

## USE OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES BY MUSLIMS: HALĀL OR HARĀM?

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### ABSTRACT

*With the increasing reliance on complementary therapies as a means to treat ailments that Muslims are struggling with today, it is important to understand if such approaches are halāl or harām by considering the various options from an Islāmic perspective. There are several therapies that are practiced in ways that are very much in line with Islām and are compatible with Islāmic practices, such as herbal remedies, acupuncture and cupping. There are other treatments that are more controversial such as homeopathy, hypnotherapy, yoga and reflexology as they include elements of harām through reliance on substances, such as alcohol, or they have a basis in beliefs that are incompatible with Islām. Whilst some have argued that these elements can be removed to make the therapeutic approach halāl, caution is urged on relying on a practise that has its original basis in something that is incompatible with Islām. This especially holds true when there are plenty of alternatives that are halāl and compatible with Islām that derive the same benefits as those that are questionable.*

**KEY WORDS:** Complementary therapy, Islām, Halāl, Harām, Homeopathy, Hypnotherapy, Reflexology, Yoga, Acupuncture, Cupping, Herbal remedies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Generally, Muslims approach medicine and health care in various ways. There are those that rely on traditional medical treatments; a few continue to rely on a mixture of Qur'ānic verses, water, local herbs, oil, or honey for their medical treatments; and the vast majority of Muslims fall somewhere in between these two groups. However, there is another group of Muslims who are now engaged in complementary or alternative therapies. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes complementary therapy as 'a broad set of health care practices that are not part of a country's own tradition, or not integrated into its dominant health care system.' (WHO, 2002). Complementary therapies broadly fit into one of two categories: natural products or mind-body practices. A number of "orientalist" ways to deal with ill health and chronic illness are now being practiced by some Muslims which include homeopathy, meditation, Yoga, hypnotherapy and reflexology. The failure of orthodox medicine to deal or manage their chronic illness or problems has led them to search for the 'ultimate' cure or respite. However, old therapies bring new dangers! It is estimated that up to 80% of the global population have tried complementary therapies (WHO, 2002). It is therefore of utmost importance that, as Muslims, we understand what these therapies entail and if they are compatible with Islām.

There are many complementary therapies available these days, but here the focus is on some of the more popular, usually Eastern or Oriental therapies, as these are used more commonly, as well as generating much more controversy for the Muslim in seeking cure. Whilst there are some complimentary therapies that are seemingly compatible with Islām, especially as they are very similar to those practised in Islām, such as herbal treatment, acupuncture and cupping that hold their basis in similar theories to the pressure points used in the Islāmic practice of *hijamah*, as well as a simultaneous focus on the spiritual mind and body interaction. However, there are several more that are far more controversial, such as homeopathy, Yoga, reflexology and hypnotherapy. They are controversial for the Muslim as there are differences of opinion amongst the scholars as to whether they are *halāl*, *harām* or if a medium can be struck where a potentially *harām* practise can be justified or practiced in a way that is compatible with Islām. Some researchers have even developed a conceptual model of Traditional Arabic & Islāmic Medicine (TAIM) that aims to combine both Prophetic and Islāmic medicine with cultural practices to some extent as a means to interconnect the two (Azaizeh, Saad *et al.*, 2010; Al Rawi and Fetters, 2012). The aim of the paper is to examine whether some of these selected complementary therapies are congruent with Islāmic beliefs and practices.

Based on these queries, the ultimate question we want to answer here is 'Are complementary therapies *halāl* or *harām*?' On the surface, the conclusion may have elicited that they are in fact allowed to seek cure and healing.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The present study used qualitative research method and it is totally based on the secondary data. Especially, evidence from Islamic literatures and the sources of Islamic knowledge are the sources of data used.

