individual is feeling unwell or over- or under-stimulated. For example: if a Melancholic individual is experiencing sluggish or dormant conditions, such as osteoporosis, arthritis, backache or muscle cramps, the colour red, with its opposite qualities of heat and moisture, increases circulation and heat, thereby relaxing muscles, loosening tension and soothing pain.
- The colour chosen must also suit the **temperamental type**. For example: if a Bilious individual were to be subjected to bright yellow over a prolonged period of time, this will result in overstimulation, with restlessness, aggression or mania, as well as exhaustion. However, the same colour may be subjected to a Phlegmatic individual, with a different outcome, due to the more passive and less energetic temperament.

### **Colour Protocols according to Tibb**

There are many protocols that can be applied with the use of colour to elicit the desired response and outcome. The Tibb perspective works within the framework of qualities and temperaments, whereas other therapies may use energy and frequencies of colour to bring about the desired effects.

Protocols which can be applied to Tibb include: breathing exercises, visualisations, affirmations and meditation. Clothing, wall colouring and décor can also change the mood and ambience of an environment, and instil confidence, determination, calmness and passion, or exert other stimulating or relaxing qualities.

Foods have specific colours and specific vitamins, minerals and nutrients which are essential to sustain a healthy body and mind. In Tibb the qualities of foods are more important than the colours they represent. Some schools of thought relate the warmer colours of red, yellow and orange foods as having energising and stimulating effects; whereas the cooler colours of green and blue foods are pacifying.<sup>16</sup> The colour of food additives, restaurant décor, placemats and colour of the walls

influence one's appetite and desire for food. Restaurateurs who integrate relaxing and calming colours into their milieu and menu will enhance customer satisfaction.

Colours alone will not achieve the desired goal. Regardless of the colour used, Tibb will always include adjusting lifestyle factors in an effort to restore equilibrium to the body by balancing the qualities of heat, moisture, coldness and dryness. These lifestyle factors include: environmental air and breathing, food and drink, movement and rest, sleep and wakefulness, emotions and elimination and retention. Other eliminative therapies, together with Tibb herbal remedies, are also utilised to restore harmony and equilibrium in the body.

Colour therapy can help to re-balance and/or stimulate the qualities by applying the appropriate colour to the body where it is most needed. The electromagnetic radiation of colours generates electrical impulses and magnetic currents, which activate biochemical and hormonal processes in the body.<sup>19</sup> There is evidence that visible electromagnetic spectrum of light, which we see as colours, can have a positive impact on human health.<sup>21</sup>

### **Colour Protocols According to Energy-Related Therapies**

Chromotherapy is based on the effect of coloured light with different frequencies on human neurohormonal pathways, precisely on melatonin and serotonin pathways in the brain.<sup>21</sup> Hydrochromotherapy incorporates water, either as a drink with spring water, which is charged with filters of various colours, or as a bath which has coloured lights. Solarized blue water is an excellent tonic for laryngitis or inflammation of the larynx. Aura Soma uses coloured water to heal physical and emotional symptoms and to promote psychological change.<sup>15</sup> The choice of colours chosen by the individual and the sequence of those choices reveal a lot about the his/her wellbeing. The dual coloured bottles contain herbal extracts, essential oils, gems and crystals, which work according to vibrations, frequencies and waveforms.

Bioptron light therapy system facilitates wound healing. Other forms of therapies include the use of coloured globes, colour puncture, using meridians and acupoints; crystals and gem stones; coloured spectacles and glass; coloured silks and cloths; wall colouring; painting with colour, and aromatherapy oils. Other therapies, such as Reiki, Pranic healing or chakra balancing, also utilise the energy frequencies of colour in their healing paradigms.

When coloured lights are applied to the body, caution needs to be exercised to localise the colour to a particular area; yellow, blue and green may be generally applied, but **red** must **never** be applied to the **head region**.<sup>4</sup>

UV rays from the sun are the best source of the vitamin D the body needs to ward off cancer and dozens of other health problems. Ultraviolet light therapy, or phototherapy, is commonly used to treat psoriasis. There is also evidence that UV light therapy inhibits the growth of cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. Ultraviolet light is an extremely effective disinfectant, with the ability to kill bacteria, viruses, and fungi in the air and on surfaces.<sup>18</sup> Research was done on the effect of ultraviolet radiation on wound exudates and its appearance, which concluded that ultraviolet radiation (type B) can significantly improve the appearance of decubitus ulcers. It also significantly

reduces the amount of purulent exudates, and it can hasten skin replacement of decubitus ulcers.<sup>17</sup>

Light therapy is used in conventional medicine for new born babies who have an excess of bilirubin in the blood. The skin of the infant is exposed to a special blue light, usually for several days, which facilitates the breakdown and excretion of bilirubin from the body.

Virtual Scanning incorporates the use of coloured light to facilitate health assessment and therapy, which identifies organ pathology and brain compensation. Strong neural signals are sent by an organ, which has developed pathology, to the brain, which assesses the degree of degeneration. The brain responds by applying appropriate compensatory stimulation.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Ideal Colours for the Temperamental Type**

The ideal colour for each individual is dependent on the ***dominant temperament***. Too much of a colour that has the ***same qualities*** as the dominant temperament will ***negatively affect*** the individual ***the most***. For example: If the Sanguinous temperament, which has hot and moist qualities, is subjected to too much red, which also has hot and moist qualities, this will affect him/her negatively the most. Other colours which have ***similar qualities*** as the dominant temperament will also affect the individual, but ***not as much***.

