

Is “The Doctrine of Signatures” Signature Sequences designed By God?

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Abstract- God has marked everything on this cosmos with a sign or “signature” for their appliance by human beings, the concept of which is known as Doctrine of Signatures. The substances of plant origin like Kidney Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), Walnut (*Juglans regia*), Carrot (*Daucus carota* subsp. *sativus*), Celery (*Apium graveolens*), Avocados (*Persea americana*), Eggplant (*Solanum melongena*) and Pears (*Pyrus spp.*), Figs (*Ficus carica*), Mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*), Grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), Sweet Potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*), Olives (*Olea europaea*), Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), Onions (*Allium cepa L.*), Grapefruits (*Citrus × paradisi*), Oranges (*Citrus × sinensis*), Bananas (*Musa spp.*), Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) and Brinjal (*Solanum melongena*), Peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*), *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, *Orchis sp.*, Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis*), Hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), Liverwort, Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*), Spleenwort or Miltwort (*Asplenium spp.*), Toothwort (*Lathraea spp.*), Broccoli (*Brassica oleracea*), Ginseng (*Panax spp.*), *Melissa officinalis*, *Antirrhinum majus*, *Doronicum scorpiodes*, *Rheum spp.*, *Anastatica hierochuntica*, and substances of animal origin like from *Sepia species*, *Tubipora musica* (Coral), *Lamprolaima species*, *Buglossoides arvensis* and substances of mineral origin like from *Cidaris spp.* exhibit doctrine of signatures.

Index Terms- Doctrine of Signatures, Plants, Animals, Minerals

I. INTRODUCTION

Doctrine of Signatures which dates from the era of Dioscorides and Galen affirms that the herbs which bear a resemblance to diverse body parts can be exploited by herbalists to treat disorders of those parts of the body. It is also known as the **Doctrine of Correspondences** and developed in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was articulated that the Almighty must have set His sign upon the various means of curing human maladies, which He endowed the globe with [1].

Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim renowned as Paracelsus (1491–1541) deemed that the “Nature marks each growth according to its curative profit” [2] and published his conclusions in a book entitled *Supreme Mysteries of Nature* (1656) [3], [4], [5]. Jakob Bohme (1575–1624) tracked the exemplar of Giambattista Porta in his *Phytophnomonica* (1588) [6], broaden this concept by writings and advocated that God marked things with a sign, or “signature”, for their application. Plants, animals, or other objects with parts akin to human organs were thought to have functional relevance to those parts [7]. The special characteristic “signature” could on occasions also be recognized in the environments or explicit locations in which plants grow. Bohme’s book published in early 1600 “**Signatura Rerum; The Signature of All Things**” gave its name to this doctrine. This book precedingly espoused a spiritual philosophy but was then approved for medical purposes [2]. The botanist William Coles supposed that God has made “*Herbs for the use of men and has given them particular Signatures, whereby a man may read the use of them*” [2]. Coles’ “**The Art of Simpling**” [8] and “**Adam in Eden**” avowed that walnuts were good for curing head/brain disorders because in his opinion, “they have the perfect Signatures of the Head”. A theological validation for this was that “*God would have wanted to show men what plants would be useful for*” [2]. Hypericum wrote, “*The little holes whereof the leaves of Saint John’s wort are full, do resemble all the pores of the skin and therefore it is profitable for all hurts and wounds that can happen there unto*” [7], [9]. According to Michel Foucault in **The Order of Things**: “...there must of course be some mark that will make us aware of these things: otherwise, the secret would remain indefinitely dormant” [10]. Tippe and Stern were of the opinion that “*In many cases, a firm belief in the goodness of God who put everything on earth for his people gave rise to the Doctrine of Signatures which held that the key to man’s use of plants was hidden in the form of the plant itself; one had only to look closely*” [11].

Some modern academics believe that the Doctrine originated in Egypt [12] while others insist that it spread during the middle Ages in China and Europe [13]. William Baley opined that the concept is “worldwide, since analogous blueprints of

'semblance' have been experiential in primeval Asia, Classical Greece, medieval Europe, and pre-Columbian America" [14]. The documented research of the **Doctrine of Signature** in medieval Europe was undertaken in the 19th and 20th century [15] which was previously presumed to be a Western medical doctrine has been furthermore revealed in Israel [16] [17] and Zimbabwe [18].

