CHAPTER-II

PLANTS MENTIONED IN THE QURAN
Plants are the natural division and beautiful garments of the earth and are one of the many favours of Allah. The Holy Quran deals with several species of plants such as grapes, fig, ginger, cucumber, garlic, lentils and the toothbrush. Agricultural crops, grains, seeds and fodder, reproductive and germination processes of the plant world are also mentioned.

Plants along with the rest of creations necessarily carry out two key functions: they are living beings in their own right and are worshipping and glorifying Allah in a manner that we cannot perceive. Plants are also beneficial for human and animal life, so nicely illustrated in the Quran.

Then let man look
At his Food,
(And how We provided it):
For that We pour forth
Water in abundance,
And We split the earth
In fragments,
And produce therein Corn,
And Grapes and nutritious Plants.
And Olives and Dates,
And enclosed Gardens,
Dense with lofty trees,
And Fruits and Fodder,-
For use and convenience
To you and your cattle.

So plants are very essential for the existence of living things in the world. They fulfill basic needs such as oxygen, water and nourishment. Green plants are essential as they provide the balance of these basic needs.
on the earth. Apart from these basic functions, plants also control temperature and maintain the proportion of gases in the atmosphere. It is mainly the green plants which maintain the entire equilibirium.³

Role of green plants does not end here. They are also used in medicines. Half of the medicines in the world are derived from plants and 80% of the world’s population relies for their primary healthcare on traditional remedies obtained from the plants. Though a large percentage of the plants in the world remain un-described and their benefits undiscovered, about 40,000 plant species are threatened according to the world conservation union (IUCN) 1997 and 2003 Red list of threatened species⁴.

Every structure in plants has been specially planned and designed. This shows us that there is a certain superior intelligence which draws up this flawless plan and ofcourse that is Allah, Lord of the entire world. He shows His dominion on all living things⁵. Consider, for example, the following verse:

To Him is due
The primal origin
Of the heavens and the earth:......
That is God, your Lord!
There is no god but He,
The Creator of all things:
Then worship ye Him:
And He hath power
To dispose of all affairs.⁶

40
It is of course Allah who inserted the essential information in the plant cells as in all other living things in the world. Undoubtedly it is Allah who created everything with perfection. Allah draws attention to this truth in several verses of the Holy Quran:

Seest thou not that God  
Sends down rain from the sky,  
And forthwith the earth  
Becomes clothed with green?  
For God is He Who understands  
The finest mysteries, and  
Is well-acquainted (with them).  

About twenty plants are discussed in the Quran. Each species possesses its own special functioning within itself and features particular to that species. But the same basic system is found in all of them. There is also an unparalleled diversity in terms of reproductive systems, defense mechanism, colour and design. The only unchanging thing in all this is the reality that the parts of the plants (leaves, roots, stems) and many other mechanisms must exist at once and without any defect, so that the general system can function.  

Besides that, plants since time immemorial have been serving humanity as the basic source of medicinal therapy. They are the main source of drugs and curative usages. Medicinal plants were once a common link between the traditional and modern sciences. The use of medicinal plants can be traced back to the beginning of human life. Their
use is deeply rooted in the civilization of man. Even animals have
instinctively acquired the practice of searching out curative plants to treat
different diseases suffered by them. Plants, being the most plentiful and
easily accessible to man, in times of illness\textsuperscript{10}, have been found to be very
beneficial for both mankind and animals.

The significance of the Quran as a source of information about
plant kingdom may be derived from the fact that it contains detailed
description of more than twenty vegetations, which are described as sign
of God’s bounty on mankind. These plants are briefly introduced below:

2.1 \textit{Acacia or Banana}:

\begin{quote}
The Companion of
The Right Hand,-
What will be
The Companions of
The Right Hand?...
Among \textit{Talh} trees
With flowers (or fruits)
Piled one above another,-
In shade long-extended,
By water flowing constantly,
And fruit in abundance.
Whose season is not limited,
Nor (supply) forbidden,
And on Thrones (of Dignity),
Raised high.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

In the above quoted verse the word \textit{takh} has been translated by the
commentators as banana. But Abdullah Yusuf Ali commented that the
banana tree did not grow in Arabia and its ordinary Arabic name is
Mauz. He held it to be a special kind of *Acacia* tree, which flowers profusely, appears in tiers one above another.\textsuperscript{12} The link between banana and the Quran is particularly interesting. The origin of banana is not correctly known. It is thought that it flourished in China. At the time of the revelation of Islam (650 A.D.) banana plants were cultivated in the Mediterranean regions. Prior to that, Alexander the great, had encountered bananas in his campaigns and brought their knowledge back to Eastern Europe. Thus they came on the scene just in time to be included in the Quran.\textsuperscript{13} As stated in the Quran, and according to ancient and modern interpretations as well as religious heritage and classical Arabic literature, all sources determine Quranic *talh* as banana. Further evidence is from the etymology of banana which is from the Arabic word *banan* Arabic for finger. Banana is sweeter than Acacia and also fits well in the context of Heaven. The adjective used to describe *talh* in the Quran literally means neatly stacked or piled one above the another. The adjective however describes the *talh* trees rather than fruits. In the Quran *talh* tree is mentioned as a source of shade rather than fruit.\textsuperscript{14}

*Talh* is a palm-like plant of the old world, cultivated throughout the tropics from pre-historic times for its edible fruits. The trunk up to 9 meter height is composed of the over-lapping bases of the leaves which are three meter or more long. The tip of the flowering stem develops
into seedless fruits up to 30 cm. long. Most bananas are eaten fresh. There are different varieties, some of which are cooked and eaten when green. It is a staple food in East and West Africa and the West Indies.\textsuperscript{15}

Botanical name of \textit{talh} is \textit{acacia Seyal}. This is an important tree of Africa. It is also in abundance in the hot place of Arabian Peninsula where it is known as \textit{Seyyal}. It is a thorny tree, about 30ft. height. It bears bright yellow fragrant serried flowers, which add to the beauty of the plant. In the Arabian Desert it is useful for its timber, fuel and much needed shade.

\textit{Acacia} trees are the source of important commercial gum. A \textit{Seyyal (talh seyal)} is also the tree under which Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) took oath from his companions which is known as \textit{Bait al-Rizwan}. \textit{Talh} gum is polymer of D-galactose, L-arabinose, L-rhamnose and D-glucuronic acid with traces of 4-0- methyl-D-glucoronic acid. It is used in many industries as food, pharmaceutical, textile, paper, ink, paints, adhesives, lithography, etc. \textit{Talh} and other acacia gums like \textit{Hushb} and \textit{Kiker} gum have important medicinal properties. After child birth it is given to women by frying in fat and it is said to be highly beneficial in general debility. It is also supposed to be a good aphrodisiac.\textsuperscript{16}
Talh (*Acacia* tree) is a tree of the Hijaz, a kind of ‘*idah* (a fair size thorny shrub), but in paradise its fruits will be ready to eat, with no effort required.

The *Acacia* tree (*talh*) is only used for shade in this world (not for fruit) but in paradise there will be many of them growing beautifully and bearing such abundant fruit that a single fruit will have seventy kinds of taste and colour that will resemble one another.\(^{17}\)

### 2.2 Cucumber:

It is mentioned in the holy Quran in *sura al-Baqarah* (verse 61) as *Qiththa*, generally known as cucumber. From ancient times there used to grow several cucurbits throughout Arabia and Egypt. Gourd, musk melon, water melon, pumpkin and cucumbers are some of the common varieties of this species.\(^{18}\) Throwing light on its dietary importance Hazrat Aisha said: “my mother intended to make me fat to send me to the (house of) Apostle of Allah (pbuh). But nothing which he desired benefited me till she gave me cucumber with fresh dates to eat.”\(^{19}\)

The plant is self-fertile, it requires sandy soil, light and moisture, it can not grow in the shade.\(^{20}\) This annual climber has been extensively cultivated in the East for some 3,000 years from where it spread westwards. It was also known among the Greeks and the Romans. According to Pliny, the Emperor Tiberius had it on his table daily, summer and winter. In the Biblical history, the Israelites in the wilderness
complained to Moses that they missed the luxuries that they had in Egypt i.e. cucumbers and melons. The dietary value of cucumber is negligible. It contains 96% water, about 3% carbohydrates, less than 1% protein and negligible amount of fat. It can be eaten both raw as well as cooked. Medicinal uses:

Cucumber is used to treat dyspepsia in children. The fruit is strongly laxative and purifier. It is also known to cause abundance of urine as well as have soothing properties. Internally this fruit is used to treat stained skin, sunburns, rashes, etc. while externally it is used as a poultice for burns, sores, etc. it is also used as a cosmetic to soften the skin and for whiter complexion of the face. Besides it has been found to have a cooling effect on an irritated skin. Its juice is in great demand for beautification of the skin. Cucumber wash applied to the skin after exposure to keen winds is extremely beneficial.

2.3 Date-palm

And tall (and stately)
Palm-trees, with shoots
Of fruit-stalks, piled
One over another;

Of all the plants and fruits discussed in the Quran, the date-palm has been the most frequently mentioned. It is mentioned twenty times—eight times alone and twelve times along with other fruits like pomegranate, olive, grapes, etc. It is called Nakhl in Arabic and
mentioned in the Quran with other names also. Dates are green when unripe. They turn yellow when half-ripe. Fully ripe dates are reddish-brown in colour. Each of these stages (green to ripe) has been given a particular name in Arabic.\textsuperscript{25}

\textit{"Abdullah b. Umar reported that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: there is a tree amongst trees, the leaves of which do not wither and that is like a Muslim; tell me which that (tree) can be? The people began to think of the trees of the forest Abdullah said: I thought that it could be the date-palm tree, but I felt hesitant (to say that). They (the companions) then said: Allah's Messenger (kindly) tells us which that can be? Thereupon he said: it is the date-palm tree. I made a mention of that to Umar whereupon he said that it meant the date-palm tree this statement of yours (would have been dearer to me) than such and such things."}\textsuperscript{26}

The botanical name of date-palm is \textit{Phoenix dactylifera}, family-\textit{Palmae}. In Arabic its fruit is known as: \textit{Tamr}. Besides, in many Arab and African countries the Hindi word \textit{Khajūr} and Persian word \textit{Khurma} have been of common usage for the date fruit.

