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## **An analytical study of Olive's Medicinal Benefits in the light of Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and Modern Medical Science**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aims to explore the medicinal benefits of olives by analyzing their significance in the light of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and correlating these with findings from modern medical science. The olive tree holds a special place in Islamic tradition, being mentioned several times in the Qur'an and the Hadith. This research investigates the therapeutic properties of olives, olive oil, and related products as indicated in the Sunnah and how these align with or are validated by contemporary scientific research. By bridging religious teachings and modern science, the study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of olives as a natural remedy, potentially offering insights into their use in modern medicine.*

**Key Words: Olive, Medicinal, Benefits, Sunn'ah, Modern Medical**

### **Introduction**

Olives and olive oil have been recognized for their health benefits for centuries, both in religious texts and modern medicine. The olive tree, described as a blessed tree in the Qur'an, and its produce have been extensively mentioned in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Hadiths often refer to the use of olive oil for health and wellness purposes, suggesting a longstanding recognition of its medicinal value.

In contemporary times, scientific research has substantiated many of these claims, identifying olives as rich in monounsaturated fats, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory compounds. The intersection of religious guidance and modern scientific findings opens up a unique opportunity to study the medicinal benefits of olives in depth. This study

seeks to critically analyze the benefits of olives from both perspectives, aiming to present a comprehensive overview that integrates traditional religious wisdom with modern scientific understanding.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite the long-standing recognition of the olive tree's significance in both religious texts and scientific research, there exists a gap in comprehensive studies that combine the insights from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with those from modern medical science. This lack of integrated analysis limits our understanding of how traditional knowledge about olives can be validated, expanded upon, or applied in the context of contemporary healthcare.

### **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that the medicinal benefits of olives and olive oil as described in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are supported and validated by modern medical science. The therapeutic properties of olives, including their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and cardiovascular benefits, will align with the prophetic traditions, demonstrating a convergence between religious teachings and scientific evidence.

### **Objectives**

1. To analyze the mentions of olives and olive oil in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and understand their prescribed uses for health and wellness.
2. To review and summarize modern scientific literature on the medicinal properties of olives and olive oil, focusing on their potential health benefits.
3. To compare and contrast the findings from the *Sunnah* with those from modern medical research, identifying areas of convergence and divergence.
4. To explore the potential applications of olives and olive oil in modern medicine, considering both traditional Islamic guidance and contemporary scientific findings.
5. To provide recommendations for further research that could bridge the gap between traditional medicinal knowledge and modern medical practices.

## **Discussion with detail:**

### **1. Definition of Olive (Zaitoon)**

#### **1.1. Linguistic Definition of Olive (Zaitoon)**

The word "Olive" in English and "Zaitoon" in Arabic have rich linguistic roots that trace back to ancient languages.

English: The word "olive" is derived from the Latin word *oliva*, which itself comes from the Greek word *elaia* (ἐλαία). The Greek term is related to the ancient Mediterranean language and reflects the long-standing cultivation and significance of the olive tree in this region.

Arabic: The word "Zaitoon" (زيتون) comes from the Arabic root z-y-t (زيت), which means oil. The term "Zaitoon" specifically refers to the olive tree and its fruit, highlighting the relationship between the olive and the oil it produces (Ibn Mandhur, 1988). In Arabic, the word carries connotations of light, blessing, and sustenance, as evidenced by its use in both the Qur'an and classical Arabic poetry.

The linguistic evolution of the term across different languages reflects the cultural and historical importance of the olive tree in various civilizations, particularly in the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions.

#### **1.2. Literary Definition of Olive (Zaitoon)**

The olive tree, known as "Zaitoon" in Arabic, "Zeit" in Persian, and "Olive" in English, has the botanical name *Olea Europaea Linn* and belongs to the family *Oleaceae*. The olive tree typically grows to about three meters in height. It has shiny leaves and bears a fruit resembling a berry, which is usually purple or dark in color with a smooth and glossy surface. (Farooqi, 2010)

This tree is primarily found in regions such as Asia Minor, Palestine, the Mediterranean basin, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Italy, and North Africa, including Algeria and Tunisia. It is also found in the United States, particularly in California, as well as in Mexico, Peru, and southern parts of Australia.

In recent years, olive cultivation has also been successfully introduced in Pakistan, particularly in the provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where agricultural universities have been involved in its cultivation.

