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Review of *Majoone Falasfa* – A Unani formulation

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Abstract

Majoone Falasfa is one of the most reputed polypharmaceutical preparations of Unani System of Medicine. It was originally called Madaat-ul-Hayaat i.e. Elixir of life. It is attributed to Indrumakhas of Greece (Andromachos, the elder, court physician to King Nero) who formulated it in consultation with several other philosophers of his time. It is an electuary which is prepared especially for the people engaged in mental work and that too processed in a semisolid form hence, renamed as *Majoone Falasfa*. This Unani compound formulation contains thirteen ingredients, which is used as liver tonic, antidiuretic, aphrodisiac, appetizer, digestive, semenagogue, carminative, stomachic, lithotriptic, deobstruent, anti-arthritis, cardiac tonic, nervine tonic as well as tonic for gall bladder and kidneys. It is also indicated for use in phlegmatic diseases. It is being particularly used in age related dementia as well as to counter the effects of ageing in Unani system of Medicine.

Keywords: *Majoone Falasfa*, Ingredients, Ageing, Unani Medicine

1. Introduction

Unani System of medicine is one among the oldest systems that prevails till date with its efficient drugs derived from animal, plant and mineral resources. Over 2400 years ago the father of medicine, Hippocrates practised it, however His medicine included a great deal of ancient Egyptian medicine as well as important components of the ancient Mesopotamian traditions. The methods of treatment according to Unani System of Medicine is divided into four different parts namely dietotherapy (*Ilaj-Bil-Ghiza*), regimental therapy (*Ilaj-Bil-Tadbeer*), surgery (*Ilaj-Bil-Yad*) and pharmacotherapy (*Ilaj-Bil-Dawa*). Considering pharmacotherapy, both single and compound drugs are being used. Among the compound drugs *Majoone Falasfa* is being prescribed from centuries with great reputation. It is an electuary belonging to the class of famous polypharmaceutical preparations. The formulation is attributed to "Indromakhus" a great philosopher physician who lived in the period between Flatan I and Aphlagorous^[1]. He is also called Andromachous, the elder of Cretes who was court physician of King Nero^[2]. *Majoone Falasfa* is given particularly in old age to counter the effects of ageing. It was originally called Madaat-ul-Hayaat i.e. Elixir of life^[3]. This electuary which is prepared especially for the people engaged in mental work and that too processed in a semisolid form hence, renamed as *Majoone Falasfa*^[4, 5]. According to different Unani Qarabadeen's (Pharmacopoeias) this compound preparation is used as sexual tonic, liver tonic, heart tonic and tonic for gall bladder and kidneys. It is also used as appetizer, digestive, stomachic, semenagogue and as aphrodisiac. In old age it is being given as a general tonic, in polyarthralgias and to improve age related dementia^[6, 7, 8].

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2. Physicochemical Standards of *Majoone Falasfa* ^[9]

Various physicochemical standards of *Majoone Falasfa* are given below;

Appearance	Semi-solid
Colour	Blackish brown
Smell	Pleasant
Taste	Sweet tending bitter
Alcohol soluble matter	69.40%
Water soluble matter	55.83%
Successive extractives	
Pet. Ether (60-80%)	1.79%
Chloroform	0.37%
Ethyl alcohol	10.53%
Ph of 1% aq soln.	4.6
Ph of 10% aq soln.	4.61
Bulk density at 25 °C	1.362
Total ash	1.8%
Water soluble ash	0.99%
Acid soluble ash	0.38%
Volatile oils	0.126%
Saponification value	216.36
Iodine value	93.30
Acid value	14.59
Alkaloids	2.21%
Total phenolics	0.81%
Tannins	0.078%
Resins	1.835%
Aglycones	0.140%
Reducing sugars	28.55%
Non reducing sugar	22.36%
Crude fibres	1.95%
Total nitrogen	0.4902%
Sodium	0.3294% w/w of drug
Calcium	0.0756% w/w of drug
Potassium	0.4800% w/w of drug

