

## **BLACK SEED – Part I\***

**...“hold onto the use of the black seed for in it is healing for all illnesses except death”<sup>1</sup>**

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### **HISTORY:**

Black Seed, black cumin, fennel flower, “Blessed Seed” or (Nigella, sativa L.) is an annual flowering plant, native to the Mediterranean region, originating from the common fennel plant in the buttercup family. Revered worldwide, in Hindi it’s known as Mangrail, in Hebrew as Ketzakh, in Russian as Chernushka and corek otu to the Turkish. It is known as Siyah Daneh to the Persians and Karim Jeerakam in Malayalam.<sup>2</sup> It has spread over the years throughout northern Africa, eastern Asia, and southern Europe. In foods, black seed is used as a flavoring or spice having a pleasant, tangy, peppery lemon flavor.

It is widely used in herbal or folk medicine, and said to have a vast number of beneficial properties for overall health. Black Seed is traced back to the Assyrians in ancient Egypt. The Assyrians called Black Seed "tin tir" and took it orally to cure stomach problems. They also used it externally for the treatment of eyes, nose, mouth, and inflammations of the skin such as rashes, bites, and sores.

The earliest record of its cultivation and use comes from ancient Egypt. It was found in the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun's tomb, dating back to approximately 3,300 years ago.<sup>3</sup> The earliest written reference to black seed is found in the book of Isaiah in the old testament (Isaiah 28:25,27 nkjv). Black Seed is also revered in the Quran, found in the Healing verses, and highly recommended for healing by Muhammad the Prophet.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, black seed has been used for headache, toothache, nasal congestion, and intestinal worms. It has also been historically used for “pink eye” (conjunctivitis), pockets of infection (abscesses), and parasites.<sup>5</sup> As early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century many ancient healers including Hipocrates, Pliny the Elder, and Dioscoredes used Black Seed. For example, Dioscoredes recorded that black seeds were also used as a diuretic to promote menstruation and increase milk production.<sup>6</sup>

### **STUDIES:**

In the first modern study, published in 1959, a group of Egyptian doctors led by Dr Muhammad Dakhakhnî managed to extract the active principle of Black Seed oil. They called it “Nigellone.” They injected it on test animals and proved that it has no toxic or harmful effects and that it has the property of dilating the bronchial tubes. This is why it is often recommended today by leading scientists and alternative doctors for the treatment of asthma and bronchitis.

Since 1964, there have been 559 (and growing) published, peer-reviewed studies referencing it.<sup>7</sup> Many of black cumin's traditionally ascribed health benefits have been thoroughly confirmed in the biomedical literature. In the middle 1980s modern medicine got more interested in Black Seed. The main

author of the first advanced study is Dr Ahmed al-Qâdî, an Egyptian doctor living in the USA. Studies have shown remarkable results supporting the benefits and uses of Black Seed alone or combined with other complimentary herbs.

#### NUTRITIONAL COMPONENTS:

Black Seed is a rich and diverse source of nutrition with over 100 compounds and is considered by some to be “an all around multiple vitamin.”<sup>8</sup> It contains the major active phytochemicals thymoquinone and crystalline nigellone as well as antioxidants, amino acids, B vitamins, carbohydrates, fats, healthy oils or fatty acids (EFA's 3/6/9), proteins (15 amino acids, including 8 of the 9 essential), alkaloids, saponin, and fiber. Containing five major volatile oils and plethora of others, it is also contains other minerals such as calcium, copper, iron, sodium, zinc, and potassium. Chemical analysis revealed that the Black Seed contains a natural form of carotene, which is converted by the liver into vitamin A.<sup>9</sup> There are still many With many healing components in Black Seed, research is continuing to identify many new benefits.

#### BENEFITS:

The benefits of Black Seed are immense; there are well over 40 health conditions that may benefit from the use of the herb, including over 20 distinct pharmacological actions. Next month we will focus on the major and most scientifically sound benefits.

#### References:

- (1) Sahih Bukhari vol 7 bk 71 #592
- (2) <https://www.blackseedproducts.com/faqs/8-what-is-black-seed.html> (accessed 02/01/14).
- (3) Domestication of plants in the Old World (3 ed.). Oxford University Press. 2000. p. 206. ISBN 0-19-850356-3.
- (4) [http://azizah1.blogspot.com/2008\\_09\\_28\\_archive.html](http://azizah1.blogspot.com/2008_09_28_archive.html) (accessed 01/19/14).
- (5) <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-901-BLACK%20SEED.aspx?activeIngredientId=901&activeIngredientName=BLACK%20SEED> (accessed 02/01/14).
- (6) W. G. Goreja. Black Seed: Nature's Miracle Remedy. 2003. p.15. ISBN-10: 097429621X | ISBN-13: 9780974296210.
- (7) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed?term=nigella%20sativa> (accessed 01/29/14).
- (8) <http://voices.yahoo.com/everything-ever-wanted-know-black-seeds-7580558.html?cat=68> (accessed 01/29/14).
- (9) <http://www.blackseedusa.com/chemanofblac.html> (accessed 01/29/14).

\*This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

**BLACK SEED - Distinct pharmacological actions:**

Analgesic (Pain-Killing)

Anti-Asthmatic

Anti-Bacterial

Anti-Carcinogenic

Anti-Inflammatory

Anti-Ulcer

Anti-Cholinergic(nervous system)

Anti-Fungal

Anti-Hypertensive(High Blood pressure)

Antioxidant

Antispasmodic

Antiviral

Bronchodilator

Galactagogue(promotes lactation)

Gluconeogenesis Inhibitor (Anti-Diabetic)

Hepatoprotective (Liver Protecting)

Hypotensive(low blood pressure)

Insulin Sensitizing

Interferon Inducer

Leukotriene Antagonist

Renoprotective (Kidney Protecting)

Tumor Necrosis Factor Alpha Inhibitor