### 3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Usamah bin Sharik رضي الله عنه that "I saw the Bedouins asking the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم 'O Messenger of Allāh! Is there any sin if we do not seek treatment?' He said: "Seek treatment, O slaves of Allāh! For Allāh does not create any disease but He also creates with it the cure, except for old age." (Ibn Mājah (a)). In another hadīth, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Seek healing, O slaves of Allāh, but do not seek it in that which is harām, for Allāh does not make the healing of my *Ummah* in that which He has forbidden to it" (Islamqa 2000).

The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم states the following in a narration by Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه "There is no disease that Allāh has created, except that He also has created its treatment." (Al-Bukhāri (a)). However, the above hadīths raise the question about what constitutes halāl and harām in these complementary therapies? Does seeking cure through such therapies contradict trusting Allāh's will? According to the following hadīths, complementary therapies may not be acceptable because they are "harām". The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Allāh has sent down the disease and the cure and has made for every disease the cure. So, treat sickness, but do not use anything harām." (Abū Dāwūd (a)). This may be the case but taking a closer look at the practice of such therapies there is evidence of ways in which they include things that may be deemed harām, such as using harām substances, and inclusion of practices that indicate seeking cure from a source attributed to other than Allāh (Shirk). Some of the complementary therapies include:

#### Homoeopathy

It was at the end of the eighteenth century that a German doctor named Samuel Hahnemann developed the rules of homoeopathy. Homeopathy brings together the best of both worlds, hence it's modern-day appeal. It is a combination of both natural medicine and orthodox science, Homoeopathy is a kind of medical treatment that is based on the principle of "like cures like." The theory of homeopathy is that a natural remedy using small doses of substances stimulates a person's immune system, working with, rather than against the human body to heal itself. This means giving the patient small doses of the same thing that causes the sickness. It is stated that "some plants, for example, cause rashes on the skin, so homoeopathic doctors treat the rash with the same plants. Onions cause tearing in the eyes and make the nose run, so onion is used to treat nasal secretions caused by the cold. (Islamqa, 2011 (a)).

Sometimes the medication may contain poisonous substances or alcohol. With regard to poisonous substances, there are diverging opinions about its uses. Whether the poison in the medication is harmful or beneficial, some scholars forbid its consumption of poison in either large or small amounts. However, other scholars permit its use but laid down strict criteria with regard to that. The scholars on the permissible side stated that "that the effect of this poison should be examined, and the extent to which it will benefit the patient's body; it is also essential that that be done in the light of numerous experiments so as to have peace of mind regarding the outcome; and these medicines should only be used to ward off a greater harm" (Islamqa, 2011). Ibn Qudaamah رحمته الله (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: "With regard to medicines that contain poison, if it is thought most likely that drinking or using it will result in death or insanity, then it is not permissible to use it. If it is thought most likely that it is safe and there is the hope of benefit from it, then it is better to permit taking it, to ward off what is more dangerous, as is the case with other

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medicines.” That is, the principle of the greater evil is repelled by the lesser evil (*ad-Darar al Ashadd Yuzaalu bi-darar al Akhaff*).

The main issue regarding the use of homeopathy is the use of alcohol in the substance as a carrier and means to preserve the medicine. With regard to using medicines that contain alcohol, as in homeopathic medicines, there are also divergent opinions among scholars. Many scholars have explicitly acknowledged that medicine containing alcohol is *harām* citing various *ahādīth* as evidence, generally citing the blanket ban on alcohol in any form. Simak narrated that he heard 'Alqamah bin Wa'il narrate from his father, that he witnessed the Prophet ﷺ being asked by Suwaid bin Tariq – or Tariq bin Suwaid – about *Khamr*, and he forbade it. So he said: "We use it as a treatment." So the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "It is certainly not a treatment, rather, it is a disease." (At-Tirmithi (a)).

