

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

11886 - Ruling on women wearing gold rings

the question

Some of the women among us are confused because of the fatwa of the scholar Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani, the muhaddith (hadeeth scholar) of Syria, in his book *Adaab al-Zafaaf* (The Etiquettes of Marriage and Wedding) concerning the prohibition of wearing gold rings in general. There are women who have given up wearing them, and they describe the women who do wear them as being misguided and misleading others. What do you say about the wearing of gold rings in particular? We urgently need your evidence and fatwa, because the matter has gotten out of control. May Allaah forgive you and increase you in abundance of knowledge.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allaah.

Women are permitted to wear gold, in the form of rings and otherwise, because of the general meaning of the aayah (interpretation of the meaning),

“(Like they then for Allaah) a creature who is brought up in adornments (wearing silk and gold ornaments, i.e. women), and who in dispute cannot make herself clear?”

[al-Zukhruf 43:18],

where Allaah mentions that wearing adornments is an attribute of women; this includes gold and other things. And Ahmad, Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa'i narrated with a jayyid isnaad from Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allaah be pleased with him) that “These two [gold and silk] are forbidden for the males of my ummah.” Ibn Maajah added in one narration, “and permitted for the females.”

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It was narrated by Ahmad and al-Nasaa'i, and by al-Tirmidhi who classed it as saheeh, and by Abu Dawood, and by al-Haakim who classed it as saheeh, and by al-Tabaraani, and classed as saheeh by Ibn Hazm, from Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (may Allaah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

“Gold and silk have been permitted for the females of my ummah, and forbidden for the males.”

It was criticized for there being a gap [in the isnaad] between Sa'eed ibn Abi Hind and Abu Moosa, but there is no reliable evidence for that. We have mentioned above those who classed it as saheeh. Even if we assume that the criticism mentioned is valid, it is still supported by other saheeh ahaadeeth, as is the well-known principle among the imaams of hadeeth.

This was the view of the scholars of the salaf. More than one of them narrated that there was consensus (ijmaa') that it is permissible for women to wear gold. We will mention the views of some of them in order to make the matter more clear.

Al-Jassaas said in his Tafseer (vol. 3, p. 388) in his discussion of gold: “The reports narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and from the Sahaabah stating that it is permitted for women are clearer and more well-known than the reports which suggest that it is not allowed. The evidence of the aayah [he is referring to the aayah which we have quoted above] also indicates that it is permissible for women.

The practice of women wearing jewellery has been widespread from the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the Sahaabah until the present day, without anyone denouncing them for doing that. Such a widespread practice cannot be objected to on the grounds of some aahaad reports.”

Ilkiya al-Harraasi said in Tafseer al-Qur'aan (vol. 4, p. 391), in his commentary on the aayah “a creature who is brought up in adornments” [al-Zukhruf 43:18 - interpretation of the meaning]:

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“This indicates that jewellery is permissible for women. There is proven scholarly consensus (ijmaa’) on this point, and the reports concerning that are innumerable.”

Al-Bayhaqi said in al-Sunan al-Kubraa (vol. 4, p. 142), when he mentioned some of the ahaadeeth which indicate that gold and silk are permissible for women, without discussing the texts in detail:

“These and similar reports indicate that it is permissible for women to adorn themselves with gold. The fact that there is consensus that this is permissible for them indicates that the reports which indicate that it is haraam for women have been abrogated.”

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo’ (vol. 6, p. 40):

“The Muslims are agreed that it is permissible for women to wear various kinds of adornment, of silver, gold and silk, by consensus, because of the saheeh ahaadeeth.”

He also said (vol. 6, p. 40):

“The Muslims are agreed that it is permissible for women to wear various kinds of adornment, of both silver and gold, of all types, such as necklaces, rings, bracelets, bangles, and everything that is worn on the neck and elsewhere, and everything that is ordinarily worn. There is no dispute on this matter at all.”

He said in his commentary on Saheeh Muslim, in the chapter on the prohibition of gold rings for men, and the abrogation of their being permissible which had existed at the beginning of Islam:

“The Muslims are agreed that gold rings are permissible for women.”

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on the hadeeth of al-Baraa’ – “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade seven things, he forbade gold rings...” – (vol. 10, p. 317):

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“The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade gold rings, or making rings of gold, to men only, not women. It has been reported that there is scholarly consensus concerning their being permissible for women.”

