

Sunnet (1814, 82)

Süslenne (181504)

distinction between humans and animals. It might be suggested that since the prohibition is phrased in a feminine form there is a declaration that women should not resemble animals that have to be marked with a tattoo as a proof of ownership.

Teeth modification

The sources mention some forbidden techniques of artificial intervention in the natural look of teeth as a means to create white, healthy, and sharp teeth that signify health and youth, two of the most esteemed values/traits of appearance. The most common techniques were smoothing the teeth (*barada*), sharpening the teeth or just the canine teeth, and making them thin and serrated (*washshara*), and having the teeth separated one from another, thus opening spaces, particularly between the front teeth (*tafallaja*).³⁷ In addition to health and youth, many popular beliefs ascribed the space between the front teeth as predicting future wealth and happiness.

According to the jurists' descriptions, the professionals who practiced teeth modifications and their clients were women who were interested in improving their personal appearance for men. The discussion is phrased in a feminine form of the practitioners and consumers alike, as befits a patriarchal system that attributes to women the need to employ these techniques. Although men are not mentioned, it is impossible to decide whether they did or did not use these techniques, or whether the jurists decided that it is more appropriate to ascribe these inappropriate behaviours to women.

Ear piercing (*Thaqab*)

The discussion of ear-piercing is gendered and jurists from different schools of law agreed that boys' ears should not be pierced, as this a needless mutilation, but there is a difference of opinion regarding the piercing of girls' ears.³⁸ The common explanation for piercing girls' ears is the need to improve their personal appearance, because according to patriarchal assumption, they were born imperfect and need artificial additions to increase their sexual attraction for men. Conversely, boys do not need to improve their appearance because they were born perfect and do not need to increase their sexual attraction. In addition, an adoption of feminine adornments by boys will threaten males' identity and hegemony, and encourage homosexuality, a deviation of God's will and the right path. al-'Asrushani (died 1234) claims that it is permissible to pierce girls' ears for purposes of adornment. Because it was already a popular custom at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, it is not a condemned innovation (*bid'a*), but rather a continuation of the ancestors' way.³⁹ It is possible that boys are not mentioned in this tradition because it was a unique custom for girls, or because it was more appropriate to attribute it to girls. 'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (died 1350) permitted the piercing of girls' ears as a mean of adornment, but prohibited the piercing of boys' ears based on the

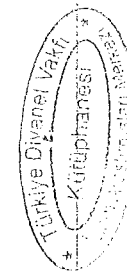
³⁷Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nas'i, *Sahih Sunan al-Nasa'i* (Riyad: Maktab al-Tarbiya al-'Arabi, 1988), Vol. 8, 188; Muslim, *Sahih*, Vol. 7, 107; 'Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Ihya' al-Ulum al-Din* (Bayrut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 1981), Vol. 1, 131; al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, Vol. 3, 140-1; 'Ibn Qudama, *al-Mughni*, Vol. 3, 77; al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 7, 36, 107, 532.

³⁸One verse in the Qur'an (43: 17) refers to female babies' adornment, but only in an indirect way. The classic Qur'anic commentators are those who expanded the verse's meaning and ascribed its content to women starting in early childhood.

³⁹al-'Asrushani, *Ahkam al-Sighar*, 146.

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argument that this is a mutilation with no religious or medical reason. 'As for piercing the ears of a boy, there is no use for it as this is a mutilation with no religious or medical reason and this is prohibited'.⁴⁰

Some jurists objected also to girls' piercing based on the following explanations: first, piercing is a painful and useless injury. 'Ibn al-Jawzi claimed that it is permissible to injure girls' bodies only for bloodletting as a medical treatment and for circumcision (*khitān*): There is no permission to pierce girls' ears for hanging earrings. This is a painful injury which is prohibited, unless it is for an important need such as bloodletting and circumcision'.⁴¹ Second, there is no importance to the adornment of girls; thus, the hanging of earrings is a needless exaggeration and it is preferable to be satisfied with the adornment of bracelets and necklaces: 'The adornment with earrings is not important, furthermore, their hanging is an exaggeration. They should be satisfied with bracelets and necklaces'.⁴²

Another aspect of females' piercing is the discussion of women's piercing and its connection to circumcision. According to Hadith tradition, Sara who was jealous of Hagar who was pregnant by Ibrahim, swore to mutilate three of Hagar's organs. Ibrahim was afraid that Sara would cut Hagar's ear or nose so instead, he permitted her to pierce her ears and to circumcise her. It is likely that Sara's intention was to wreck Hagar's face and make her unattractive; while Ibrahim who was fearful of the ruin of Hagar's personal appearance permitted Sara to pierce Hagar and circumcise her.⁴³