The healing and nourishing properties of any fruit or vegetable is reflected in and ultimately revealed by the fruit or vegetables' outer physical shape, form, or "**signature**" in relation to the human body. Every food has a pattern that appears like a body organ or a physiological function which may act as a signal or sign of the benefit of the food to the eater. The awesome insight of civilizations past has now been corroborated by today's exploratory nutritional sciences:

(a) Doctrine of Signatures with Medicinal Substances of Plant Origin

1. **Kidney Beans** (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) cure and help sustain kidney function and appear unerringly like human kidneys. Kidney beans have many nutritional traits that endorse kidney health. **Kidney Beans** are full of soluble and insoluble fiber and low in fat, which augments cardiovascular health, blood pressure and alleviates blood sugar. Kidney beans also supplies magnesium and potassium to human body, the deficiency of which can enhance the danger of developing kidney stones.
2. A **Walnut** (*Juglans regia*) resembles human brain having left and right hemisphere, upper cerebrums and lower cerebellums. The crinkle /folds on the walnut are identical to the gyre of neo-cortex. **Walnuts** are at zenith in nuts used for brain health. These have notably high concentration of DHA which is a kind of Omega-3 fatty acid and assist in growth of over three dozen neurotransmitters for functioning of brain. DHA also guards brain healthiness in infants, recovers cognitive performance in adults and checks or improves age-related cognitive turn down. Mothers who get sufficient DHA have smarter children. It has been investigated at Tufts University in Boston that walnuts invalidate various signs of brain ageing in rats. Dr James Joseph states that walnuts also enhance signaling within the brain, as the silver ion needed for signaling is present only in walnut kernels.
3. Our lungs are made up of branches of ever-smaller airways that end up with tiny bunches of tissue called alveoli, which resemble bunches of **Grapes** (*Vitis vinifera*). A diet rich in grapes has been shown to reduce the risk of lung cancer and emphysema. Grape seeds also contain a chemical called pro- anthocyanidin, which appears to diminish the severity of asthma triggered by allergy. A cluster of grapes has the shape of heart. Each grape appears like a blood cell and is considered as heart and blood vitalizing food.
4. The section of a **Carrot** (*Daucus carota* subsp. *sativus*) seems like the human eye and these massively improve blood flow to the eyes and assist in the general function of the eyes. Carrots get their orange color from a plant chemical known as beta-carotene, which reduces the risk of developing cataracts. The chemical also protects sight problems that that develop over the age of sixty five.
5. **Mushroom** (*Agaricus bisporus*) slice resembles a human ear and improves hearing. As these are one of the few foods that have vitamin D thus makes bones strong.
6. **Ginger** (*Zingiber officinale*) often is identical to the stomach and one of its biggest benefits is assistance in digestion. The Chinese have been using it for over 2,000 years to calm the stomach and cure nausea and is also a popular therapy for motion sickness.
7. **Onions** (*Allium cepa* L.) give the impression of body cells and are known to clear waste material from all body cells. The tears produced by onions wash the epithelial layers of the eyes.
8. **Tomato** (*Solanum lycopersicum*) has four chambers like heart and is red in color. Tomatoes contain lycopene which is heart and blood food.
9. **Peanuts** (*Arachis hypogaea*) have a profound effect on the testicles and sexual libido. In Middle Ages peanuts were banned as food for males by church. Arginine which is main component of today's Viagra comes from peanuts.
10. **Bananas** (*Musa spp.*), **Cucumber** (*Cucumis sativus*) and **Brinjal** (*Solanum melongena*) seems to be like male sexual organ and plays a role in its size and strength. Banana contains a protein called tryptophan which when digested gets converted into a neurotransmitter called serotonin which is a mood regulating chemical in the brain. Banana can be termed as an antidepressant drug, since it adjusts the level of serotonin production in the brain and is similar to smile of a man.
11. **Grapefruits** (*Citrus × paradisi*), **Oranges** (*Citrus × sinensis*) and other citrus fruits seem like the mammary glands of females and help in

movement of lymph in and out of breasts and maintain breast health.

