

248680 - Why is plucking the eyebrows prohibited and circumcision permitted when both of them are changing the creation of Allah?

the question

I read a theory of the quranist group on circumcision and it has got me confused. They quote Surah 64:3, 67:3, 95:4 and 4:119-120 for their claims. They also quote hadiths which are against circumcision from Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Tabari (vol.3, p.592) and Ibn qudamah's Al-Mughni (I wasn't able to verify these as I don't have access to the mentioned sources of hadith). This got me thinking about eyebrow threading which is also haram (Bukhari 5931, Muslim 2125) as it involves altering the creation of Allah. Why is the plucking of eyebrows haram and yet circumcision is ok? The hairs grow back in the former whereas the change in foreskin because of circumcision is permanent (Also unlike cutting nails or hairs which grows back too). Don't both fall under the category of modifying Allah's creation? Please clarify this for me.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The prescription of laws, and what is lawful and what is prohibited are matters to be referred to Allah, may He be exalted. What is lawful is that which He has permitted and what is prohibited is that which He has forbidden, and what is obligatory is that which He has made obligatory, either in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Or have they partners with Allah (false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained?” [ash-Shoora 42:21]

“And say not concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely: “This is lawful and this is forbidden,” so as to invent lies against Allah. Verily, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper” [an-Nahl 16:116].

At-Tirmidhi (1726) narrated that Salmaan said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was asked about ghee, cheese and furs, and he said: “That which is lawful is what Allah has permitted in His Book, that which is unlawful is that which Allah has prohibited in His Book, and whatever He was silent about is among that which He has pardoned.”

This hadith was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi.

Allah prescribed circumcision on the lips of His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), so it is not permissible to object to it on the grounds that this is the creation of Allah, or that man was created in the best form, because the Creator is the One Who has enjoined that, and He knows best about His creation and what is best for them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous (to His slaves), All-Aware (of everything)” [al-Mulk 67:14].

Similar to that is the issue of shaving the pubic hair and plucking the armpit hair. For example, no one should say that this hair should not be removed because it is the creation of Allah, quoting as evidence the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “He has created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He shaped you and made good your shapes. And to Him is the final Return” [at-Taghaabun 64:3] and “Verily, We created man in the best stature (mould)” [at-Teen 95:4], because that is the utmost ignorance and misguidance, that stems from the claim that the Quran alone is sufficient.

Whoever believes in the Quran believes in the words (interpretation of the meaning): “And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)” [al-Hashr 59:7] and “And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) the Dhikr [the reminder and the advice], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them” [an-Nahl 16:44]. The dhikr is the Sunnah, by means of which the Messenger explained the Quran.

And Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in to a plain error” [al-Ahzaab 33:36].

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) issued rulings, issued commands, prescribed, permitted and prohibited, by Allah’s leave, as it says in the hadith of al-Miqdaam ibn Ma’di Yakrib (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Verily I have been given the Quran and something like it with it. Verily soon a man will be (reclining) on his couch, having eaten his fill, and will say: You should adhere to this Quran; whatever you find in it that is lawful, then regard it as lawful, and whatever you find in it as prohibited, then regard it as prohibited. Verily whatever the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has prohibited is like that which Allah has prohibited.” Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2664); he said: It is hasan ghareb with this isnaad. It was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in as-Silsilah as-Saheehah (2870).

One of the things that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) prescribed was circumcision, and he said that it is part of the fitrah (sound human nature) and the way of the Father of the Prophets Ibraaheem (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Al-Bukhari (6298) and Muslim (2370) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) circumcised himself when he was eighty years old, with an adze.”

An adze is a woodworking tool.

Al-Bukhari (5441) and Muslim (377) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The fitrah is five things, or five things are part of the fitrah: circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, clipping the nails, plucking the armpit hair, and trimming the moustache.”

Moreover, he also prescribed some things that are not mentioned in the Quran, such as the fact Zuhr prayer is four rak’ahs and ‘Asr prayer is four rak’ahs; that the zakaah on camels is such and such, and the zakaah on sheep is such and such; and he enjoined zakat al-fitr as a saa’ of

foodstuff; and he prohibited being married to a woman and her paternal or maternal aunt at the same time; and he forbade eating animals with fangs or birds with talons; and other well-known rulings. Whoever claims that the Quran alone is sufficient will ultimately exit the religion of Islam.

See a discussion on the so-called Qur'aaniyyeen in the answers to questions no. [3440](#) and [9067](#).

Hence we warn you against looking into the specious arguments of these misguided people, because it is not permissible to look into specious arguments except for people of knowledge who are able to expose them and refute them.

Think about the wisdom behind the fact that people are born uncircumcised, then the purely monotheistic nation was singled out for circumcision, so that it might be a sign that distinguishes between those who affirm the Oneness of Allah and others. If they were all born circumcised, there would not be this differentiation.

For more information, please see questions no. [7073](#) and [9412](#)

Secondly:

Plucking the eyebrows is prohibited, and it comes under the heading of changing the creation of Allah, as it says in the hadith.

It should be understood that with regard to changing the creation of Allah, some of it is permissible and allowed, such as circumcision, shaving the pubic hair, plucking the armpit hair, and removing defects and deformities.

Among that which is allowed is that concerning which sharee'ah has said nothing, such as removing hair on the legs and arms.

And some of it is prohibited, such as plucking the eyebrows, shaving off the beard, adding hair extensions, filing the teeth for the purpose of beautification, and tattooing.

We have stated above that determining what is lawful, what is prohibited and what is prescribed is not up to us; rather that is the right of Allah, may He be exalted, alone.

