



Surma - Kajal Safe for All

Z.B. Hashmi

The use of *Surma* and *Kajal* in Indo Pak Sub-Continent is an old practice. Kohl (*Surma*) is defined as an ultra-fine powder form to be used in the eyes whether it is black in color, white, red or grey etc., whether simply made out of *Surma* Stone or combination of Herbs etc., with or without the *Surma* Stone. Kohl/*Kajal* was a first development by healers in the ancient times for soothing and cleaning the eyes and to keep them healthy, beautiful and protected from various diseases.

Natural remedy

There are various medicaments that have been used for the care and treatment of eyes, and Kohl has been one of the formulations occupying a vital role in ophthalmology in traditional system of medicine. Regular use of Kohl is beneficial and its centuries old use until this day is

itself a proof of its efficacy and its important role in the field of traditional medicine.

Well-ground kohl prepared from simple Kohl stone keeps the eyes clean, cool and well protected from dust and bacteria invading the eyes by virtue of its three main properties i.e. Astringent, Adsorptive and Oligodynamic action, besides another very important property are to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun and UV radiations naturally. Always use a good quality *Surma* which is properly packed in clean containers, should be ultra-fine ground, free from grit, compatible and free from irritants, and must not produce tears from the eyes when applied, it is a misconception that application of *Surma*/Kohl brings tears.

Properties of Kohl preparations

are further enhanced by adding ingredients like Saffron, *Mumeera*, *Chaksu*, *Rasant*, *Arg-e-Saunf*, *Neem*, Zinc Oxide, Pearls, and Gem stones like, Ruby, Emerald, Kidney stone, *Aqiqe*, Turquoise etc., the medicinal properties of these ingredients are well-described in literature.

Surma/Kohl also 'helps eyes counter electro-magnetic pollution and other forms of harmful environmental energy. Kohl is also mentioned as a soothing therapy for the eyes in several texts of "Old Testaments" (Kings II, 9:30; Veremieh 4:30; Ezekiel 23:40) as well (Narada, 2000; David -et al., 2000). Among Muslims, use of Kohl is described as "Sunnah" in Abu Dawud Tib, 14; and Tirmidhi, Tib, 9 (Yursil, 2007).

Notes from the Editor:

1. This article was sent by Mr. Z.B. Hashmi in response to an article by ophthalmologist Dr. Sadia Farooq that was published in October 2009. Shifa News would appreciate scholarly comments on this article from ophthalmologists and relevant people from medical community. By publishing differing opinions, we only intend to encourage healthy debate and help clear misconceptions. However, we would strongly recommend the readers to decide about using/avoiding surma or kajal only after consulting a relevant professional.
2. This article contained many references regarding the claims made in it but has been generously edited for space limitations. Anyone wanting to reply and wishing to read the full article can contact the writer at a.hashmi@cyber.net.pk