

Plucking, Trimming and Shaping the Eyebrows: What the Scholars say -

Various Scholars

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1. Sheikh Muhammad Naasir-ud-deen Al-Albaanee -

In his book *Adaab-uz-Zifaaf Fee Sunnatil-Mutaharah* (The Etiquettes of the Wedding in the Pure Sunnah)¹, Sheikh Al-Albaanee says:

'38 - Refraining from opposing the (Islamic) legislation.

And it is obligatory upon him (the one getting married) that he refrains from all that which has in it an opposition to the (Islamic) legislation, and in particular, that which the people have become accustomed to during the likes of this occasion, until many from amongst them think - because of the silence of the scholars² - that there is no problem with them (these issues). And here, I will point out the important issues from them...'

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After mentioning: 1) The hanging of pictures and 2) The covering of the walls with rugs/carpets, the Sheikh then says:

'3. Plucking out the eyebrows and other than them.

The Third (opposition to the Islamic legislation) is what some of the women do by way of plucking their eyebrows until they become (the shape of a) bow or a crescent. They do that to make themselves beautiful, as they claim! And this is from that which the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) forbade and cursed the one who did it with his saying:

'Allah curses the women who tattoo (others) and the women who ask to be tattooed, the women who connect hair with false hair, the women who remove facial hair³ and the women who ask for facial hair to be removed and the women who ask for a gap to be made between their teeth for beauty; those women who change Allah's creation.'

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¹ Translator's note: Distributed by Daar-us-Salaam, Saudi Arabia, 1423/2002

² Translator's note: As this article will *inshallah* show, the Salafee scholars - by the Grace of Allah - are the scholars who have not remained silent on this issue.

³ Translator's note: The Arabic term for the woman who does this is *An-Naamisah*. Abu Daawud said: *'..the Naamisah is the one carves out the eyebrow until she makes it thin'* (Sunan Abee Daawud, narration No. 4170)

The Sheikh then mentions the saying of At-Tabaree:

'At-Tabaree said: 'It is not permissible for the woman to change anything from her creation which Allah created her with by adding or decreasing in order to search for beauty; not for her husband or other than him. Like the one whose eyebrows are connected, so she removes that which is between them out of the delusion of having a clear (and beautiful) space between the eyebrows, or its opposite. And (like) the one whose hair is short or inconsiderable, so she makes it longer or more abundant with hair other than her own. So, all this enters into the prohibition, and it (the prohibition) is against changing the creation of Allah. And an exception to (all) this is that by which harm or damage is caused (because of the hair)'. Summarised from Al-Fath.'

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2. Sheikh Saaleh Al-Fawzaan -

Sheikh Saaleh Al-Fawzaan was asked:

What is the ruling on plucking the hair that is between the eyebrows and the hair that is on the face (of the woman)?

So he replied:

'As for the hair of the eyebrows, then it is not permissible to remove it by any means, not by plucking, nor by cutting and nor by removal, (not) by any means (at all). This is because this is *An-Nams* (removal of the facial hair) for which the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) cursed the one (the female) who did it, for indeed he (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) cursed *An-Naamisah* (the woman who removes facial hair) and *Al-Mutanamisah* (the woman who asks for facial hair to be removed).

An-Naamisah: She is the one who cuts the hair (from the eyebrows) from her own self or from other than her.

Al-Mutanamisah: She is the one who requests other than herself to remove it (the hair) from her eyebrow.

And this is from the major sins, because an act of disobedience, if it is cursed because of (doing) it, it becomes from the major sins. And (also) because this is from changing Allah's creation (Subhaanhu Wa Ta'Alaa), about which Allah The Most High informed about that it is from the command of shaytaan:

“(Shaytaan said) And I will surely command them so that they will for a surety change the creation of Allah.”

(Surah An-Nisaa: 119)

And as for the removal of the hair from the rest of the face, then this is what is known amongst the scholars as *Al-Haff* (trimming/clipping). So this, if it disfigures

the face, then there is no problem in removing it. As for if it is normal, (then) no attention should be paid (to it). And this (issue of the hair on the woman's face), indeed the people of knowledge have differed over the ruling of it being removed. So, from them are those who prohibited against it and regarded it as entering *An-Nams*, and from them are those who allowed it...'⁴

3. Sheikh 'Abdul'-'Azeez Ibn Baaz -

Sheikh Ibn Baaz was asked:

What is the ruling on thinning the extra hair from the eyebrow?

So he replied:

'It is not permissible to take (out) the hair of the eyebrows, and nor to make them thinner, due to what has been established from the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) that he cursed *An-Naamisah* (the woman who removes facial hair) and *Al-Mutanamisah* (the woman who asks for facial hair to be removed). And indeed, the people of knowledge have explained that taking from the hair of the eyebrows is *An-Nams* (removal of the facial hair).'⁵

4. Sheikh Muhammad Bin Saaleh Al-'Uthaymeen -

Sheikh Al-'Uthaymeen was asked:

What is the ruling on removing or shortening some of the extra hair from the eyebrows?

So he replied:

'Removing the hair from the eyebrows, if it is by plucking, then indeed it is *An-Nams* (removing facial hair). And indeed, the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) cursed *An-Naamisah* (the woman who removes facial hair) and *Al-Mutanamisah* (the woman who asks for facial hair to be removed) and it is from the major sins. And he (the Prophet [sallallahu alaihi wa sallam]) specified the woman because she is the one who mainly does it to beautify herself. Otherwise, if a man were to do it, he would (also) be cursed just as a woman is cursed - and refuge with Allah is sought.

