

**AN OVERVIEW OF A HONEYED UNANI BLOOD PURIFIER:
SHARBAT UNNAB**

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ABSTRACT

Sharbat is one of the important Qiwami (Sugar based) oral liquid Unani dosage forms, which are made either by preparing the decoction from the drugs of plant, animal and mineral origin or by taking juice of the fruits from different plants and mixed with sugar and boiled to the required consistency. The main benefit of Sharbat preparation of drugs is preservation and prevention of the drug from putrefaction and fermentation, due to being prepared in the base (Qiwam) of sugar or honey. This dosage form also enhances the palatability for the patients who are reluctant to intake raw herbs. There are many Sharbat which are generally used for treatment of hepatic, respiratory, cardiac,

digestive, urinary and skin diseases. In this article Sharbat Unnab is being discussed which is widely used by the practitioners of the Unani system of medicine for a long time in purifying blood, eliminating Hiddat-e-khoon, Ghalayan-e-khoon and curing sore throat, catarrh, cough and urticaria etc.

KEYWORDS: Sharbat, Qiwam, Unani dosage form, Blood purifier, Sore throat.

INTRODUCTION

Although, single drugs in Unani system of medicine were commonly being used for cure and prevention, but the treatment with poly herbal or compound preparations had been also established from hundreds of years. Whether it is the use of single drugs or compound formulations, both employed a large number of herbal, mineral and animal products. At the same time, many of the formulations have been found to be extraordinary effective for the multisystem disorders.

As per the need of hour and demand of ailing mankind, Unani philosophers invented many types of dosage forms. Hence, depending on the type of administration four basic dosage forms came into existence viz. solid, semisolid, liquid and gaseous.

Dosage forms are classified into the following four types:

(1) Jamid (solid): e.g., Haboob, Aqras, Banadiq, Sheyaf, Hamool, Farzajah, Fatilah, Kabus, Safoof, Sanun, Kohal, Kushta etc.^[1]

(2) Neem Jamid (semisolid): e.g., Itrifal, Majoon, Anooshdaru, Jawarish, Khameera, Mufarreh, Laboob, Laooq, Zimad, Marham etc.^[1]

(3) Sayyal (liquid): e.g., Sharbat, Arq, Sikanjabeen, Joshanda, Khesanda, Abkama, Maullaham etc.^[1]

(4) Bukhari (gaseous): e.g., Bukhur, Inkibab, Shumum, Lakhlakhah etc.^[1]

Sharbat: Sharbat is counted in liquid (Sayyal) dosage forms. With the passage of time many sharbat were invented according to the need of the time. The word sharbat is an Arabic word which means to drink.^[2, 3, 4] but Hkm. Kabeeruddin says that sharbat is a Persian or Urdu word, which means sweet drink.^[5] According to Makhzanul Jawahir sharbat is a drink.^[6]

Sharbat, in Unani literature, are those medicinal preparations which are made either by preparing the decoction from the plant, animal and mineral origin drugs or by taking juice of the fruits from different plants and mixed with sugar and boiled to the required consistency.^[7]

According to Ibn-e-Seena, Sharbat are those preparations which are made either by decoction of dry drugs or by taking juice by juicy (wet) drugs and mixed with sweet and boiled to required Qiwaam.^[8]

Sharbat is a sweet aqueous liquid which is made by dissolving sugar, misri, honey or jaggery in the water. But according to some Qarabadeen (Pharmacopoeias), Sharbat is a sweet viscous liquid which is made by taking of juice of fruit or by preparing the infusion or decoction of the ingredient drugs which, thereafter, mixed with sugar and boiled to a required consistency i.e. of one tar.^[9, 10, 11, 12]

The synonym of Sharbat in allopathic system of medicine is 'syrup' but the syrup is concentrated, viscous, aqueous solutions of sugar substitute with or without flavors and medical substances.^[13]

In Asia (West and South), sharbat is a popular sweet drink, which is prepared from fruits or flower petals. Popular sharbat is made of one or more of the fruits, petals and barks like rose petals, sandal wood, bel, gurhal, lemon, orange, mango, pineapple, falsa etc.^[14]

