

Can Women Have More Than One Ear Or Nose Piercing?

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(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the scholars of Islam say concerning the following matter: is it permitted for women to have more than one ear or nose piercing? Having multiple piercings on the nose or ear is common practice in some places, but is this permissible?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

In Islam, women are not prohibited from adorning themselves as long they remain within the boundaries of Islamic law. One method of beautification is to pierce the ears and hang jewellery from them. During the blessed era of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, women pierced their ears, and he did not forbid them from this. This is what led jurists to declare this a permissible act.

Women in the time of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not pierce their noses. When jurists found woman in various localities piercing their noses as a form of adornment, they also declared this permissible. Piercing the nose has the same intention of adornment as piercing the ears, which meant beautification was not restricted to the latter action.

After this preamble, the answer to the question posed is as follows: piercing the nose and ears and hanging jewellery from them for the purpose of beautification is permissible.

If honourable Muslim women in a region have multiple piercings in their nose or ears, and hang jewellery from them for the purpose of increasing their beauty; there is no harm in this. The beautification that is attained from one piercing can also be attained from many piercings.

The style of adornment differs region to region. In one location it might be common to pierce the right nostril, some areas may prefer to pierce the left, whilst others may pierce both. Similarly, some women may have one ear piercing and wear earrings. Others may have many ear piercings in order to wear more jewellery (this is common in some regions of Pakistan), with it not being considered an unrefined practice in their respective lands. Multiple piercings for the purpose of beautification is permissible.

Adopting a style of piercing that is practised by unbelieving women, such as piercing of the nasal septum and hanging a pendant through; this is not allowed. This practice is not found amongst upstanding Muslim women. This is because it is prohibited to imitate both disbelievers and transgressors, and this shall be considered altering the creation of Allah without the approval of Islamic law, which is totally impermissible.

Yet, there are countless trends and customs across the world. If this type of piercing is common in an area amongst righteous Muslim women, it is permissible to wear such

piercing in that location. Otherwise, it is impermissible for the reasons mentioned previously.

Allah states regarding permissible adornment:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ط

Say you (O Beloved), 'Who has made unlawful the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His bondsmen, and pure sustenance?'¹

Evidence for piercing the ears can be found from the following hadith:

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى يوم العيد ركعتين، لم يصل قبلها ولا بعدها، ثم أتى النساء ومعه بلال، فأمرهن بالصدقة، فجعلت المرأة تلتقى قرطها

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās reports that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ offered two units of salah on Eid. He never offered any units of salah before or after this. He then went to the womenfolk with Bilāl and ordered for them to give charity. A woman took off her earrings and cast them (into the clothing of our master Bilāl عَنْهُ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ).²

It is written in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* regarding this hadith:³

واستدل به على جواز ثقب أذن المرأة لتجعل فيها القرط وغيرها مما يجوز لهن التزين به

In *Fatāwā Qādī Khān*:⁴

ولا بأس بثقب أذن الطفل لأنهم كانوا يفعلون ذلك في الجاهلية ولم ينكر عليهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

Al-Baḥr al-Rā’iq and *Tabyīn al-Ḥaqā’iq* discuss women piercing the ears:⁵

وكذا يجوز ثقب أذن البنات الأطفال لأن فيه منفعة الزينة، وكان يفعل ذلك في زمنه عليه الصلاة والسلام إلى يومنا هذا من غير تكبير

In *Al-Ikhtiyār li Ta’līl al-Mukhtār*:⁶

ولا بأس بثقب أذن البنات الأطفال لأنه لا يضر لمنفعة الزينة وإيصال الدم إلى الحيوان لمصلحة تعود إليه جائز كالختان

‘Ala’ al-Dīn al-Ḥaṣkafī said:

ولا بأس بثقب أذن البنات والطفل استحسانا ملتقط. قلت: وهل يجوز الخزام في الأنف، لم أراه

Ibn ‘Ābidīn al-Shāmī comments on the above by saying:⁷

لا بأس بثقب أذن الطفل من البنات وزاد في الحاوي القدسي: ولا يجوز ثقب أذان البنين قلت: إن كان مبايتزين النساء به كما هو في بعض البلاد فهو فيها كالثقب

القرط وقد نص الشافعية على جوازه

After citing al-Shāmī’s text, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khan added:

اقول: ولا شك ان ثقب الاذن كان شائعاً في زمن النبي صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم وقد اطلع صلى الله تعالى عليه وسلم ولم ينكره ثم لم يكن الايلا مال للزينة فكذا

هذا بحكم المساواة فثبت جوازه بدلالة النص المشترك في العلم بها المجتهدون وغيرهم كما تقر في مقرره

I say there is no doubt women having their ears pierced was widespread in the era of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He knew well of this, but did not prohibit it. The pain caused

¹ Al-Quran, 7:32, Translation from *Kanz al-Īmān*

² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, p. 158, published in Beirut