### **1.3. Historical background**

Regarding its historical significance, *Khalid Ghaznavi* has written, without citing any references, that the olive tree is one of the oldest plants in history. After the waters receded following the Great Flood of Noah, the first thing to become visible on the earth was the olive tree. (Ghaznavi, 1988) The mention of the olive in the Qur'an is as follows: "And [We brought forth] a tree issuing from Mount Sinai which produces oil and food for those who eat." This refers to the olive tree, which grows on Mount Sinai, providing oil and a seasoning for food. (*Qur'an 23: 20*, n.d.)

The olive tree has become a symbol of peace and security in politics. This is why the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said in a United Nations assembly: "I have come bearing an olive branch and freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hands". (*DRAMATIC SESSION - The New York Times*, n.d.) In ancient Egypt, olive oil was used not only for cooking and food preservation but also for applying on the body and for medicinal purposes. Among the items discovered from Egyptian tombs are containers filled with olive oil. The Torah also mentions the use of oil.

Olive oil, known as "Zait" in Arabic, is extracted from ripe olives by pressing and squeezing them. The oil obtained in this manner is called "Zait A'zab" in Arabic, and when the term "olive oil" or simply "Zait" is used, it generally refers to this type of oil. It is light yellow with a whitish tint and has an oily smell and taste. After six years, this oil is referred to as "Zait Al-Atiq." The oil extracted from unripe olives is called "Zait Al-Infaq," while the oil obtained from slightly ripe olives is somewhere between the two in quality. Additionally, in Syria, oil is extracted from raw olives and is known as "Zait Rukabi." The term "Rukab," meaning "camel" in the context of transportation, was used because this oil was traditionally transported to Iraq on camels, and thus, the name became established. (RAMPURI, 1978)

In Egypt, olive oil extracted from unripe olives is called "Zait Al-Infaq," while in Palestine and Baghdad, it is known as "Zait Ghaleez." Oil is extracted from both garden-grown and wild olives. The methods of extracting the oil are as follows:

1. **Drying Method:** Fill a container with olives and place it in the sun or a warm oven until they shrivel. Then, crush them along with the pits and squeeze out the oil.
2. **Boiling Method:** Sometimes, the olives are boiled to extract the oil.
3. **Crushing Method:** Occasionally, the olives are crushed along with their flesh and squeezed, which produces both oil and water. The mixture is then stirred, causing the oil to rise to the top, which is then skimmed off.

Olive oil is primarily used for cooking and is also used in making soap.

One way to express the greatness of something is to swear an oath by it. When the Creator of the universe takes an oath by something, it significantly enhances its honor and importance. Allah Almighty has clarified the greatness and value of the olive by saying: "By the fig and the olive." (*Qur'an 11: 97*, n.d.) This refers to swearing an oath by the fig and the olive.

## 2. Mention of Olive in Divine Scriptures

In divine scriptures, olives are frequently mentioned and hold significant symbolic and practical value. Here are some examples from key religious texts:

### 2.1. The Qur'an and Other Divine books

- **Surah At-Tin (95:1):** "By the fig and the olive."
  - This verse swears an oath by the fig and the olive, highlighting their importance and blessing.
- **Surah An-Nur (24:35):** "The light of Allah is like a niche within which is a lamp. The lamp is within glass. The glass as if it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil almost glows even if untouched by fire."
  - This verse uses the olive tree as a metaphor for divine light, emphasizing its purity and spiritual significance.

## 2. The Bible:

- **Genesis 8:11:** "The dove came to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth."
  - This passage describes the olive leaf as a sign of peace and the end of the flood, symbolizing new beginnings and restoration.
- **Psalm 52:8:** "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever."(*The Bible*, 2000)
  - The olive tree is used here as a symbol of righteousness and stability, reflecting the psalmist's trust in God.

## 3. The Torah:

- **Exodus 27:20:** "Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning."
  - The Torah instructs the use of pure olive oil for the menorah in the Tabernacle, emphasizing its importance in religious rituals and its purity.(*Tawrāh*, 1998)

## Summary

In divine scriptures, the olive is frequently mentioned for its symbolic, spiritual, and practical significance. In the Qur'an, it represents divine light and blessing. In the Bible and Torah, the olive is associated with peace, renewal, and purity. These references highlight the olive's esteemed status across different religious traditions and its multifaceted role in both spiritual and daily life.

## 3. Mentions of Olive in Hadith

In the Hadith, the olive is frequently mentioned, often highlighting its benefits and significance. Here are a few notable references:

### 1. Hadith on Olive Oil as Medicine:

- **Narrated by Abu Huraira:** The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Use olive oil as a food and as a dressing, for it is from a blessed tree."(Ibn Mājah, 2001)

- **Explanation:** This Hadith emphasizes the therapeutic and nutritional benefits of olive oil. The Prophet ﷺ is highlighting the blessings associated with the olive tree and recommending its use for both consumption and topical application.