The cultivation of date-palm started 6000 to 8000 years back in Mesopotamia. That might be the first cultivated plant in the world. That was the reason why date-palm was associated with the development of human culture and civilization.\textsuperscript{27}
Date-palm is a fruit tree with very ancient origin. Its importance is largely notable among the inhabitants of North Africa, Arabia, Iraq and Iran, who depended entirely on its fruit. Male and female date trees are separate. Only one male date tree is sufficient for the pollination of 50 to 100 female date trees. It starts bearing fruit after 4-5 years of planting. It produces fruits up to 80 years of age. A good fruit bunch will have about 40 strands of fruit with 25-35 dates per strands. Some thousand varieties of dates may be broadly categorized into three types (i) soft dates which contain 60% sugar enough to preserve them naturally. These are produced on a large scale in Iraq and exported in pressed masses, (ii) the medium or semi-dry dates which are soft but do not contain enough sugar to preserve them naturally. Generally, they are eaten fresh from the trees; (iii) dry dates are quite hard and not sticky. Usually they are stored and used when palms do not bear fruits.

The date market in Medina, the Souq-al-Tumour, sells about 150 varieties, differing in colour, shape, taste and price. Date-palm is widely cultivated in hot and dry climates. It is the main diet of the Arabs. Date-palm is remarkable for its capacity to prosper in dry regions where most other trees fail. In many parts of the world date-palms are grown near oasis and on land. Date-palm is about 50-80 ft in height. Normally the palm tree is not branched but sometimes branched palms are also seen in nature. These two types’ i.e. branched and without branch palms have
been mentioned in *sura* Ra’ad (verse 13:4). The age of the date palm is about two hundred years but good fruiting occurs only for one hundred years or so. The date palm is a tall tree, but its anchoring roots seldom go more than 5ft. deep into the ground.

Phytogeographically, the area of cultivation of date-palm extends from Western India to the East of Africa but the best producing region is Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt.

**Uses:**

As per an old Arab saying, the uses of date-palm are as many as the number of days in a year. Wood of date-palm is used as a building material; big leaves are very useful for making several handicrafts like fans, ropes, sticks, mats, etc. The date-stone when soaked and powdered is rated as a good cattle feed. The fruit is not only sweet and delicious but is one of the best known nutritious diets for mankind. It contains more than 60% invert sugar along with a small amount of sucrose in addition to protein, pectin, n. tannin, cellulose, starch and fat in varying proportions. Also vitamin A, B and C are present in appreciable amount. Furthermore the mineral constituents present are also of great importance viz. iron, sodium, calcium, sulphur, chlorine and phosphorus. The nutritious dates are used for making confectionary; beverages, sugar and sugary syrup very much like honey.
Medicinal Uses:

Dates are rated for great medicinal value. It is a demulcent. It softens and relaxes living tissues. It increases vital energy and helps in checking the loss of memory. It is also useful in respiratory disorders in general and asthma in particular. It relieves constipation, increases urine secretion as well as acts as an aphrodisiac. Thus, taking into account all its compositions and qualities, it can be rated as a wholesome nutritious diet and a health tonic. A plaster of powdered date-stones helps in the cure of eye diseases of keratites and ophthalmic. In *Tibb-e-Nabawi* i.e. Medicine by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) dates have been given a very high place. It is said that once Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) advised Hazrat Ali not to eat dates, while he was recovering from sickness. This advice is obviously based on scientific reasons as dates contain dietary fibers which can not be easily digested by persons recovering from illness when digestive system becomes weak. Some of the commentators of the Quran like Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi have suggested that the Dates are also very beneficial for the pregnant women. This is mainly because of the fact that date fruits were provided for Hazrat Maryam when she was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. It is highly energetic and a complete diet. From ancient times date-palm trees have occupied an important position among Arabs.
2.4 Dhārī:

No food will there be
For them but a bitter Dhārī
Which will neither nourish
Nor satisfy hunger.\(^{34}\)

In the above verse of the holy Quran Dhārī is stated as being the food for wrongdoers living in Hell. The commentators have given different opinions regarding the meaning of Dhārī. By some of them it is classified as a sort of plant having large thorns which grows close to the ground. The people of Quraysh called it sibriq when it is fresh and Dhārī when it get dried. It is also said to be a poisonous plant which no beast will approach because of its harmful quality.

According to philologist Khalid, Dhārī is a green plant with a bad smell which is cast out of the sea upon the beaches. In a Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) Dhārī is a thorny plant, it is very bitter and tasteless and has very bad and unbearable odour, even animals do not approach it when it gets dried. Hazrat Ibn Abbas reported that it is a tree of hell, it is very bitter and more stinking than a rotten corpse and more burning than fire.\(^{35}\)

Some commentators of the Quran say Dhārī actually is thorny grass. According to another view it as a product of the sea, thus implying that it might be the seaweed.\(^{36}\) More or less the same opinion has been
given regarding dhari' plant that it is a food of Hell which neither
nourishes the body nor satisfies hunger.

2.5 Fig:

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, 37

In the Quran fig has been mentioned only once under the name of
Teen. But this reference has great importance. In that verse Allah has
taken oath by fig. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani has explained that as
both these fruits i.e. fig and olive have great importance and use, Allah
swears by it. According to the opinion of Maulana Maududi, oath of
Allah by fig and olive basically refers to Syria and Palestine where large
gardens of these fruits existed and at those places several prophets were
born. 38 As described by Maulana Haqqani teen was the name of a city
which is now known as Damascus. Different opinions have been
expressed regarding fig by different commentators of the Quran.
Abdullah Yusuf Ali stated that Ficus indica, the Bo-tree, was the tree
under which Mahatma Buddha got Nirvana. 39 It is also said that it was the
leaves of fig through which Adam and Eve covered their bodies.
Height of fig tree goes up to 30 ft. It produces fruits two times a year. The figs are produced only on such trees where the insects called fig wasps are present. In their absence production of figs is not possible.\(^{40}\)

The fig is native to Western Asia, and has been cultivated for thousands of years in the Mediterranean regions of Europe and North Africa. Figs were introduced to England and Mexico in the 1500's, then to the eastern US in 1669, and to California in 1881. Common figs were cultivated successfully throughout the Gulf States and California, but the Smyrna figs bear fruits only by pollination through tiny wasp. The wasp (Blastophaga psenes) was introduced in 1990.\(^{41}\)

Fig is a highly nutritious fruit. It contains about 60% sugar, considerable amount of citric acid, malic acid and several inorganic salts. Ficin enzymes are also present in it. It is digested easily. It is very effective in removing small stones from kidney and bladder. It is also of great benefit to patients suffering from piles and gout. In a Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) advised people to eat fig if they suffered from piles.\(^{42}\)

The latex is applied in case of warts, skin ulcers and sores. A decoction of the fruits is gargled in sore throat; while poultice made from its fruit is used in tumors and other abnormal growths. Dried figs are appreciated for their laxative action.\(^{43}\)
2.6 Garlic

And remember ye said:
“O Moses! we cannot endure
One kind of food (always);
So beseech thy Lord for us
To produce for us of what the earth
Groweth,-its pot-herbs, and cucumbers,
Its garlic, lentils, and onions...”

The Bible also refers (Numbers 11:5) to the same incident. In Arabic language garlic is generally called as soom but its Quranic name is Foom. However some commentators have translated this Quranic word as wheat for which Arabic term is Hintah. Nevertheless Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Maulana Abdul Latif and several other translators have called the Quranic Foom as Garlic only. Historical evidences too prove that the verse 7 of the sura al-Baqarah refers to Garlic and not to wheat.

Botanical name of garlic is Allium sativum, Family Liliaceae. It is a pungent irritant plant that has been known for thousands of years. It was known in ancient Egypt by the name Hatoum, and was included in their medicinal papyri.

Garlic is reputed for its great medicinal properties as well as for its wide occurrence and easy availability. For the poor, it is an antidote to the bite of poisonous animals, especially snakes. It is also was used for the treatment of several diseases with little cost. They used to macerate its bulbs, left exposed to the sun rays for four days, and then would take it
orally to reduce hypertension. Because of its great medicinal properties, it has been found to be effective as a stomach stimulant and intestinal disinfectant. It is also known to reduce fever and promote discharge from the mucous membrane of the lungs or trachea. In addition, it is anti-asthmatic and carminative. When taken externally, it cures deafness and protects inner tissues as well as heals diseased tissue.

A volatile oil was obtained by pressing the bulbs called "Monk’s oil". It was of dark brown yellow colour, heavier than water of a very repulsing, acrid burning taste and a disagreeable odour. This oil has an excellent reputation for the treatment of paralysis, rheumatism, gout and lumbago. Desert inhabitants used to hang round necks of their children complaining of intestinal worms a necklace made of garlic bulbs, thus eliminating the worms. They also used to combine garlic with leek in a local treatment for insect bites.

**Garlic bulbs contain the following:**

Water- 50-60%; albuminoids- 6.76%; fat-0.06%; sugar- trace; nitrogen free extractive-26.3%; cellulose-0.77%; ash-1.44%

Internally garlic reduces the cholesterol level, stimulates. It is astringent and disinfectant for mouth germs such as diphtheria, staphylococci, streptococci, etc.

Garlic is traditional medicine, is reputed to cure Alopecia aerate with great success and still used up to the present time. In tubercular
infections of the lungs garlic juice diminishes the obstinate cough and acts as an expectorant. It is also applied to the indolent tumors when given with common salt. Garlic when chewed after much fatigue acts as a very powerful restorative. It improves the nervous system and relieves headache, flatulence, hysteria, etc.

Herodotus stated that the builders of the great pyramids of Egypt were fed daily with garlic and onions as a nourishing stimulant. The Romans called garlic “The fruit of courage” because they used it extensively as a food for their soldiers so as to stimulate them before military battles knowing its vital effects.

2.7 Ginger:

And they will be given
To drink there of a Cup
(Of Wine) mixed
With Zanjabil.

In the following verse Allah has promised to provide a wine in Jannat (paradise) having the taste of ginger to those who have done good deeds in this world. In Tafseer-e-Mazhari, it is stated that Arabs like ginger so Allah has promised them to provide it in jannat. Maulana Maududi has also written in his commentary of the Quran that Arabs had a great liking for ginger which they mixed with their drinking water.

In Arabic language it is called Zanjabil and botanically known as Zingiber officinale. It is a long lasting herbal plant, native to South East
Asia and widely grown in the tropics for its pungent underground stems (rhizomes). It is grown in fertile, moist and tropical soil. It is used both as a medicine as well as a spice for making food delicious. Its leafy stems grow about 1 m high while the leaves are 15-30 cm long, and the flowers grow in dense cone like spikes. The plant is unproductive, and it is cultivated by cutting from the root stocks.54

Its rhizomes or underground stems are used in medicine in Asian, Indian and Arabic herbal traditions since ancient times. In China, for example, ginger has been used to aid digestion and treat stomach upset, diarrhoea and nausea for more than 2,000 years.55 Now, ginger is used throughout the world, it contains aromatic oil having characteristic smell, the main constituents of this oil are camphene, phellandrene, zingiberine, cineol and borneol. It also contains the oleoresin named as gingerin. These are used in food preparations and drinks like pastries, biscuits, curries, condiments, ginger bread, ginger beer, pickles, syrups, conserves, etc.

**Medicinal Uses:**

Ginger is stimulant to the gastro-intestinal tract and, therefore, highly digestive. It is extremely useful in indigestion, flatulence, spasmodic abdominal pain, vomiting due to motion sickness, pregnancy, sudden involuntary muscular contraction and other painful affections of the stomach and asthma. Ginger juice with lemon juice and rock salt,
when taken before meals, is very useful in loss of appetite. Patients suffering from soar throat, hoarseness and loss of voice are benefited by chewing a piece of ginger as it produces saliva. It is useful in complains of headache also. Besides, Ibn Sina has attributed great aphrodisiacal properties to Ginger along with its other medicinal properties. Galen has recommended the use of Ginger in cases of paralysis and all complaints arising from cold humours. Since ancient times, ginger has also been used to cure arthritis, diarrhoea, and unhealthy heart conditions. In addition to these medicinal uses ginger continues to be valued around the world as an important cooking spice and is believed to benefit patients in cases of common cold, flu-like symptoms, headaches, and even painful menstruation.

2.8 Gourd:

So also was Jonah  
Among those sent (by Us).  
When he ran away  
(Like a slave from captivity)  
To the ship (fully) laden,  
He (agreed to) cast lots,  
And he was condemned:  
Then the big Fish  
Did swallow him,  
And he had done  
Acts worthy of blame.  
Had it not been  
That he (repented and)  
Glorified God,  
He would certainly have  
Remained inside the Fish  
Till the day of Resurrection.  
But We cast him forth
In the above verse story of Prophet Yunus (a.s.) is related. He was advised by God to go to Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria to warn people not to indulge in sins otherwise they would face the wrath of God. Prophet Yunus (a.s.) went there. But as the people of that place did not listen to him he left that place in anger. While he was on way on a ship, a fish (whale) swallowed him and cast him out on the shore, where he was provided shelter of a plant by God, called *yaqtin*. He regained health and again went to that place and got success in his mission.

As explained by Maulana Maududi *yaqtin* in Arabia means a climber like gourd, which Maulana Fateh Muhammad Jalandhari identified as *kaddu* (Urdu).\(^5^9\) Gourds were used ornamentally in Solomon’s temple (I King 6:189).\(^6^0\)

It is an annual climber which grows very rapidly up to 9 meters. Warm summer is required for good production. As a climbing plant, it attaches itself for support by means of tendrils that grow out of the leaf axils and requires plenty of moisture to grow. Immature fruit is cooked and used as a vegetable. It has different qualities. The bottle gourd is widely cultivated in the tropics and sub-tropics for its edible fruit and for...
the hard wooden shell of the fruit which is used as containers, musical instruments, etc.61

Gourds have been used by many societies in vast and diverse ways. Different shapes of fruits come from various plants in the cucumber family (cucurbitaceae). Their closest relatives are pumpkins, melons and squash. Bottle gourd is widely used and cultivated from prehistoric times.62

Gourd is a very useful vegetable. It contains pectin, vitamin B, vitamin C, Calcium, phosphorus, iron, potassium and iodine. It is a diuretic and is useful as a remedy for gout. The oil from its seed is a good medicine to relieve headache.63 The pulp around the seed is laxative. A poultice of the crushed leaves is applied to the head to treat headaches, while its flowers are used as an antidote to poison. Its stem bark and the rind of its fruit have been found to be a diuretic. A poultice of boiled seeds is used in the treatment of the boils. In many parts of China 3grams per day of this species has been used as a single treatment for diabetes mellitus.64 The wax gourd is used as a food and medicine for thousands of years in the East Asian countries. Ashes of the rind are applied to the painful wound. A decoction thereof is used internally in the treatment of vaginal discharges and cough. In Ayurveda the seed is used in the treatment of cough, fevers, excessive thirst and to expel tapeworm. Recent research has shown that the fruit contain anti-cancer terpenes.65
2.9 Grapes:

Verily for the Righteous
There will be
A fulfillment of
(The Heart's) desires;
Gardens enclosed, and Grapevines; 66

Grape is one of the delicious fruits given by God to mankind. It has eleven references in the Quran under the name of 'Inab (singular) and 'Anab (plural). Its botanical name is Vitis vinifera.

Several varieties of grapes have been found in different parts of the world. Till now about 8,000 varieties of grapes have been developed throughout the world and some of them like Thomson seedless are being grown in huge quantities in several countries, the leading amongst them being Italy, France, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Japan, Syria, Algeria, Morocco and the U.S.A. About half of the total production of grapes comes from European countries.

Grapes are eaten throughout the world, but 80% of the total grape production is used to make wine, and 7% is used for making raisins (dried grapes) and vinegar. The art of making wine was very well-known to people of this region as well as Egypt, Greece and Rome. In Islam wine production and consumption is prohibited.

History of the grape too is very old like Date fruit. It is said that during the time of Noah, grape was already in cultivation.67 and like the oak tree vine is a long-lived plant and nearly as old as civilization. The
remains of its leaves, seeds and stems have been found in the hardened rocks, some of which are estimated to be 40 million years old, those found with mummies in Egyptian tombs are thought to be at least 3,000 years old. In old Christian scriptures Noah is said to have planted a vineyard after he survived the great flood.

Grape is a climber plant which sheds its leaves annually. Its height goes up to 30 m long; it grows by means of tendrils. Grape vines are native to the northern temperate zones, but cultivated throughout the world. Today there are some 60 species of vine producing more than 8,000 varieties of grapes; France, Spain and Italy produce large quantities of grapes. Grape plants can grow in different kinds of soil. Grape fruit consists of a watery fleshy pulp containing stones, encased in a soft skin. Grapes are in different colours-pale green, purple or black.\(^6^8\)

Grape is a good source of glucose and fructose. It contains sugar, tartaric acid, malic acid, sodium, potassium, calcium and iron. Recently another compound named as vitamin P has also been isolated from it.

**Medicinal uses:**

Grapes are nourishing and slightly laxative fruit that can support the body through illness. It is diuretic, cooling and strengthening. A diet based wholly on grapes is suggested during the treatment of torpid liver on sluggish biliary function, in the treatment of varicose veins, hemorrhoids and capillary fragility. The dried fruit is demulcent, cooling,
mildly expectorant, laxative and stomachic. It has a slight effect in easing coughs. A decoction is used in the treatment of threatened abortion, internal and external bleeding, cholera, dropsy, diarrhoea and nausea. It is also useful in mouth ulcers and as douche for treating vaginal discharge. It is used as a remedy for skin disease and an excellent lotion for the eyes. A yellow dye is obtained from the fresh or dried leaves.\textsuperscript{69}

The seeds of the grape contain tannin and a fixed oil. Eating grapes or raisins increases fertility as well as strengthens mental powers. The seeds and leaves of the grape vine are astringent and were used to stop hemorrhages and bleeding. When boiled with barley-meal and made into a poultice, it was also used to cool the inflammations of wounds. The ash of burnt vines was used as toothpaste to make discoloured teeth white again. Grapes are also used in the treatment of poor blood circulation, low blood pressure, anemia, congestion and skin blemish.\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{2.10 Henna or Camphor:}

\begin{quote}
As to the Righteous, \\
They shall drink \\
Of a Cup (of Wine) \\
Mixed with \textit{Kafūr}.\textsuperscript{71}
\end{quote}

Abdullah Yusuf Ali wrote in his commentary on the Quran \textit{Kafūr}, is literally camphor. It is a fountain in the Heaven. It is a seasoning added to the cup of pure, blissful wine, which causes no harm and intoxication
rather it is refreshing. Camphor is cool and refreshing and is given in eastern medicine as a soothing tonic. Its minute amount is agreeable.72

In Tafseer-e-Majidi (note 4) it is stated that camphor of heaven would be different from that of the earth. In Tafhima-al Quran (note no.7), Tafseer-e-Haggani, Tafseer-e-Usmani, Tafseer-e-Mazhari and in Byāna al-Qurān the same opinion has been expressed, holding that the wine of Heaven would have the brightness and coolness of the camphor. In Arabic dictionaries like al-Munjid several meanings of kafūr have been given like, apart from camphor, it is said to be the covering of the unripe bunches of grapes and dates and the perfume derived from certain types of deer.

Since antiquity Malaysian and Chinese plants have been the main source of commercial camphor which is known as Dryobalanops aromatica and Cinnamomum camphora respectively. But no reference to this plant is found in the ancient civilization of Egypt and Rome as well as in the works of Dioscorides, Aristotle, Galen and Theophrastus. In brief no reference of this plant product is available during the time of Christ and few centuries after him. Ancient cultures of Southern Europe, Egypt and Arabia also do not have any mention about this plant product.

Ignorance about camphor by early Arabs has also been stated by al-Fakhri and al-Tabri, who have quoted an incident that during the expedition of Muslims toward Iran and Iraq in 637 A.D., Arab soldiers
found a bag that contained some white substance which they considered to be salt. But before they could use it someone told them that it was camphor used by the Persians as a medicinal substance.