Some scholars claimed that it is lawful to use homeopathic medicine that contains alcohol because the “quantity of alcohol is very less in homeopathic medicines and now many alcohols are made of potato, vegetables and coals etc. hence you can use homeopathic medicines for treatment. It is lawful as per the Shari’ah (Darul Ifta, Fatwa: 1111/1113/N=1433). According to (Zaidi, 2012), “In homeopathy, remedies are made from mixing alcohol to extract the herb and to dilute the solution to the required potency. Once at the right potency a drop of the solution is placed on a sugar/lactose pill to be used as a carrier. In such a case, it would be permissible to consume. However, if the medicine is wetted in alcohol (with or without reason), meaning that after the medicine is made it is submerged, coated, or in any way mixed with alcohol, then it would not be permissible.” That is, when there is a mixture of the herbal plant and a very small amount of alcohol as an ingredient, and that the alcohol has gone through change through this process (*istihala*), then it is permissible to consume the medications.

Other scholars have the view that “when alcohol is mixed with other medicines, it either has a clear, strong and obvious effect, or it does not. If its effect is clear, strong and obvious, the mixture is *harām* and using this medicine is *harām*. If the alcohol does not have that effect on this medicine, it is permissible to use it.” (Islamqa 2011a). For a fatwa of the scholars of the Standing Committee, *Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah* (22/110) (Islamqa, 2005): “It is not permissible to mix medicines with intoxicants, but if it is mixed with alcohol, if drinking a lot of it will cause intoxication, it is *harām* to handle it and drink it, whether a small amount or a large amount. If drinking a lot of it will not cause intoxication, then it is permissible to handle it and drink it.”

Shaykh Ibn‘Uthaymeen رحمه الله in *Liqaa’aat il-Baab il-Maftoohah*, 3/231 (Islamqa, 2005). said: “With regard to some medicines that contain alcohol, if the effect of the alcohol in the medicine can be seen in the form of intoxication, then it is *harām*, but if no effect is seen, and the alcohol is only added to it as a preservative, then there is nothing wrong with it, because the alcoholic content does not have any effect.”

In terms of the effectiveness of homeopathy, there has been mixed results from clinical studies but with clear trends that there is no positive effect (McKenzie, 2013). Many homeopathic medicines contain poisonous or dangerous substances if the doses are not controlled. A series of meta-analyses that have suggested that the therapeutic claims of homeopathy lack scientific justification and pose a number of counter-therapeutic risks, including the causing of deaths (Freckelton, 2012). It is evident that there are more harms than benefit when using homeopathic medicines. Ultimately, as with the numerous scenarios that may produce this same controversy,

one might instead prefer to leave what is uncertain and instead seek treatment with something known to be halāl and beneficial according to the Qur’ān and Sunnah. This includes the use of honey or black seed, depending on the condition that the person is suffering from, as well as taking a more preventative approach by exercising, following a healthy diet, sleeping well and seeking psychological and spiritual interventions.

### **Hypnotherapy**

Hypnotherapy is a type of complementary medicine of guided hypnosis, or a trance-like state. It is used to treating a number of conditions including neurotic disorders, addictive behaviours sexual dysfunction and undesirable behaviours. The efficacy of hypnotherapy as therapeutic interventions has questions on a long-term basis. There is no evidence to support its efficacy in a number of disorders including chronic anxiety disorders (Pelissolo, 2016), pain of childbirth (Jones *et al.*, 2012) or post-natal depression (Sado *et al.*, 2012).

Islāmīc contemporary scholars have ruled that the issue of hypnotherapy is related to the use of the *Jinn*. The scholars stated that “It is not permissible to seek the help of the *Jinn* or any other creatures in trying to find out matters of the Unseen, whether that is by calling upon them, trying to please them or any other method. Rather that is *shirk* because this is a kind of worship, and Allāh has taught His slaves to worship Him alone and say,

- ***You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything)***” (Al-Fatihah (The Opening) 1:5) (Islamqa. 2002).

There is evidence from a hadīth that the Prophet ﷺ said to Ibn ‘Abbaas رضي الله عنه: “. If you ask, then ask Allāh [alone]; and if you seek help, then seek help from Allāh [alone] (At-Tirmithi (b)).