The fact that gold is permitted for women in general, whether it is formed into rings or not, is proven by the two hadeeth quoted above, and by the comments of the scholars mentioned above, and by the scholarly consensus that the following ahaadeeth are to be accepted:

1 - The hadeeth narrated by Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa'i from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb from his father from his grandfather, that a woman came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with a daughter of hers, on whose hand were two heavy bangles of gold. He said to her, “Do you pay zakaah on these?” She said, “No.” He said, “Would you be happy if Allaah were to give you two bracelets of fire on the Day of Resurrection because of these?” So she took them off and threw them to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), saying, “They are for Allaah and His Messenger.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) explained to her the obligation to pay zakaah on the two bangles mentioned, but he did not rebuke her for putting them on her daughter. This indicated that that is permissible, although they were formed into the shape of circles. The hadeeth is saheeh and its isnaad is jayyid, as was pointed out by al-Haafiz in al-Buloogh.

2 - It was narrated in Sunan Abi Dawood with a saheeh isnaad from 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) that she said: “Some jewellery came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as a gift from the Negus (the ruler of Abyssinia), as a gift to him. It included a gold ring in which was set an Abyssinian stone. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) picked it up hesitantly with a stick or with his fingers, then he called Umaamah the daughter of Abu'l-'Aas and his daughter Zaynab. He said, ‘Adorn yourself with this, O my daughter.’” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gave a ring to Umaamah, which was formed from a circle of gold, and said, “Adorn yourself with this.” This

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indicates that gold formed into a circle is permissible on the basis of this report.

Abu Dawood and al-Daraaqutni narrated, and al-Haakim classed as saheeh, as stated in Buloogh al-Maraam, a report from Umm Salamah (may Allaah be pleased with her) that she used to wear anklets of gold. She said, "O Messenger of Allaah, is this kanz (stored wealth)?" He said, "If you pay the zakaah on it, it is not kanz."

With regard to the ahaadeeth which appear to forbid women wearing gold, they are shaadhhdh ("odd"), and contradict those which are more saheeh and stronger. The imams of hadeeth have stated that what is said in the ahaadeeth with jayyid isnaads but goes against ahaadeeth which are more saheeh, and they cannot be reconciled, and the chronology is not known, such reports are to be regarded as shaadhhdh ("odd") and unreliable, and they are not to be followed. Al-Haafiz al-'Iraaqi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Alfiyyah:

"A shaadhhdh (odd) report is one in which a thiqah (trustworthy) person says something which goes against the majority.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said in al-Nukhbah:

"If it is contradicted by something that is more correct, then the correct report should be adopted and the one that contradicts it is shaadhhdh (odd)

They also stated that the condition for a saheeh hadeeth to be accepted is that it should not be shaadhhdh (odd). There is no doubt that the ahaadeeth which state that gold is haraam for women, even if we accept that their isnaads are free of faults, cannot be reconciled with the saheeh ahaadeeth which indicate that gold is permissible for females, when we do not know which reports came first. So they have to be regarded as shaadhhdh and not saheeh, following this shar'i principle which is accepted by the scholars. What our brother 'Allaamah Shaykh Muhammad Naasir al-Deen al-Albaani has mentioned in his book Adaab al-Zafaaf, reconciling these reports with the

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ahaadeeth which permit (gold to women) by interpreting the prohibition as applying to gold formed into circles and the permission as applying to other kinds of jewellery, is not correct and is not in accordance with the ahaadeeth which indicate that gold is permitted, because the ahaadeeth permit rings, which are in the form of a circle, and they permit bangles, which are in the form of a circle. So what we have mentioned becomes clear. Moreover the ahaadeeth which indicate that gold is permitted are general and are not restricted in meaning. So we must follow them because they are general in meaning and because their isnaads are saheeh. This is supported by the reports narrated by a group of the scholars that there was consensus that the ahaadeeth which indicate that gold is forbidden were abrogated, as we have quoted from them above. This is the truth beyond a doubt. Hence confusion may be dispelled and the ruling of sharee'ah becomes clear: there is no doubt that gold is permitted to the females of this ummah and is forbidden to the males. And Allaah is the Source of strength. Praise be to Allaah the Lord of the Worlds, and may Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions.