

# Medicinal uses and properties of Fragrances

By: Ml. Afzal Yusuf

Malih bin Abdullah (R.A) narrates that Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wassallam said, “Five things are from amongst the practices of the Ambiya (A.S): modesty, perseverance, Nikah, Miswaak and applying Fragrance.” There are many Ahadeeth regarding Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wassallam’s fondness for ‘itr,’ especially that of Musk, Oudh and Amber.

The science and art of fragrance making and blending, dates back to Sayiddina Suleman (A.S) as Allah Ta’ala granted him the ability to converse with flora and fauna. Allah placed great healing properties in plants and flowers and these creations of Allah informed Suleman (A.S) of the myriad of medicinal benefits contained therein and accordingly he extracted the oils and resins and produced Attar.

Attar, besides giving the user and those around a pleasant scent, inadvertently adds value to the general wellbeing of the user, both physically and emotionally. There are many physical and psychological ailments that are easily treatable and preventable solely by applying good quality attar.

The major key Fragrances that provide numerous medical benefits are Oudh, Amber, Musk, Rose, Saffron and Sandalwood. Perfumers generally use these as base ingredients in the manufacturing of a variety of scents.

Oudh or Dahnul Oudh is regarded as the *King of Fragrance* and fittingly so. Imam Bukhari reports the Prophet Sallallahu alaihi wassallam said, “I recommend the use of Oudh Al Hind, for it has a cure for seven ailments.” Commentators have listed some of the seven sicknesses as: Pleurisy (inflammation and water retention in the lungs), Anticoagulant (prevents clotting of the blood), Cardiac Tonic, Ailments of the throat, Kidney disorders, Chest problems (eg. Asthma) and amongst others, prevents impotency.

Oudh is extremely rare and costly because of its origins. Oudh is a resin that originates from the Aquilaria tree found in the south Asia regions viz Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Assam and Burma. The tree has to be at least 50 years old before a fungus attacks it. As a natural response to counteract this infection, the Aquilaria tree produces the resin known as Oudh, thus preventing a total decay of the tree.

Once the Oudh is produced within the core of the bark, skilled collectors remove these Oudh rich barks for distillation. On average, it takes a kilo of Oudh sticks to yield approximately 3ml of Oudh oil. It is noteworthy to mention that to date no one has ever successfully cultivated Oudh artificially. One derives benefits by both applying the Oudh oils and burning the Oudh sticks. The burning of Oudh sticks was a practice of Sayyidina Umar (R.A.) in Masjidun Nabawi as it is mentioned that Oudh originates in Jannah and Iblees despises its scent because the beautiful fragrance of Oudh brings nostalgic memories of his residence there once.

Amber is called the *Father of Scents* due to its many medicinal uses. Amber originates from Ambergris which is a concretion formed in the intestines of the sperm whale.

The sperm whale's staple diet is cuttlefish and squid which the whale digests easily, however the beaks of these fish scar the intestinal walls of the whale and a paste like substance gathers in these crevices.

Eventually this substance is ejected from within the sperm whale. Once freed, the Ambergris, lighter than water, floats on the ocean currents, refining itself naturally with the combined action of the sun and saltwater. It is generally collected in the high seas and traded to the delight of perfume makers. Its prohibitive price makes it a precious commodity and so it is used sparingly.

Amber is very effective in ailments relating to the heart and neurological disorders. Unfortunately of late, very little use is made of Amber in western healing, although it used to be commonly prescribed for heart conditions by medical doctors in the mid 1900's. An excellent method of using Amber is to put one drop on the tip of the finger and apply it to the area between the eyes on the nose bone (third eye).

This is absorbed by the body and stimulates the pineal gland, which activates many of our physiological functions.

Musk, Sayyidah Aiysha (R.A.) narrates that Nabi Sallallahu alaihi wassallam loved Musk and Oudh the most.

Pure Musk is derived from a belly gland of the Musk Deer native to central Asia's high plateaus and the Himalayas. The trade in Musk is strictly regulated. Musk is commonly used to treat cancerous cells, liver, heart and fertility problems.

For maximum medicinal benefits, pure Attar should be applied on the pulse points and a drop or two on a cotton wad and placed into the ridge-like ledge of the right ear. At this point of placement, five cranial nerves come together to form a nerve mass or ganglia, which are important life-regulating points.

Should you require further information, kindly contact Ml. Afzal Yusuf on +27 31 207 7862.