

The Relationship between the Quranic Foods as Natural Antioxidants and their Cold/Hot Nature According Persian Traditional Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of human. Modern nutrition has many recommendations for health promotion Iranian traditional medicine (ITM) scholars classified food based on some of their properties including their nutritious value, the amount of calories, and warm or cold temperament (midzaj). ITM is a medical system that is based on temperament; the main objective in Iranian traditional medicine managements during health and disease is returning and maintaining the human being to an equilibrium in which the organ systems works at their optimal status. According Quran's invitation to health, life style and nutrition style which mentioned several times in various verses, we must think to the utilities and properties of foods, plants and fruits and how God has put these wonderful utilities in herbal medicines. In the present investigation that is a descriptive and library based study, we have tried to represent the associations between the Quranic foods and their cold-hot/warm nature category according to Iranian traditional medicine. Based on the traditional medicine manuscripts, and modern medical reports regarding the properties of Quranic foods (as natural anti-oxidants) and their effects, it can be concluded that consumption of Quranic fruits (grape, olive, pomegranate, date, and fig) and their inclusion in the diet prevents different diseases, especially cancers, Alzheimer, cardio-vascular diseases, and also decrease of blood pressure, bad cholesterol, infections, and inflammations.

Keywords: Holly Quran, Iranian traditional medicine, Temperament, Natural anti-oxidant, Life style

INTRODUCTION

Iranian traditional medicine (ITM) is an ancient, which has been rooted in the boundless land of knowledge and experiences of many great scientists during many centuries. It was integrated with Islamic medicine which was inspired of the Holy Quran after rising of Islam among Iranian populations [1].

According to the viewpoint of ITM, the human body is composed of four groups of substances, which are called the four humors (Akhlat) including yellow bile (Safra humor), blood humor (Dam), phlegm humor (Balgham), and black bile humor (Sauda) [2]. ITM scholars believes that depending on the quantity of each humor, the human body shows a dominant quality of one of the four humors, *i.e.*, hot, cold, dry, and moist, which are called

temperaments. Changes in the quantity or quality of each of the humors would cause unnatural changes in the four qualities, which are called "sue midzaj". Sue midzaj (ill temperament) is a kind of disease in traditional medicine and could cause disorders in natural activities [1-2].

Also, in ITM, food can be classified based on some of their properties including their nutritious value, the amount of calories, and warm or cold temperament. Concepts such as "cold" or "warm/hot" temperaments (*Midzaj*) are well-known in Persian traditional medicine and also in many other traditional medical theories, such as Unani (Greek), Arabic, Roman, Indian, European, and Chinese traditional medicines [3-4]. Then, most traditional medicines such as ITM divided people into four groups according to their temperaments. These include warm and dry, warm and moist, cold and dry, cold and moist, with cold and warm being the two main temperaments [3].

The appearance of the theory of Hot and Cold natures

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finds its origin in ancient Greece, by Hippocrates and Galen. The book of *Canon of Medicine (QanundarTib)*, written by Avicenna (Persian physician, 973-1037 AD) is an excellent collection and classification of all the ancient beliefs that still survived, mixed with the medical theories of the time and Avicenna's own experiences as a physician [4].

According to the ITM, quality and quantity of food depends on the its different physical and gastrointestinal conditions, age, weather and season. If these factors are considered, the food causes health, and if not, food causes illness and can not feed body, appropriately [5]. In the humoral theory, in which people are categorized regarding their dominant body fluid, the people with a dominant hot humor (sanguine temperament that is Hot and Moist and choleric temperament that is Hot and Dry) were considered to have a Hot nature, and the people with a dominant Cold humor (melancholic temperament that is Cold and Dry and Phlegmatic temperament that is Cold and Moist) were considered to have a cold nature [3-4].

ITM scholars believe that health is a state of equilibrium between the cold and warm elements inside the body and whenever this equilibrium is disturbed, diseases are formed [4]. This balance is prepared through three to four digestive processes through gastrointestinal tract, liver, blood, and cells [1]. Finally, this equilibrium can be restored by food therapy. Understanding the scientific basis of temperaments may help modern medicine to diagnose and treat diseases by providing the aforementioned equilibrium by traditional medicine. Also, it is notable that previous reports have shown that the social and cultural parameters can effect on eating habits and personal hygiene [4].

