

## **AROMATIC DRUGS IN UNANI MEDICINE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KITABUL-MIA-LIL-MASIHI.**

**K.A. SHAFQAT AZMI,\* WASIM AHMED\*\* & M.K.SIDDIQUI. \*\*\***

### **ABSTRACT**

This is an established fact since time immemorial that, the aroma plays a vital role in the human beings and even in animals. The aromatic plants and aromatic chemicals contained in them has also significance in our day to day living. Process of distillation as adopted and described by Unani physicians confirms the claim that, they were aware of the importance of aromatic drugs and perfumes. There is a vast literature scattered in existing Unani medical books, which shows their intelligentia towards the knowledge of herbal drugs including aromatic plants. 'Kitabul-Mia-Lil-Masihi is a book on Unani Medicine. Its 17th Chapter consists aromatic drugs exclusively. The drugs have been classified and presented here under different headings.

### **Introduction :**

This is an established fact that the aroma plays a vital role in the human being and even in animals since time immemorial. The sense of smell also plays a tremendous role in the identification of right type of food. The aromatic plants and aromatic chemicals contained in them have also significance in our day to day living. All of us use certain spices, condiments which improve not only the taste of food but also appetite increasing the salivation.

Process of distillation as adopted and described by Unani physicians confirms the claim that they were aware about the importance of aromatic drugs and perfumes.

Furthermore, vast literature is scattered in existing Unani medical books which

shows their intelligentia towards the knowledge of herbal drugs including aromatic plants, e.g. Kitabul-Mia Lil-Masihi, as its one chapter i.e. 17th consists of aromatic drugs exclusively.

### **Aromatic Drugs in Kitabul-Mia :**

Kitabul-Mia- Lil-Masihi, authored by abu Sahl Masihi, teacher of Avicenna is a unique book on medicine, however as discribed in the aforesaid para, its 17th chapter comprises of aromatic drugs, which shows his research aptitude of more than one thousand years back, when the modern developed technological facilities were not available. The drugs have been classified under the following headings :

1. Perfumes
2. Essential oil bearing plants
3. Odoferous herbs or aromatic plants

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\* Asst. Director I/c. Literary Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CCRUM). Jamia Hamdard Campus, New Delhi - 110 062 (India).

\*\* Research Officer (U), LRIUM (CCRUM), New Delhi (India).

\*\*\* Director, Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine, New Delhi (India).

Description of temperaments, medicinal properties and therapeutic effects of these drugs have been highlighted through the following tables :-

**TABLE - I**

**Perfumes**

S.No.	Name of drugs (Arabic and botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic use
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Zafran ( <i>Crocus sativus</i> , Linn.)	H <sub>2</sub> D <sub>1</sub>	Tones up the heart and brain.
2.	Sandal i) ( <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> , Linn.) ii) ( <i>Santalum album</i> , Linn.)	C <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Beneficial in the fever caused by heat (heat stroke), useful in weakness of stomach and hot headache. Its poultice is beneficial not only for the aforesaid ailments but also for hot swellings.
3.	Ambar ( <i>Berberis pectiolaris</i> )	H <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Cardio-brain tonic.
4.	Ood	H <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Astringent for the stomach, stomachic and aromates the stomach, strengthens the internal organs, removes the fetid breath, opens the hepatic obstructions and evacuates the septic humours of the stomach, carminative, soothing effect in pleural pain, beneficial for brain, liver and heart.
5.	Kafoor ( <i>Camphora officinarum</i> or <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> , Linn.)	C <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Useful in headache and hot ailments of brain, stops the bleeding in epistaxis, Excessive smell causes insomnia, its internal use cools the kidneys and testicles and coagulates the semen.
6.	Lazan ( <i>Cistus craticcus</i> )	H <sub>2</sub>	Deobstruent, beneficial in otalgia, strengthens the hair follicles, expells the placenta.

**TABLE - II**  
**Essential Oil bearing Plants**

S.No.	Name of drugs (Arabic and botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic uses
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Duhnul-aas ( <i>Myrtus communis</i> , Linn.)		Beneficial in the hotness of the head, grows thickens and strengthens the hairs.
2.	Duhnul-Afsantin ( <i>Artemisia siversiana</i> , wild. or <i>Artemisia absinthium</i> Linn.)	H	Strengthens the cold organs, particularly stomach, subject to the condition its hot massage.
3.	Duhnul-Babunaj ( <i>Anthemis nobilis</i> , Linn.)	H	Resolvent, beneficial in rigor.
4.	Duhnul-ban ( <i>Melia azedarach</i> Linn.)	H. M	Beneficial for nerves, utilised in the form of suppository, evacuates immatured humours.
5.	Duhnul-banafsaj ( <i>Viola doctorata</i> , Linn.)	C. M	Beneficial in hotness, irritation and dryness
6.	Duhnul-Hina ( <i>Lawsonia alba</i> , Lamk.) inermis, Linn.	H. C	Tonic, astringent, Moderate in hotness and coldnes.
7.	Duhnul-Khasak ( <i>Tribulus terrestris</i> , Linn.)		Beneficial in constipation and renal colic.