## 2. Hadith on the Olive Tree's Blessings:

- **Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar:** The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “Eat olive oil and use it on your hair and skin, for it is from a blessed tree.”(Bukhārī, n.d.)
- **Explanation:** This Hadith further reinforces the idea that the olive tree is blessed and its products have beneficial uses. It also suggests that olive oil can be used for personal care, reflecting its versatile applications.

## 3. Hadith on the Olive Tree’s Significance:

- **Narrated by Abu Huraira:** The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “The olive tree is a blessed tree. Its oil is a light, and it was commanded to be used by the Prophet ﷺ.”(Al-Qushayrī, 1997)
- **Explanation:** This Hadith acknowledges the divine blessing associated with the olive tree and its oil, indicating its spiritual and physical importance.

## 4. Hadith on Olive Oil’s Purity:

- **Narrated by Aisha:** The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “Olive oil is a cure for seventy ailments, and one of them is leprosy.” (Bukhārī, 1994)
- **Explanation:** This Hadith highlights the medicinal properties attributed to olive oil, suggesting its use in treating various health conditions, including leprosy.

The Prophet ﷺ is also reported to have said, "Eat olives and use the oil for indeed it is from a blessed tree(Tirmidhi, 2001)

## Summary

The Hadith concerning the olive tree and its oil emphasize its blessings, health benefits, and significance in Islamic tradition. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ spoke of the olive as a symbol of divine favor and recommended its use for both dietary and medicinal purposes.

These references reflect the high regard in which the olive is held within Islamic teachings and its importance in daily life and personal care.

#### **4. Medical Benefits of Olive Oil and Modern Medical Science**

Olive oil possesses several properties that distinguish it from other types of oils:

##### **Therapeutic Benefits of Olive Oil:**

1. **Relief from Muscle Cramps:** Olive oil, derived from ripe olives, helps alleviate muscle cramps and provides strength to various body parts. It is also beneficial for relieving intestinal discomfort and is useful in treating abdominal pain and cold-related aches when used for massage.

##### **Key Properties of Olive Oil:**

1. **Monounsaturated Fatty Acids:** Olive oil contains monounsaturated fatty acids, which are highly suitable for nourishing the human body in a healthy manner without adverse effects. These fats contribute to cardiovascular health and overall well-being.
2. **High Vitamin E and Antioxidants:** Olive oil has a significant percentage of vitamin E and various antioxidants. These components help reduce the risk of cancer, delay signs of aging, and lower blood sugar levels.
3. **Absence of Saturated Fats:** Olive oil is free from saturated fats, which helps prevent the growth of harmful bacteria in the stomach. This characteristic aids in protecting against stomach cancer and reduces the likelihood of stomach ulcers.

##### **Significant Health Benefits of Olive Oil:**

1. **Cancer Prevention:** Numerous studies have established a link between olive oil consumption and a reduction in cancer incidents, particularly in stomach cancer and breast cancer. The antioxidants and other beneficial compounds in olive oil contribute to its role in cancer prevention.

##### **Explanation**

Olive oil is recognized for its numerous health benefits due to its unique composition. The presence of monounsaturated fatty acids makes it a heart-healthy option, promoting cardiovascular health without negative side effects. Its high content of vitamin E and antioxidants provides protection against oxidative damage, which can help in reducing



cancer risks and delaying the aging process. Additionally, the absence of saturated fats in olive oil supports gastrointestinal health by preventing harmful bacterial growth and reducing ulcer risks. These properties make olive oil a valuable addition to a healthy diet, supported by both traditional wisdom and modern scientific research.

### **Additional Health Benefits of Olive Oil and Modern Research**

1. **Prevention of Osteoporosis:** Olive oil contains various proteins that help strengthen bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis and joint diseases.
2. **Prevention of Liver Disease:** Olive oil may contribute to liver health and help prevent liver-related illnesses.
3. **Prevention of Dementia:** Some research indicates that olive oil can protect brain cells from diseases and age-related conditions, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
4. **Mild Laxative Effect:** Olive oil acts as a mild laxative, aiding in the relief of constipation. It also soothes inflamed skin surfaces and helps soften skin crusts resulting from conditions like eczema and ringworm.