Circumcision

There is a difference between body modification rituals and body modification practices. While piercing, tattooing, and teeth modifications were modification practices, circumcision is a modification ritual. As a cultural ritual, circumcision reflects the traditions, symbolism and beliefs of society and it affects the individual participant and the group at the same time.⁴⁴ Bouhdiba adds that circumcision is a practice of Muslims and not of Islam thus, its main goal is to be manifested as a sign of membership in the Muslim community.⁴⁵

Circumcision of boys and girls is classified as body modification, although there is a special importance to the fact that it is practiced on the sex organs. The fact that the practice of the ceremony can take place anytime from a few days after birth until the eve of marriage is proof for its social-cultural context rather than for its physical one.⁴⁶ During the circumcision, like other cutting ceremonies, the individual is separated from his former group of membership, and after the cutting ceremony ends he automatically joins another defined group. The fact that the modification is permanent symbolizes the

⁴⁰Muhammad b. 'Abi Bakr 'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-Mawdu' fi 'Ahkam al-Mawlu'd* (D. M.: Sharaf al-Din al-Kutubi wa-Awladuhu, 1961), 181.

⁴¹'Ibn al-Jawzi, *Ahkam al-Nisa'*, 15.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuhfat al-Mawdu'd*, 166.

⁴⁴Armando Favazza, *Bodies Under Siege* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 200-1. For more about circumcision as a rite of passage see: Arnold Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 65-74; Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca: N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93-111; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), 94-130.

⁴⁵Abdelwahab Bouhdiba & Abdu Khal, 'Festivities of Violence: Circumcision and the Making of Men', in Mai Ghousoub & Emma Sinclair-Webb eds. *Imagined Masculinities* (London: Saqi Books, 1999), 26-7.

⁴⁶For more about the age of males' and females' circumcision in Islam see:

explanation for their authorization is that the believers were incapable of renouncing pre-Muslim body adornments and modifications, so some of them were Islamized and approved by the jurists. The need to justify the acceptance and tolerance towards some modifications and adornments caused the jurists to create an explanation that differentiates between impermanence and permanence, in turn, based on the criteria of the possibilities of removing them with a minimum of pain and investment in time and money.

Kuhl

The most known and popular cosmetic compound in Muslim societies was *kuhl* or *ithmid*.⁷ *Kuhl* as an eye decoration was legitimate, permitted because the change it creates is temporary and it can easily be removed painlessly. According to *Hadith* tradition the Prophet said: 'I hate women with no *kuhl* in her eyes'.⁸ The sources even mention that the Prophet Muhammad himself had a special vessel to store *kuhl* (*mikhala*) and that he used to sprinkle drops of *kuhl* into his eyes every evening.⁹ The use of *kuhl* is gendered when discussing women's personal appearance during two phases in their adult life. Jurists declared that a few months after a divorce, or the death of the husband, a period that is called '*idda*',¹⁰ Muslim women have forbidden the use of *kuhl* as a means to adorn themselves until it is proved that they do not bear the child of the divorcer or of the deceased. This prohibition serves the patriarchal need to ascribe the off-spring to a recognized father by declaring that women during their '*idda*' cannot re-practice their sexuality and thus do not need to adorn themselves. However, if there is a medical danger of damage to the eye it is permitted to use *kuhl* during the night and remove it in the morning.¹¹

Henna

Henna is used as a dye for the body and the hair for aesthetic, ritual, and magical reasons and as a medication for health reasons.¹² Body adornment with henna is simultaneously humiliating when marking concubines, and empowering as a means for beautification when used on the skin as a form of temporary body modification. The practice of using henna is largely associated with women as practitioners and consumers throughout a long history. The concept of *al-khidab bi-l-hinaa*,¹³ meaning, dyeing with henna, describes various cosmetic options that use a mixture of the henna planet for adornment such as dying the hair or body parts and writing inscriptions on them.

The following discussion will not present the medical use of henna or the practice of dyeing head and bodily hair with it.¹⁴ Rather it will focus on the widespread use of henna for adornment whether to dye body parts, or to write inscriptions on them as a temporary tattoo. Although the medical use of henna and the question of dyeing the hair is common to females and males, the discussion of adorning body parts and dyeing them with henna is phrased in only in a feminine form. Married women and concubines daubed the palms of their hands or their hands, nails and the soles of their feet with henna as a mean of adornment for their husbands or masters. They continued this practice throughout their lives even when they grew older and were no longer sexually attractive in order to groom their hands' skin and preserve the differentiation between women and men.¹⁵ It is mentioned that while women swore their oath (*bay'a*) to the Prophet they stretched their hands to him, but because their hands looked like men's hands, namely with no henna, the Prophet refused to accept their oath until they had rubbed their nails with henna as a sign of femininity.¹⁶ According to another tradition, the Prophet held a hand that was stretched to him through a curtain. When he understood that it was a female's hand, he sent her to rub her hands with henna.¹⁷