The holly Quran is a religious book of Muslims, revealed from God to Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) more than fourteen centuries ago. In fact, the holly Quran is God's greatest gift to human beings and leads them to eternal prosperity. The Quran is not a book of science but it is a book of signs. There are more than six thousand 'signs' in Quran including various aspects of human life and death [6]. Muslims are encouraged to seek knowledge about diseases, and to pursue medical remedies administered by eligible physicians [7-8]. Also, it is interesting that the holly Quran includes the most complete health program for human beings. Therefore, human can obtain perfection and loftiness through reflecting on Quran and conforming their

lives to it [9-10].

Holy Quran includes vast information on recommended food, life style and eating manner, and also, some of verses contain nutritional concepts. But it seems there are limited studies with different results about identification the verses with nutritional concepts and their associations with the traditional medicine manuscripts especially ITM. Therefore, the aim of the present investigation is to study a relation between the best principle combinations Quranic foods with ITM food category in various views of pairs in temperaments or hot/cold nature of Quranic foods and applications of foods with its peacemakers (or food reformer).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the present study, we have used an analytical-conceptual method. Using the reliable sources of interpretation and narrative from reliable sources, incoming texts were extracted from Quran according to the goal of this study and then, using the achievements of scientific research, the concept and implications of verses on the medicinal properties the Quranic foods were studied. So, present research is a descriptive and library based study in which the eminent chosen elements are traced in the above mentioned work to show the associations between the nutrient content of the Quranic foods and their cold-hot nature category in Persian traditional medicine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of human. Modern nutrition has many recommendations for health promotion (Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee [11]). There are a lot of instructions and lessons presented in Quran about healthy nutrition which is a very important factor for attaining the body and soul health. In one of the verses of Quran, it is directly commanded that human pay attention and look to his food.

"Therefore, let man look at his food" [12].

The closest exterior substance, to Man, is his food which, after some changes, is easily absorbed and becomes part of his body; therefore, if he cannot obtain it he will perish. That is why the Quran, among all things, puts emphasis on

the nourishment; especially those produced from trees and plants. It is clear that the aim of saying 'look at' is not a simple look, but it means with deep care and contemplating on the vital elements and wonderful structure of the nourishment, and the surprising effects they have on him, so, consequently, he should think about the Creator, Who has created them [10,13]. Also, the frequency of word "look to" in Quran is applied Four times. Two of them (Kahf 18:19 and Abasa 80:24) are used for the food of human, one of them is used for the practice of human (Al-Hajj 22:15) and the other one (Tariq 86:5) is used for how human is created. In Abasa, at first the exalted God invite human to pay attention to the ingredients of his nutrition and to find out which food has priority over the other one [10]. There is the idea which says that it may mean 'a superficial look, a look which stimulates the salivary glands and then helps the digestion of food. Some of the interpreters believe that it to mean that when a man sits at the table to eat, one must look carefully at the foods to see how they are prepared; whether they are permitted or forbidden, lawful (Halal) or unlawful (Haram) and, thus, one may consider the moral and religious aspects in eating [14]. However, some of the interpreters define the concept of food beyond its material aspect and include the food of thought. This means that human must look to his food of thought and reflection just like the food of body. The food of body and soul or thoughts, cultures, religions and books [10,14].

It is evident that the term 'man', used in the verse, includes all members of the human race whether they are believers or unbelievers. They must care about what they eat and, also, the wonder of its creation in order for the unbelievers, to find the right way, and for the believers to increase in their faith [9]. In the other verse (Kahf, 18:19), God recommended believers to eat the cleanest and purest blessings that we have provided you.

And likewise We did rouse them that they might question one another (Kahf 18:19).