TABLE - II (A)

S.No.	Name of drugs (Arabic and botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic use
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
8.	Duhnul-Khairi ( <i>Al-hagi comelorum</i> , Fisch.)	M	Tenuity is present, generally suits to all temperaments.
9.	Duhnus - Sudab ( <i>Ruta graveolens</i> Linn.)		Beneficial in the coldness of kidneys, bladder, back and uterus. It is also useful in the atony of nerves, pleural pain and gaseous ailments.
10.	Duhnus-Safarjal ( <i>Cydonia oblonga</i> Mill.)		Hepato tonic, relieves the hotness of liver and stomach.
11.	Duhnus-Sosan ( <i>Iris ensata</i> Thumb.)	H	It has the resolving power, relieves the uterine pain, otalgia and debility of the organs due to coldness.
12.	Duhnul-Qust ( <i>Saussurea Lappa</i> Clarke.)		Useful in gastralgia and hepatic pain, beneficial in coldness of joints and its atony.
13.	Duhnul-Marzanjosh ( <i>Orianum vulgare</i> , Linn.)	H	It has the tenuity, its smell and snuff removes the obstruction of brain.
14.	Duhnul-Mastaki ( <i>Pistacia lentiscus</i> , Linn.)	H	Astringent, useful in gingivitis and toothache.

TABLE - II (B)

S.No.	Name of Drugs (Arabic and botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic use
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
15.	Duhunul-Miah ( <i>Liquidambar orientalis</i> , Miller)		Useful in rheumatic pain and coldness of organs, resolves the swellings due to dryness.
16.	Duhnul - Nardin ( <i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> )		Beneficial in hepatic pain, gastralgia, colic pain and migrain. Useful in atony of bladder, provided that administered through urethra.
17.	Duhunul-Narjis ( <i>Narcissus tazetta</i> , Linn.)	M	Some resolvent, more moderate in comparison to Duhnul-sosan. Useful for diseases of the chest and pleura.
18.	Duhunul-Nilofar ( <i>Nymphaea alba</i> , Linn.)  or ( <i>Nymphaea lotus</i> , Linn.)	C <sub>1</sub> . W	More coldness in comparison to Duhunul-Banafsaj, its snuff is useful in the heat of head, and removes mucous.
19.	Duhunul-Ward ( <i>Rosa alba</i> , Linn.)		Beneficial in intestinal ulcers and external and internal injuries, if used as enema.

**TABLE - III**  
**Aromatic Plants**

S.No.	Name of Drugs (Arabic and Botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic use
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Aas ( <i>Myrtis communis</i> , Linn.)	C.D. M	Compound of different energies, contains astringency and heat along with delicate liquid, coldness and hotness dominates irrespective of hot or cold temperament. Brain tonic. Useful for viscera and stomach.
2.	Uqhawan	H <sub>3</sub> .D <sub>2</sub>	Attenuant for nutrition, opens the obstruction, beneficial for stomach.
3.	Babunaj ( <i>Anithenis nobilis</i> , Linn.)	H <sub>1</sub> .D <sub>1</sub>	Attenuant resolvent laxative and colorific.
4.	Banafsaj ( <i>Viola odorata</i> , Linn.)	C <sub>1</sub> .W <sub>1</sub>	Some resolvent and attenuant, useful in heat and burning, relieves the headache due to excessive heat. Beneficial for cough due to heat, if used duly preserved in sugar. Dry banafsaj, purges the viscoueous bile from intestines, if used orally.
5.	Khairi ( <i>Al-hagi camelorum</i> , Fisch)	H <sub>2</sub> . D <sub>2</sub>	Attenuant. Yellow is best of moderate grade and of less hotness.
6.	Sosun ( <i>Iris florentina</i> , Linn.)	H <sub>2</sub> .D <sub>2</sub>	Violet is more potential than white, attenuant beneficial in phlegmatic and nervous ailments.
7.	Shahsafaram ( <i>Ocimam basilicum</i> , Linn.)	C	Useful in heat and burning, hypnotic.
8.	Shaqaiqun-noman ( <i>Asparagus recenmosus</i> , Willd)	H <sub>3</sub> .D <sub>3</sub>	Evacuates the excreta, if smelled.
9.	Shih <i>Artemisia persica</i> , Boiss	H <sub>2</sub> .D <sub>2</sub>	Useful in the pain of buttocks.

