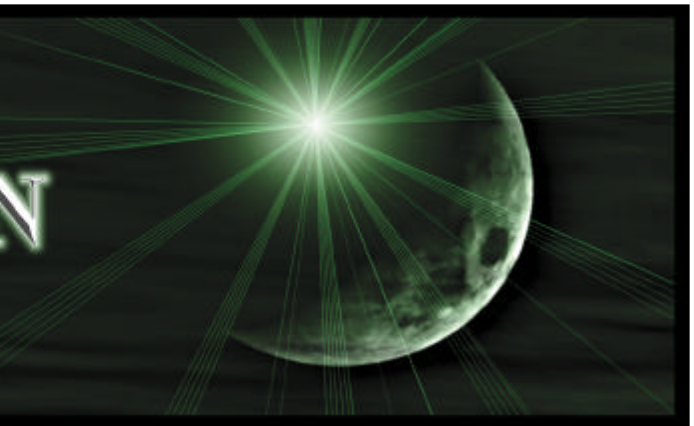


YOUNG EUROPEAN MUSLIM



From the Editorial Team . . .

Assalamu-Alaikum and Greetings!

Welcome to the eleventh issue of the Young European Muslim Newsletter (YEM). We are a team of young people from the Blackburn in Lancashire whose ages range from 13 to 19. This newsletter is intended, not specifically for Young European Muslims, but for everyone throughout the world. We work together on a regular basis to design and produce quarterly newsletters on 'Muslim issues' such as Islamic festivals and Bullying. We constantly seek feedback from our readers concerning the contents of this newsletter - Were there any parts you particularly enjoyed? Can we make any improvements? Any form of feedback would be highly welcome.

Introduction

In this issue we explore one of the most beneficial foods that the creator has provided for us, HONEY. We will look at the medicinal properties, the vitamins and the healing effects brought about by including honey in your daily diet.

Honey: The Antibiotic of the Future?

Although honey's healing benefits were revealed to Muslims 1400 years ago through the Holy Qur'an and several *hadiths* (Prophetic sayings and traditions), scientists are just now beginning to research it's amazing properties. Indeed, Peter Molan, biochemist at the University of Waikato (New Zealand) has researched into the healing properties of honey and has shown scientifically that all types of honey have varying degrees of such properties (*Molan*). Honey contains many minerals and vitamins beneficial to man. However, one of the most important properties seems to be its antibiotic action.

Each drop of honey contains many minerals (potassium, sodium, phosphate, copper, iron, calcium, manganese), enzymes, trace elements, vitamins (A, B1, B2, B3, C, D, K), as well as beta-carotene. Honey also contains glucose, fructose and saccharine (70%) and is very preservative just by itself. Of course honey from a supermarket, which has been heated and filtered, may not be as therapeutic as one taken directly from the comb.

Molan's favourite study concerning honey makes reference to a 20-year-old wound in a British woman. Bacteria had been festering in an abscess in her armpit for years, resisting all the antibiotics she had taken. Nothing seemed to help her and she could barely use her arm. In August 1999, she heard about honey's healing effects

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and convinced her doctors to put some in her dressing. At that point they were willing to try anything and were not very hopeful that anything would work. However, they were quite surprised when one month later the wound finally healed and the woman could use her arm again.



Since then, different types of honey have been tested on the different species of bacteria responsible for wound infection. The State Medical Society of Wisconsin announced, "*It is only a matter of time before antibiotics lose their effectiveness because their overuse creates ever-stronger germs*".

Thus, we may have to go back to the old fashioned remedies. However, "old fashioned", is not as bad as it sounds.

Effectively, the potency of honey was found to be superior to all types of antibiotics. Two years ago, Australia approved honey as a medicine and began selling it in pharmacies (*Whichman*).

Honey is now known for its antibiotic, antioxidant and antiviral capabilities. In fact, honey contains an enzyme that produces hydrogen peroxide, which is believed to be the main reason for its anti-microbial activity. If one wants to use it as a dressing, the best way is to use sterilised honey. However, the only way to sterilise honey without destroying its antibacterial agents is through gamma-irradiation. Honey is also used for sore throats, colds, heartburn, fever, blisters, cuts, acne, skin disorders, ulcers, stomach inflammations and cataracts... and its flavour excites the appetite (*The National Honey Board*).

