

## **The Effects of Healing and Nutritious Properties of Olive on Human Physical Health from the Perspective of Quran and Hadith**

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**Abstract:** Physical and spiritual health, food hygiene, prevention of diseases, strengthening body using nutritious and halal foodstuff are issues recommended in the holy Quran and Sunnat. Quran and Hadith have pointed to olive along with pomegranate, grapes, dates and fig as nutritious and healthy foods and recommended it for curing illnesses. The purpose of this study is to investigate about the secrets behind emphasis of Quran and Hadith on the consumption of olive and understand the viewpoint of Islam about healthy and nutritious foods for a good nutrition. The present study is descriptive-analytical in nature and the data are collected based on the purpose of the study and through investigation into verses of Quran and narrative by using primary sources and valid hadith texts (e.g., Alkafi, Almahasen, Vasaelo Shiat). Then, the collected data underwent document and content analyses. From among the collected data, there were fourteen properties found about olive products and its oil. This evinces that olive is a valuable fruit in curing and/or prevention of diseases. It also shows the comprehensiveness of the issues and orders in Islam and the miracle of Quran and Hadith about physical health. With regard to Islamic teachings about olive, two recommendations are made in this study. First, special attention should be paid to olive and its products by health department when setting policies for food. Second, development of an analytical reference book documenting medical hadiths by experienced researchers is needed.

**Key words:** Healing and nutritious value, nutrition, olive, Quran, hadiths about medicine, Iran

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Many believe that providing science debates such as medicine and nutrition in Quran are inevitable and originate from absolute wise words. In these verses, the Lord seeks theology and draws human attention to existence and kindness. All these issues about nutrition and health are implicit in Quran. However, among Hadiths, these issues are discussed, independently. Hence, spiritual and physical health has always been considered by Islamic scholars. In addition to medical Hadiths collecting, they had developed an independent book entitled "Book of Diseases" in this field. Dr Kamal Samerai in the introduction of first volume of the "Arabic history of dentistry" book says that prophet has about 300 hadiths in the field of medicine that lead some books entitled "medicine of prophet" to be written from third century onwards.

Anecdotal communities such as Al-Kafi, Al-Jafariat, Daaemol Eslam, Al-Davat, Tebol Aeme, Ghorarol Hekam, Makem-al-Akhlagh, Vasaelol Shiee introduce some books such as Book of Diseases, Book of Atame and Ashrabe, Bab Fi Alsehat va Al-salamat, Bab fi Akal and Ashrab and Hadiths about medical issues (Yaqub, 2012). Also, forty independent books were developed in this field. According to scholar Agha Bozorg Tehrani, Al-Risalah

al-Dhahabiah of Imam Reza (AS) is the first book which is written about Islamic medicine. Among Hadith books of Sunnis, the medical hadiths of prophets had a good reflection. In Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Moslem, two books entitled "Al-teb and Al-maraz" is collected with eighty chapters and hundreds of narratives.

In the new era, many papers are collected about therapeutic effects of olive but no comprehensive and analysis paper that includes all of these hadiths in not found and written papers in this field are non-specialist and incomplete; firstly, because these hadiths are not from primary sources and only a few narratives without document and investigation had been considered; secondly, full induction and expertise was not conducted in hadiths reception; thirdly, these hadiths had not been documented and their content analysis was not conducted as a comparison with therapeutic properties. But, this research tries to resolve these discrepancies and receives narratives of original documents and separates pure from impure by using documents and debates. To formulate a comprehensive and substantial research study, it is necessary to extract and analyze the verses of Quran and Islamic traditions about olive from primary resources and hadiths and illustrate the nutrition importance, the therapeutic benefits and healing application of olive in health.

## **VERSES ANALYSIS ABOUT NUTRITION AND PHARMACEUTICAL PROPERTIES OF OLIVE**

In Quran, it is recommended about foods such as olive. In Quran, olive is the only tree which is defined by Holy word. Quran uses this characteristic for sacred books, words or places. The meaning of blessing is surplus in favor of protein and vitamins and its appearance and fruits are used in intoxication and its oil is used for feeding and brightness. Olive is listed seven times in the Quran:

- Out of the date-palm and its sheaths clusters of dates hanging low and near and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates, each similar yet different
- Dates and tilth with produce of all kinds and olives and pomegranates, similar and different, eat of their fruit in their season
- With it He produces for you corn, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit
- Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai which produces oil and relish for those who use it for food.
- Lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the West, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it
- And olives and dates
- By the fig and olive