This is highlighted in the following table, where the colours are as ***closest to the dominant temperament***:

<b><u>Temperamental type</u></b>	<b><u>Colours closest to the dominant temperament</u></b>
<b>Bilious</b>	<b>Yellow</b> , orange, red
<b>Sanguinous</b>	<b>Red</b> , yellow, green
<b>Phlegmatic</b>	<b>Blue</b> , green, purple/violet
<b>Melancholic</b>	<b>Purple/violet</b> , orange, blue

Colours which have ***opposite qualities*** to that of the ***dominant temperament*** will ***negatively affect*** the individual the ***least***. For example: If the Sanguinous temperament, which has hot and moist qualities, is subjected to too much purple/violet, which has cold and dry qualities, this will affect the individual the least. However, ***too much of anything is opposed in nature***.

The qualities which would be most ideal to an individual would include the colours which are ***directly opposite to the dominant temperament***, as highlighted in the following diagram:

**Temperamental type**  
**temperament**

**Ideal colours *opposite* to the dominant**

<b>Bilious</b> (H&D) needs C&M, M&H, C&D	<b>Blue</b> , green, purple/violet
<b>Sanguinous</b> (H&M) needs C&D, C&M, M&H	<b>Purple/violet</b> , blue, orange
<b>Phlegmatic</b> (C&M) needs H&D, H&M, D&H	<b>Yellow</b> , red, orange
<b>Melancholic</b> (C&D) needs H&M, M&H, H&D	<b>Red</b> , green, yellow

The Tibb **MENTAL/EMOTIONAL** breathing exercises:

It creates **harmony** in 2 brain hemispheres.

- Use the right index finger to close the left nostril. After taking a long, deep breath through the right nostril, close the right nostril with the thumb and hold the breath for 15 to 20 seconds. Visualise an **appropriate colour** as you breath in, filling your breath with love and this beautiful coloured light.
- Release the finger and breathe out through the left nostril.
- Now breathe in through the left nostril and repeat the same process by holding the breath for 15 – 20 seconds and breathe out through the right nostril.
- Start by doing 5 cycles, and build up slowly to 10.
- After completing this exercise, rest for at least 5 minutes in the same position.
- Do this exercise early in the morning and late afternoon. Bhikha, R.A.H. & Mohamed, N. (2006). *Learning with Tibb*. Johannesburg: Ibn Sina Institute of Tibb.

## **TIBB EXERCISES FOR EMOTIONAL STATES:** (All Temperament types)

### **1. The Tibb HEART MEDITATION exercise:**

- Sit on the floor or chair, with a straight spine.
- Put the head down, close your eyes, concentrate on the heart and breathe in deeply. Visualise an ***appropriate colour*** as you breath in, filling your breath with love and this beautiful coloured light.
- Hold the breath for a while, then, breathe out slowly in the same manner.
- Continue exercise every day and night before going to bed, **for 10 – 15 minutes.**

### **2. The Tibb PINEAL BODY MEDITATION exercise:**

- Sit in a relaxed state, in a calm environment, with eyes closed. Concentrate on the area between the eyebrows, and breathe in deeply. Visualise an ***appropriate colour*** as you breath in, filling your breath with love and this beautiful coloured light.
- Hold the breath for a while and breathe out slowly in the same manner.
- Repeat this exercise for **10 – 15 minutes.**

### **3. The Tibb VISUALISATION MEDITATION exercise:**

- Lie in a relaxed position in bed. Make sure the room is quiet and close your eyes.
- Visualise an ***appropriate colour*** gently surrounding you.
- If you are emotionally stressed visualise a blue or violet colour. Alternatively, choose the colour most appropriate for your temperament.
- Repeat this exercise for **10 – 15 minutes.**<sup>34</sup>

## **Conclusion**

*“In colour there is life. To understand this power, is living. Colour could very well be the most magnificent experience we take for granted. Look around; it's everywhere, surrounding and embracing us. We interpret life as much through colour as we do shape, texture and sound. The truth is, the power of colour is the very essence of life”.*<sup>36</sup>

Throughout history, from the time of the ancient Egyptians, Leonardo da Vinci and Lord Kelvin, to Newton’s colour wheel and Ott’s use of ultraviolet light, colour therapy has played a pivotal role in healing.

Colours provoke emotional feelings and they are part of everything, from nature and rainbows to man-made creations. Colours have a physiological, psychological and social impact on a person’s health, wellbeing and status in the world; from the positive stimulating effects of warm colours, to the mental relaxation and soothing effects of cool colours.

In Tibb every organ and part of the body has its own temperament, ranging in degrees of heat, moisture, coldness and dryness, and which is appropriate to its own functional requirements. The Tibb approach to using colours is to recognise the

specific qualities exerted by each colour. The colours of the body and its parts indicate the status of one's health over time, and are markers of infection and inflammation, as well as determinants of disease.

The qualities of colours used will depend on the ideal temperament of an individual, as well as the particular ailment, condition, or desired effect needed. There are benefits and drawbacks associated with the use of colour as a therapeutic tool, which should be used judiciously and with caution. Too much of a colour that has the same qualities as the dominant temperament will negatively affect the individual the most; whereas colours which have opposite qualities to that of the dominant temperament will negatively affect the individual the least.

Colours alone will not bring about healing; however, together with lifestyle factors, they will play a vital role in the overall health and wellbeing of an individual; from the environment, air and breathing to food and drink, movement and rest, and sleep and wakefulness; as well as emotions, elimination and retention.

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