Therefore Allah, may He be exalted, tells us that Iblees said (interpretation of the meaning):

“ ‘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 Allah.” And whoever takes Shaytaan (Satan) as a Wali (protector or helper) instead of Allah, has surely suffered a manifest loss” [an-Nisa’ 4:119],

and what is meant is making changes for which the Lawgiver has not granted permission.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) granted permission to a man whose nose had been cut off to have a nose made of gold; he granted permission for this change because it was a kind of treatment.

Abu Dawood (4232), at-Tirmidhi (1770) and an-Nasaa’i (5161) narrated from ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Tarafah that the nose of his grandfather ‘Arfajah ibn As ‘ad was cut off in the battle of al-Kulaab, and he wore a nose made of silver, but it began to stink, so the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told him to get a nose made of gold.

This hadith was classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Abu Dawood (4170) narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas said: The woman who does hair extensions and the woman for whom that is done, the woman who plucks eyebrows and the woman for whom that is done, the woman who does tattoos and the woman for whom that is done when there is no disease (that would justify doing that) are cursed

This hadith was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

Ahmad (3945) narrated that Ibn Mas‘ood said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbid plucking the eyebrows, filing teeth, adding hair extensions and tattooing, except in the case of treatment of disease.

Ash-Shawkaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The apparent meaning of the words “except in the case of treatment of disease” indicates that the prohibition mentioned applies

only if these things are done for the purpose of beautification, and not because of disease or some problem, in which case they are not prohibited.

End quote from Nayl al-Awtaar (6/229)

Thus it is known that with regard to changing the creation of Allah, some types are permissible and allowed, and some types are forbidden and prohibited. So one should not ask why plucking the eyebrows is prohibited and circumcision is allowed, when both are changing the creation of Allah, because the answer to that is clear to the believer: Allah has prohibited some things and permitted others; He has allowed some things and forbidden others.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Baghawi and ar-Raafi'i said: It is not permissible to castrate animals that are not eaten, whether when they are small or when they are fully grown. He said: It is permissible to castrate an animal that will be eaten when it is small, because that serves a purpose, which is to make the meat taste good, but it is not permissible to do that when the animal is fully grown.

The reason for their verdict is that it is included in the general meaning of the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, tells us that the Shaytaan said, "and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allah" [an-Nisa' 4:119]. Circumcision and the like were excluded from that, and everything else is included in the general meaning of the condemnation and prohibition.

End quote from al-Majmoo' (6/177)

Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Allah, may He be exalted, says concerning the Shaytaan (interpretation of the meaning):

"Allah 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

Allah." And whoever takes Shaytaan (Satan) as a Wali (protector or helper) instead of Allah, has surely suffered a manifest loss" [an-Nisa' 4:119].

This clearly states that changing the creation of Allah, without permission from Him, may He be exalted, is in obedience to the orders of the Shaytaan and is disobedience to the Most Merciful, may He be glorified and exalted. Undoubtedly the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) cursed women who changed the creation of Allah for the purpose of beautification, and there can be no doubt that shaving the beard for the purpose of beautification is also included in the curse mentioned, because they both share a common reason, as is quite obvious!

I only said without permission from Allah, may He be exalted, so that no one will think that it is included in the changes mentioned, such as shaving the pubic hair and the like, which are things for which the Lawgiver has given permission, and has in fact encouraged or made them obligatory.

End quote from Aadaab az-Zafaaf (p. 136)

Allah criticised the mushrikeen when they produced a specious argument wanting thereby to make dead meat (meat of an animal that was not slaughtered in the prescribed manner) permissible, which was when they said: You do not eat meat of an animal that Allah slaughtered with His hand (meaning an animal that died of natural causes), yet you eat what you slaughter with your own hands!

Allah stated that this came from the inspiration of the devils, and that it was contrary to His laws, and that whoever obeyed the mushrikeen by making what is unlawful permissible by means of such specious arguments is a mushrik.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allah’s Name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal), for sure it is Fisq (a sin and disobedience of Allah). And certainly, the Shayaateen (devils) do inspire their friends (from mankind) to dispute with you,

and if you obey them[] [by making Al-Maytah (a dead animal) legal by eating it], then you would indeed be Mushrikoon (polytheists) [because they (devils and their friends) made lawful to you to eat that which Allah has made unlawful to eat and you obeyed them by considering it lawful to eat, and by doing so you worshipped them, and to worship others besides Allah is polytheism]” [al-An‘aam 6:121].

We will conclude this answer with a statement that the prohibition on plucking the eyebrows is proven in the Quran, for anyone who understands the Quran as it should be understood.

It was narrated that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said: May Allah curse the one who does tattoos and the one who has a tattoo done, the one who plucks eyebrows and the one who has her eyebrows plucked, and those who file teeth for the purpose of beautification, changing the creation of Allah.

News of that reached a woman of Banu Asad who was called Umm Ya‘qoob, who used to read the Quran. She came to him and said: What is this that I have heard about you cursing the one who does tattoos and the one who has a tattoo done, the one who has her eyebrows plucked, and those who file teeth for the purpose of beautification, changing the creation of Allah?

‘Abdullah said: Why should I not curse those whom the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) cursed, when it is in the Book of Allah?

The woman said: I have read the Mus-haf from cover to cover and I did not find it.

He said: If you had read it you would have found it. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning: “And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)” [al-Hashr 59:7].

The woman said: I think that I would see something of that on your wife now.

He said: Go and look.

So she entered upon the wife of ‘Abdullah and did not see anything.

She came to him and said: I did not see anything.

He said: If that were the case, we would not live with her.

Narrated by al-Bukhari (4886) and Muslim (2125)

We ask Allah to help and guide us and you.

And Allah knows best.