The second point, the scholars pointed out is that “Hypnotism is a kind of fortune-telling or magic whereby the hypnotist uses the jinn to overpower the subject and then speak through his tongue and give him strength to do things by means of controlling his faculties. This is if the jinni is sincere towards the hypnotist and obeys him in return for the things by means of which the hypnotist draws close to him. So, the jinni makes the subject obey the wishes of the hypnotist to do things or tell him things, through the help of the jinni. Thus, using hypnotism as a means of finding out where stolen goods are hidden, or where a lost item is, or as a means of treating disease or of doing anything else is not permissible. Rather it is *Shirk*, for the reasons stated above, and because it implies turning to someone other than Allāh and goes beyond the ordinary means which Allāh has created for His creatures and permitted them to use.” (Islamqa. 2002).

The Fatwas of the Permanent Committee (Fatwa no. 1779) stated that hypnosis [hypnotherapy] is a type of soothsaying, in which a hypnotist seeks the help of a *Jinn* and makes him overpower a hypnotized person and talk through him. The *Jinn* gives the hypnotised person power to do certain actions if he agrees to obey the hypnotist and is truthful with him in return for mutual benefits. Accordingly, the *Jinn* causes the hypnotised person to obey the hypnotist in any actions or to give any information asked from him if it is being honest with the hypnotist. It is therefore not permissible to utilise hypnosis or to use it to find a stolen or lost object, to cure a sick person, or to do anything through a hypnotised person. In fact, this is *Shirk*, due to what was previously mentioned and because it entails resorting to other than Allāh in matters that are beyond those

ordinarily permitted by Allāh for His Creation.” This is clear, hypnotherapy and all its forms are harām.

## Yoga

The practice of yoga is also common amongst many Muslim women as a form of health exercise. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Fattaah Faheem stated that “Yoga in the sacred Indian language means union and contact with God, for example, union between the body, the mind and God which helps man attain knowledge and wisdom and develops his thought by developing his knowledge of life; it protects him from sectarianism, religious fanaticism, narrow mindedness and short sightedness when searching; it makes him live a life of contentment both physically and spiritually.” There are many Muslims, especially in the Indian subcontinent, who believe that yoga is a form of *ibādah* in Islām and is quite permissible. It is claimed that yoga is a desirable act for Muslims as evidenced in the second sutra of the Yoga Sutras and should be undertaken as a spiritual pursuit (Rahman, 2012). He stated that “*Yogas Chitta Vritti Nirodhah* means yoga is: ‘stopping all the modulations of the mind’. Ceasing all the outward activities of the mind and reposing in Allāh is the ultimate goal of Islām. So, any act done to reach such a state cannot be un-Islāmic. In fact, it represents the highest form of *ibādah* (prayer).” *Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah (There is no power or might except with Allāh)*.

Yoga is both a spiritual and physical exercise, so at first glance one might assume that yoga is halāl and perhaps even beneficial since it is both physical exercise and a means to get close to God, Allāh. However, upon studying the practise further, there are other issues to consider. The Islāmic ruling on practising yoga is that “it is not permissible for the Muslim to practice yoga at all, whether he does it on the basis of belief or imitating others, or because he is seeking a particular so-called benefit. That is due to a number of reasons.” (Islamqa, 2011). A summary of the reasons is given below:

“Yoga is contrary to *Tawheed* and involves associating other deities with Allāh, may He be exalted, and because it involves prostrating to the sun and repeating its names. Allāh says:

- **Say, "I have only been commanded to worship Allāh and not associate [anything] with Him."** (Ar-Ra`d (The Thunder) 13:36).
- **If you should associate [anything] with Allāh, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers."** (Az-Zumar (The Troops) 39:65).