Olive is an Arabic word and known tree that its fruit is olive and its oil is olive oils. Olive is a genus plural name. Its unit is zaytuna (olive) and is considered for singular and plural (Aldin, 1995). In these verses, the olive word is used five times with other fruits such as dates, pomegranates, grapes, fig, beans and vegetables. According to universality and eternal nature of Quran, it becomes clear that the secret of emphasizing on olives, dates and grapes among other fruits is because of not only their presence in Quran but also their effectiveness on human body (Makarem, 1904). This word is used in Quran without mentioning to olive word and is referred to a tree that has oil and grows in Sinai in Palestine “a tree springing out of Mount Sinai”. In a verse, the olive is used as a nutrient healthy food for humans and animals. The olive is a holy and blessed tree. Growing of olive is a sign of God and it is used as sworn. It is instructed to eat olives, dates and grapes. From Nutrition sciences, each of these foods is invaluable and shows that using plants, fruits and grains in human nutrition is more important than animal foods.

## **EXPRESSING TOPICS IN QURAN**

The method of Quran in all topics and issues is based on inducing all general indexes and entrusts detailed analysis such as health and medicine to saint. Therefore,

the principles of health and hygiene are presented in Quran. Among desired verses, in general form, olive was praised but its properties and effects were not considered.

**Restatement of Scientific issues in theology:** Providing scientific issues such as cosmology, astronomy, geology, medicine and nutrition are implicit in Quran and inevitably, it is originated from the words of god! Among these verses, God seeks to guide people and draw their attention to the universe and grace and principles induction is in line with human conduct. Therefore, thinking about development and evolution process of these fruits is the main issues to bringing faith in God and getting familiar with the plant creation system. Exploring among these phenomenon and scientific references opens a new horizon of scientific miracles of Quran and Hadith and reveals integrity and perfection of Islam in the extent of physician and spiritual health.

**Two important principles in nutrition:** Among Quranic teachings healthy eating and physical health are praised “Hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess”. To use nutrition, two important and effective principles in the physical and health process, disease prevention and failure exclusion are presented. These principles are considered as the most important principles in nutrition.

The first principle is foods purity, safety and hygiene; eating pure foods is recommended in Quran “So eat of the sustenance which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good”. Human is demanded to look at the food that she/he is eating “Then let man look at his food”. Many hadiths have been issued in the field of food and beverages purity. It is narrated by Imam Reza that human’s body is like ground that should be fed and watered with mediation. The body stays healthy if it is fed with salubrious food and beverages and all its organs do their job well (Alreza, 1981). The type of food has impact on human's spirit and behavior “O ye messengers! Enjoy things good and pure and work righteousness: for I am well acquainted with (all) that ye do”. Imam Ali (AS) says that food can change human’s nature and mood.

The second principle is eating and drinking with moderation, eating healthy food and avoiding overeating “Eat and drink: But, waste not by excess”. Moderation is one of the Quranic health principles. Overeating threatens spiritual and physical health and causes pain, diseases, barbarity, malaise in God orders, reluctance to sermons and is a sign of extravagancy and excess and suppresses entering heaven. Kuleni in “Atame and Ashrabe” in disdain of overeating section, brings many hadiths about nutrition hygiene and moderation in eating foods. Qomi in

Safin Albehar quotes a hadith of Imam Sadegh (AS) about moderation in eating: if people be moderate in their food, their bodies will remain stable and solid. It is also quoted a hadith of the messenger of Allah that: we do not eat until we are hungry and we do not stop eating until we feel full. Although the secrets of these words in the revelation time was not clear to people, it was only accepted as a wisdom word but today, according to "English Mr Duz", surprisingly we should say that this word is the basis of hygiene science.

### **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES ABOUT NUTRITIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES OF OLIVE**

In this study, we will explore and analyze a set of Hadiths about olive collected from Alkafi, Almahasen, Vasaelo Shiite, Mostadreko Alvasel and Beharo al anvar, to reveal Islam views about pure nutrition and beneficial food for body, we believe that these health and medical issues are universal for all times, not related to a specific geographical region and are correctly quoted. These sources are accurate and divine and are the best way to prevent and treat diseases.