One spokesman of them spoke, 'How long have you stayed here, some of them spoke, 'We stayed a day or part of a day'. Others spoke, 'Your Lord knows well how long you stayed', now then send one of you with this silver, to the city, then let him look for which food is the cleaner there and that he may bring for you provision from it, and let him be courteous and let him not inform anyone about you

(Kahf 18:19).

Also, in several verses of holly Quran, God mentioned the all creation from fruits, plants, animals up to all the creation in universe is made pairs (for example in chapter of Az-Zariyat 51:49):

And we have made pairs of everything that you may reflect (Az-Zariyat 51:49).

In this verse, the Lord commended to pay attention to this fact that all creatures, whether living beings or solid matter, are created in pairs. This means that this phenomenon does not only apply to animals and plants. The verses do not refer exclusively to pairs of sexes or to sexual reproduction alone; rather, it is much more general. It refers to everything that was created. For example the quarks "Up" and "Down," the protons and antiprotons, the positive and negative electricity charges in the universe are just the small sample of creation in pairs in universe.

It is notable that according holly Quran verses, the importance of creation in pairs in universe not only include the plant, animals and ... but also, holly Quran refers to pairs in temperaments or hot/cold nature of Quranic foods (chapters of Al-Insan, verses of 17 & 5) as follow:

And they will be given to drink there of a cup mixed with Zanjabil (ginger). (Al-Insan 76:17)

Undoubtedly, the virtuous will drink of a cup whereof the admixture is camphor (Al-Insan 76:5).

In both of the above verses, Allah says ginger and camphor will be the drinks that will refresh the believers in paradise.

Ginger (named "zangabil" in Persian), is the rhizome of *Zingiber officinale*, a perennial plant belonging to Zingiberaceae family, has been used alone or in compounds as a spice or remedy in ancient recipes of Iranian Traditional Medicine manuscripts. Some of the important applications of ginger in ITM are such as: a tonic for the memory and digestive system, the hepatic obstructions opener, aphrodisiac, for expelling compact wind from stomach and intestine, diluting, desiccating and emollient of phlegmatic and compact humor sticking to stomach, intestine, brain and throat [15]. Among all spices, ginger exhibits one of the greatest diversity of uses, such as in dietary supplements, beverages (such as ginger ales), and food products (such as in curry powder, confectionaries, soups, jams, and baked goods). It has been a part of healing strategies in Asia, India, Europe, and the Middle East for

centuries for treatment of such disorders as arthritis, stomach upset, asthma, diabetes, and menstrual irregularities, to name a few [16]. According traditional medicine, ginger has hot and dry in temperament and contain two major constituents of gingerol and shaghol which suppress absorption of dietary fat from the intestines and help in dissolution of excess fat deposited in the body, thus it can control obesity [17].

Camphor is the gum of an evergreen tree with aromatic leaves called *C. camphora* from Lauraceae family that is native of China and Japan, and has also been cultivated in Iran. It is said to be cold and dry [18]. Camphor exhibits several biological properties such as antimicrobial, antiviral and antitussive effects. Also, it is a common ingredient in modern medicine in topically applied analgesics and rubefacients for treatment of minor muscle aches and pains and it is reported that camphor has been used to relieve pain caused by breast engorgement by intramuscular injections. It has been applied as a topical anti-infective and anti-pruritic and internally as a stimulant and carminative. Thus, camphor is a multipurpose molecule with a most diverse range of applications, ranging from being used to treat medical conditions in humans to being used as a natural poison to kill insects, which seems divergent [19].

It is notable that according traditional medicine manuscripts, every human nature and temperament is genetic in nature or that certain features of the physical, mental and moral, and his relationship with the world around him, including food also affected. Also, in the universe, in addition to humans, all animals and even inanimate beings, color, foods, images, desires climates, geography and nature have their own temperament. The principles of Yin and Yang (opposing but complementary forces) which govern Traditional Chinese Medicine are also followed in Chinese food therapy. Practitioners believe that foods have different natural properties. They can be neutral or possess either yin or yang properties. Yin foods are cold or cool while Yang foods are hot or warm.