Here we have a norm of a visual sign of femininity that was set-up by the Prophet who ordered women to dye their hands and or their fingernails with henna as a means of differentiation between them and men. At the same time, he forbade *mukhannathun*¹⁸ (effeminate) from imitating this practice because a feminine manner of nails was condemned and forbidden. The need for this prohibition is reflected in the descriptions of the *mukhannathun* who used to dye the palms of their hands and legs or their finger and toe nails with henna as a part of their personal grooming and in partial imitation of women's appearance.¹⁹ The same argument is used to justify the prohibition of dyeing male children hands with henna.²⁰ According to al-Washa (died 936), in 10th century Baghdad concubines and slave-girls applied henna to their hands and feet and wrote with it the name of their lover or master as an enticement and a declaration of fidelity.²¹ It is interesting to note that henna decorations on feet are a reflection of women having a status that does not demand daily household tasks otherwise the decorations would disappear.

In pre-modern and modern times, henna was in use as a mean of protection from the evil eye. Henna patterns were drawn to protect women from the evil eye and sometimes even to safeguard the spirits of the mother and the newborn baby.²² Some henna body

¹⁴For more about the use of Henna for dyeing head and bodily hair see: Hadas Hirsch, 'Hair: Practices and Symbolism in Traditional Muslim Societies', *Sociology of Islam* 5 (2017): 33–55 or Mernissi's descriptions in Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1995), 231–42.

¹⁵Ibn al-Jawzi, *Ahkam al-Nisa'*, 97.

¹⁶al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, Vol. 8, 253.

¹⁷Ibid.

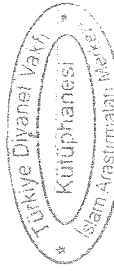
¹⁸Muhammad b. Mukkaram 'Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* (Bayrut: Dar Lisan al-Arab, 1970), Vol. 1, 908; Muhammad b. Ya qub al-Firuzabadi, *Al-Qamus al-Muht* (Bayrut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1995), 155; Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon*, Vol. 2, 815; al-Murtada al-Zabidi, *Taj al-Arus* (Bayrut: Dar al-Jalil, 1965), Vol. 5, 240–3.

¹⁹al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, Vol. 1, 295.

²⁰Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Asrushani, *Ahkam al-Sighar* (Bayrut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997), 145.

²¹Abu Taysib Muhammad b. 'Ahmad b. 'Ishaq b. Yihya al-Washa', *al-Zarf wal-Zurfa'* (Bayrut: 'Alam al-Kutub, 1985), 342, 344.

²²Catherine Cartwright-Jones, 'Developing Guidelines on Henna: A Geographical Approach' (Ph.D. Diss., Kent State University, 2006), 24; Carrie Griffin Basas, 'Henna Tattooing: Cultural Tradition Meets Regulation', *JAMA Dermatology* 6 (2007): 781.



⁷Fabian Kas, 'Antimony', *EP*, Vol. 2, 21; 'Ali 'Ibn 'Isma'il 'Ibn Sida, *al-Mukhassas* (Bulaq: al-Matba'a al-Kubra al-'Amiriyya, 1898–1903), Vol. 1–4, 58.

⁸Abu al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali 'Ibn al-Jawzi, *Ahkam al-Nisa'* (Bayrut: Dar al-Galil, 1984), 97.

⁹Muhammad b. Isa al-Tirmidhi, *Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (al-Riyad: Maktab al-Tarbiya al-Arabi, 1988), Vol. 2, 151.

¹⁰Shams al-Din Al-Sarakhsi, *Kitab al-Mabust* (Bayrut: Dar al-kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1994), Vol. 5–6, 559; 'Abu Zakariya Muhi al-Din al-Nawawi, *al-Majmu': Sharh al-Muhadhdhab* (al-Qahira, Matba'at al-'Asima, 1966), Vol. 18, 185–7.

¹¹al-Nawawi, *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, Vol. 2, 149; Muwaffiq al-Din 'Abd 'Alla b. 'Ahmad 'Ibn Qudama, *al-Mughni* (Bayrut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1972), Vol. 9, 168.

¹²Efraim Lev & Zohar Amar, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Geniza* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183–5; Hanne Schönicg, 'Henna', *EP*, Vol. 4, 105.

¹³Edward William Lane, *Lane Arabic English Lexicon* (Bayrut: Librairie du Liban, 1980), Vol. 2, 753.