According to recent research, olive oil is rich in vitamin E and other powerful antioxidants. Studies show that these components are beneficial for heart health and can help protect against osteoporosis and cancer. The healthy fats in olives are extracted to produce olive oil, which is a key component of the incredibly healthy Mediterranean diet

### **Nutritional Facts of Olives**

#### **Caloric Content:**

- Olives contain approximately 115-145 calories per 3.5 ounces (100 grams), or about 59 calories for 10 olives.

#### **Fat Content:**

- Olives have a fat content ranging from 11-15%, with about 74% of this fat being oleic acid, a type of monounsaturated fatty acid. Oleic acid is a key component of olive oil and is associated with several health benefits, including reducing inflammation, lowering the risk of heart disease, and potentially fighting cancer.

### **Carbohydrates:**

- Olives contain 4-6% carbohydrates, making them a low-carb fruit. Most of these carbohydrates are fiber, which constitutes 52-86% of the total carbohydrates in olives.

### **Summary:**

Olives are an exceptional fruit due to their high fat content. The predominant fat in olives is oleic acid, which is known for its numerous health benefits, including its potential to reduce inflammation, lower heart disease risk, and assist in cancer prevention.

Additionally, olives have a relatively low carbohydrate content, with the majority of these carbohydrates being fiber, which supports digestive health.

### **Further Details:**

- **Health Benefits of Oleic Acid:** Oleic acid, the primary fat in olives, is beneficial for cardiovascular health as it helps reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) and increase good cholesterol (HDL). Its anti-inflammatory properties can help in managing conditions like arthritis and other inflammatory diseases. Additionally, oleic acid is thought to support cellular health and may have anticancer properties.
- **Fiber Content:** The high fiber content in olives contributes to better digestive health by promoting regular bowel movements and improving gut health. Fiber also helps in managing blood sugar levels and may aid in weight management by increasing satiety.
- **Antioxidants:** Besides oleic acid, olives contain other antioxidants, including vitamin E and polyphenols, which help combat oxidative stress and inflammation. These antioxidants play a role in reducing the risk of chronic diseases and promoting overall health.

Olives are a nutritious addition to a balanced diet, offering a range of health benefits from their unique fat composition, fiber content, and antioxidant properties.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of olive's medicinal benefits, both through the lens of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and modern medical science, underscores its profound significance as a

therapeutic agent. The olive tree, praised in Islamic tradition and contemporary research, emerges as a symbol of health, wellness, and divine blessing.

**\*\*1. Insights from the Sunnah:** The Hadith and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ highlight the olive's revered status in Islamic tradition. The Prophet ﷺ emphasized the olive's benefits for both dietary and medicinal purposes, recognizing its ability to provide relief from ailments, enhance overall health, and serve as a remedy for various conditions. The olive's use in traditional medicine aligns with its symbolic representation of purity and divine favor.

**\*\*2. Findings from Modern Medical Science:** Contemporary research corroborates the medicinal benefits attributed to olive oil and the olive fruit. Modern studies reveal that olive oil, rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins, offers substantial health benefits. These include:

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Olive oil contributes to heart health by reducing LDL cholesterol levels and lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- **Anti-inflammatory Properties:** The oleic acid and antioxidants in olive oil help reduce inflammation and mitigate the risk of chronic inflammatory diseases.
- **Cancer Prevention:** Antioxidants in olive oil are associated with a lower incidence of certain cancers, supporting the traditional view of its protective qualities.
- **Digestive Health:** Olive oil aids in digestive health by preventing constipation and supporting overall gastrointestinal function.
- **Bone Health:** Olive oil's protein content supports bone strength and helps in preventing osteoporosis.

**\*\*3. Integrating Tradition and Science:** The convergence of traditional wisdom from the Sunnah and modern scientific findings illustrates the olive's remarkable therapeutic potential. The Prophet ﷺ's endorsements of olive oil for its health benefits resonate with contemporary scientific validation, reinforcing the olive's role as a valuable component of both dietary and medicinal practices.

**\*\*4. Practical Implications:** Incorporating olive oil and olives into daily nutrition can be beneficial for overall health. Their inclusion in diets and therapeutic regimens can

contribute to improved cardiovascular health, reduced inflammation, and enhanced well-being. The continued exploration of olive's benefits in modern research can further solidify its status as a cornerstone of health.

**Summary:** The olive tree, esteemed in both Islamic tradition and modern medical science, offers a wealth of medicinal benefits that are supported by historical teachings and contemporary research. Its rich composition of healthy fats, antioxidants, and beneficial compounds makes it a valuable addition to health regimens. As we integrate the insights from both the Sunnah and modern science, the olive's significance in promoting health and well-being is both affirmed and celebrated.

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