It was introduced in the late 9th century by the famous physician Ishaq bin Amman. In the same period well-known geographer Khardad-Bah also mentioned *kafūr* (camphor) of India, later on many writers mentioned *kafūr* as a product of Malaysian plant. It is noteworthy that up to that time Chinese camphor was not known. It was Marco Polo who gave a detailed description of the Chinese camphor in the 13th century. That history of camphor makes it clear that during the period of the revelation of the Quran the Arabs were unfamiliar with that product, and the *kafūr* mentioned in the Quran is different from this camphor.73

The camphor is a broad-leaved evergreen and very wide tree. It grows up to 50-100 feet height, covered with shiny oval leaves. It grows in well-drained sandy soil.74

A number of plants mentioned in the Quran are also mentioned in the Bible by different names. For example, the Quranic name of pomegranate is *Rummān* and the Biblican name is Rimmon. For olive the Quranic name is *zaitūn* whereas the Biblican name is zaith. Likewise in the Bible’s Song of Solomon (verse 14), it is stated: “My beloved is unto me as a cluster of Copher (Henna) in the vineyards of Engedi.” In the early translation of the Bible this word copher was interpreted as
camphire i.e camphor. But after a great deal of study and research it was concluded that camphor was not known during the period of Moses and Christ and that the word copher was actually the name of Henna in the Semitic language.

Like many other words of the Quran *kafūr* has its origins either in Semitic or in Greek language. Besides, the chemical substance of the camphor also makes it clear that the *kafūr* of the Quran is different as both Malaysian and Chinese camphor contains the same properties. It was also not used in food preparation, as it has a very pungent and disagreeable smell. It has medicinal value but the quantity used in both external and in internal uses is always very small. Its odour could result in giddiness, vomiting, nausea, and stomach-ache and in extreme cases paralysis. It is used in some ointments.⁷⁵

**Henna:**

Its Quranic name is *kafūr*, Arabic name: *Hinnan*, English: henna and in Urdu it is known as *Mehndi*. Botanical name of this plant is *Lawsonia inermis* and belong to the Lythraceae, the loosestrife family. Henna is a shrubby tree which goes up to 7 m height at its tallest, with grayish brown bark. Leaves of this plant are of almond shape and are used as a skin and hair dye as well as in traditional medicine. Its flowers are creamy white in colour, sweet scented. Fruit-seeds are used in traditional medicine and oil for fragrance. They are brown when ripe and
contain several tiny seeds. It is widely cultivated as a hedge plant. It is mostly found in Egypt, India, Kurdistan, Iran, and Syria and also cultivated in tropical countries but probably native to North Africa and Asia. It is widely naturalized in the West Indies and Mexico where it is known as “mignonette”.

The earliest civilizations which used henna are Babylonians, Assyrians, Sumerians, Semites, Ugaritics and Canaanites. When Islam was revealed in the 7th century A.D., henna was incorporated into the customs of Muslims. As Islam spread quickly into other countries, the use of henna went with it. Islamic world used henna in marriage celebrations. It is regarded as a beautiful and suitable ornament for women till date.

The constituent of henna is found in a brown substance of a resinoid fracture, having the chemical properties that characterize the tannins, and therefore named *hennotannic acid*. Dried, powdered leaves of henna contain about 0.5 to 1.5% lawsone, the chief compound responsible for dying properties of the plant. Henna also contains mannite, tannic acid, 2-hydroxy-1:4-naphthoquinone resin mucilage. Gallic acid, glucose, mannitol, fat, resin and mucilage are also present. The colouring matter is the quinine and napthaquinone.
Medicinal Uses:

As a medicinal plant, henna has been used as an astringent, antihemorrhagic, intestinal antineoplastic, cardio-inhibitory, hypotensive, and a soothing substance. It has been used both internally and locally in jaundice, leprosy, smallpox, and affections of the skin. It is helpful in burns and in mouth ulcers when chewed. Henna extracts show antibacterial, antifungal, and ultraviolet light screening activity. Henna has exhibited antifertility in animals and may cause menstruation. It helps in skin disorders, as it is known to contain antiseptic and anti-dandruff properties. It is also used in rheumatic and arthritis pain. It is antibacterial and antifungal. The dried leaf and leaf stalk of henna are generally recognized as safe when used as a colour additive for hair. Distilled water prepared from them is used as a cosmetic, and the powdered leaves have been in use from the most ancient times in Eastern countries for dying the hair and the nail reddish yellow.

Fresh leaves mixed with vinegar or lime juice are bandaged onto the soles of the feet to treat ‘burning feet’, a symptom of beriberi. The juice of the plant can be applied to the skin for headache, and the oil is applied to hair to prevent it from becoming grey. Oil obtained from its flowers is helpful in muscular pains, while its seeds are used as deodorant and to regulate menstruation. Its flower induces sleep, cures headache and bruises. Bark of henna, extract of flower leaves and branches used as a
treatment of leprosy. In *Ayurvedic* system it is used in different skin diseases, and its seeds are used to cure fever.\textsuperscript{78}

2.11 Lentils:

In *Suraal-Baqarah* verse number 61 lentils has been mentioned as *Adasa*. It is also mentioned in the Bible’s first chapter, Genesis, in the story of Esau who gave up his birth right for a dish of lentils (Genesis 25:30-34). The lentil is one of the oldest cultivated leguminous plants, and is believed as native to south western Asia and Northern Syria. Its cultivation evidence is traced back from the studies of ancient culture as early as 6000 B.C.\textsuperscript{79} Lentil is perhaps the first seed plant recorded in history. Its seeds have been discovered in Egyptian pyramids. The Hunza of Himalayas, known for their great physical endurance and long life, ate plenty of lentils. It is said to be a very nourishing food. During times of war in Europe (World War: I and II), one handful of cooked lentils was the daily ration for many soldiers.\textsuperscript{80}

From the ancient times lentil has been an important crop and was cultivated along with wheat, barley, peas, and flax. During the later Stone Age (Neolithic period) its cultivation spread to Greece and Bulgaria and during the Bronze Age to the near East and the Mediterranean. The ancient Greeks also enjoyed lentils, which they used in soups and bread making. Pliny wrote a description not only of the growing of lentils from
seed but also its medicinal properties and culinary uses. The Apicius also recorded several recipes from lentils.

A lentil is an easily grown annual plant. The plants are short (20 to 40 cm. tall) with finely divided leaves, flowers of red, and pink, purple or white carrying pods that contain two seeds each. The green varieties have green or tan seed coats and green cotyledons. The red lentils have tan or pink seeds coat, and pink or red cotyledons. The pods are left on the plant until they are dry. If seeds are still moist, which are later dried in the sun, in the oven or a dehydrator.

As mentioned above, there are several varieties of lentils grown and used as food throughout the world. But the three common types used in culinary are brown, red and green. Two less common but interesting lentils are beluga (black) lentils and white lentils (skinned and split black lentils).

Lentils are rich in protein and carbohydrates and are a good source of calcium, phosphorus, iron and B vitamins. They make a natural staple to supplement other sources of protein. The whole seed contains approximately water 11.2%, protein 25%, fats 1%, carbohydrate 55.8% and fiber 3.7%. Due to its high protein content it is widely used in soups and stews.
Lentil is rudurific. It causes increased output of urine. It is also known to be a mild laxative. Application of lentil paste is a good remedy for measles, chicken and small pox and other rashes and boils on the skin.83

2.12 Manna:

And We gave you the shade of clouds
And sent down to you
Manna and quils, saying:
“Eat of the good things
We have provided for you:”
(But they rebelled);
To Us they did no harm,
But they harmed their own souls.84

In sura ‘Araf: 160 and sura Tā Hā: 80-81 the Quran also speaks about Manna and Salwa. In Arabic language ‘Manna’ means ‘favours or reward’ and in general usage it is the saccharine food which Allah made available to the children of Israel, when on being exiled from Egypt they were wandering in the desert of Sinai. Bible also mentioned Manna eleven times and says that the Bani-Israel ate that food for forty years.85

According to al-Tabari the Israelites were bored with eating nothing but quail meat and drinking “a honey sent down from the skies called mann” (Tafsir II, 125-6, and Quran 2:61)86 In the Old Testament ‘Manna’ is mentioned as a seed of coriander which people collected, baked and made cakes of it. It tasted like a fresh oil, and the colour thereof was the colour of bedellium, and people went about and gathered it, ground it in mills or beat it in a mortar and baked it in pans and made
cakes, and when the dew fell upon the camp during night the ‘Manna’ fell upon it (Number 11:7-9). In Hebrew ‘Manna’ is known as Man-hu, in the Old Testament it is described as “a small round thing as small as the frozen water vapour on the ground (Exodus 16:14). It usually rotted if left over till next day. It softened in the sun’s heat. The quantity necessary for each man was about an ‘omer’ – a Hebrew measure of capacity equal to about 12/2 Quarts. It’s a gummy secretion of a species of Tamarisk. In present time it is found in the Sinai region. It is produced by the puncture of the lac insect on certain trees in India.

Several commentators of the Holy Quran such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Maulana Abdul Haque Haqqani, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi and Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi have explained ‘mann’ as the produce of a plant, but none could identify the real plant source. Nevertheless some of them described it as ‘turanjabin’.

Credit goes to Abu Rehan Muhammad Ibn al Biruni (973 A.D. to 1050 A.D.) who makes known that ‘turanjabin’ is obtained from the plant known as Haj in Arabic which was the real ‘mann’ of the Quran. After al-Biruni no effort was made to identify the plant. Then in 1922 A.D. J. L. Burckhard in his famous book “Travels in Syria and Holy Land” stated that insects on certain trees of Palestine and Syria were responsible for the production of a sweet gum secretion i.e. ‘Mann’.
According to Burckhard, who was known as Sheikh Barkat in Egypt, these insects pricked the bark of host plant through which a liquid substance leaked out during the extreme heat of the sun and that substance hardened during cool nights. After the publication of Burckhard's book two famous botanists of that period Ehrenberg and Hemprich published a report of their survey in 1829 and identified the 'Mann' producing insect as Coccus manniparus. They observed that the production of 'Mann' by these insects was made on Sinai trees known as Tamarisk. So it became clear by the middle of the 19th century that trees of Sinai region did produce a liquid substance. It also became known that people around that region gathered 'mann' from the trees and used that 'Mann' in making of sweets. It may be said that 'mann' in the Quran was obtained from two different plants; The 'Haj' or Aaqul (Alhagi maurorum named also locally turanjabin) called also shagul-jamal the camel fodder. It is a thorny shrub that does not grow beyond three feet in height, but it has also roots that can go 15 to 20 feet deep in the ground.