Traditionally the invention of Sharbat is attributed to an eminent Unani philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras.^[10]

Reason & Benefits of sharbat preparation

- The reason behind the innovation of sharbat preparation lies in the fact that most of the herbs, if taken in crude form, are highly impalatable. So, to enhance palatability sharbat dosage form is selected.^[15]
- The main benefit of sharbat preparation of drugs is preservation and prevention of the drug from putrefaction and fermentation, due to being prepared in the base (Qiwam) of sugar or honey.
- The incorporation of various ingredients into a sharbat prolongs the life of medicinal ingredients, incorporated into it.
- Some sharbat is used as a Badarqa (vehicle) to intake the main medicines, prescribed for the specific ailments.^[10]

Methodology of sharbat preparation

1. Fruits

- a. **Juicy fruits:** To prepare sharbat of juicy fruits such as grape, pomegranate, apple, and so forth, firstly the juice of the fruit is obtained, mixed with 2.5 or 3 times of sugar and boiled on a low fire to the required tar (consistency) of sharbat.^[9]

b. Dried fruits

- i) **Sweet fruits:** To make the sharbat of dried sweet fruits like Unnab, Anjeer etc., the fruits are thoroughly washed and soaked overnight in water, amounting to six times the weight of the fruits. Next morning, the fruits are boiled, cooled, rubbed with hands and filtered through a piece of fine cloth. Required quantity of sugar is added and then boiled on a low fire to obtain the desired consistency of sharbat.^[9]

ii) Sour fruits: To obtain the sharbat of dried sour fruits such as Imli, Zarishk, Aalu bukhara etc., the fruits are treated same as dried sweet fruits. But in addition to this, the filtered liquid is kept undisturbed for some time so that the heavier matter settles down at the bottom. Thereafter, the lighter liquid part is decanted in a vessel. A required quantity of sugar is then added, and the mixture is boiled on a low fire to the required consistency. It is now filtered again through a piece of fine cloth to obtain the sharbat.^[16]

2. Seeds

To prepare sharbat of seeds of herbal drugs, firstly the seeds are pulverized and broken into small pieces and soaked overnight in water. Then all the steps are taken as of dried fruits.^[10]

3. Roots

To obtain sharbat from herbal roots, the roots are pulverized, squashed into small pieces and soaked overnight in water. Then all the steps are taken as of dried fruits.^[10]

4. Petals

Petals of some flowers like rose petals are used to obtain sharbat. To prepare sharbat from rose petals, firstly petals are mixed with sugar or honey in a glass jar to make Gulqand with a specific process. Gulqand is then boiled in the water. When half of the water remained in the vessel, it is removed from the fire and allowed to cool. Then all the processes are selected as of sharbat of dried fruits.^[10]

5. Other dry herbal drugs

All the other dry herbal drugs are soaked overnight in water, amounting to 8 or 10 times to the weight of the drugs. Next morning, they are boiled till one third water is left, allowed to cool, rubbed with hands and filtered through a piece of fine cloth. Then two or three times of sugar is added and the mixture is boiled on a low fire to obtain the desired consistency of sharbat.^[9]

6. Mucilaginous drugs

When mucilaginous drugs e.g. Behidana, Sapistan etc. are used as ingredients in a particular formula along with other drugs. The sharbat of the other drugs is prepared first and then mixed with the mucilaginous drugs. The boiling is continued till the mixture reaches its required consistency of sharbat.^[17]

7. Drugs containing volatile constituents

To obtain sharbat of the drugs containing volatile oils such as Mushk, Ambar and so forth, the drugs are dissolved in any specific arq. These types of drugs are added in the last stage of the sharbat preparation and mixed thoroughly.^[17]

8. Sharbat containing Turanjabeen

Turanjabeen is dissolved in the decoction of other drugs and strained. The mixture is then decanted and sugar is added three times the weight of the solution to prepare the sharbat.^[18]

The methodology discussed earlier is a general methodology, but in different Unani books, different drug and water and drug and sugar ratios are recommended. Even in certain cases, the same type of sharbat is prepared with different drug and water and drug and sugar ratios by Unani physicians.