3. Prescription

According to *Qarabadeen-e-Lutfi*, the original preparation of *Majoone Falasfa* contained only ten plant ingredients viz, Filfil Siyah (*P. nigrum*), Filfil Daraz (*P. longum*), Zanjabeel (*Z. officinalis*), Darchini (*C. zeylanicum*), Kundur (*B. serrata*), Balela (*T. belerica*), Amla (*E. officinalis*), Chilghoza (*P. gerardiana*), Sheetraj (*P. zeylanica*) and Babuna (*M. chamomilla*) ^[4]. However, there are certain variations regarding the weight and number of ingredients of the compound in different Unani formulations. The formula for preparation of *Majoone Falasfa* in National Formulary of Unani Medicine (NFUM) contains thirteen ingredients with sugar or honey as a base, ^[10] whereas in Hamdard Pharmacopoeia of Eastern Medicine, the number of ingredients are same as that of NFUM but differs in dosage ^[11].

4. Method of Preparation

For making *Majoon* or any of its allied preparations, *Qiwam* (base) of different consistencies (tar) is generally made. It depends on the nature of ingredient drugs to be used. The *Qiwam* is generally made by adding Aab (water), Araq (distillate) or Aab e samar (fruit juices), etc in any of the bases of purified honey, sugar, candy or jiggery etc and boiled over a low fire till it acquires a required consistency. The bases are generally purified by adding Aab e lemu (lemon juice), Satt e lemu (lemon extract), or Shibbe yamani (Alum) before making *Qiwam*. Afterwards the ingredients are mixed in *qiwam* to prepare *Majoon*. *Qiwam* for *majoon* is of two tar (consistency) ^[10]. *Majoone Falasfa* is made on the same principle while using water with sugar or honey as a base and boiled over low

fire till *Qiwam* (consistency) of two tar is achieved.

According to Hamdard Pharmacopoeia of Eastern Medicine, the first 10 ingredients are made into a *safoof* (powder) after being ground and sieved through 80-mesh. The two kernals are separately ground, sieved through 40-mesh, and added to *safoof* (powder). The raisins are washed and heated in ½ litres of water till the volume of the water has been reduced by 1/4th when the decoction is allowed to cool, hand-rubbed and filtered. The decoction is added to the *qiwam* (consistency) of white sugar. When the proper *qiwam* (consistency) forms, the medicinal *safoof* (powder) is gradually added to its stirring. The *Majoon* is preserved in glass jar ^[11].

5. Dosage and Administration

5-10 g. in the morning or at bed time with 250 ml. of milk ^[10, 11].

6. Action and Uses

It is a reputed compound formulation given in old age ^[6, 7, 12]. It is used as liver tonic, antidiuretic, semenagogue, aphrodisiac, digestive, appetizer, carminative and in colic pain. It is also used as stomachic, lithotriptic and deobstruent. It is used as general tonic, cardiac tonic, nervine tonic, tonic for gall bladder and kidney, anti-arthritic, specially in backache and joint pain in large joints. It is also indicated for use in phlegmatic diseases. It helps for strengthening of gums and teeth. It is being used for enhancing memory, in dementia and in impairment of memory ^[3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11].

Table 1: Formula of Preparation of *Majoone Falasfa* according to NFUM [10]

Maweez Munaqqa (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)	450g
Zanjabeel (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)	150g
Filfil Siyah (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)	150g
Filfil Daraz (<i>Piper longum</i>)	150g
Darchini (<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>)	150g
Amla (<i>Emblica officinalis</i>)	150g
Post-e-Balela (<i>Terminalia belerica</i>)	150g
Sheetraj Hindi (<i>Plumbago zeylanicum</i>)	150g
Zarawand Madaharaj (<i>Aristolochia Indica</i>)	150g
Salab Misri (<i>Orchis latifolia</i>)	150g
Maghz-e-Narjeel (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)	150g
Beikh-e-Babuna (<i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>)	150g
Maghz-e-Chilghoza (<i>Pinus gerardiana</i>)	150g
Tukhm-e-Babuna (<i>Anthemis nobilis</i>)	75g
Asal or Qand Safaid	7kg