Besides 'Haj' there was also another plant called Tamarix mannifera that grows in the same region and can also be 'mann' plant, a small tree with scaly leaves. It is named Gazanjabin. The sweet 'Mann' is still traded over the world, but mainly used in medicine. It has nutritious as well as medicinal values.
In a hadith ‘Mann’ is also defined as *al-kamat* which is an Arabic equivalent of mushroom. The sugar and alcohols generally present in ‘Mann’ are: glucose, fructose, melizitose, duleitol, mannitol, etc. Both gums and ‘Manna’ are carbohydrates in nature but the gums do not have much nutritive values whereas Manna is highly nutritious.

The plant has been referred with the *salwa* bird or Quail eaten with the ‘Mann’ during 40 years (1419 B.C. to 1451 B.C.) as a balanced diet during the great famine in Iran in 1854, when tonnes of the lichen named *Lecanora affinis* ‘rained’ when fully fried, it is very light and can fly to long distances and can settle down at a certain place. When it rains, also called rose of Jerico over the famine area, people collected it, powdered it, and ate its bread for many days.

### 2.13 Mustard

The word *khardal* has been mentioned in two verses of different *sura* of the Holy Quran and on both occasions it has been referred to as an example of smallest thing or smallest event. This is mainly because of the fact that mustard seed is generally regarded as the smallest seed known not only in Arabia but in other parts of the world.

Mustard seeds have been found in different colours like black, brown and white. Black seeds from *Brassica nigra* are regarded as true mustard. Mustard seeds are from mustard plants, which is a cruciferous vegetable related to broccoli. There are approximately forty different
varieties of mustard plants, there are three principal types that are used to make mustard seeds: black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), white mustard (*Brassica alba*), and brown mustard (*Brassica juncea*). The mustard plant does not usually grow as tall as a tree. They are normally not more than 3-4 feet tall. But some plants have been found 10-15 feet tall. They are only annual plants. Their stems and branches in autumn become hard and rigid. *Brassica nigra* is now an annual garden herb. In former days it grew wild in the fields of Palestine. The Jews sowed and cultivated it in their fields and not in their gardens (Mt 13.31) probably for oil.\(^9^1\)

It is good for seasoning food. Mustard is one of the oldest and most widely used spices. The Chinese used mustard thousands of years ago, and the ancient Greeks considered it an everyday spice.\(^9^2\) It is widely cultivated in many parts of Africa and Arabia for its edible seed oil. Apart from 27% of fixed oil present in the seeds, it contains glucoside sinigrin (potassium myronate) the enzyme myrosin, lecithin, mucilage and ash (4%). The fixed oil present is the glyciride of oleic acid, steanic acid and erucic acid.\(^9^3\)

**Medicinal uses:**

The first medical mention of it is in the Hippocratic writings, where its application is recommended for general muscular relief. Historically mustard has always held an important place in medicine.\(^9^4\) It reduces the severity of asthma and inflammation and pain of joints. It
assists in lowering high blood pressure as well as in preventing cancer. It is also known to restore normal sleep pattern in women having difficulty with the symptoms of menopause. Besides it reduces the frequency of migraine attacks and prevents heart attack in patients suffering from atherosclerosis or diabetic heart disease. Mustard seeds are qualified as a very good source of omega-3 fatty acids as well as a good source of iron, calcium, zinc, manganese, magnesium. Protein, niacin and dietary fiber.95

The volatile oil of mustard is a powerful irritant capable of blistering skin. As a poultice it has a soothing impact by creating a warm sensation. Mustard plasters are still used today as counter-irritants. Over the years mustard has been prescribed for scorpion stings and snake bites, epilepsy, toothache, bruises, stiff neck, colic and respiratory troubles.96

2.14 Olive:

God is the Light
Of the heavens and the earth.
The parable of His Light
Is as if there were a Niche
And within it a Lamp:
The Lamp enclosed in Glass:
The glass as it were
A brilliant star:
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:
Light upon Light!
God doth guide
Whom He will
To His Light:
God doth set forth Parables
For men: and God
Doth know all things.97

Olives have been mentioned seven times in the Quran and its medicinal uses have been discussed in *Tibb-e-Nabavi*. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is reported to have said—“take oil of olive for food and massage with it.” Olives also hold great desirability among the people of olden and modern culture. Oil of this tree is also cited as a sign of purity and goodness. In the Greek Orthodox Church its oil was applied in religious ceremonies.98 The bird dove with olive leaf in its beak has become a universal symbol of peace and unity. This symbol initially comes from the story of the Noah’s Ark. When Allah’s severe punishment came in the form of flood, a dove appeared with an olive shoot in its beak as a sign of relief and peace.99 Olive tree is closely related with the history and development of human civilization. People of Middle East take it as a symbol of success, divine blessing, beauty, wealth and power. Fruit of this plant has been highly valued since ancient times, not only for food but also for its oil.100

The botanical name of the olive is *Olea europaea*. Originally it was found in Asia, from where it spread to Mediterranean basin 6000 years ago. Now it is the chief area of production, Spain, Italy and Greece being the foremost. These are the major olive producing countries in the
world. Olive production has also expanded to California, South Africa and Australia. According to an estimate of 1964, there are at least 200 million olive trees in Spain and 123 million in Italy.

During the time of revelation of the Quran olive was a commonly grown plant in the Mediterranean area of Europe and Africa. In Southern Europe its production was so large that they named it as *Olea europoea* as it belong to that region. Researches later on revealed that Europe was not the real home of olive. Rather it was the northern part of Arabia from where olive actually originated.

Olive tree is a hard tree which grows less than 10 meters. It is a deciduous plant. Its leaves are pale green above and silvery below and the flowers are numerous small and creamy white in colour. The fruit of the tree is drupe with fleshy fruit and a hard stone, olives are cultivated through grafting it takes more than five years for a tree to start production and produce fruit until tree become old and hollow. The fruit are green at first and dark blue or purplish when ripe.

The unripe fruit is quite bitter in taste and are used for pickle and chutney; ripe fruit are very delicious oval in shape up to 2 to 3 cm. in length, oil is obtained through expression, the first crushing gives the highest grade of the oil which does not need any refining. The major constituent of this non-drying oil is oleic acid (80%) with small amount of palmitic, stearic, linoeic, arachidic and myristic acids. After the first
crushing inedible oil is extracted which is commonly known as Sulphur-oil or Sausa-oil and used in soap making and other industrial production. Uses and benefits:

Whole tree of olive is useful, its fruit produces oil, the leaves possess medicinal value and wood is highly valuable in carpenting work its wood resists decay and is used in furniture and ornamental works. Edible olive oil can be used in salads without cooking and for preserving fish.

Medicinal and cosmetic uses:

Olive oil is amazing. It is highly nutritious and is recommended by dieticians to improve the balance of fats within the blood as well as lowering cholesterol levels.

A study by Dr. Ferrara and his colleagues of the Frederico II University of Naples, Italy (Ferrara, et al., 2000) compared the effects of two similar low fat diets on the blood pressure of the hypertensive patients. One diet was enriched with extra virgin olive oil, high in mono unsaturated fatty acids while the second was enriched with the same amount of sunflower oil with a high content of polyunsaturated fatty acids. The patient on the former diet, all hypertensive, showed significant reduction in their blood pressure, thereby indicating that a diet, rich in olive, is not only associated with lower level of cholesterol,
but with lower blood pressure as well. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plant, which promotes a diet low in sodium and high in unsaturated fats, also recommends olive oil (National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, 2003). There are other medicinal benefits of olive oil like it maintains the digestion system. Oxford University’s Institute of Health found that “olive oil may have a protective effect on the development of colorectal cancer” (Stoneham et al., 2000).

New research suggests people who use plenty of olive oil in their diets may be helping to prevent to damage to body cells that can eventually lead to cancer. In a study of 182 European men, researchers found that olive oil can reduce ‘oxidative damage to cells’ genetic material, a process that can initiate cancer development. The findings may help in explaining why rates of several cancers are higher in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe, where olive oil is staple diet. They also suggest replacing saturated fats from meat and butter with vegetable fats, like olive oil.

Traditionally its oil is used to prevent constipation, help in cleansing of gall bladder and in treating various illnesses related to skin such as burns, scratches, and sunburns. Application of olive oil on skin brightens the complexion, softens skin and is used in the treatment of eczema and psoriasis. It also used for the treatment of hair fall etc.
The leaf of the olive is commonly used by the herbalists as an antiviral traditionally used to cool fever. Its leaves not only used in the treatment of severe causes of fever but in tropical diseases too like malaria. Today extracts of olive leaf are available in a tablet form. In gastric and intestinal sores, it is also given as nitrogen free diet in kidney failure. Its oil is a useful fuel for lamps, quality of its oil as described in Sura Nur of the Quran so beautifully ‘lights all around’, in the Quran olive oil is described as relish for food and in Bible its various uses have been described besides being eaten.

2.15 Onion:

In the Quran in suraaal- Baqarah verse 61 onion is mentioned as the desired food of the Israelites. They requested Moses to ask his Lord for them for the earth vegetation onion among other items, besides heavenly food i.e. manna and salwa. Moses told them to go down to Egypt where they could find all what they had desired for. The Bible also narrates onion as the most liked food by the Israelites. In Arabic language it is known as Basal and botanically as Allium cepa.

The origin of the name ‘onion’ can be traced to the classical period. Etymologically it is derived from the Latin word of unio which means oneness or unity. The French called it oignon. Martin Elcort in his book The Secret Life of Food writes, “The word (onion) was created by adding
the onion-shaped letter to the word union, which produced a new spelling ounion. The letter u was later dropped to create the modern spelling.\textsuperscript{112}

For over 4000 years, onion has been used in food and in medicines. It was cultivated by the Egyptians around in 3200 B.C. It is said that it has been derived from a wild species found in the mountains of Central Asia.\textsuperscript{113}

Regarding onion and garlic there are at least three \textit{ahadith} (traditions) in \textit{Sahih Bukhari} Jabir bin Abdullah narrated: Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said, "whoever has eaten garlic or onion should keep away from us (or should keep away from our mosques)."\textsuperscript{114} However in none of the traditions eating of onion or garlic was forbidden. In old civilizations of Asia and Africa eating garlic and onion was common, but it was not looked upon as a good act. Egyptians worshiped onion and took oath by its name. Nevertheless, they refused to enter temples after eating them.\textsuperscript{115} Indian Brahmins and Jains are also forbidden to eat onion even today. Presently there is a small sect in France which respects onion and considers it divine.