The whole essence of yoga involves the imitation of idol worshippers and resembling them. It is narrated by Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” (Abū Dāwūd). Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته said: “Imitating them in outward matters leads to imitating them in attitude and actions” Some of the yoga practices are harmful from a health and psychological point of view. It is narrated by Abu Saeed Saad ibn Maalik Ibn Sinaan al-Khudri رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “There is not to be any causing of harm nor is there to be any reciprocating of harm.” (Ibn Mājah (b)). Other reasons include: “It is a waste of time doing something that does not bring anything but harm and loss in this world, and calamity and despair in the Hereafter. It is a clear call to imitate animals and detracts from human dignity, such as:

adopting nakedness, resting on all fours in most of the exercises and the special posture in the third and eighth exercises. Many of those who tried to practice what is called scientific yoga or behavioural therapy fell into the pit of drugs and addiction, and this remedy has been proven to be ineffective and of no benefit. This activity is based on lies and charlatanism; its promoters rely on deceit and twisting the facts in spreading it. A few of those who practice yoga, or some other esoteric or deviant trends may perform extraordinary feats, people are deceived by it. But in most cases, they are only using devils among the jinn as in the case of magic and so on, and this is harām according to Islām.” (Islamqa, 2011(c))

Despite the clear ruling on yoga, some Muslims would argue that by just doing the exercise is not harmful or harām. It has been suggested that “while merely doing the physical movements of yoga without the worshipping and chanting might not be against religious beliefs, Muslims should avoid practising it altogether as “doing one part of yoga would lead to another.” (The National Fatwa Council of Malaysia). It was narrated that Abu’ d-Darda’ رضي الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allāh صلی الله علیه وسلم said: “*Allāh has created the sickness and the remedy, so treat sickness but do not treat sickness with anything that is harām.*” (at-Tabarāni).

As with previous therapies addressed here, it is a practice that falls in the grey area and therefore is best avoided. The same benefits experienced by the yoga practitioner can be achieved in halāl ways. The spiritual element can be attained through prayer and *dhikr* and the physical elements through exercise and stretching. It is important to note here also that if exercised that are normally done and accepted by sports scientists are Islāmically acceptable even if they may resemble that of those performed in yoga.

### **Reflexology**

Reflexology is also part of the alternative or complementary therapies. Reflexology is a form of 'touch therapy' with ancient origins. Practitioners of reflexology postulate that the body contains an invisible life force, or *Ch'i* and the blockage of this invisible energy field can prevent healing. This view of reflexology is rooted in Eastern mysticism and is popular in the New Age movement. In reflexology, pressure is applied to the feet and hands using specific thumb, finger and hand techniques. There is no evidence in the medical literature of its efficacy. It is stated that “Reflexology works on three levels: the physical, the mental, the spiritual” (Berkson, 1992, p.12). The spiritual dimension of reflexology is based on “a healing force from the universe [which] is called upon and used, by both the client and the practitioner”. (Berkson, 1992 p.115).

The basic philosophy behind reflexology has roots in the Taoist Chinese view of the life force *Ch'i* and the concept of *Chakras* in the Hindu practice of yoga. Furthermore, it is stated that “Amongst the shrines and temples of Vishnu, there is a footprint painting. Ancient Sanskrit symbols are painted on the feet. These symbols correspond to modern day reflex points.” (Google search). That means the reflex points in the foot are based on Hindu symbols. According to Mookerjee (1971), the feet symbolise the unity of the entire universe and he stated that “all the elements of the universe are represented by the signs, and they also indicate the many aspects of the Ultimate One” (p.54). These symbols and concepts are totally incompatible with the belief of God as the only true God, Almighty, Creator, Healer and Source of Life.

These considerations of the spiritual aspects associated with reflexology alone should nullify it as a choice for Muslims and as believers, we should have nothing whatsoever to do with New Age

belief. Currently, there is no known Fatwa on the use of reflexology. The best action for a Muslim is to avoid this form of treatment even if it is claimed to be a mixture of reflexology with value-added Islāmic element, coined as “Islāmic Foot Reflexology”.