Qiwam: The Qiwam is generally made by adding Aab (water), Arq (distillate) or Aab-e-samar (fruit juice) etc. in any of the bases of purified honey with sugar, candy or jaggery etc. and boiled over a low fire till it acquires a required consistency. The base are generally purified by adding Aab-e-Lemu (lemon juice), satt-e-lemu (lemon extract) or shibb-e-yamani (Alum) etc. before making the Qiwam.^[19] which act as preservative also.

The infusion or decoction of ingredients drug or juice of fruits is poured in to a coated vessel and added with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 parts of sugar. Then the vessel kept on low fire and boiled till the required consistency is obtained. The sign of complete prepared Qiwam is, to show tar (thread like shape) on dropping it one to two drop.^[9] and pressed the Qiwam between thumb and index finger and observed tar.^[12] or a drop of sharbat was put on the floor and if the drop does not spread on the floor it was considered to be the required Qiwam.

For making Sharbat or any liquid or semisolid preparations the consistency of Qiwam varies, as mentioned below in the table.^[20, 21, 16, 22]

Consistencies of Qiwam of liquid and semisolid preparations

S. No.	Dosage form	Degree	Tar (Consistency)	Percentage
1	Sharbat (Liquid)	I Degree	One tar	70 %
2	Majoon (Semisolid)	II Degree	Two tar	75 %
3	Khameera (Semisolid)	III Degree	Three tar	80 %

For making Sharbat or any allied preparations, Qiwan (base) of the above mentioned consistencies is generally made, depending on the nature of ingredient drugs to be used in a particular formula. The ingredient drugs in a Qiwan may be used either in powder or liquid form.

Important points regarding preparation of Sharbat & Qiwan.^[19, 21, 22]

- (1) All the ingredients of sharbat were weighed in required proportion separately.
- (2) The ingredients are taken and soaked in water for overnight in the stainless steel pot.
- (3) In next day they are boiled on the stove, till the volume of water becomes half.
- (4) They are then filtered thoroughly by cloth.
- (5) Joshanda (Decoction) is taken in stainless steel pot, after that sugar and citric acid (2gm/kg sugar) is added in decoction and the mixture is heated on stove with continuous stirring to bring the Qiwan of sharbat. Continuous stirring is necessary throughout the process otherwise the sugar will clot and after sometime may crystallize.
- (6) Benzoic acid (1gm/kg sugar) after dissolving in sterilized hot water is then added.
- (7) The content is further heated for few minutes.
- (8) After preparation of Qiwan, it must be avoided from water, otherwise the Qiwan will be waste.
- (9) When Qiwan is ready, it should not be in touch with water; otherwise the chance of contamination is more.
- (10) After preparation of sharbat, firstly its cooling is necessary. After cooling, it should be filled in air tight dry sterilized closed container.
- (11) Sharbat is stored in cool and dark place.

Sharbat Unnab

Sharbat-e-Unnab is a very important Unani formulation which is mentioned in different classical Unani literatures especially in Bayaz-e-Kabeer, Ilajul Amraz and Qarabadeen-e-Jalali which is used as a musaffi-e-khoon (Blood purifier), dafae sual (antitussive), musakkin-e-hiddat-e-khoon (suppressive blood heat) etc, in amraz-e-jild wa fasad-e-khoon (skin diseases and blood putrefaction) like Judri (small pox), mashara (urticaria), hiddat-e-khoon and ghalba-e-khoon.^[23, 24, 25] and in amraz-e-sadr wa riya (pectoral and pulmonary diseases) like chest pain, cough, pneumonia.^[14, 26] etc.