Onions were commonly grown in Middle Ages throughout Europe.\textsuperscript{116} Wild onions at present are grown in Central Asia, from where the whole family of onion is said to have originated. There are about 325 species of onion, 70 of which are grown in North America. It comes in a
variety of colours - white, brown, yellow and red (or purple), while flavours range from mild and sweet to strong and biting.\textsuperscript{117}

One dominant trait of onion is that when cut into slices it makes us tearful. Onion cells have two sections one with enzymes called allinases, the other with sulfides. The enzymes break down the sulfides and generate sulfenic acids. Sulfenic acid is unstable and decomposes into a volatile gas called syn-ropanethial-S-oxide. The gas then dissipates through the air and eventually reaches the eye, where it will react with the water to form a mild solution of sulfuric acid. The sulfuric acid irritates the nerve endings in the eye making them sting. The tear glands then produce tears in response to this irritation to dilute and flush out the irritant.

Onions have been liked by many cultures throughout history. During World War II Russian soldiers applied onions as an antiseptic. Several folk remedies attributed to onions such as putting a sliced onion under pillow to ward off insomnia.\textsuperscript{118} People hang strands of onions on their doorways, their windows and even around their necks to keep the vampire away.

\textbf{Medicinal Uses:}

Robert J. Courtine, a French gourmet, says that onion is the truffle of the poor. French writer Raymond Dumay affectionately expresses his
thought on onion, saying that Garlic is peasant, rustic while onion is urban.\textsuperscript{119}

The constituents of onion contain only traces (0.01\%) of essential oil, which mostly consists of sulfur compounds. Onions contain two substances: sulfur and quercetin. Both are strong antioxidants which help to neutralize the free radicals in the body, and protect the membranes of the body’s cells from damage. It also contains the minerals Potassium, Phosphorus, Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium and Selenium as well as small amounts of iron, manganese, copper and zinc.

Onion is used as a diuretic, expectorant and antiseptic. Onions are highly recommended for people trying to prevent cardiovascular disease, cancer, and infections. They appear to be at least somewhat effective against colds, heart disease and diabetes. They are also known to contain anti-inflammatory, anti-cholesterol, and anticancer components as well as stimulate the immune system.\textsuperscript{120}

Among other medicinal properties of onion it is a good antidote for tobacco poisoning. To relieve earache, warm onion juice is dropped in the ear. A decoction of the onion is beneficial for checking extreme heat sensation, while in cases of piles; roasted onion has been found to be a quite effective remedy.\textsuperscript{121}
2.16 Pomegranate:

The pomegranate is mentioned in the Holy Quran three times, under the name *al-Rummān*, in Arabic. It is mentioned in the Quran as a fruit available in Heaven. It belongs to the family *Punicaceae*, and its botanical name is *Punica granatum*, while the name pomegranate derives from the middle French word, *pomme granete* meaning seeded apple. It originally belongs to Iran. Later it became native to the Himalayan regions as well as Northern India, where it has several culinary uses. It spread to the Mediterranean basin and even further to areas with a semi-arid mild temperate to sub-tropical weather. It is adapted to regions with cool winters and hot summers.

The pomegranate is found in a small round shrub or tree form, five to six meters in height. Sometimes, it can reach up to nine meters. It has narrow pointed leaves, about 7.5 cm. long and orange red flowers growing in the leaf axils. It is deciduous as it sheds its leaves periodically. But in certain regions of the world, it is evergreen. Productive capacity of the tree declines after approximately 15 years. However, it is a long living species and some specimens have lived as long as 200 years. The nearly round fruit is surrounded by a hard, leathery cover, with a light or deep pink to rich red colour. Because of the hard cover the fruit can be preserved for about six months. The rind too contains high percentage of tannic acid (more than 20%) and is sometimes used for tanning leather.
One of the most attractive aspects of the pomegranate is the structure inside the fruit. The shiny, leathery cover once peeled out, reveals an indefinite number of cell like juicy sacs with a fresh, sweet-sour delighted taste\textsuperscript{122}.

In ancient times, it has been given great respect in Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Jewish king Prophet Solomon (a.s.) was said to have an entire garden of pomegranates. The pomegranates are regarded as a mark of fertility.\textsuperscript{123} Several other references are found in ancient cultures regarding pomegranate. The Chinese traditionally served pomegranates at wedding, as it was associated with affluence, success and fertility.

Ancient Egyptians were buried with pomegranates. They were reportedly grown in the famous Hanging garden of Babylon in ancient Egypt. During the period of Prophet Musa (a.s.), they were cultivated throughout Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. The city of Rimmon, an ancient city believed to have been located close to the present day Hebron, also abounded in pomegranates.

Uses:

It is used both as a dye and a fruit. Extract from its scarlet flowers, its dye, has been used in central Asia for several years. The juice oozed out from seeds is used in beverages as well as for making a kind of wine.
Nutritious Values:

The uses of the pomegranate as also of the two other plants of the Quran, dates, and olives, are numerous. The fruit is nutritious and has a calorific value of 65. Its juice is easily digestible and contains about 15% invert sugar. Its protein and fat contents are unimportant, although it is a good source of Sodium and also contains a rich quality of riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, vitamin C, calcium and phosphorus. It is delicious when served slightly chilled. Pomegranate juice is powerful anti-oxidant. Anti-oxidants protect body against free radicals, harmful molecules that are believed to contribute to heart disease, premature ageing and cancer.

Medicinal Properties:

Besides its nutritive value, pomegranate also has medicinal benefits. Generally it is prescribed under the homeopathic as well as Unani-Tibb medical systems. Medicinally, pomegranate is used for diarrhoea, earache, bad vision, fevers, teeth and gum disorders and indigestion.

Traditional Sri Lankan plant based remedies include boiling the buds of the pomegranate tree and taking it as a tea to treat either diarrhoea or bronchitis. The beautiful flowers of the tree are also used to reduce eye sufferings. Pomegranate is a good food of nutritious and medicinal value. It is a useful tonic for heart patients, highly efficacious in the inflammation of the stomach and effective to check heart pain. The juice
of the fruit is an excellent cooling beverage and relieves thirst in diarrhoea and dysentery. For many ailments such as colitis, anemia, jaundice, high blood pressure, piles and arthritis, its juice is an effective medicine. When given with honey, it reduces biliousness.

The extraction of the root bark of pomegranate contains an alkaloid pellatrierine and tannic acid, which is a highly useful medicine for expulsion of worms, including the tapeworms. It is reported that extraction from the root bark of pomegranate is also useful for treatment of tuberculosis in children\textsuperscript{124}.

Cultivation of pomegranate was introduced quite early in Mediterranean and eastern countries like India. In Spain, it was introduced after the influence of Islam and in England it reached much later in the thirteenth century. The Spanish people took that fruit plant to the new world of Mexico and Florida.

Likewise its cultivation spread in other countries as well and now it grows almost everywhere in tropical and sub-tropical climates. Presently, good quality pomegranates come from Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Morocco and Spain. In India, Sholapur, is known for juicy pomegranates. It is popularly known in India as \textit{Anār}. In Turkey, it is served during important feasts\textsuperscript{125}.

\textbf{2.17 Sidrah or Lote-tree:} \\
\hspace{1cm} While he was in \\
\hspace{1cm} The highest part

88
Of the horizon:
Then he approached
And came closer,
And was at a distance
Of but two bow-lengths
Or (even) nearer;
So (did) God convey
The inspiration to His Servant-
(Conveyed) what He (meant)
To convey.
The (Prophet’s) (mind and) heart
In no way falsified
That which he saw.
Will ye then dispute
With him concerning
What he saw?
For indeed he saw him
At a second descent,
Near the Lote-tree
Beyond which none may pass:
Near it is the Garden
Of Abode.
Behold, the Lote-tree
Was shrouded
(In mystery unspeakable!)
(His) sight never swerved,
Nor did it go wrong!
For truly did he see,
Of the Signs of his Lord,
The Greatest!126

The word Sidrah is mentioned in the holy Quran four times- twice in sura Najm and once each in sura Saba and Waqiah. Of these four references, only one pertains to this earth (sura Saba), while the remaining three have been mentioned in the description of the Paradise.
In the context of heaven *sidr* tree is the place where people of the right hand (who had done good deeds) will rest.

In the opinion of most of the commentators and translators of the Quran, *Sidrah* is Lote-tree. In India it is known as *Beri* and in Europe as jujuba and *ziziphus*. In *Lughat al-Qurān*, *sidr* is defined as a tree signifying the utmost boundary of human knowledge. According to the Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic *Sidr* is a variety of Christ’s-thorn (*Zizyphus spina christ*); lotous tree and *sidr-al-muntaha* the lotous tree in the seventh Heaven. Maulana Maududi says that it is actually a place where Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) met Gabriel for the second time in person and it is difficult to know the exact nature and description of this *Sidrah* tree.

The Prophet and Gabriel travelled once more and they reached the extreme limit “*Sidratul Muntaha*”. There the Prophet saw something which could not be explained by the tongue. There he saw a huge tree “*the Lote-tree or the Sidr of the farthest boundary*” which was of a different kind. It did not resemble any other tree. It was beyond description, covering all the heavens and universes. The trunk of the tree was a huge angel named Samarafil. The tree had an endless number of branches, created from a heavenly element which has no name in a created language. The distance between one branch and another was five hundred thousand light years. On every branch there were an infinite
number of leaves. If the entire created universe were placed on a single one of these leaves they would disappear just as an atom disappear in ocean of water. From the trunk of the tree four absolute springs flew: (i) pure, transparent, crystal water, (ii) second was a river of white milk, (iii) third was a spring of pleasurable, untarnished wine which was not intoxicating and (iv) the fourth was a river of pure honey mixed with gold. Inside the trunk there was a prayer-niche of Gabriel and his constant words of praise \textit{Allahu Akbar} (God is Great).

Abdullah Yusuf Ali identifies \textit{Sidrah} as the lote-tree of the family \textit{Ziziphus} which grows in Arabia as a wild plant as well as it is cultivated. In all the four Quranic references to \textit{Sidrah} not a single verse explains or indicates about its fruits. Furthermore, in none of the verses of the Quran \textit{Sidr} is discussed with other fruit plants like date or olive etc. as all these fruits and fruit trees are mentioned together several times in the holy Quran. So it is evidently clear that by mentioning \textit{Sidrah} Allah has actually stressed on beauty, strength and splendour of the tree and not the fruit.

