

# THE HEALING ART OF CUPPING



By: Dr. Aadila Dockrat Ravat-MD,  
Unani-Tibb Practitioner & Cupping Therapist  
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A Science of Medicine  
The Art of Care

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, *“Cupping is the most helpful act for human beings to cure themselves with!”* There are several treatment modalities that a Tibb practitioner encompasses in order to treat patients naturally, holistically, and causatively. Among these are:

1. Lifestyle adjustments : includes diet, exercise, emotions, elimination and breathing
2. Regimental therapies : cupping and massage therapy
3. Pharmacotherapy : Herbal medication

Cupping, which is found in various forms in several healthcare modalities addresses many levels of a persons well-being and, as such, deserves special attention.

## WHAT IS CUPPING?

Also referred to as Hijaamah, cupping is one of the oldest and most effective methods of releasing toxins from the body. The word cupping literally means ‘to suction’. Using a vacuum in a glass or plastic cup, the skin under the cup is drawn up causing increased blood flow to the area. This action draws impurities, toxins, pain and inflammation away from the deeper tissues and organs towards the skin where it can be eliminated. This facilitates the healing process or Physis.

## HISTORY OF CUPPING

Cupping has been practiced since ancient times ñ by the Babylonians, the Egyptians and by the early Chinese. Initially it was implemented using metal cups, bamboo trees or bulls horns, from which the air was removed by sucking. After a long period of neglect, cupping was revived during the Muslim contribution to medicine. Traditional healers in many parts of the world use cupping or versions of it in their healing repertoire.

## TYPES OF CUPPING:

There are two forms of cupping:

**DRY CUPPING:** Using a flame or a manual pump, a vacuum is created in a glass/plastic cup, which is applied to the skin. This results in the tissues beneath the cup being drawn up. No incisions or cuts are made.

**WET CUPPING:** After the cups are applied, the skin immediately below the cup is cross-cut superficially several times so that blood is drawn by the vacuum from the skin into the cup.

Depending on the condition being treated, the Tibb practitioner will decide which form is most suitable for each patient.

## CUPPING POINTS

Cupping can be done on different parts of the body according to the illness being treated. Cupping points are similar to acupuncture/meridian points and also increases blood flow to the appropriate organs, akin to the way acupuncture/reflexology works. Specific points on the body were cupped on by Prophet Muhammad [PBUH].

1. Cupping on the back between the shoulder blades and on the sides of the neck – beneficial for headaches, pain in the shoulders etc.
2. Cupping on the head – beneficial for diseases of the eye, headaches and lethargy.
3. Cupping on the chest and stomach – beneficial for lung or heart congestion, menstrual abnormalities, haemorrhoids.
4. Cupping on the legs and feet – beneficial for sciatica, arthritis etc
5. Cupping over a wound.

## PREFERRED TIMES OF CUPPING

The best time of cupping for health maintenance is during Spring, when the body is emerging from the lethargy of winter, and the flow of body fluids is beginning to increase. Autumn is also an appropriate time, as the levels of toxins in the body may have reached their peak after summer.

According to Muslim practice, fasting is usually recommended for health maintenance during the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> days of the lunar cycle, followed by cupping on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> days.

Dry cupping has no specified time and both wet and dry cupping may be done when the need arises, especially in times of acute pain.

## THE BENEFITS OF CUPPING

Amongst others, cupping is highly recommended in the treatment of stomach ailments, menstrual abnormalities, headaches, infertility, muscular pains and sprains, boils, circulatory disorders, sinusitis and nerve entrapment.

Cupping has been found to:

- (a) Affect the body up to four inches deep in to the tissues
- (b) Activate the lymphatic system
- (c) Clear colon blockages
- (d) Help activate and clear the circulation
- (e) Activate the skin, clear stretch marks and improve varicose veins.

Wet cupping has the following additional benefits:

- The release of toxins from the cupping site
- The release of accumulated pressure provides instant relief
- The elimination of blood volume, however little, allows Physis to restore the humoral balance

## **CONTRAINDICATIONS TO CUPPING**

- Dry cupping is not recommended for children below 3
- Wet cupping should be avoided in children below 6
- Caution in menstruating women
- Not recommended in patients with high fever
- Not recommended in pregnant patients
- Not in anemic patients or patients with a bleeding tendency

## **AN IMPORTANT NOTE**

Cupping is a safe, sterile and inexpensive technique. Slight discomfort may be experienced, but this is usually well tolerated by patients. Whenever cupping is done, it should be with the correct intention and a proper indication. It is a continuous practice that proves very beneficial.

For more information on Tibb, kindly contact the Ibn Sina Institute of Tibb on 011-991 7300 or Contact Dr. Aadila on 0828402135