3268 - Hijama in Islam: What Is the Best Time?

the question

I would like to know when hijama (cupping) began to be practiced according to the sunnah, and the manner in which it should be performed. Are there recommended times for one to have it done, or times that one should avoid cupping?

We are hoping to begin this practice for sisters, and wish to make sure that we would be performing it strictly according the sunnah of Rasool Allaah, sallalahu alaihi wa salaam. Jazakum Allaahu kullu khairan,

Summary of answer

Hijama in Islam refers to the extraction of blood from the body by means of cupping using a suitable vessel or whatever modern equipment serves the same purpose. For more about the benefits and time of hijama, see the detailed answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What is hajama in Islam?

Hijaamah comes from the root al-hajm, which means “sucking”, and is used of the action of draining the breast when an infant is suckled. Al-hajjaam is the name given to the cupper, and hijaamah is the name given to this profession. Al-mihjam is the name given to the tool in which blood is collected, or to the knife used by the cupper.

Benefits of hijama in Islam

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Healing is to be found in three things: drinking honey, the knife of the cupper , and cauterization of fire.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 10/136)

According to a hadeeth narrated by Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If there is any good in your medical treatments , it is in the knife of the cupper, drinking honey, or cauterization with fire, as appropriate to the cause of the illness, but I would not like to be cauterized.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 10/139)

According to a hadeeth narrated by Anas ibn Maalik, may Allaah be pleased with him, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I did not pass by any group on the night when I was taken on the Night Journey (Isra’), but they said to me, ‘O Muhammad, tell your ummah to do cupping.’” (Reported by Ibn Maajah; it has corroborating evidence which strengthens it)

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was treated with cupping, and he paid the cupper his fee.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 10/124; Muslim 1202).

Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allaah was treated with cupping by Abu Tayyibah. He commanded that he should be given two measures of food, and he spoke with his tax-collectors, who reduced his taxes. He said, “The best treatment you can use is cupping.” (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 10/126; Muslim, 1577)

What is the best time for hijama?

With regard to the times when cupping is recommended:

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The best times to be treated with cupping are the seventeenth, nineteenth or twenty-first [of the month].” (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2054; the isnaad is da’eef)

Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings

of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever wants to be treated by cupping, let him do it on the seventeenth, nineteenth or twenty-first, lest the blood flow too copiously and kill him.” (Reported by Ibn Maajah, 3489; there is some weakness in the report)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever is treated with cupping on the seventeenth, nineteenth or twenty first, will be healed from all diseases.” (Reported by Abu Dawood, 3861, and al-Bayhaqi, 9/340. The isnad is hasan)

Although the ahaadeeth quoted above are from different sources and may be weak to some extent, they give strength to one another.

Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“These ahaadeeth coincide with what the doctors agree on, that cupping should be done in the second half of the month, and that the third quarter of the month is better than the beginning or the end. But if cupping is done out of necessity it is beneficial at any time, even at the beginning or end of the month. Al-Khallaal said: ‘Ismah ibn ‘Isaam told me: Hanbal told me: Abu ‘Abd-Allaah Ahmad ibn Hanbal would be treated with cupping whenever his blood increased, no matter what time it was… They disliked having cupping done on a full stomach, because that could lead to obstruction and grievous diseases, especially if the food was heavy and bad… Choosing the times mentioned above for cupping is an extra precaution, to be on the safe side and to protect one’s health, but when it comes to treating disease, whenever it is necessary it should be used.”

Al-Haafiz ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“According to the doctors, the most efficacious cupping is that which is done at the second or third hour, after having intercourse or taking a bath, etc., and neither on a full nor empty stomach. With regard to specific days for administering cupping, it was reported in a hadeeth narrated from Ibn ‘Umar by Ibn Maajah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Administer cupping, may Allaah bless you, on Thursdays, and administer cupping on Mondays and Tuesdays, but avoid cupping on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.’ It was reported

with two da’eef isnads, and there is a third version, also da’eef, reported by al-Daaraqutni in al-Afraad. He also reported it with a jayyid isnaad from Ibn ‘Umar but it is mawqoof (the isnad stops at the Sahaabi). Al-Khallaal reported that Ahmad disliked cupping on the days mentioned, even though the hadeeth was not proven. It was said that a man was treated with cupping on a Wednesday and he developed leprosy because he ignored the hadeeth. Abu Dawood reported from Abu Bakrah that he disliked cupping on Tuesdays, and said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Tuesday is the day of blood, and on that day there is an hour when blood does not stop.’ The doctors are agreed that cupping in the second half of the month, especially in the third quarter, is more beneficial than cupping at the beginning or end of the month. Al-Muwaffaq al-Baghdaadi said: The body fluids (humours) flow heavily at the beginning of the month and calm down at the end, so the best time to let the blood flow is in the middle of the month.”

It is clear from the above that the ahaadeeth which specify a particular time, when taken as a whole, indicate that there is a basis for this, especially since the words of the doctors are in agreement with it. If the seventeenth or nineteenth or twenty-first of a hijri month happens to be a Thursday, this is the best possible time for cupping, but this is not to say that it is not good to do it at other times. As a form of medical treatment, cupping should not be restricted to any particular time; it should be done as needed by the patient.

It is essential to make sure that you do it properly; cupping should be done by one who is experienced and he or she should use instruments that are properly cleaned and sterilized. The cupper must also ensure that no blood reaches the stomach of the patient.

We ask Allaah to help us and you to follow the Sunnah. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.

References

Fath al-Baari by Ibn Hajar, 10/149.

Sharh al-Zarqaani ‘ala al-Muwatta’, 2/187.

Al-Mughni by Ibn Qudaamah, 1/184.

Zad al-Ma’aad by Ibn al-Qayyim, 4/60.