Hot/warm food helps to warm up the stomach (middle of the body), clear coldness, and strengthen the body. Generally, people who have an inner environment with a cold manifestation should eat more hot/warm food, and people who have an inner environment with a hot manifestation should eat more cold food. So, it is interesting

that in both of the verses (chapters of Al-Insan, verses of 17 & 5), Allah invites the believers in paradise to drinking of beverage including the ginger and camphor according their genetic temperament. It is notable that the most important point to remember is that when the Lord recommended the proper combinations of foods in holly Quran, it can be discussed this point in two various views of pairs in temperaments or hot/cold nature of Quranic foods and applications of foods with its peacemakers or food reformer.

In Iranian traditional medicine, the diagnosis of diseases is based on measuring and assessing the temperament of total body and its organs. So, the treatment is performed by changing the imbalance of temperament [18]. The most important rule of all the ancient medicines was the maintenance of the balance between the fundamental body elements, among which Warmth and Coldness played an absolutely essential role. Also, Iranian traditional medicine is a medical system that is based on temperament; the main objective in Iranian traditional medicine managements during health and disease is returning and maintaining the human being to an equilibrium in which the organ systems works at their optimal status [2].

Previous reports have shown that improper food combination will result to the interference of digestive process. Modern science supports these habits by informing us that the combination of foods we eat and the order in which we eat them are very important factors in health. Recently, it has been found that foods require different digestive processes in the body; thus, they are most easily digested when combined properly. Proper food combining is a system of eating foods that combine together efficiently to assist digestion so that the digestive tract does not have to work so hard to give the nutrients to our body which we need for energy. So, proper food combinations are based on the idea that there are foods groups that digest well with each other and others that don't [20]. Also, recently reports have shown that foods require different digestive processes in the body; thus, they are most easily digested when combined properly. Modern scientists say that improper food combinations can cause a person to inadequately digest their food, which can create imbalances in pH levels, improper absorption of nutrients, constipation or other digestive troubles.

The Ayurvedic perspective is that each food has a distinct combination of tastes and energies –and a corresponding affect on both the digestive system and on the body as a whole. Combining foods with radically different energetics can overwhelm the digestive fire and can cause indigestion, fermentation, gas, bloating, and the creation of toxins. This is why proper food combining is so important. According to Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, and other alternative medicine, if wrong foods combine, the body will become acidic and unbalanced, and actually will secrete enzymes that cancel each other out. This causes bloating, gas, weight loss and fluctuations in energy levels. It can also lead to slowed or impaired digestion, causing food to ferment in the stomach or toxins to be released in the intestines.

In fact, the Holy Quran implies a food combining principle in the several verses such as Chapters of Al-Rahman 55:68, Al-Tin 95:1-5, *Al-Anam*, 6:99, *Al-Mumenun* 23:19, Al-Nahl 16:11, ... which we discuss them as follow:

In the two Gardens there shall be fruits and date-palms and pomegranates (*Chapter of al-Rahman/68*).

Regarding the fruits of Paradise, the blessed Verse 68 is saying that there is abundance of fruits and those like dates and pomegranates in the two Gardens. Also, this verse mention for the presence of all kinds of fruit in Paradise, but the significance of dates and pomegranates are mentioned owing to their significance. According this verse, dates and pomegranates have their prime of place among fruits in Paradise, since they are rich in vitamins.

Fruits are important sources of vitamins and carbohydrates like fiber and sugar. They are low in calories and naturally sweet. Fruits and their juices are good sources of water, too. According to Quran, fruits like grape, date, fig, olive and pomegranate are heavenly gifts from God. They contain substantial quantities of essential nutrients in a rational proportion. It is notable that the holly Quran mentions the usage of several fruits that modern science has shown to have preventive effects on various diseases. Fruits, which benefit the human body in many ways, also taste very good. In Quran, Allah draws attention to their diversity and beauty and calls people to ponder upon their miraculous creation.

Also, it is interesting that when we notice to food combining principle in holly Quran, we can investigate this

principle according another view of consuming of food with its reformer. According Persian traditional medicine scholars, Food reformers or peacemakers are kind of food or herbal medicine that its consumption along with foods and will be effective in modifying and balancing the side effects of the food and improving the digestion of the food, and then increasing the properties of food and increasing the food absorption in the body and organs. Almost a meal or fruit can not be found without its reformer consumption. Unfortunately, today people consume foods without its reformers which lead to the reduction of quality and quantity of absorption and digestion and finally, appearance of strange diseases. So, the purpose of the food reformers (such as spices or flavorings) that are combined with food reported to help create a balance in the human body.

Also, the most important rule of all the ancient theories was the maintenance of the balance between the fundamental body elements, among which Warmth and Coldness played an absolutely essential role. For example, according Persian traditional medicine the best food reformer for milk is honey in people with hot and moist temperament. It is interesting that in description of Paradise in holly Quran, we can see the application of honey and milk together in chapters of Mohammad (47:15) as follow:

(Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits; and Grace from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell forever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)? (Chapter Mohammad 47:15)

However, not again that it is important to “food reformers” necessarily and solely to correct the effects and properties of foods are bad and sometimes one eat or drink, base on individual temperament.

Also, in the verse of 68, Chapter of al-Rahman, God invites the consuming of date and pomegranates together which according ITM manuscripts; the reformer of date is pomegranates. Also, in view of temperament science, the date has a hot temperament whereas pomegranate has a cold temperament which indicative of invitation to consuming of two fruits in above verse which they are complementary

temperament and balancing each other.

Also, in several verses such as Chapters of Ya Sin 36:34, Baghare 2:266 and Al-Isra 17:91 (as follow), Holy Quran implies water with cold temperament after two fruits of date and grape with hot temperament that again insist on a complementary temperament or balancing principle in Holy Quran.

And we made therein gardens of dates and grapes and we caused to gush forth springs therein (Ya Sin, 34).

Would any one of you like it that he would have a garden of dates and grapes beneath which rivers would have been flowing underneath it, with all kinds of fruit for him therein; and old age hath stricken him and he hath feeble offspring; and a fiery whirlwind strikes it and it is (all) consumed by fire. Thus Allah makes plain His revelations unto you, in order that ye may give thought. (Baghare, 266)

Or you have a garden of date palms and grapes, then you cause springs to gush forth (Al-Isra, 91).

In the Chapter of Al Tin 95:1-5, God swear to two fruits of Fig and the Olive and invite to pay attention to these fruits:

“By the Fig and the Olive, And the Mount of Sinai, And this City of security, We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, Then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low, -”(Chapter of Al Tin 95:1-5)

Japanese scientists have studied that on Metallothionein (MT) which extracted from fig or olive. Metallothionein is a material which is produced by humans and animals brains in small quantities and is a protein that contains Sulfur which can easily bind with zinc, iron and phosphorus. This substance is considered very vital to the human body in the sense of reducing cholesterol, performing metabolism, strengthening the heart, and controlling breath. They showed that extracted metallothionein from fig or olive alone did not give the expected benefit for the human health, whereas, its optimum effects were only seen when metallothionein that is extracted from fig was mixed with MT that is extracted from olive. After noticing that, the Japanese team tried to find the best mix ratio between fig and olive that provides the best influence. Finally, they reported that the best mix ratio is to be 1 fig to 7 olives.

It is interesting that Dr. Taha Ibrahim Khalifa has worked on the Holy Quran and found that fig was mentioned once while olive was mentioned six times explicitly and one time

implicitly (in Al Mu'minun/23:20 verses) in holly Quran (Al-Saadani)

“Also a tree springing out of Mount Sinai, which produces oil, and relish for those who use it for food.” (Chapter Al Mu'minun 23:20)

Then, these findings have a good agreement with proper food combining principle in holly Quran.

Also, The Lord in another chapter (al-Anam, 6:99) invite people to attention to consuming of grapes, olives and pomegranates together as follow:

And it is He who has sent down water from the heaven, then We brought forth every things of growth and out of it We brought forth the green (foliage) from which We bring forth-clustered grains and out of the sheaths of palms the bunches close to one another and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates, similar in some respect and dissimilar in some other respects. Look at its fruit when it bears fruit and its ripening. Undoubtedly there are signs in it for the persons believing (al -Anam, 6:99).

The 99th verse of Chapter al-Anam and other related verses that treat the three fruits of ‘Grape, Pomegranates and Olives’. As for as the phytology (botany) and the climate where the three fruits grow, are concerned, many similarities and differences exist between them. When they are consumed concurrently, they have either contradictory or complementary medicinal properties.

In above verse, holly Quran invited to notice in this point that by the means of water, God produces gardens of grapes, olives, and pomegranates top to. Olives and pomegranates are mentioned with together because their branches seem to Arab full of leaves from bottom. According to Quran, the fruits like grape, date, fig, olive and pomegranate are gifts and heavenly, fruits of God. They contain substantial quantities of essential nutrients in a rational proportion. They are excellent sources of minerals, vitamins and enzymes. Also, they are easily digested and exercise a cleansing effect on the blood and the digestive tract [21].

It is interesting that ITM scholars believe that grape, pomegranates and olives have the temperament of hot, cold and hot, respectively which have complementary or balancing effects on human body which prove the proper food combining principle in holly Quran.

Also, in the following verses, the holly Quran invites the

people to pay attention to eating and thinking about olives and dates and grapes (Al-Mumenun 23:19 and Al-Nahl 16:11) as follow:

Then, we created therewith your gardens of dates and grapes, for you therein are abundant fruits, and of them, you eat (Al-Mumenun 19).

With this water, He causes to grow for you crops and olives and dates and grapes and fruits of every kind. No doubt. In it, there is sign for a people who ponder (Al Nahl 11).

In Holy Quran, God has mentioned grape 11 times, olive 6 times, pomegranate 3 times, date once (palm tree 20 times), and fig once. Of course, in one case olive has been indirectly mentioned. It is notable that, these fruits have been mentioned together, in some verses; such as Surah At-tin verse 1: "by the fig and the olive!". From another side, traditional medicine books and modern clinical findings show that these fruits are effective in the treatment of cancers, cardio-vascular diseases, Alzheimer, hyper tension, bad cholesterol, infection and inflammation, and also improvement of immune system, and health of various body organs.

Finally, according to food combining principle in some verses of Holy Quran, we understand that some of these fruits have been mentioned along with another fruit; for example, in Chapters of Albaqara verse 266, Al-Isra verse 91, Al-Mumenoon verse 19, and Al-Rad verse 4, date and grape are mentioned together. In Chapter of Al-Anaam verse 11, olive has been mentioned along with pomegranate; in Al-Rahman verse 68 date and pomegranate; in Chapter of Abasa verse 29, olive and date; in Chapter of At-Tin verse 1 fig and olive; and in Chapter of Al-Anaam verse 99, grape, olive and pomegranate have been mentioned together. Then, it seems that more studies should be conduct on the properties and effects of Quranic fruits, in combination; for example, combination of fig and olive in a ratio of 6 to 1; or olive and pomegranate in a ratio of 6 to 3; or combination of date and grape in a ratio of 1 to 11, and even 21 to 11. According to the main ingredients of these fruity combinations, their effects on a certain diseases can be evaluated. It is clear that according to the scientific reports and evolutionary process of relevant experiments, benefits and positive aspects of using Quranic fruits have gradually become more specific and extensive [3].

CONCLUSIONS

According Quran's invitation to health, life style and nutrition style which mentioned several times in various verses, we must think to the utilities and properties of foods, plants and fruits and how God has put these wonderful utilities in herbal medicines. Also, base on the traditional medicine manuscripts, and modern medical reports regarding the properties of Quranic foods and their effects, it can be concluded that consumption of Quranic fruits (grape, olive, pomegranate, date, and fig) and their inclusion in the diet prevents different diseases, especially cancers, Alzheimer, cardio-vascular diseases, and also decrease of blood pressure, bad cholesterol, infections, and inflammations.

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Conflicts of Interest Author

The authors declare that he has no conflict of interest.

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