And if it was by other than plucking, by cutting or shaving, then some of the people of knowledge are of the opinion that it is like plucking because it is changing the creation of Allah. So, there is no difference between whether it is plucking, cutting or shaving (with these people of knowledge). And without doubt

⁴ Translator's note: *Al-Muntaqa Min Fataawa Fadeelatish-Sheikh Saaleh Bin Fawzaan Bin Abdullah Al-Fawzaan*, Vol.3, Pp.431-432, Daar-ul-Muayyid, 1st Edition, Riyaadh, 1425/2004

⁵ Translator's note: *Fataawa-ul-Mar'ah* (86) as mentioned in *Al-Qawl-ul-Jameel Bi-Jami' Fataawa-il-Mar'ah Fee Zeenati Wat-Tajmeel* (Pp.78-79) compiled by Umm 'Abdir-Rahmaan Bint 'Abdillah Al-Asadee (Daar-ul-Athaar, 1st Edition, Cairo, 2007)

this (opinion) is more cautious, so it is upon the person to stay away from that, whether it is a man or a woman.’⁶

The Sheikh was also asked:

What is the ruling on thinning the hair of the eyebrow?

So he replied:

‘Thinning the hair of the eyebrows, if it is by way of plucking, then it is prohibited. Rather, it is a major sin from amongst the major sins because it is from *An-Nams* (removing facial hair) about which the Messenger of Allah cursed the one who did it.

And if it was by way of cutting or shaving, then some of the people of knowledge disliked it and some of them prohibited against it and made it to be from *An-Nams* (removing facial hair) and said: ‘*Indeed An-Nams (removing facial hair) is not specific to plucking, rather it is general to every changing of the hair which Allah has not allowed, if it is on the face.*’

However, that which we believe, is that it is imperative upon the woman - even if we stated the permissibility or dislike of thinning it by way of cutting or shaving⁷ - that she should not do that except if the hair on the eyebrows was a lot whereby it comes down upon the eyes and affects the eyesight. Then (in this case), there is no problem with removing that which causes harm.’⁸

5. The Permanent Committee of Scholars -

The Permanent Committee was asked:

What is the ruling on the woman shaving her head and her eyebrows?

So they replied (after mentioning that it is not allowed to shave her head except due to a necessity):

‘...As for cutting the hair of the eyebrows or to define it by cutting its parts, or shaving it, or plucking it for adornment as do some of the women today, then it is prohibited, due to what it contains of changing the creation of Allah, and following shaytaan in his misleading of man and his ordering him to change the creation of Allah. Allah The Most High says:

⁶ Translator’s note: *Fataawa Ash-Sheikh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen* (2/830-831) as mentioned in *Al-Qawl-ul-Jameel Bi-Jami’ Fataawa-il-Mar’ah Fee Zeenati Wat-Tajmeel* (Pp.77-78) compiled by Umm ‘Abdir-Rahmaan Bint ‘Abdillah Al-Asadee (Daar-ul-Athaar, 1st Edition, Cairo, 2007)

⁷ Translator’s note: Which the Sheikh didn’t actually do, as is apparent from his words.

⁸ Translator’s note: *Majmoo’ Fataawa Wa Rasaail Ash-Sheikh Muhammad Bin Saaleh Al-‘Uthaymeen*, Vol.11, page 133, Daarul-Thuraaya, 1st Edition, Riyadh, 1419/1998

“(Shaytaan said) And I will surely command them so that they will for a surety change the creation of Allah.”

(Surah An-Nisaa: 119)

And in the Saheeh (of Al-Bukhaaree) from Ibn Mas’ood (it is reported) that he said:

‘Allah curses the women who tattoo (others) and the women who ask to be tattooed, the women who remove facial hair and the women who ask for facial hair to be removed and the women who ask for a gap to be made between their teeth for beauty; those women who change Allah’s creation.’

Then he said:

‘Shall I not curse the one whom the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) cursed and it is in the Book of Allah (‘Azza Wa Jall)’ -meaning His Saying The Most High:

“And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, then take it. And whatsoever he prohibits you from, then stay away from it.”

(Surah Al-Hashr: 7)

And with Allah is success. And may the Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions.’⁹

The permanent Committee were also asked (by some sisters):

What is the ruling on plucking the eyebrows and that which is between the eyebrows if it is dense? And is it permissible for us to remove the hair of the moustache and the face, and does (that) enter into the ruling of the eyebrow? And what is the ruling of the one who does it, from the practising sisters, and that is because of pleasing the husband or the society around her?

So they replied:

‘It is not permissible to remove the hair of the eyebrow because this is *An-Nams* (removing facial hair) about which the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) cursed the one who does it. And it is from changing the creation of Allah which is from the action of shaytaan. And even if her husband ordered her with it, then indeed she should not obey him because it is an act of disobedience. And there is no obedience to the created in disobedience to The Creator. Rather, obedience is indeed in that which is good, as the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said. And the hair of the face should not be removed except if it disfigures, just as if a moustache or beard were to grow on a woman, then it there is no problem in removing them.

⁹ Translator’s note: *Fataawa Lajnatu-Daa’imah* (5/196-198) as mentioned in *Al-Qawl-ul-Jameel Bi-Jami’ Fataawa-il-Mar’ah Fee Zeenati Wat-Tajmeel* (page 37) compiled by Umm ‘Abdir-Rahmaan Bint ‘Abdillah Al-Asadee (Daar-ul-Athaar, 1st Edition, Cairo, 2007)

And with Allah is success. And may the Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions.'¹⁰

¹⁰ Translator's note: *Fataawa Lajnatu-Daa'imah* (17/132-133) as mentioned in *Al-Qawl-ul-Jameel Bi-Jami' Fataawa-il-Mar'ah Fee Zeenati Wat-Tajmeel* (Pp 80-81) compiled by Umm 'Abdir-Rahmaan Bint 'Abdillah Al-Asadee (Daar-ul-Athaar, 1st Edition ,Cairo, 2007)