An-Nu'man bin Bashir رضي الله عنه said: "I heard the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم say: *"That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain, and between them are matters which are not as clear. I will strike a parable for you about that: indeed Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, has established a sanctuary, and the sanctuary of Allāh is that which He has forbidden. Whoever approaches the sanctuary is bound to transgress upon it, Or he said: 'Whoever grazes around the sanctuary will soon transgress upon it, and whoever indulges in matters that are not clear, he will soon transgress beyond the limits.'"* (An-Nasā'i).

In a similar method to *hijamah* and acupuncture, reflexology targets certain key points, on the foot in this case, to achieve maximum benefit for the recipient whilst also relaxing the muscles. There are some Muslims who practice delivering reflexology suggest that just because some people attach a spiritual meaning to reflexology, it does not nullify the acceptability of a Muslim practicing or receiving this type of treatment in search of physical treatment. With a distinct lack of Fatawas issued on this topic, it may be argued that we cannot completely discredit this approach. According to Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Anwar Sahib Al-Madani, Lecturer in Islāmic Jurisprudence at the Islāmic Online University, “Reflexology is acceptable Islāmicly and there is no evidence to discredit it.” Allāh knows best.

### Herbal Remedies







More than a thousand years ago, Islāmic scientists and scholars used herbs as medicine based on recipes and formula. It has been reported that “Islāmic medical texts usually had at least one section on herbs and other natural remedies, and another consisting of instructions for compound remedies, with descriptions of the geographical origin, physical properties, and methods of application. Many formularies were composed as larger independent collections of simples (single herbs with medicinal value) and compound recipes. Some were written specifically for use in hospitals.” (Tschanz, 1998).

The uses of herbs for cures in the natural world stemmed directly from the Prophet Mohammed صلى الله عليه وسلم. According to Sheikh ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreen رحمته, it is permissible to use herbal remedies because the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: *“Seek healing, O slaves of Allāh, but do not seek it in that which is harām, for Allāh does not make the healing of my Ummah in that which He has forbidden to it.”* (Islamqa, 2001). Sheikh ibn Jibreen رحمته added that “Seeking healing with herbs comes under the heading of permissible things. This does not contradict the idea of putting one’s trust in Allāh (*Tawakkul*). It was narrated that a man said, “O Messenger of Allāh, what do you think of medicines with which we seek healing, and *Ruqyah* (incantations) which we use for healing-do they change the decree of Allāh?” The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: *“They are part of the decree of Allāh,” for example, Allāh decrees that a person falls sick, then He decrees that this disease needs treatment, and that if it is treated with medicines or herbs, he may be healed by Allāh’s leave. So there is no reason why we should not use these medicines, including the use of needles and herbs.*” (Islamqa, 2001).







In fact, in Arabian medicine, there are over 250 different herbs available for treatment of illness (Saad et al., 2005). There are in fact many a hadīth that specifically tell us which herbs to rely in for certain conditions.



### **Honey for abdominal pain.**

Narrated Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri : A man came to the Prophet  and said, "My brother has some abdominal trouble." The Prophet  said to him: "*Let him drink honey.*" The man came for the second time and the Prophet  said to him, "*Let him drink honey.*" He came for the third time and the Prophet  said, "*Let him drink honey.*" He returned again and said, "I have done that". The Prophet  then said, "*Allāh has said the truth, but your brother's `abdomen has told a lie. Let him drink honey.*" So, he made him drink honey and he was cured. (Al-Bukhāri, (b)).