Ingredients of Sharbat-e-Unnab

The ingredients of Sharbat-e-Unnab as following;^[23, 26, 10, 27, 28, 29]

S. No.	Ingredients	Weight
1	Unnab	500 g
2	Sugar	1500 g

Botanical description, Habitat and Distribution of Unnab

Unnab is a spiny deciduous shrub or a small tree upto 10-12 m high; leaves alternate; apex slightly obtuse; base oblique; margin closely serrulate; flowers perfect, greenish-yellow; fruits drupe, 1.5-5 cm long, dark reddish-brown when ripe, containing a single stone surrounded by fleshy pulp.^[30]

It is cultivated in Rangpur, Nepal, Jurjan, Khata, Baghdad, Punjab, Himalayas, Kashmir, Baluchistan, dry hot regions of Western India chiefly Rajasthan, Bengal, commonly cultivated in India, Japan, China, Africa, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Australia.^[31, 32, 33, 30]

Medicinal actions of Unnab^[24, 34, 35, 36, 37, 32, 38]

- ❖ Musakkin-e-hiddat-e-khoon wa safra (Blood and bile refrigerant)
- ❖ Musaffi-e-khoon (blood purifier)
- ❖ Munzij-e-akhlat-e-ghalizah (Concoctive of viscous humour)
- ❖ Mulayyin-e- sadr (Emollient of chest)
- ❖ Munaffis balgham (expectorant)
- ❖ Dafe sual wa rabu (Antitussive and anti asthama)
- ❖ Dafe khashunat-e-halaq wa sadar
- ❖ Mulayyin (laxative)
- ❖ Muza'if-e-bah (Anaphrodisiac)
- ❖ Muqallil-e-mani (Reducer of semen)
- ❖ Mundamil-e-quruh (cicatrizant)
- ❖ Dafe alam-e-kuliya wa masana (Analgesic)
- ❖ Nafe sozish-e-baul
- ❖ Mukhaddir (Anaesthetic)
- ❖ Musaffi -e-saut
- ❖ Musakkin-e-ataash
- ❖ Mushil-e-akhlat-e-raqiqa
- ❖ Dafe hikka (anti pruritus)
- ❖ Habisuddam (styptic)
- ❖ Muqauwi-e-meda (stomachic)

Mawaq-e-Istemaal(Therapeutic uses of Unnab)

Constipation, Dry cough, Sore throat, Busoor (skin eruptions).^[39, 40] Hkm Azam Khan mentioned in his book Muhit-e-Azam that Sharbat -e-Unnab is very beneficial in Mashara (Urticaria), Amraz-e-sadr (Thoracic diseases), Amraz-e-Riatain (Lungs diseases), Surfa (Cough), Laza-e-Meda (Stomach irritation) Nazfuddam (Hemorrhage), Hiddat-e-Khoon, Ghalayan-e-Khoon, Judri(Chechak, Small pox) and Hasba (Measles). Hkm Azam Khan also said that Nuqu-e-Unnab (Infusion of Unnab) is very effective in several diseases such as Khashunat-e-Halaq (Sore Throat), Sozish-e-baul (burning micturition), Surfa yabis (dry cough), pain in chest, lungs and kidney.^[34] It is also used in Damma (asthma), bahhatus saut (hoarseness of voice).^[24] hiddat-e-khoon wa safra, wajaul kuliya wa masana.^[41, 42, 34] Hikka (pruritus), Kasrat-e-mani (excess of semen), Kasrat-e-shahwat (Excess of sexual desire).^[43, 34, 24] Unnab fruit is also used in poor appetite and colitis.^[32] Syrup of dried fruit is used for bronchitis.^[31] Large Unnab is better and very useful in general fatigue, night sweat, hysteria when it is taken before meal.^[44, 43, 30] Unripe and acrid Unnab is beneficial in loose motion and diseases of rectum. it is used prophylactically for liver diseases.^[45]

Phytochemical constituents

The following important chemical constituents are found in Unnab: Alkaloids e.g. Cyclic peptide alkaloids, Cyclopeptide alkaloids, Antibacterial peptide alkaloid; Glycosides, Acylated flavone-C glycosides; Saponins; Terpenoids, Triterpene esters; Phenolic Compounds; Flavonoid compounds.^[46, 47, 48]

