

21119 - Evidence that tattooing, plucking the eyebrows and filing the teeth is haraam

the question

What is the Islamic ruling on women reducing their eyebrows? Please quote the specific ahaadeeth if possible.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Allaah has forbidden women to remove any part of the hair of their eyebrows; this action is called al-namas in Arabic, and it is haraam because of the following evidence:

1 - Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They (all those who worship others than Allaah) invoke nothing but female deities besides Him (Allaah), and they invoke nothing but Shaytaan (Satan), a persistent rebel!

Allaah cursed him. And he [Shaytaan (Satan)] said: ‘I will take an appointed portion of your slaves.

Verily, I will mislead them, and surely, I will arouse in them false desires; and certainly, I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allaah.’ And whoever takes Shaytaan (Satan) as a Wali (protector or helper) instead of Allaah, has surely, suffered a manifest loss”

[al-Nisa’ 4:117-119]

The relevant point in this verse is that Iblees will tell people to change the creation of Allaah. Some of the mufasssireen interpreted it by saying that what is meant here in this verse is tattooing, plucking the eyebrows and filing the teeth, as we shall see below.

Al-Qurtubi said in his commentary on this verse:

A group said what was meant by changing the creation of Allaah was tattooing and other things that are done for the purpose of beautification. This was stated by Ibn Mas'ood and al-Hasan.

Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 5/392

2 - It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah said: "Allaah has cursed the women who do tattoos and those who ask for tattoos to be done, those who ask for their eyebrows to be plucked, and the women ask for their teeth to be filed for the purpose of beautification, changing the creation of Allaah." A woman from the tribe of Bani Asad whose name was Umm Ya'qoob heard of that and she came and said, "I have heard that you have cursed So and so and So and so." He said, "Why should I not curse those whom the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) cursed and who are mentioned in the Book of Allaah?" She said, "I have read what is between the two covers [of the Qur'aan], and I did not find anything in it like what you have said." He said, "If you have read it, have you not read that Allaah says,

'And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)'

[al-Hashr 59:7]?"

She said, "Of course." He said, "He forbade that." She said, "I think your wife does it." He said, "Go and look." So she went and looked and she did not see what she was looking for. He said, "If she had been like that, she would not be with us."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4604; Muslim, 2125

Al-Qurtubi said concerning the meaning of tattooing:

Tattooing is done on the hand; it involves piercing the back of the hand with a needle and filling it with kohl or another substance so that it changes colour. [Translator's note: this refers to the type of tattooing known at that time]

Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 5/392.

Ibn Hajar said concerning the meaning of plucking the eyebrows:

The mutanammisah is the one who asks another to pluck her eyebrows, and the naamisah is the one who does it. Al-nimaas means removing the hair of the face with tweezers. It was said that the word nimaas refers specifically to removing hair from the eyebrows in order to reduce them or make them straight. Abu Dawood said in al-Sunan: al-naamisah is the one who plucks the eyebrows in order to reduce them.

Fath al-Baari, 10/377

It was said concerning the meaning of those who ask for their teeth to be filed (al-mutafallijaat)

This refers to one who asks for her teeth to be filed or who does that. Falj means making a gap between two teeth and tafalluj means making a gap between two attached things by means of filing or the like. This was usually done to the incisor and the eyetooth for the purpose of beautification. A woman might do this if her teeth were close together so that she would have gaps between her teeth, or an old woman might have do to make it look as if she were younger, because young women usually have gaps between their teeth that disappear as the woman gets older.

Fath al-Baari, 10/372

Al-Qurtubi said:

With regard to all of these matters, the ahaadeeth indicate that those who do them are cursed and that they are major sins. But there is some difference of scholarly opinion concerning the reason why they are forbidden. It was said that it is because it is a kind of deception, or because it is changing the creation of Allaah, as Ibn Mas'ood said. This is more correct, and it also includes the first meaning. And it was said that what is prohibited is what is permanent, because it is changing the creation of Allaah; with regard to what is not permanent, such as kohl and make-up, the scholars have permitted that.

Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 5/393.

See also question no. [13744](#).