The advantage of the honey used externally is that during the healing process the re-growth of the sick part of the body is enhanced by honey's moisturising properties. The mechanism of this process are:

1. Water is very attracted to the nectar, because the nectar is made of glucose and fructose. When put on a wound, it attracts water and body fluids, absorbing and destroying bacteria and inhibiting their growth in the process.

2. Raw honey contains glucose oxidase, an enzyme that produces a mild antiseptic when mixed with water. This enzyme is destroyed by heat and pasteurisation. That is



why it cannot be found in commercial honey. Of course raw, unprocessed honey, which is usually darker, has the most medicinal and nutritional value and is even the most flavour-full. Particularly active, Manuka Honey from New Zealand has all the healing anti-bacterial properties of other honeys, with some additional components. *"All honey is not created equal, however certain types such as "active" Manuka from New Zealand and perhaps Honeydew from Central Europe are more effective for infections,"* explains Molan.

Let him drink honey

While the healing properties of honey may be news to modern science, Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him-PBUH) commented on its value 1400 years ago. Once a man came to the Prophet and said, *"My brother has got loose motions"*. The Prophet (PBUH) said to him, *"Let him drink honey (Bukhari)"*. Furthermore, the work of Molan has provided substantial evidence that honey holds promise in the treatment of peptic ulcers and upper gastroenteritis disorders. Despite its high acid concentration, the nectar is very digestible and tones the kidneys.

The Prophet (PBUH) also said, *"If there is any healing in your medicines, then it is in cupping, a gulp of honey or branding with fire (cauterisation) that suits the ailment, but I don't like to be cauterised"*. Honey also nourishes, regulates and purifies blood circulation. Fructose is the only natural sugar which goes straight into the blood, nourishing nerves and providing the brain with extra energy. In cases of first-degree burns, *"the raw wild flower honey forms a flexible protective barrier which prevents infections, absorbs pus and reduces pain, irritation and odour"* explains Leigh Broadhurst (Healthwellexchange.com).

A Romanian doctor stated that he tried honey on cataract patients, and 2002 of his 2094 patients recovered completely (Islamweb.net).

Another plus has been found for honey. An Oklahoma allergist has said that raw honey is an excellent treatment for 90% of all allergies. A person who is suffering from allergies to certain plants should eat honey mixed with the offending plant (Reallyrawhoney.com)

Honey is good for teeth!

Ironically, sweet honey can also protect the teeth. Its anti-microbial activity has been tested on several species of dental plaque bacteria. A study shows that honey has been proven to sharply reduce acid production, thus killing the bacteria responsible for dental caries. Researchers believe that it also makes a difference in fighting inflammatory infections of the gums (Cbshealthwatch.com).

HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH HONEY IS A VERY SAFE AND NATURAL REMEDY, IT SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR-OLD.

HONEY IS A SOURCE OF BACTERIA SPORES THAT PRODUCE A TOXIN WHICH CAN CAUSE INFANT BOTULISM. EVEN THOUGH IT IS VERY RARE, A RISK OF BOTULISM EXISTS IN THE INGESTION OF ANY UNCOOKED FOOD. BOTULISM IS A RARE DISEASE THAT AFFECTS THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND CAN LEAD TO PALSY. NEVERTHELESS, IT CAN STILL BE USED AS A DRESSING FOR BURNS AND CUTS.

Honey Bee Pollen

Pollen is the ultra-fine powder that makes up the male element of a flower. Honeybees, who collect it, pass by poor pollen and collect only that which is nutritious and healthy. Some experts even say that the bee chooses "by instinct" those good flowers. This is explained in the Holy Qur'an in verse (16:68).

Bee pollen contains all the elements humans need in a form easily assimilated by the body. For this reason, bee pollen is called "the perfect food". Indeed, it contains all the minerals (14), vitamins (13), trace minerals, proteins, amino acids (15), enzymes, co-enzymes (over 5,000) and hormones known to man and probably many more known only to Allah.

Pollen is a prime source of proteins, which cause elevation of the gamma globulins of the body and increase its immune defence reactions. Known as a *"Fountain of Youth"*, it has linoleic acid, which is the only fatty acid for the nutrition of the hair and skin, and which slows the aging process and increases capillary strength. Dr. Louveave and Dr. E.L. Mand of France report that experiments showed that *"Honey Bee Pollen can reverse the aging, darkening, wrinkling and blemishing of the skin"* (*New Horizons*).

Bee pollen is also very helpful for fatigue (psychological or physical), immune system deficiencies, anaemia, sleep disorders, diabetes, cholesterol, diarrhoea, constipation, prostate disorders, and rheumatism. Cartson Wade said, *"Bee Pollen is a natural way to improve metabolism and help control and take weight off."* He recommends eating

pollen before meals for those who want to lose weight or eating it after meals to increase weight.

