

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allāh. To proceed:

Some people have asked us whether black olives are hot or cold in temperament, because some have stated that black olives are cold and dry.

We say that one should not rely solely on medical books without proper instruction, because the physicians of old sometimes omitted details that were well known to them, which can lead those who depend only on books into errors. As Imam Ibn Hajar said:

“Some physicians said: Our books are deadly poisons.”

Meaning, for those who are not practitioners of this science.

Some may have read in *Tadhkirat Dawud al-Antaki*, where he says concerning olives:

“Most authorities agreed that olives are cold and dry in the second degree.”

However, they may have overlooked the rest of al-Antaki’s statement, for a few lines later he continues:

“And this refers to green olives.”

In *Al-Mu‘tamad fi al-Adwiyah al-Mufradah* it is stated:

“Green olives are cold and dry... Black olives are hot and dry... Black olives are hot and wet, while green olives benefit yellow bile, and black olives benefit black bile. They should be used according to need.”

As for the statement in *Al-Mu‘tamad*:

“Black olives are hot and dry, are digested more quickly than green olives, and when digested in the stomach they are transformed into yellow bile, which then putrefies and becomes black bile.”

This means that excessive consumption by people of a bilious (yellow bile) temperament may cause it to transform into black bile, because yellow bile, when burned, becomes black bile. This statement is not meant as an absolute rule. If a phlegmatic person eats black olives, they will not necessarily generate black bile, because black bile is only produced from yellow bile through burning.

In *Al-Jami' li-Mufradat al-Adwiyah wa al-Aghdhiyah* by Ibn al-Baytar it is stated:

“Galen said in the sixth book: The leaves and tender branches of the olive tree possess coldness in proportion to their astringency. As for the fruit, when fully ripe and mature, it is moderately hot; when unripe, it is colder and more astringent.”

In *The Canon of Medicine* by Ibn Sina:

“Oil made from unripe olives is cold and dry in the first degree. Rufus says it contains some wetness. Oil from ripe olives is

moderately hot and wet. If washed, it becomes more balanced in wetness and dryness and less hot. In general, ripe olives are hot, their oil tends toward wetness, and unripe olives are moderately cold.”

Ibn al-Nafis states in his *Summary of Medicine*:

“Oil made from unripe olives is cold and dry in the first degree, whereas oil made from ripe olives is moderately hot and tends toward wetness.”

In *Khaza'in al-Adwiyah* by Muhammad Najm al-Ghani al-Hindi:

“The ripe olive fruit is moderately hot with some astringency. It is said that unripe olives are cold in the first degree and dry at the beginning of the first degree, whereas red and fully ripe black olives are hot and dry in the first degree. Some have said they are hot and wet. Wild olives are hot and dry in the first degree.”

In *Fath al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir*, Imam al-Manawi refuted those who claimed absolutely that olive oil is hot and wet

in the first degree and those who mistakenly claimed it is dry, saying:

“Both absolute statements are incorrect. Its nature depends on the olives from which it is pressed. Oil extracted from ripe black olives is moderately hot and wet, and this is the most balanced and best type. Oil extracted from unripe olives is cold and dry.”

Therefore, we say that since there is no disagreement that black olives are hot and that their oil is also hot, then oil pressed from black olives must necessarily be hot. It is impossible for cold olives to produce hot oil. Rather, cold unripe olives produce cold oil, while hot olives produce hot oil.