Table 2: Formula of Preparation of *Majoone Falasfa* according to Hamdard Pharmacopoeia of Eastern Medicine [11]

Amla (<i>Emblica officinalis</i>)	50g
Baheda (<i>Terminalia belerica</i>)	50g
Papal kalan (<i>Piper longum</i>)	50g
Salab Misri (<i>Orchis mascula</i>)	50g
Chita lakri (<i>Plumbago zeylanicum</i>)	50g
Darchini (<i>Cinnamomum officinalis</i>)	50g
Zarawand Madaharaj (<i>Aristolochia rotunda</i>)	50g
Zanjabeel (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)	50g
Filfil Siyah (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)	50g
Babuna (<i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>)	75g
Chilghoza (<i>Pinus gerardiana</i>)	50g
Maghz-e-Narjeel (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)	150g
Maweez Munaqqa (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)	150g
Shakar (White sugar syrup)	1 kg + 875g

Table 3: Brief Description of Ingredients of *Majoone Falasfa*

Drug	Parts Used	Botanical name	Dosage	Functions	Uses	Scientific Studies
Maweez	Fruit [13, 14, 15]	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> Linn. [13, 14]	5-10 Units [17, 21]	Stimulant, Aphrodisiac, Cardio tonic, Laxative, Liver tonic, Antitussive, Vermifuge, Adipogenous, Somachic, Resolvent, Expectorant, Blood purifier, Concoctive, Haematogenic. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Enteritis, Arthritis, Stomatitis, Jaundice, Loss of libido, Anaemia, Dyspepsia, Constipation, Gout, Dyspnoea. Heart diseases, Palpitations, Cough, Hoarseness of voice. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Antifungal, Antibacterial, Anti inflammatory, Anticancer and Antioxidant. [22]
Zanjabeel	Root [13,14,15]	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> [13, 14]	1-1/2 g [17, 21]	Aphrodisiac, Brain Tonic, Appetizer, Digestive, Carminative, Anti helminthic, Laxative, Expectorant, Detergent, Stimulant. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in sexual weakness, paralysis, Bell's palsy. It is also used in indigestion and other stomach ailments. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Cardio tonic activity, Powerful Antioxidant activity, Anti-cancer activity, Anti coagulant activity, Anti inflammatory activity, Anti atherosclerotic activity, Antacid activity, Anti microbial activity, Antitussive activity and Immuno-modulatory activity. [23]
Filfil Siyah	Fruit [13, 15, 17]	<i>Piper nigrum</i> Linn. [13, 14]	500 mg [17, 21]	Nervine tonic, Aphrodisiac, Memory tonic, Stomachic, Digestive, Liver tonic, Anti inflammatory, Analgesic, Expectorant, Diuretic, Emmenagogue, Carminative, Anti pyretic. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It used in nerve weakness, hemorrhoids, syphilis, cholera, eye diseases, liver pain, muscle pain, paralysis, night blindness, spleen disorders, low back ache, leucoderma, arthritis, tooth ache, and vertigo. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Anti diabetic activity, Anti depressant activity, Antihypertensive activity, Anti-asthmatic activity, Antimicrobial activity, Antioxidant activity, Anti-cancer activity and Anti fungal activity. [24]