Royal Jelly

Royal Jelly is sometimes difficult to find because of its high demand and complexity of manufacture. This white gelatinous substance is secreted by the salivary glands of worker bees. It is the food for the queen bee, who is the only bee in the hive that lives for several years (worker bees only live for a few weeks). Royal Jelly, which is synthesised during the digestion of bee pollen, is a mixture of various proteins and water. It has a reputation of maintaining youthfulness in people as well as bees.

Some studies have shown that it has more benefits when injected. Royal Jelly possesses an excellent and powerful antibacterial protein called "royalisin", which has proven to protect against several species of bacteria. Royal Jelly may also have effects on tumours. In a study on mice carried out in Japan, it also appeared that Royal Jelly reduced and inhibited the tumour. The mice treated with Royal Jelly lived longer than the ones who were not treated with Royal Jelly.

However, although this product is excellent, it should not be consumed by people who have asthma or anaphylaxis without the advice of a doctor. This is because some products made of Royal Jelly and other herbs, such as *BeeAlive* and *BeeSweet*, have been the objects of condemnation for false claim by the federal court of the USA.

Bee Venom

Through the ages bees have played a significant role in Muslim and Arab culture. In fact, the value of bees was so great that before an important battle the first *caliph* Abu Bakr As-Sidiq told his general, Yazid Ibn Abi Sufian, "*Do not burn bees and do not scatter them*".

In the Holy Qur'an "*The Bee*", also speaks of the importance of bees in Islam. *Surah* 16, verse 69 describes a drink of various colours produced from the bellies of Bees, which is full of healing properties for mankind. Many people interpret this "drink" to mean honey, however, bees also produce another healing drink in their bodies - Bee Venom. This is a complex mixture used by the bees to protect their hives against predators.

Bee Venom Therapy (BVT), also known as "Apitherapy", is a popular healing method that uses this venom. BVT consists of using bee stings to treat symptoms of certain diseases. BVT can be performed by a doctor, a therapist, a beekeeper or a patient who is taught how to properly use the bees (*Rothfeld*). Some physicians use BVT by taking sterilised venom and injecting it under the skin, imitating a bee sting. Other doctors claim that the venom loses part of its effectiveness when tampered with and they insist on having their patients stung in the natural manner. However, apitherapists all over the world agree that taking injections is easier than handling the bees themselves and that injection produce almost the same noticeable results.

Apitherapy was practiced as far back as the age of Hippocrates, who called it "*a strange and mysterious medicine*" however, although Bee Venom Therapy has a

long history, it remains as much of a mystery today as it was in the time of Hippocrates.

In an effort to uncover this mystery, Georgetown University in Washington D.C. has begun a study of Bee Venom Therapy (*CNN*). The Georgetown University study notes that many reports of BVT successes include people being cured of AIDS, arthritis, high blood pressure, cataracts, heart disease, depression, eczema, epilepsy, hair loss, stress, PMT, and male impotence (*Manukahoneyusa*). In fact, many studies cite Bee Venom as a valuable cure. Additional studies show that Bee Venom can cure almost anything from osteoarthritis to cancer. In each disease, Bee Venom produces a unique reaction that assists the body in healing itself.



In cases of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, BVT has been known to reduce pain and swelling. While no conclusive treatment has been discovered for rheumatoid arthritis, Bee Venom has been very effective in treating the affliction, according to a study on animals. On humans, Dr. Bodog Beck, in 1935, already recorded a remarkable number of cases improved by BVT. A hospital has also used Bee Venom therapy and reported real improvement in 66% of cases treated. Some substances contained in Bee Venom stimulate the production of cortisol by the adrenal gland. Cortisol is one of the most effective anti-inflammatory agents. Another peptide found in Bee Venom is known to have anti-inflammatory effects a hundred times stronger than any drugs (*Manukahoneyusa*).

Bee Venom has also helped in curing diseases like scleroderma, asthma, and ulcerative colitis through a stimulation of endogenous cortisol. Bee Venom Therapy has also shown its effectiveness on injuries - both acute and chronic - such as tendonitis, neck and back pain aches. In those cases, the effects are probably due to an anti-inflammatory action involving the humeral and cellular immune response to foreign proteins (*Primushost.com*).