12. **Adiantum capillus-veneris** (maidenhair fern) is used in the treatment of hair problems because of their similarity to that part of the body.
13. **Liverwort** is either Marchantiophyta or Hepatica which are used to treat the liver diseases [19].
14. **Celery** (*Apium graveolens*) comes into view like bones and specially target bone potency. Bones are composed of 23% sodium and celery also has 23% sodium. In case of lack of sodium in food, body draws it from the bones making them frail. Celery refills the skeletal necessity of the body.
15. **Avocados** (*Persea americana*), **Eggplant** (*Solanum melongena*) and **Pears** (*Pyrus spp.*) target the health and function of the womb and cervix of the females, resemble these organs and avocados facilitate women balance hormones, shed unwanted birth weight and prevent cervical cancers. It takes exactly nine months to nurture an avocado from blossom to ripened fruit like a woman has infant in her womb. There are 14000 photolytic chemical constituents of nutrition in each one of these foods out of which only 141 are named and studied so far.
16. **Figs** (*Ficus carica*) are full of seeds and hang in twos after fully mature. Figs amplify the sperm mobility and boost sperm count as well to overcome male sterility.
17. **Sweet Potatoes** (*Ipomoea batatas*) appear like pancreas and stabilize the glycemic index of diabetics.
18. **Olives** (*Olea europaea*) are known to assist in the healthiness and function of the ovaries.
19. Various **Orchis sp. (Orchid)** bulbs were used in the treatment of impotence owing to their similarity to human testicles.
20. **Eyebright** (*Euphrasia officinalis*) is used against eye infections [2].
21. **Hedge woundwort** (*Stachys sylvatica*) is thought to have antiseptic qualities [20].
22. **Lungwort** (*Pulmonaria officinalis*) is used for pulmonary infections [21].
23. **Spleenwort** or Miltwort (*Asplenium spp.*) is used to treat the spleen [22]. "William Coles in year 1657 considers this plant as signature of the spleen and is profitable for all diseases thereof".
24. **Toothwort** (*Lathraea spp.*) is used in case of tooth disorders.
25. **Broccoli** (*Brassica oleracea*) head has tiny green tips which look like hundred of cancer cells. A team of researchers at US National Cancer Institute found if a weekly

serving of broccoli was enough to reduce the risk of prostate cancer by 45%.

26. **Ginseng** (*Panax spp.*) root looks like a human body and is a holistic cure for nearly all ailments.
27. **Melissa officinalis** (lemon balm) leaves are similar to heart and help in Heart infirmity.
28. **Antirrhinum majus** commonly known as Snapdragon has Flowers, Roots, Leaf which appears like Dog head and Snake mouth and are effective against Rabies and Snake bites.
29. **Doronicum scorpiodes** locally known as Panther Strangler has roots like Scorpion which were helpful in treatment of Scorpion Bites and Poisons.
30. **Rheum spp.** (Rhubarb) leaf is similar to internal organs and was used in treatment of Liver, Kidney, Chest and Stomach.
31. **Anastatica hierochuntica** (Rose of Jericho) plants are similar to birth process and were used in Birth infections (**Figure A**).

(b) Doctrine of Signatures with Medicinal Substances of Animal Origin

1. **Sepia species** (Cuttle Fish) skeleton is white in color and is effective in teeth discoloration treatments [23].
2. **Tubipora musica** (Coral) body is red in color and used in treatment of hemorrhage [23].
3. **Lampyrus species** (Firefly) is similar to light and has constituents effective against night blindness.
4. **Buglossoides arvensis** (Corn Gromwell) seeds are analogous to stones and consequently were used in treatment of urinary obstructions.

(c) Doctrine of Signatures with Medicinal Substances of Mineral Origin

1. Hematite (Fe_2O_3) Red chalk powder was used as a special dietary supplement for underweight women and to treat Hemorrhage.
2. **Cidaris spp.** commonly known as Jew's Stone has petrified body looking like stone and is used to treat Urinary obstructions [23].
3. White Clay chalk powder is used to treat Breast-feeding problems mainly to improve the quantity and quality of their breast milk.



Figure (A): Various plants showing Doctrine of Signature:

- (1) Kidney Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), (2) Walnut (*Juglans regia*), (3) Grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), (4) Carrot (*Daucus carota subsp. sativus*), (5) Mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*), (6) Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), (7) Onions (*Allium cepa L.*), (8) Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), (9) Peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*), (10) Bananas (*Musa spp.*), Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) and Bristjal (*Solanum melongena*), (11) Citrus (12) *A. fistulosus squillus-novebor* (Maidenhair Fern), (13) Liverwort (*Marchantia*)

II. CONCLUSION

Concepts similar to the Doctrine of Signatures may be found in folk or indigenous medicines and in modern alternative medicines. The signatures are described as post hoc attributions and mnemonics [24] of value only in creating a system for remembering actions attributed to medical herbs. However, till now there is no scientific evidence that shapes and colors help in the discovery of medical uses of plants [24] or animals. The **Doctrine of Signatures** may sound eccentric to us but its insight is primeval and rediscovered in contemporary times.

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