Pharmacologicalactions of Unnab**Antioxidant activity**

The comparative study of antioxidant components and antioxidant activity of the raw and cooked peel of *Ziziphus Jujuba* Mill was done. The peel was analyzed for polyphenols, glutathione and tannin contents. In addition methanol and aqueous extracts were analyzed for flavonoid, saponin contents and antioxidant potential. The antioxidant activity of extracts was determined by DPPH and reducing power assay. It was observed that antioxidant activities of all the extracts increased with increasing concentration except in hydro alcoholic extract of raw peel. Moreover, in the raw peel, methanolic extract with highest antioxidant capacity revealed the same antioxidant activity as compared to standard of butylated hydroxytoluene. Hydroalcoholic extract was the most potent antioxidant in the raw and cooked extracts. Data

confirmed the raw and cooked peel of *Ziziphus jujuba* Mill. both have a great potential for utilization as a source of natural antioxidant.^[49]

Anticancerous activity

In a study to evaluate the anticancerous activity, Cytotoxicities of the triterpenoic acids (extracted from *Z. jujuba*) was tested against tumour cell lines. The lupane-type triterpenes showed high cytotoxic activities. The cytotoxic activities of 3-O-p- coumaroylaliphitolic acids were found to be better than those of non-coumaroic triterpenoids. The results indicated that the coumaroyl moiety at the C-3 position of the lupane-type triterpene may play an important role in increasing cytotoxic activity.^[50]

Preparation of Sharbat-e-Unnab

The method of preparation of Sharbat-e-Unnab mentioned in Bayaz -e - Kabeer Vol II. After bruising (crushing to small pieces) Unnab (500gm) will be boiled in 2 liter of water, the volume of water becomes half and thoroughly mixed they are then filtered. Then this decoction is used to make Qiwan with 1.5 kg of sugar.^[23]

According to Qarabadeen-e-Majeedi, take the Unnab 600gm and crush to small pieces and soak it in 4 liter of water for overnight. In morning boil till the volume of water becomes half, they are then cloth filtered, after few minutes cotton filtered. Next, the sugar and citric acid are added and the mixture is heated, any impurity that accumulated on top should be removed by means of spoon. When the Qiwan is about to form, the sodium benzoate dissolved in little of distilled water is added and after the formation of Qiwan, the Sharbat should be filtered and stocked in bottles.^[10]

Af'al wa Khawas (Medicinal actions of Sharbat-e-Unnab)

Musaffi-e-khoon (blood purifier).^[23]

Musakkin-e-hiddat-e-khoon.^[10]

Dafa-e-Suaal (antitussive).^[26]

Muskin-e-alam-e-sadr (analgesic).^[25]

Munaffis-e-Balgham (Expectorant)

Mawaqa-e-istamal (Therapeutic uses of Sharbat-e-Unnab)

Hiddat-e-khoon wa ghalba-e-khoon.^[10, 27]

Mashra (urticaria).^[51]

Judri (small pox).^[23]

Hasba (measles).^[27, 52]

Wajausadr (chest pain).^[27, 53]

Suaal (cough).^[29, 54]

Zaturriya(pneumonia).^[55]

Fisharuddam(hyper tension).^[21]

Miqdar-e-khurak (Therapeutic doses)

2- 4 Tola (24- 48 ml).^[23, 53]

4 Tola (48ml) with Arq mundi 5 Tola and arq gaozaban 7 tola.^[28]

20 to 50 ml with water or with any arq.^[21]

25 to 50 ml with water or goat milk.^[10]

CONCLUSION

From this extensive review it is concluded that “sharbat” is one of the most famous Unani liquid dosage form. Due to its sweet taste this dosage form is more palatable than any other liquid dosage form. Sharbat-e-Unnab is a well-known blood purifier with sweet taste used since centuries to treat various dermatological ailments like urticaria, measles, small pox etc. It is also useful in some respiratory disorders like cough and pneumonia. Modern pharmacological studies have been revealed the antioxidant and anticancerous potential of Unnab. But unfortunately no scientific data is available regarding the pharmacological activities of Sharbat-e-Unnab. Therefore, it is a need of hour to evaluate the sharbat-e-Unnab on modern scientific parameters, so that the classical claims can be validated and humanity can be benefited.

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