Kuleni in "Alkafi" opened a chapter which was entitled "Bab al-zayt and al-zeytun" with seven hadiths and "Bab al-nakhl and al-zeytun" with nine hadiths and there are many hadiths about the properties of olive and its oil. After Kuleni, this issue was considered by other scholars like Allameh Barghi, Hor Ameli, Mirza Nouri and Majlesi. Some of these hadiths are accurate from document perspective. In terms of content, these verses raised two major issue; the recitation of virtues and blessings of olives and expression of its properties. In the following, we analyze the narratives of these two parts.

**Narrative about virtues and blessings of olive:** Some parts of explored narratives refer to recitation of virtue and blessing of olive and its oil and prophets and saints attention to this type of food and fruits. Among these hadiths, olive oil is mentioned as prophets food. Mrslyn food, food of Ahl al-Bayt (Noori, 1987). Akhyar food, food of Atqya (Noori, 1987) and Muslims food. In a quoted hadith, it was mentioned that the most popular food for Prophet Muhammad was vinegar and olive oil. Kuleni quoted from Imam Sadegh (AS) that Prophet of God said: "eat olive oil and lubricate your body with it and it is a blest tree". The meaning of oil in this hadith is olive oil and the meaning of blest tree is olive tree. In a documented Hadith of Imam Reza (AS), it was quoted that: "Eldest of Adam Prophet to his son Habo Allah was to eat olive oil which is from a blessed tree". It is quoted that the body of Jesus was blessed with olive oil so, he was called Christ.

Olive and its oil was from the usual foods of prophets and Imams and they recommended others to eat olive and prescribed it to treat the diseases. Barghi in a hadith with poor documentation says that Imam Ali was very similar to Prophet Muhammad in eating. Ali (AS) always ate bread with vinegar and olive oil but gave people bread and meat. And in a confirmed hadith, it was said that Khaled Ibn Najih says that I broke my fast with Imam Sadegh and Imam Musa Kazim and both of them broke their fasts with vinegar and olive oil and first thing that they ate was three morsels of that (Barghi, 1992). Also in a poor Hadith, it is said that Gholansi says that I entered to Imam Sadegh (AS) and when I spoke, Imam said: why your words became weakened? I said that I have pain in my mouth, he said: "what are you eating", I said: "I eat everything!" he said: "eat soup and if there is not any meat at home, eat vinegar and olive oil" (Noori, 1987). In an accurate narrative, it is said that Ajlan was a guest of Imam Sadegh and there was some vinegar and olive oil and cold meat on the table. Imam separated meats and offered him and he himself ate vinegar and olive oil and said it is our food and food of prophets.

These Morsal Hadiths attracted human interest to olive and its oil, provided its benefits, called it a blest fruit and recommended its eating. This represents a comprehensive and wisdom approach of Islam to the issue of nutrition and body health and indicating their awareness of the properties of plants and herbs.

**Narratives about properties and health effects of olive:** In another part of Islamic narratives, the characteristics of olive mixtures were provided and fourteen nutrition and medical properties of that were developed. We will describe them in the following narratives.

In "Makarem Alakhlagh", Tabarsi in a weak narrative hadith by Imam Reza (As) mentioned to six properties of oil which are so surprising and precision in its kind. Imam said: olive is a good food, sweetens the mouth and removes mucus and mucoid discharge. It makes face bright, strengthens the nerves, removes the exhaustion and lethargy and takes off anger.

Mucus is a cold and wet lymphatic and it is such as winter and water in nature and it will be increase by eating some foods such as mild foods. Mucus causes sluggishness and pale skin, memory loss, apathy and impotence, excessive sleepiness, indigestion weakness and overeating. Its diseases are Alzheimer, stroke and epilepsy.

As it was seen, in this narrative, Imam Reza (AS) said that olive oil eliminates mucus. And, its medical analysis is that olive has a hot and dry nature and rich in vitamins A and D, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, magnesium,

calcium, chlorine, iron, copper and manganese. Its oil has a high thermal calorie and is so valuable for body fuel production. Olive oil increases body's temperature, strengthens the gums and cleans blood. In this regard, it is tonic against the mucoid discharge. Olive extract is so useful for wrinkles and makes the skin soft and supple. These indicate Imam's knowledge, at that time Imam mentioned some points that scientists reached them in modern laboratories and by doing a lot of research.

Ahmad Ibn Amer Taii in the book of "Sahife Al-reza" says that Imam Reza quoted from Holy Prophet: "you'd better eat olive oil because it reinforces human nature and increases tact and intelligence, removes mucoid and mucus, strengthens the nerves and purify moral and soul, removes sadness and brings peace.