### **Black seed for illness and analgesia properties (Al-Ghamdi, 2001)**

Narrated Khalid bin Sa`d : We went out and Ghalib bin Abjar was accompanying us. He fell ill on the way and when we arrived at Medina, he was still sick. Ibn Abi 'Atiq came to visit him and said to us, "Treat him with black cumin. Take five or seven seeds and crush them (mix the powder with oil) and drop the resulting mixture into both nostrils, for `Aisha  has narrated to me that she heard the Prophet  saying, "*This black cumin is healing for all diseases except As-Sam.*" Aisha  said, "What is As-Sam?" He said, "Death." (Al-Bukhāri, (c))




### **At-Talbinah (barley, milk and honey) for grief**

Narrated 'Urwa: Aisha  used to recommend at-Talbinah for the sick and for such a person as grieved over a dead person. She used to say, "I heard Allāh's Messenger  saying, '*at-Talbinah gives rest to the heart of the patient and makes it active and relieves some of his sorrow and grief.*'" (Al-Bukhāri, (d))



### **Saut (type of salt)**

Narrated Ibn `Abbas : The Prophet  was cupped and he paid the wages to the one who had cupped him and then took Su'ut (Medicine sniffed by nose). (Al-Bukhāri, (e)).



### **Indian incense for pleurisy**

Narrated Umm Qais bint Mihsan : I heard the Prophet  saying, "*Treat with the Indian incense, for it has healing for seven diseases; it is to be sniffed by one having throat trouble, and to be put into one side of the mouth of one suffering from pleurisy.*" Once I went to Allāh's Messenger  with a son of mine who would not eat any food, and the boy passed urine on him whereupon he asked for some water and sprinkled it over the place of urine. (Al-Bukhāri, (f)).

### Kohl for eye problems


Narrated Umm Salama : The husband of a lady died, and her eyes became sore and the people mentioned her story to the Prophet . They asked him whether it was permissible for her to use kohl as her eyes were exposed to danger. He said, *"Previously, when one of you was bereaved by a husband she would stay in her dirty clothes in a bad unhealthy house (for one year), and when a dog passed by, she would throw a globe of dung. No, (she should observe the prescribed period 'Iddah) for four months and ten days."* (Al-Bukhāri, (g)).

### Al Mann for eye diseases

Narrated Sa'id bin Zaid : I heard the Prophet  saying, *"Truffles are like Manna (i.e., they grow naturally without man's care) and their water heals eye diseases."* (Al-Bukhāri, (h)).




### Acupuncture

The name acupuncture is derived from the Latin words 'acus' meaning 'needle' and 'punctura' meaning 'to puncture' which is exactly what the practice involves. Working very much in the same way as cupping/*Hijamah*, with treatment serving to restore the natural balance in the body through a process of unblocking energy channels. In line with this, it is suggested that disease is caused by blood stagnation which impairs the flow of blood depriving organs from vital nutrients which leads to sickness. Acupuncture works by increasing blood flow to these areas, encouraging the release of opioids, or pain killing agents. There is no clear evidence to suggest it is *harām* as no substances such as alcohol are used, and no foreign religious practices or incantations are used as in other complementary therapies as it has no basis in old religious or spiritual beliefs. According to Sheikh Ahmad Kutty (2016) "There is nothing in Islām to forbid Muslims from resorting to alternative therapies or treatments so long as they do not involve beliefs or practices inimical to Islām. Acupuncture is one of such practices; it has been an integral part of traditional medicine in certain parts of the world like China; and it has been found to be effective and beneficial in some cases."

Shaykh 'Abd-Allaah ibn Jibreen  said, with regard to the "Chinese needles" (i.e., acupuncture), if it is proven that this is beneficial, or if its benefit outweighs its harm – if it causes any harm – then there is nothing wrong with using this. And Allāh knows best. (Islamqa, 2001)

### Cupping

Cupping, known as "hijamah" in Arabic, is just another method of applying acupressure to the pressure points. It is used in Islāmic medicine to treat a wide number of complaints including bronchitis, pneumonia and back pain. This is performed with the use of cups, not needles, to create a vacuum on the skin over the pressure point. Dry cupping works much like acupuncture in terms of redirecting blockages to the lymphatic drainage system to clean it within the body. Whereas wet cupping sees this blood removed manually from the body through small incisions made to the surface of the skin under the cup.