Generally lote-tree is recognized as \textit{Z. spina christi} and accordingly this species is highly respected by Muslims throughout the Middle East. This tree has been widely used as a fruit plant and as a medicinal plant since ancient times. Greek botanist Theophrastus (4\textsuperscript{th} - 3\textsuperscript{rd} Centuries B.C.) wrote, “The (Egyptian) ‘Christ Thorn is more shrubby than the \textit{lotos}
(might be Ziziphus lotus); it has a leaf like the tree of the same name of our country, but the fruit is different, for it is not flat, but round and red, and in size is as large as the fruit of the prickly cedar or a little larger; it has a stone which is not eaten with the fruit, fruit is sweet in taste. This common variety is mentioned several times in Christian and Muslim traditions. Among Christian traditions the tree was identified with the thorn bush with which Jesus was crowned before his crucifixion. The tree was usually recorded for its uses and as a mark of sacredness.132

But some of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) prove that Sidr of the Quran was not thorny shrub like Ziziphus. It is rather a tall tree like cedrus. For instance, there is a hadith (tradition) according to which the Prophet is reported to have said to his companions that the ‘Sidratul Muntaha’ was a huge tree with its leaves (branches) looking like the ear of an elephant and its fruits like the water pots of Hajr.”133

According to another tradition reported by Abu Dawood, “Abd Allah b. Habashi reported the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) as saying: “If anyone cuts the lote-tree, Allah brings him headlong into Hell”134 Imam Muslim reported in his Sahi Muslim, “Umm Atiyya reported: The Apostle of Allah (pbuh) came to us when we were bathing his daughter, and he told us: Wash her with water and (with the leaves of) the lote-tree, three or five times, or more than that if you think fit, and put camphor or something like camphor in the last washing; then inform me when you
have finished”.¹³⁵ The **Sidrah** is a prickly plum which is known as **Ber** in India. **Ziziphus** is a good source of fuel. Its orchards are seldom planted. These are either found wild or cultivated in patches or around gardens as protective barriers or hedges.¹³⁶ In Medieval medical literature the jujube appears frequently under various names such as ‘**Sidar**’ or ‘**tsal**’ while the fruit is called “**nabaq**” or **dum**, the fresh and the dried fruit of the plant are edible and highly valued locally by Arabs and Bedouins. Its wood is heavy and durable. The tree and its various parts have been an important source for pharmaceuticals since ancient times.¹³⁷

By taking into account the characteristics of **Ziziphus**, one is inclined to conclude that **Sidrah** of the Quran may not be any of its species because in **sura Najm** and **sura Waqiah** beauty of the **Sidrah** plant has been described, while, in **sura Saba**, it is narrated to grow in the cool atmosphere of the hilly regions of Yemen, which is about 4000ft. above sea level. At such heights **Ziziphus** are not supposed to grow. Some other scholars hold that **Sidrah** may be some “other good tree”. This may be considered as the Cedar of Lebanon as the true **Sidr** of the Quran. This splendid tree botanically known as **Cedrus libani**, generally called in Arabia as **Arz al-Rab** (**Arz of God**) or **Shajaratul Allah** (**tree of the Lord**). In Sanskrit or Hindi it is known as **Deodaru** which means the wood or tree of God.
It is not only the most beautiful and formidable tree of Arabia but probably the grandest tree amongst the entire plant kingdom. It is a tall tree whose height goes up to 150ft. with a trunk up to 8ft. diameter. The whole plant with its terraced effect of the leafage gives the tree a dignity and majesty. Moldenke has very rightly stated that by looking at the Cedar tree (or its forests) one is lost by its beauty.

Its wood is of good quality. It is shiny, light, durable and pleasant smelling because of the presence of a resin known as Cedar oil. It is said that the great palace of Solomon was built of the wood of this marvelous tree and for which 1 lac eighty thousand laborers were employed to cut down the huge tree and transport it to the capital Jerusalem.138

2.18 Sweet basil

Also corn, with (its)
Leaves and stalk for fodder-
And sweet-smelling plants.139

Reyhan or sweet-smelling plants are mentioned in the Quran twice in sura Rahman and sura Waqiah. In the Holy Quran Reyhan is described as provision of Allah on the earth as gift and His favours. Maulana Majid has written that Reyhan is a fragrant flower. Thus Allah not only provided food plants but flowers also, but he did not mention its name. Abdullah Yusuf Ali translated it is a scented herb. In flora of Arabia Reyhan has been identified as Ocimum basilicum (sweet-smelling).140
The derivation of the name Basil is uncertain. Some authorities are of the opinion that it is derived from the Greek *basileus*, a king, because as Parkinson says, the smell thereof is so excellent that it is fit for a king’s house, or it may have been termed royal, because it was used in some unguent or medicine. Basil was first introduced to Europe in the 16th century. In India there was a belief that it wards off misfortune. Hindus planted it in their temples and homes. Many rituals and beliefs are associated with the basil plant. The French call basil “*herb royale*” Jewish traditional belief suggests it gives strength during fast. It is a symbol of love in present day Italy, but represented hatred in ancient Greece. African legend claims that basil protects against scorpions. While European lore sometimes claims that basil is a symbol of Satan.

Holy Basil also called as ‘*thulsi*’ or ‘*tulsi*’, is highly respected in Hinduism and also has religious significance in the Greek Orthodox Church, where it is used to make holy water. It is said to have been found around Christ’s tomb after his resurrection.

It is found wild as well as is cultivated throughout Arabia in general and Yemen in particular. In India it is also widely found and known as *Babui Tulsi*. There are several species of *Ocimum* grown in India. It is a tender low growing annual herb, originally native to tropical Asia that grows to about 70cm. The stem is soft and succulent
while the leaves are bright green. Small white to purple flowers appear in autumn.\textsuperscript{145}

The whole plant of \textit{Reyhan} is highly fragrant. The leaves contain an essential oil composed of L-linalool, methyl cinnamate and terpinene. The plant is considered to be stimulant, styptic, demulcent, diuretic and carminative.\textsuperscript{146}

\textbf{Medicinal uses:}

Basil is a member of mint family and like other mints it is used in medicines for its digestive and anti-gas properties. Herbalists also suggest it for stomach cramps, vomiting, constipation, headaches and anxiety. It is an excellent breath freshener as well as contains blood pressure lowering components. It is also used successfully as a tea, to combat the nausea from chemotherapy.\textsuperscript{147}

The juice of its leaves when snuffed up causes sneezing and clears the brain. It is a remedy for mild nervous or hysterical disorders. The mucilaginous seeds are highly astringent and prescribed in fluxes from the bowel. The seeds are also useful in urinary disorders, such as gonorrhoea, scanty and scalding urine etc. The roots of \textit{Reyhan} are used as balm. Because of the great medicinal uses, the seeds of \textit{Reyhan} under the name of \textit{tukhmaria} are exported from India to Arab and European countries.\textsuperscript{148}
Its seeds are used against snake bites, both internally and on wound. The plant is also applied to snake or hornet bites to draw the poison. Culpepper says:

"Being applied to the place bitten by venomous beasts or stung by a wasp or hornet, it specially draws the poison to it".

Of its several other advantages, it is used to tone the skin also.

Uses:

Basil is a most delicious herb, especially teamed with tomatoes. It lends great flavour to meaty pasta, sauces, chicken and vegetable dishes and salads. The oil is used to flavour soups and sauces. Basil is most commonly used fresh and in cooked recipes. It is generally added at the last moment as cooking destroys the flavour quickly.

2.19 Tamarisk:

There was, for Saba,
Aforetime, a Sign in their
Home-land-two Gardens
To the right and to the left.
"Eat of the Sustenance (provided)
By your Lord, and be grateful
To Him: a territory fair and happy,
And a Lord Oft-Forgiving!
But they turned away
(From God), and We sent
Against them the flood
(Released) from the Dams,
And We converted their two
Garden (rows) into "gardens"
Producing bitter fruit,
And tamarisks, and some few
(Stunted) Lote-trees."
Saba now called Yemen, once upon a time was an extremely beautiful, prosperous and fertile land of southern Arabia. Irrigated by the M'arib dam, its roads or perhaps its canals were skirted by gardens on sides, right and left. People were also happy, and they enjoyed the blessings of Allah. Into that Garden of Eden in Arabia came the insidious snake of disbelief following which people became arrogant of their prosperity or of their science, their skill in irrigation, engineering regarding the construction of Dams, which their ancestors had constructed. Then came a disastrous flood as a punishment for their disobedience of God. This broke the Dam, which could not be repaired. As a consequence flourishing "Gardens of Arabia" were soon converted into waste. The luscious fruit trees became wild and produced bitter fruits. The feathery leaves of tamarisk replaced the fragrant plant and flowers. The French traveler T.J. Arnaud saw the town and ruins of the Dam of M'arib in 1843 and described its gigantic works and its inscriptions. The dam was measured by Arnaud as two miles long and 120 feet high. The date of its destruction was somewhere about 120 A.C. 152

Most of the commentators of the Quran have translated the Khamt as Pilu, Athl as Jhau and Sidr as Ber; athl is the name of several species of Tamarisk in general and Tamarisk aphylla in particular. Apart from athl, The tamarisk trees are known by many other names in Arabic, such
as *Tarfa, Gaz*, etc. *T. aphylla* is a common tree of peninsular Arabia and is supposed to be very strong because its roots go as much as twenty feet deep into the ground. Tamarisk (salt cedar) species are spreading shrubs or small trees, 5-20 feet tall, with numerous branches and scale like leaves, pale pink to white flowers. Salt cedar is an enormous water consumer. As estimated by experts one large tamarisk plant has the potential to absorb up to 200 gallons of water per day— that is twice the amount the average tree uses in the same time frame.

2.20 Toothbrush tree:

"But they turned away (From God), and We sent Against them the flood (Released) from the Dams, And We converted their two Garden (rows) into "Gardens'' Producing bitter fruit … .." 