Filfil Daraaz	Fruit ^[17, 21]	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn. ^[13, 14]	1-2 g ^[17, 21]	Carminative, Anti fertility, Diuretic as well as emmenagogue, Haeminic, Aphrodisiac, Stomachic, Analgesic. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in cold and other respiratory disorders, paralysis, Bell's palsy, arthritis, cough, sciatica, gout, night blindness, epilepsy, and asthma. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Scientific reports are available for Anti stress, Antitumor, Anti diabetic, Antimicrobial, Anti , Anti fungal activity, Anti Tubercular activity, inflammatory, Anti arthritic, Antioxidant, Anti fertility, Hepato- protective and Cardio-protective activity. ^[25]
Darchini	Bark ^[13, 14, 17, 21]	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> ^[13, 14]	1-2 g ^[17, 21]	Cardiac stimulant, Carminative, Disinfectant, Expectorant Demulcent, Deobstrient, Antidote, Sexual stimulant, Tonic to vital organs, Vision improvement. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in stomach and cardiac disorder like palpitation, hiccups, indigestion and flatulence. It is also used as tonic for stomach and liver. Further it finds its use as an antidote as well as sexual tonic. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Anti diabetic, Anti oxidant, anti cancerous activity, Anti parasitic activity, Anti microbial activity. ^[26]
Amla	Fresh and dried fruits, seeds, nuts flowers, leaves and bark ^[17, 21]	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> ^[13, 14]	10.5 g ^[17, 21]	Astringent, Stomachic, Desiccant, Anti emetic, Brain tonic, Blood purifier, Aphrodisiac, Cardio tonic, Haemostatic, Frigorific. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used for poor eye vision and is used in all paralytic conditions. It is used to grow the hair longer and also as a hair dye. Amla is considered to be refrigerant, diuretic, laxative and purifier of humours of the body. The raw fruit is laxative and the dried fruit is useful in haemorrhage, diarrhoea, piles and dysentery. In combination with iron, it is used in anaemia, jaundice and dyspepsia. It is also beneficial in epistaxis. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Spasmolytic activity, Antibacterial activity-inhibiting the growth of S. Typhi, S. Para typhi, M. Pyogens var. albus; S. schottmellari , S. Dysenteriae, Cardioprotective effect, Strong antioxidant, Anti cancer properties, Expectorant, Purgative, Hypoglycaemic, Hepatoprotective ^[27]
Balela	Fruit ^[15, 17, 21]	<i>Terminalia bellerica</i> , Roxb ^[13, 14]	3-6 g ^[17, 21]	Astringent, Demulcent, Anti inflammatory, Antipyretic. Removal of Black Bile, tonic for stomach, brain and eyes. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	The fruit is used in the treatment of chronic diarrhea, hemorrhoids, leprosy, leucoderma, spleen disorders, loss of appetite, dyspepsia, respiratory tract infection and brain and eye diseases. It removes yellow bile from the body. It is also beneficial in atony of stomach and its coldness. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Strong Anti oxidant, Anti microbial, Anti diarrhoeal activity, Antihypertensive effect, Anti salmonella activity, Anti-Spasmodic and Bronchodialatory properties, Hepatoprotective activity, Anti microbial activity, Analgesic activity, Anti peroxidative activity, Streptozotocin induced Antidiabetic activity, Activities of Accessory reproductive ducts in male rats. ^[28]
Babuna	Flowers, Root ^[17, 21]	<i>Matricaria chamomillia</i> Linn ^[13, 14]	1-3 g ^[17, 21]	Anti inflammatory, Local analgesic, Stimulant, Anti Febrile Paroxysms, Digestive, Emmenagogue, Laxative, Alterative, Anti cold, Humectants, Hypnotic, Carminative, Demulcent, Deobstruent, Brain and nerve tonic. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in Arthritis, Ear ache, Episodic fevers, Indigestion, Ammenorrhoea, Inflammation, Neurological disorders, Stomachic, Jaundice. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Cardiovascular effects, Anti spasmodic, Anti ulcer, Choleric, Anxiolytic, Sedative, Uterine Tonic, Anti-inflammatory, Anti allergic, Anti bacterial, Anti fungal, Anti viral, Anti neoplastic, Anti oxidant. ^[29]
Sheetraj	Roots , Stem with branches ^[17, 21]	<i>Plumbago zeylanicum</i> L. ^[13, 14]	31/2 g ^[17]	Anti inflammatory, Detergent, Digestive, Carminative, Nerve stimulant, Analgesic, Stimulant, Exhilarant, Irritant. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in Leucoderma, vitiligo, Scabies, Tinea, Dermatitis, Arthritis and Sciatica. It is also used in hardness of spleen. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Anticancer, Antitumor, Anti inflammatory, Antioxidant, Anti mycobacterial and Antimicrobial activities. ^[30]
Zarawand	Root ^[17, 21]	<i>Aristolochia rotunda</i> ^[13, 14]	3-5 g ^[21]	Tonic, Diuretic, Antidote, Cicatrizant, Anti inflammatory, Demulcent, Deobstruent, Expectorant, Detergent, Analgesic, Aphrodisiac, Brain tonic. ^[13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in heart diseases, general weakness, nerve weakness, hysteria, phelghmatic diseases, cough, asthma, sciatica, gout. ^[13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Anti Diabetes activity, Antimicrobial activity, Antifertility, Abortifacient, Anticonvulsant activity. ^[31]