There is little controversy in the use of cupping for Muslims as Prophet Mohammed  was an advocate of cupping and often used the method himself. This is documented numerous times in the Sunnah. It is narrated Abu Hurayrah  that the Prophet  said: The best medical treatment

you apply is cupping (Abu Dāwud (c)). It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “If there is any good in any of the remedies you use, it is in cupping” (Ibn Mājah (c)). Narrated Jabir bin `Abdullah رضي الله عنه: I heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, “If there is any healing in your medicines, then it is in cupping, a gulp of honey or branding with fire (cauterization) that suits the ailment, but I don't like to be (cauterized) branded with fire.” (Al-Bukhāri (i)). Narrated Ibn `Abbas رضي الله عنه: The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was cupped on his head for an ailment he was suffering from while he was in a state of Ihram. at a water place called Lahl Jamal. Ibn `Abbas رضي الله عنه further said: The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was cupped on his head for unilateral headache while he was in a state of *Ihrām* .( Al-Bukhāri (j)). Preventative *hijamah*, as prescribed by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, is done on the 17th, 19th and 21st of every lunar calendar month. It is stated by Dr. Magda Amir, an expert in the practice and study of *hijamah*, or cupping therapy that “Our body is affected by the moon, just as the tides are,” she elaborates. “Because of the lunar magnetic field, when the moon is full [on the 15th day], all the toxins in our cells are accumulated beneath the surface of the skin. Applying *hijamah* in three even intervals after the full moon “detoxifies the body monthly.” There is evidence to suggest that *hijamah* is highly effective in treating the severity and frequency of tension and migraine headaches, conditions that Western medicine has difficulty treating (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2008).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To answer to the question, ‘Are complementary therapies halāl or harām?’ it says that some are harām, some are permitted, and some are doubtful even when practiced in a “halāl” way.

However, it is recommended to avoid the complementary therapy approaches which are in the grey areas as there are also plenty of halāl alternatives as proposed in the Prophetic Medicine (*‘Al-Tibb an-Nabawī*). In summary, Muslims need to be cautious in using complementary or alternative therapies because some of them are contrary to belief in the Oneness of Lordship (*Tawheed ar-Rubūbiyyah*). There are some that show little evidence to suggest that they are harām, such as herbal remedies, acupuncture, cupping and possibly reflexology, yet others are far more controversial, such as homeopathy, hypnotherapy, and yoga. It is important that we fully understand the basis behind these therapies and how they work in order to make informed decisions in accordance with the Qur’ān and Sunnah, along with scholarly advice on such practices. Some have ruled that they are halāl under certain conditions if practised in a certain way, but many scholars have said that they are harām as they have the potential to be practised in a way that is incompatible with Islām, either due to the use of harām substances, or they have a basis in beliefs contrary to Islām.

Having considered evidence both for and against the practise of each of the most commonly used, yet in Islāmically controversial complementary therapies it can be concluded overall there is a choice. If in doubt, refrain from using that particular complementary therapy. With each therapy, there are alternative options that are embedded in Islāmic principles and entirely halāl as well as yielding the same benefits as those that are more controversial. When we have such vast, rich and

proven methods available to us in the form of Prophetic medicine, we must ask ourselves if seeking other such cures is even necessary, bearing in mind that the practise of those left to us by our beloved Prophet ﷺ, are those that can only draw us closer to him and our Creator. So why neglect them unnecessarily over other available treatments that are compatible with Islām? In addition, we need to beware of medicines that contain poisonous substances or alcohol, unless the amount is small, and it is proven that medicine is beneficial for most patients according to confirmed studies and proven results. It is recommended to use *Ruqyah* as prescribed in the Sharī'ah, composed of Qur'ān and *athkār* and *du'ās* that are narrated in Sharī'ah; read them over yourself and seek the help of Allāh, asking Him to ward off sickness from you. And we advise you to use medicines that Islām has stated are beneficial and useful, such as honey and black seed. There is nothing wrong with referring to doctors concerning specific amounts and how to use them” (Islamqa, 2011a). Allāh Knows Best, الله اعلم (Allāhu A'alam).

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