TABLE - III (A)

S.No.	Name of Drugs (Arabic and Botanical)	Temperament.	Medicinal Properties and Therapeutic use
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
10.	Faranjmishk ( <i>Ocimum gratissimum</i> , Linn.)  or ( <i>Ocimum frutescens</i> ) or ( <i>Citratum zeylanicum</i> )	H <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Opens the obstruction of brain, useful in the palpitation caused by melanic and phlegmatic humours. Its smell is beneficial in the obstruction of nostrils.
11.	Mur ( <i>Commiphora myrrha</i> , Nees)	H <sub>2</sub> D <sub>2</sub>	Useful for cold temperamental individuals, its smell produces intoxication, if taken after wine.
12.	Marzanjosh ( <i>Orianum vulgare</i> , Linn.)	H <sub>3</sub> D <sub>3</sub>	Attenuant and resolvent, tones up the organs and increases vigour and vitality.
13.	Narjis ( <i>Narcissus tazetta</i> , Linn.)	H <sub>1</sub> D <sub>1</sub>	Attenuant and resolvent.
14.	Nilofar ( <i>Nymphaea alba</i> , Linn.) or ( <i>Nymphaea lotus</i> , Linn.)		Properties resemble to banafsaj, but comparatively more humectant and laxative, both are useful for hot swellings.
15.	Ward ( <i>Rosa alba</i> , Linn.)	C,D	Composed with astringent and bitter substances, its smell is beneficial for individuals of biliary and hot temperament, relieves the congestive as well as biliary headache, useful for stomach and liver, beneficial for the ulcers of lower extremities, if used duly decoated with aas.
16.	Yasmin ( <i>Jasminum officinale</i> , Linn.)	H	Attenuant and resolvent, increases the metabolism, strengthens the organs.

**Discussion :**

After going through the ancient Unani literature particularly, *Kitabul-Mia Lil-Masihi*, it is clearly evident that Unani physicians were fully aware regarding the importance and efficacy of herbal drugs. It is the matter of surprise that they arranged the relevant material in such a scientific form, which gives the impression of present developed research. They have noted and discussed even the minute points in this regard. They have classified these drugs under the headings of *Itr* (perfumes), *Idhan* (essential oil bearing plants) and *ryahin* (Odoferous herbs or aromatic plants). After comparison of modern research with the ancient repository, it is clearly evident that the modern scientist have elaborated the Unani literature with or without their acknowledgement.

**Conclusion :**

The ancient literature on the subject of aromatic drugs scattered in the existing

Unani books is of high significance. A team work is required for the thorough study and screening of these valuable matter right from very beginning i.e. Dioscorides to Hakim Mohammad Azam Khan. The collection, collation and screening of the relevant literature may become firm basis for the present research. The valuable matters available in Unani Medical books e.g. *Kitabul-Mia* may be incorporated with full confidence in the modern research as it is inevitable to improve the efficacy and natural values of aromatic drugs. Needless to mention that the whole world is looking forward for alternative system of medicine based on aromatic and medicinal plants and free of hazards. Fortunately the major portion of Unani therapeutics is based upon herbal drugs which are biologically more competible with human system and comparatively less toxic than the synthetics.



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सारांश

## यूनानी चिकित्सापद्धति में सुगंधित द्रव्य किताबुल-मिया-लिल-मसीही के विशेष संदर्भ में

-के. ए. शफखत आजमी  
वसीम अहमद  
एम. के. सिद्दीखी

अतिप्राचीन काल से यह एक प्रमाणित तथ्य है कि सुगन्ध की मानव जाती में एवं पशुओं में भी एक महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका होती है। सुगन्धित पौधों तथा उनमें पायेजाने वाले सुगन्धित रासायनिक पदार्थों का हमारी रोज़ाना की जीवनचर्या में विशेष महत्त्व है। यूनानी चिकित्सकों द्वारा अंगीकृत एवं वर्णित आसवन प्रक्रिया इस तथ्य को प्रमाणित करती है कि वे सुगंधित द्रव्यों तथा इतरों के महत्त्व से अवगत थे। किताबुल-मिया-लिल-मसीही नामक इस ग्रन्थ का विषय यूनानी चिकित्सा पद्धति है। इस ग्रन्थ का १७ वां अध्याय केवल सुगंधित द्रव्यों पर आधारित है, जिनका यहां विभिन्न शीर्षकों के अंतर्गत वर्गीकरण कर प्रस्तुत करने का प्रयास किया गया है।