Although, this hadith is considered Motezafer from document perspective, the book of "Sahifeh Al-Reza", narrated by Ahmad Ibn Amer Taii in 194 AH in Medina from Imam Reza has a great credit among Shiite scholars and is considered as primary four hundred principles. Therefore, it can be a basis for accepting this narrative. On the other hand, there are many hadiths that are considered as Motezafer Hadith and they have similar theme and their tenor and context are such a way that issuing them by infallible is not possible, so its weak document can be irrespective and we can rely on that hadith.

From the content view, this hadith refers to one of olive oil characteristics that can remove bile. Bile is one of four natures in traditional medicine and in word, it is used as power and strength of moral or material. This word literally means strength and intensity of mind. The meaning of "Marreh" in this hadith is bile and human nature. Today, nutrition scientists infer to those references that are in the words of prophets and they say that olive oil is laxative and very beneficial for liver, it excretes bile and kitty of kidneys. Olive oil removes gallbladder and prevents of gallstones creation.

In two Morsal narratives, the olive characteristics were studied and it was found that olive is effective for disposing fart. It is clear that fart is caused by body coldness and moisture. Olive is a heating material which can dispose fart. Isaac Ibn Ammar says that I asked Imam Sadigh (AS) that people say olive stimulate fart! Imam said no, olive excretes fart.

In a Morsal narrative of Imam Sadigh (AS), the olive properties are considered and they know it to enhance sexual power and water of back.

In a Morsal Hadith of Imam Kazim (AS), it is emphasized on the effect of olive oil on increasing sexual performance and it is stated that: anyone who eats eggs,

onions and olive oil, his/her sexual ability will increase and anyone who eats meat and eggs, his son will be big bone.

There was a notion in this Hadith that olive strengthens the sexual boost. In today science, it is said that to increase sexual power, enough blood should reach reproductive system, sex hormones should leak and energy should generate. Sea foods and green olive which contain zinc, selenium and iodine increase blood in male and female genital tract and stimulate and increase sexual power. Also leaves of lettuce, tomato and olive oil increase the power of spermatogenesis by supplying necessary materials.

Another property of olive oil is virus and germs elimination. As prophet said: anyone who eats olive oil and lubricates his body with it, devil (germs and viruses) cannot approach him during forty days (Noori, 1987).

The meaning of devil in this Hadith is germ because devil literally means insidious object. Since, olive oil contains phytochemicals, it reduces cholesterol, destroys bile and removes virus.

In a documented but poor Hadith from Imam Sadiq (AS), four effects of olive oil were mentioned: eating wheaten flour with olive oil grows meat, strengthens bones, thins the skin and increases sexual ability.

In a Morsal Hadith which was quoted by Prophet, eating olive oil causes mouth odor. Prophet says that what a good aromatic oil! It was prophets' perfume and a blest thing.

In some Motezafer Hadiths, the spiritual effect of olive oil is mentioned and it is said that those who use vinegar and olive as spice for bread and stew will not be poor and always have food because oil is the food of prophets (Noori, 1987).

As it was seen, 14 characteristics of olive and its oil were mentioned and these characteristics were confirmed by new and traditional medicine theories. These characteristics are disposing fart, strengthening sexual power, mouth purifying, skin making and face coloring, relaxation, strengthening of the nerves, decreasing rage, destroying mucoid and mucus secretion and relieving fatigue and lethargy and failure mode, removing germ, growing meat and bone, increasing wisdom and intelligence and in general eliminating the diseases. Nutrition scientists know olive oil as the best oil in the world. Due to its positive effects on skin and hair, it is referred as beauty oil. Olive contains high fat, protein, iron and phosphate and it is full of Vitamins A, B, D and E which is one of the most important antioxidants. Olive oil has omega 3 and oleocanthal that prevents arthritis and ehritt rheumatoid.

## CONCLUSION

As it was observed, in Quran and Hadiths, it was mentioned to traditions of physical health and nutrition, dependently and independently. Instructions about prediction and treatment were provided. Also, for sample of beverages and foods appropriate for physical health, they introduced dates, grapes, figs and olives. Based on clear text of Quran and Islamic tradition, it is revealed that olive is a valuable food for diseases removal and prevention. Its mixture is a healing medical drug for diseases. We can also say that verses related to this subject represent miracles of Quran. A major part of these hadiths are accepted rationally and data of new and old medicine illustrate them. These are signs of full science and magic words of prophet and innocent inmate.

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