Salab Misri	Root [17, 21]	<i>Orchis latifolia</i> Linn. [13, 14]	3-5 g [17, 21]	Spermatogenic, Aphrodisiac, Inspissant to semen, Nerve tonic, Adipogenous, Anti inflammatory. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in sterility as well as in oligospermia to increase sperm count. It is also used in premature ejaculation. It is beneficial in paralysis, tetanus, bell's palsy and stomatitis, besides it is helpful in increasing body weight. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Sexual stimulant activity, Aphrodisiac activity, Spermatogenic activity, Anti hypertensive activity. [32]
Narjheel	Dried fruit [17, 21]	<i>Cocus nucifera</i> L. [13, 14]	12-36 g [17, 21]	Nerve stimulant, General tonic, Adipogenous, Antidote), Prophylactic for cholera, Antipyretic), Haematogenic, Aphrodisiac. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used in cholera, muscle weakness and diarrhea. It is used for building body muscles. It acts as a nutrient. It is used as an antidote against cholera toxins in body. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Leishmanicidal, Antiviral. Anti-helminthic, Anti inflammatory, Antinociceptive, Anti neoplastic, Pro inflammatory and non toxic in addition to treating Diabetes and prostatic hyperplasia. [33]
Chilghoza	Fruit [17, 21]	<i>Pinus gerardiana</i> Wall. [13, 14]	7-12 g [17, 21]	Adipogenous, Aphrodisiac, Impuissant to semen Expectorant, Caloric, Carminative. [13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	It is used as a sexual tonic, appetizer as well as carminative. It adds to the body mass. It is also used in Bell's palsy, paralysis, arthritis and lumbago. It is beneficial in cough and asthma. [13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21]	Nutritive, sexual tonic, effective in sexual weakness, spermatorrhea, seminal thinning and low sperm count, physical weakness and weight loss. The seed is anodyne and stimulant. The turpentine obtained from the resin of all pine trees is antiseptic, diuretic, rubefacient and vermifuge. [34, 35]

Various functions of *Majoone Falasfa* is attributed to its various ingredients which possess antioxidant, hematogenic, body building, stomachic, anti inflammatory, aphrodisiac, adipogenous, carminative, tonic for nerves, brain, heart and kidneys, nerve stimulant, cicatrizant, emmenagogue, laxative, expectorant, deobstrient, demulcent, antipyretic, blood purifier, antitussive etc properties. These functions have been proved by scientific studies. However clinical trials or scientific studies are lacking on *Majoone Falasfa* as a compound drug. In a clinical trial conducted in National Institute of Unani Medicine Hospital, Bangalore, 30 eligible subjects were selected and randomly assigned into two groups, 20 in test group and 10 in control group. Test group was administered with 10 gm of *Majoone Falasfa* orally in the morning and same dose in the evening for two months while control group was given placebo for the same period of time as that of test drug. Response was measured by the assessment of Lipid profile, Hb%, TLC, DLC, physical activity score, appetite score, weight, Dementia score, grip strength score on every 15th day. MDA concentrations and CD4 Counts were assessed before and after treatment. Test group showed strongly significant increase in Weight (p<0.001), Appetite score (p<0.001), Grip strength score (p<0.001), Dementia score (p<0.001), and there was increase in Hb% clinically in test group though not significant statistically.

7. Conclusion

With the above discussion the inference may be drawn that the *Majoone Falasfa* is one of the best Unani formulation with a lot of health benefits. It has proven to be beneficial to counter the effects of ageing. However more scientific studies and clinical trials are needed on this

compound formulation to ensure its scientific validation for clinical use in patients in general and in elderly in particular.

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