In the above verse of the Quran the word ‘Khamt’ is translated as bitter fruit. In some of the translations of the Quran that word is described as *peelu* plant. Its botanical name is *Salvador persica*. In English translations of the Quran, commentators described it bitter fruit tree. But in several Arabic, Persian and Urdu translations and commentaries the word ‘Arak’ and Peelu (Urdu) have been used. It is commonly known as ‘Shajar al Miswak’ in Arabia, where its twigs and roots were used as tooth brush.
“Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) recommended Muslims to clean their teeth with Miswak daily; especially after waking from sleep, during ablution before namaz, before recitation of the Quran, before going to bed in night and when mouth odours is bad.” Hazrat Aisha narrated a hadith of the Prophet muhammad (s.a.w.) that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said “Ten things are natural (for one to do): Trimming the moustache, growing a beard, (using) the miswak, sniffing-up water, cutting the nails, washing hands, shaving armpits, shaving pubic hairs and conserving water.” (Muslim)."^^

One more saying of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) regarding miswak, shows how much importance was given by him to miswak: “If were it not burdensome for my Ummah, I would have made it compulsory to practice miswak before every namaz”. Once he has been quoting as saying – “You should clean your mouth, for this is a means of praising Allah”, he was so much concerned with the oral hygiene that he often advised his followers for cleanliness."^^

Chemical composition of Tooth brush tree: Chemically it contains trimenthal, amine, salvodorine, alkaloid, chlorine, nitrogen; potash and phosphoric anhydride, all of which help in healthy tooth system."

The miswak is a natural tool for cleansing teeth; it is taken from a particular desert tree's roots and branches. It differs from one area to another. In Arabia and Asia it is taken from the Arak tree. This is the
most well-known. And since it was used by the Prophet (s.a.w.), it has been scientifically studied. It is a tree that grows in hot weather countries particularly in desert valleys. It is widespread in the south of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt and elsewhere.

It is an upright evergreen small tree or shrub, seldom more than one foot in diameter reaching maximum height of three meters. The leaves are small, oval, thick and palatable with small smell cress mustard. Physically, the *miswak* is a natural toothbrush. It is composed of a compact group of minute natural fibers which perform exactly the same job as a normal toothbrush excepting that it is made of natural fibers and not of plastic ones, so that it is gentle on the gums.

In general, it is recommended that the *miswak* be used five times a day. The use of *miswak* can be satisfying if used regularly. It is a healthy, good and natural substitute for the toothbrush. In present times, several European and American industries have shown great interest in spreading this tree. Its wood extract is used in tooth pastes. This extract is reported to contain lots of salts and resins which are helpful for cleansing and shining of the teeth. *Miswak* is said to possess many qualities. Among its various functions, it makes the teeth white and fragrant, strengthens and gives vigor to the gums and teeth as well as it stimulates the mind, increases memory, quenches the bile, dries the phlegm, sharpens the eyes, increases the appetite and relieves constipation. *Arak* fruit is aperients and
appetite promoter. It is a useful remedy for piles, affections of spleen, fever, Juzam and worms. The berries of *al-Arak* are edible. These berries have a taste of mustard oil and, therefore, the tree is sometimes also called as Mustard Tree in English and *khardal* in Arabic.

2.21 Tuba

For those who believe  
And work righteousness,  
Is (every) blessedness,  
And a beautiful place  
Of (final) return.\(^{163}\)

The word *Tuba* has been differently described by different authors in Islamic literature. As described by Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and Allama Qartabi in their respective commentaries of the Quran, *Tuba* is a tall, dignified and shady tree of *Jannah* (Paradise).\(^{164}\) While Syed Anwer ‘Ali in his commentary says on the authority of Abdullah bin ‘Abbas that *tuba* is a European word meaning the comfort of the heart and coolness of the eyes. As held by Saeed bin Jubair, in Abysinian language, the word *Tuba* means paradise. According to a tradition quoted by Abu Hurairah and other companions, it is a tree of Paradise, whose shadow spreads in every corner of Jannah.\(^{165}\) But in the Arabic lexicon *al-Munjid* it is used to mean a good news, blessings, etc. Yet another opinion about *tuba* is that it is derived from an Indian word *tupa* which also stands for Paradise.\(^{166}\)
2.22 Zaqqūm:

Is that the better entertainment
Or the Tree of Zaqqūm?
For We have truly
Made it (as) a trial
For the wrong-doers.
For it is a tree
That springs out
Of the bottom of Hell-fire:
The shoots of its fruit-stalks
Are like the heads
Of devils:
Truly they will eat thereof
And fill their bellies therewith.
Then on top of that
They will be given
A mixture made of
Boiling water.¹⁶⁷

Zaqqūm is mentioned three times in the holy Quran and at one place it has been referred as shajar al-Maluna i.e. the ‘Cursed Tree’. According to the Arabic dictionary al-Munjid,: “Zaqqūm is the tree of hell and a poisonous food for wrong doers with thorns and bitter taste.” Maulana Maududi in his commentary on the Quran states that it is bitter in taste with bad smell; fluid which comes from its stems, causes small boils filled with watery fluid on skin. He also approximated it to Thohar plant which is found in our country.¹⁶⁸

According to Muslims belief, zaqqūm tree grows in hell. Shaykh Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar, a professor at the University of Jordon says that “once the palate of the sinners is satiated, the fruit in their bellies
churns like burning oil.” Some Islamic scholars believe the fruit tears their bodies apart and releases bodily fluids.\textsuperscript{169} As the Quran also says:

Verily the tree  
Of Zaqqūm  
Will be the food  
Of the sinful, -  
Like molten brass;  
It will boil  
In their insides  
Like the boiling  
Of scalding water. \textsuperscript{170}

The Quran describes zaqqūm so clearly that it is easy to identify true zaqqūm with the help of present botanical and chemical knowledge. The three characteristics attributed to it need to be borne in mind: (a) When eaten, it causes burning in the stomach or inside the body, (b) Its stems look like the head of a Satan i.e. a big round thing, and (c) The food for the sinful has been referred in all the four verses.\textsuperscript{171}

“Ye will surely taste  
Of the Tree of Zaqqūm.  
“Then will ye fill  
Your insides therewith,  
“And drink Boiling Water  
On top of it:  
“Indeed ye shall drink  
Like diseased camels  
Raging with thirst!  
Such will be their entertainment  
On the Day of Requital! \textsuperscript{172}

In fact zaqqūm is a tree which grows from the roots of Hell and its fruit resembles the expanded hood of snakes. Zaqqūm is translated as ‘\textit{seend}’ which is a well known tree and has a bitter taste. But this has
been stated only to serve as an illustration that everything in Hell will be worse in bitterness and bad smell than the things of this world and have an unpleasant sight.

The above statement is further illustrated by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) stated: “If only one drop of zaqqūm is caused to spill into the world it will spoil the food of the entire world (i.e. all types of food will become extremely bitter). Imagine then the condition of those whose diet will be nothing but zaqqūm."
REFERENCES


23. www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/c/cucumber.html


26. Imam Muslim, *Sahih Muslim* (translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi), (Delhi, 1999), vol.IV, Ch.MCLXVI, p.1470.


41. www.uga.edu/fruit/fig.htm


43. www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/fig.html

44. *The Quran* II: 61.

45. www.odu.edu/webroot/instra/sci/plant/ssci/plant.nsf/pages/holypharmacy

46. MIH Farooqi, *op.cit.*, p.91.


51. www.umm.edu/altmed/ConsHerbs/Gingerch.htm
52. Maulana Maududi, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, note no. 20, p. 199.
53. www.umm.edu/altmed/ConsHerbs/Gingerch.htm
55. www.umm.edu/altmed/ConsHerbs/Gingerch.htm
57. www.umm.edu/altmed/ConsHerbs/Gingerch.htm
58. *The Quran* XXXVII: 139-146.
60. www.web.odu.edu/webroot/instra/sci/plants.nsf/pages/holypharmacy
64. www.ibiblio.org/pfaf/cgibin/arr_html?Lagenaria+Siceraria&CAN=COMIND
68. www.controverscial.com/Vine.htm
70. www.controverscial.com/Vine.htm
74. www.plants.ifas.ufl.edu/camphor.html
75. M.I.H. Farooqi, *op.cit.*, pp. 75-78.
76. www.kingtutshop.com/how/mix.html
78. www.kingtutshop.com/how/mix.html
79. www.recipies4us.co.uk/Specials%20and%20Holidays/Lentils%20Origine%20uses%20Recipes.htm
81. www.recipies4us.co.uk/Specials%20and%20Holidays/Lentils%20Origine%20uses%20Recipes.htm
84. *The Quran* II: 57.


89. www.umma.com/islam/taqwapalace/fitness/health2html


91. www.plantanswers.com/bible.htm


95. www.plantanswers.com/bible.htm

96. www.theepicenter.com/Spices/mustard.html


98. www.europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/prom/olive/medinfo/uk_ie/factsheets/fact1.htm


100. M. Akbar Ali and others *op.cit.*, p.150.


103. www.europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/prom/olive/medinfo/uk_ie/factsheets/fact1.htm

104. M. Akbar Ali and others *op.cit.*, p.150.


110. www.web.odu.edu/webroot/instra/sci/plant.nsf/koranandbiblenew


112. Quoted in www.vegparadise.com/highestperch312.html

113. www.herbsofegypt.com/Egyptian-Herb/onion.htm


117. www.vegparadise.com/highestperch312.html

118. www.herbsofegypt.com/Egyptian-Herb/onion.html

119. www.vegparadise.com/highestperch312.html

120. www.herbsofegypt.com/Egyptian-Herb/onion.htm


122. www.islamonline.net/English/science/2004/07/article04.shtml

123. M. Akbar Ali and others *op.cit.*, p.150.
124. www.islamonline.net/English/science/2004/07/article04.shtml
125. M.I.H. Farooqi, op.cit., p.47.
141. www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/b/baswe18.html
143. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basil
147. www.freespirits.chosenones.net/archive/index.php/t-707.html
149. www.freespirits.chosenones.net/archive/index.php/t-707.html
150. www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/b/baswe18.html
155. www.eurekalert.org/pubnews.php
158. www.islamweb.net/ver2/archive/article.php?long=E&id=34569
160. www.irfi.org/article/articles_201_205/quranic_botany.htm
161. www.islamweb.net/ver2/archive/article.php?long=E&id=34569


169. www.answers.com/topic/zaqqum


