13744 - Is Removing Facial Hair Haram for Women?

the question

I am doing a project on Muslim women and would like to know what is the ruling concerning a Muslim's hair. Is she allowed to cut it as much as up to her shoulder or not/ what about facial hair? Is it haram to get rid of it or not. Please answer and pray my iman is strong.

Summary of answer

It is OK for a woman to remove hair on the upper lip, thighs, calves and arms. This is not the same as plucking the eyebrows which is forbidden. More details below.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Can Muslim women cut their hair?

We ask Allah Almighty to increase you in faith and to make you content with the truth.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

We do not know anything (to disallow) cutting women's hair . What is forbidden is shaving it. You should not shave your hair but you may cut it and reduce its length or volume; we know of nothing wrong with that. But that should be done in a proper manner which will please you and your husband.

You should come to some agreement with him on a kind of haircut that does not resemble non-Muslim women, because if you leave it long, it will be a lot of trouble to wash it and comb it.

So if the hair is very long or thick, and the woman cuts it to reduce its length or volume, that

doesn’t matter. Cutting some of it will make it more beautiful, which will please both the woman and her husband. So we do not know of any reason to disallow that. But shaving it altogether is not permissible, except in the case of sickness. And Allah is the Source of strength.” (Fatawa al-Marah al-Muslimah, part 2, p. 515)

It was narrated in Sahih Muslim that Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman said: “The wives of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to cut their hair until it came just below their ears.” (al-Hayd, 320)

Al-Nawawi said: “This indicates that it is permissible for women to cut their hair short .”

But women should avoid resembling non-Muslim women or immoral women when they cut their hair

Shaykh Salih al-Fawzan said:

‘It is not permissible for a woman to cut her hair short in the back and leave the sides longer, because this involves disfiguring and fooling about with her hair which is part of her beauty, and it also involves imitating the non-Muslim women. This prohibition also applies to haircuts which are named after non-Muslim women or animals, like the “Diana” cut, named after a non-Muslim woman, or the “lion” cut or “mouse” cut, because it is haram to imitate the disbelievers or to imitate animals, and because that involves fooling about with a woman’s hair which is part of her beauty.” (Fatawa al-Marah al-Muslimah, 2/516,517)

Is removing facial hair haram?

Shaykh Muhammad al-Salih ibn ‘Uthaymin said:

“With regard to hair which is abnormal, because it grows in places where hair does not usually grow, such as a woman having a moustache or hair growing on her cheeks, there is nothing wrong with removing this , because it is abnormal and is disfiguring to the woman.”

The Standing Committee was asked about women removing facial hair , and they replied as

follows:

“It is OK for a woman to remove hair on the upper lip, thighs, calves and arms. This is not the same as plucking (eyebrows), which is forbidden.” (‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz, ‘Abd al-Razzaq ‘Afifi, ‘Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyyan, ‘Abd-Allah ibn Qa’ud, Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daimah, 5/194, 195)

The Standing Committee was also asked:

What is the ruling on a woman removing hair from her body; if it is permissible, then who is allowed to do that for her?

They answered:

“It is permissible for her (to remove) everything except her eyebrows and the hair on her head; it is not permissible for her to remove those, or to remove anything from the eyebrows whether by shaving or any other means. She, her husband or one of her mahrams may do that for her, with regard to the parts of the body that they are permitted to see; or another woman may do that, with regard to the parts of the body that she is permitted to see.” (‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz, ‘Abd al-Razzaq ‘Afifi, ‘Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyyan, ‘Abd-Allah ibn Qa’ud, Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daimah, 5/194)

The hair of the private parts and the thighs may not be seen by either another woman or a mahram.

Is plucking eyebrows haram?

It is forbidden for a woman to remove her eyebrows or part of them by any means, whether it be by shaving, cutting or using a depilatory substance, because this constitutes the plucking for which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed the one who does it, i.e., the woman who plucks all or part of her eyebrows , claiming that it is for the purpose of beautification, or the woman who does that for her. This is changing the creation of Allah which the Shaytan promised to enjoin upon the sons of Adam. (See also al-Fatawa al-Jami’ah li’l-Marah al-Muslimah, part 3, p. 877-879)