³ *Fatḥ al-Barī*, vol. 10, p. 331, published in Beirut

⁴ *Fatāwā Qādī Khān*, vol. 3, p. 251, published in Beirut

⁵ *Baḥr al-Ra’iq*, vol. 8, p. 554, published by Dar al-Kitab al-Islami

⁶ *Al Ikhtiyār li Ta’līl al-Mukhtār*, vol. 4, p. 167, published in Beirut

⁷ *Radd al-Muḥtār*, vol. 6, p. 420, publisher Dar al-Fikr, Beirut

by this (piercing the ears) is only for the sake of adornment, and this (piercing the nose) also. The ruling of both is the same. Permissibility of piercing the nose is established through textual implication, the knowledge of which is found between mujtahids and non-mujtahids alike, as proven in its place.⁸

The permissibility of the style of piercing is dependent upon the societal practices of the time. If there is no cause of prohibition (like resembling the disbelievers etc.), then there is no problem in this form of beautification, due to its establishment by way of *Dalalat al Nass*.

With regards to nose piercings, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khan said:

فان الشابت بدلالة النص كالشابت بالنص

They are free to choose the right side or left side. This is not a matter of Islamic law. It is dependent upon the custom of the time, so they can pierce whichever side they wish.⁹

In relation to the prohibition of altering the creation of Allah, the Quran announces:

فَطَرَتْ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ط

(that is) the established nature by Allah upon which He has created people. Do not change what Allah has created.¹⁰

It is also mentioned in the Quran:

وَأَضَلَّتْهُمْ وَآمَنَ بِئِنَّهُمْ وَلَا مَرْتَبَهُمْ فَلْيَبْتِكُنْ إِذَانَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَا مَرْتَبَهُمْ فَلْيَغَيِّرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ ط وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٧٣﴾

‘I swear I will definitely lead them astray, and I will certainly arouse (sinful) desires in them, and I will definitely order them that they will pierce the ears of animals (this is a ritual of idol worshippers), and I will definitely order them that they will change the creation of Allah.’ And whoever chooses the Devil for a friend instead of Allah, he has indeed suffered a manifest loss.¹¹

A hadith in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* explains:

لعن الله الواشيات والمستوشيات والنامصات والمتنصات والمتفلجات للحسن المغيرات خلق الله تعالى

Allah has cursed women who tattoo and have themselves tattooed, those who pluck hair from faces and have it plucked, those who make spaces between teeth for beautification, and those who change what Allah has created.¹²

Women piercing other parts of the body falls under this warning. Allama Badr al-Dīn al-‘Ainī writes:

هو غرز إبرة أو مسلة ونحوها في ظهر الكف أو البعصم أو الشفة وغير ذلك من بدن المرأة حتى يسيل منه الدم ثم يحشى ذلك البوضع بكحل أو نورة أو نيلة

لقد لعن الشارع من صنعت ذلك من النساء لأن فيه تغيير الخلق الأصلية

It [tattooing] is the insertion of a needle etc., into the back of the hand or the wrist, or the lip or other part of the body of a woman until the skin bleeds. Following this, the area is filled

⁸ *Fatāwā al-Razawīyah*, vol. 23, p. 482, Raza Foundation, Lahore

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ *Al-Quran*, 30:30, Translation from *Kanz al-Īmān*

¹¹ *Al-Quran*, 4:119, Translation from *Kanz al-Īmān*

¹² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 205, published in Karachi

with antimony, quicklime or indigo. Allah curses the women who do this because it is changing the original nature of creation.¹³

Regarding imitating a nation, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

من تشبه بقوم فهو منهم

Whoever imitates a nation is from them.¹⁴

In *Fatāwā Razawiyya*:

Care should be taken to avoid resemblance with women and transgressors. For example, it is disliked for a man to wear a shirt with lace trim, even if it does not exceed four fingers, due to its resemblance with the apparel of the transgressors and women. Scholars say if someone requests for the clothing or footwear of wrongdoers to be made for them (like the apparel of the naturalists in our time), it is disliked for the tailor or cobbler to fulfil this request, as they will be abetting sin. This establishes how it is sinful to adopt the attire of sinners.¹⁵

He further wrote:

The universal principle in relation to clothing is that whichever apparel is the style of disbelievers, innovators, and transgressors, is disliked or forbidden. In some cases, it can be an act of disbelief, in accordance with the degree of its specificity to them.¹⁶

In *Bahār-i-Sharī'at*:

This hadith is a universal principle. It distinguishes which people should and should not be imitated in clothing, habits and mannerisms. Resembling the disbelievers and transgressors is evil, and imitating the pious is praiseworthy. There are levels to this resemblance and each has a different ruling. Even the least level of imitation of the disbelievers and transgressors is disliked. Muslims should be distinguishable, and they should not resemble non-Muslims.¹⁷

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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¹³ *Umdat al-Qārī*, vol. 22, p. 97, published in Beirut

¹⁴ *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 2, p. 203, published in Lahore

¹⁵ *Fatāwā al-Razawiyyah*, vol. 22, p. 137, Raza Foundation, Lahore

¹⁶ *Fatāwā al-Razawiyyah*, vol. 22, p. 184, Raza Foundation, Lahore

¹⁷ *Bahār-i-Sharī'at*, vol. 3, p. 407, Maktabat al-Madina, Karachi