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In fact, one of the greatest successes of BVT is that it can cure many kinds of chronic pain which cannot be cured by any drugs. Dr. Leo Roy reports that he treated a woman who had suffered from migraine headaches for 15 to 18 years until she had been treated with Bee Venom: "I injected her ten to twelve times... her case is truly an example" he explained (*Beelief.com*).

However, Bee Venom does not just numb pain. It seems to have positive effects on individual organs as well. Scientists from all over the world have found that bee products can significantly improve Liver Cirrhosis (LC). This is a disease, where normal liver tissues die and the organ becomes filled with more fibrous ones, greatly affecting its ability to function normally. The most common cause of LC is alcohol abuse, but it can also be caused by malnutrition. "A Romanian study showed that up to 50% of people suffering from liver cirrhosis have been cured by bee products, for they stimulate, nourish and regulate the functioning of the healthy liver cells and inhibit the non-healthy ones" (*Santigu*).

BVT has also been found useful in curing cases of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). MS is a deficiency of the neurological and immunological systems, often due to a nerve infection, viruses or depression. BVT has already improved the condition of many MS patients. However, in order to use BVT on MS it requires a certain amount of skill on the part of the practitioner. Bee Venom helps the body to increase immune responses, nourish cellular membranes, clean intestines from toxins, promote healthier blood and provide more energy, as it is a water-soluble blend of proteins (*Beelief.com*).

Finally, BVT has been used in cases of cancers that are caused by "non-sufficient healthy blood". Scientists have shown that Bee Venom contains different substances that improve the blood flow in the afflicted organ. Plus, BVT is used to help heal scar tissues by softening and breaking them down (*CNN*).

To make use of these wonderful cures, many people call their nearest beekeeper. However, some people prefer to administer injections themselves. BV injections were developed by Ketschy in 1928 (*Santigu*). Recently BVT has even replaced some synthetic drugs because of its almost non-existent side effects. BVT is so effective, in fact, that the U.S Army has also studied its qualities (*Rothfeld*). Studies done by the U.S Army found that Bee Venom contains at least 63 components that have pharmaceutical properties including:

1. Melitin - one of the strongest anti-inflammatory substances known.
 2. Adolapin - which has anti-inflammatory and analgesic activities.
 3. Apamin - which improves nerve transmissions (*Beekeeping.com*).
- However promising as it may sound, Bee Venom Therapy

is not completely without risk. The first reactions to a bee sting are redness, swelling, pain and itching, which are not usually life threatening but are very uncomfortable. However, as some people have severe reactions to bee stings, a sting-test is often necessary before embarking on any bee therapy program. A person's reaction to bees must be monitored by a professional because, "Many people who have had severe local reaction to bee sting, which an apitherapist would consider a positive effect, are incorrectly considered to have allergies to bees" says Dr. Rothfeld.

From the above examples we can understand better what Prophet (PBUH) meant when he said, "I prohibit killing four creatures in this earth: ants, bees, hoopoes and sparrow-hawks". Bees are one of the miracles of the Almighty. As further proof of the value of bees: beekeepers tend live longer than the rest of the population.

Beeswax

The cells of the beehives are made from beeswax. Bees manufacture this in their abdomen by chewing large quantities of honey that they consume. Following this the beeswax is moulded into shape. Beeswax is used in many products such as cosmetics, candles, chewing gum, ointments and cleaning products.

A Concluding Note...

Therefore, honey should be the one of the first choices in cases of health problems because it is natural and has a high nutrient value. It does not have the side effects of many popular drugs and is more affordable than most other kinds of therapy.

"Honey is a remedy for every illness and the Qur'an is a remedy for all illnesses of the mind, therefore I (The Prophet) recommend to you both remedies the Qur'an and honey" (Bukhari).

A final word from the Editorial Team

The Editorial Team would like to thank all the young people who have contributed to this issue of the Young European Muslim Newsletter. They are :

Ayaz Asghar, Khurram Hamid, Almass Shah, Faizal Musa, Kashaf Asghar, Waqaas Ali, Harris Ali, Bilal Hussain, Mubashir Khaliq, Ali Qayum, Tassadaq Ashraf.

Project Co-ordinators - Noor Banu and Usman Ali.
Design and Layout - Usman Ali and Noor Banu.

You may contact the Editorial Team by:

Post: The Editorial Team, YEM Newsletter,
Lancashire Council of Mosques,
Bangor St. Community Centre,
Norwich Street, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 6NZ.
Tel: (01254) 692289
www.lancashiremosques.com

