



NOSE; FACTS AND MYTH

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ABSTRACT: Objectives: The nose is used more than any other organs of the body in different cultures as a symbol. This symbol may indicate honor, shame or sex. Some of them are facts and others are myths. This paper reviews most of these symbols. **Conclusions:** The nose is used in many cultures in different ways. It is used daily in greetings within Arabic Gulf area. It is the most used body organ in proverbs. Myths about its relation to sexual activity are funny ones. Scientifically, priapism in the nose occurs in sickle cell disease. Vicarious menstruation may occur in the nose resulting into epistaxis.

Keywords: Nose; myth; sex; proverbs; priapism, menstruation

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The nose is used more than any other organs of the body in different cultures as a symbol. Since ancient times, the nose has been considered the organ of reputation. This symbol may indicate honor, shame or sex. This is may be due to that it is the most anterior organ of the body and in the centre of face.

The Egyptian priests considered a large nose to be a symbol of wisdom. Greeks and Romans gave great importance to the beauty of the nose and preferred long, sculptured noses.

In gulf region, till now they greet themselves by touches of the tip of the nose (figure 1), instead of shaking hands. They also till now point to the nose saying absher (figure 2) if they agree for a request. Men usually urge their children in big Arabic families to be proud and arrogant by keeping tell them turn your nose up. As the nose and the eyes are the only facial features displayed in traditional women's Islamic clothing, these women are determined to make sure what shows looks good. So, a lot of rhinoplasty are done for Arabic women.

Females in India and Pakistan wear golden ring to the ala of the right nostril as a sort of body beauty. Hindu nose piercing has certain meaning. Some people said that this is a symbol of a married

woman. Others say, it will reduce the pain when a woman gets her period¹. For surprise while I was roaming in an European city in 2006, I watched a bigger using his nose instead of the mouth to blow a pipe to attract visitors to help him (figure 3). In history, some tribal societies in Asia used to tattoo the nose of beautiful girls to protect them against rape as they will appear ugly (figure 4). It is well known that the most beautiful nose in history is that of the Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun (figure 5).

In most of countries and especially Arabic ones, it is a symbol of honor. Arabic people say akser anfa (break your nose) if they want to humiliate someone as in their culture the nose is a sense of honor. They also say ragm anfa (against your nose), if they are ordering someone to do anything against his or her will.

In a very nice paper, the nose was used as symbol of sex². The length of the nose gives an idea about the length of penis. The longer the nose, the longer the penis. In folklore, there is the widespread belief that people with big noses have an excessive sexual power. They even described sneezing as little orgasm. They also made a relation between females genitalia and the nose. Both the nose and the private parts have orifices, the peak of the nose is said to

correspond to the clitoris and the nostrils are said to remind us of the vulva. Clitoris was called the nose of the vagina. However, some women get arousal sexually by rubbing the nose with their private parts. Olfaction and its effect as stimulator for sex is another relation of the nose role for sexual pleasure. Smell sensation of females to males and vice versa increases the desire for sex. Sexual practice can include the mutual rubbing of the nose on the partner's genitals, which clearly demonstrates the importance of smell in the vita sexualis².

Scientifically, there are publications which support the relation of the nose to sex organs. Priapism of the turbinates is one of the rhinologic problems of sickle cell disease. It is a cause of nasal obstruction in sickle cell anaemia. The blood supply to the turbinates has been described as pseudoerectile and similar to that of the penis³. In another published paper, the authors observed that the cavernous structure of the conchae is comparable to the erectile tissue of the penis and clitoris⁴. Nasal congestion often accompanied by epistaxis, not uncommonly occurs at the time of menses and may be so regular as to warrant the term vicarious menstruation. Excision of the conchae in young animals results in hypoplasia of the sex organs⁴. Degenerative changes in the nasal mucosa have been observed as a sequence to castration, which could be reversed by estrogen injections⁴.

Punishment for criminals by cutting off the nose had been practiced in many cultures. It has been used as punishment for adultery as a method of castration.

There is a verse in Quran which mentioned the nose twice in Surah Al-Maedah, Verse number 45. Its translation is that " And We ordained for them therein a life for life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a

tooth, and for wounds is legal retribution, but whoever gives [up his right as] charity, it is an expiation for him And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed – then it is those who are the wrongdoers⁵. So, the victim has the right to injure the nose of the offender same same as he got from the assault. Muslims when they read Quran they will get ten good deeds for each letter in Arabic. Nose (alanf) has 5 letters in Arabic. So, if any one reads that part of verse (Ayah) a nose for a nose (alanf bealanf), he or she will get one hundred and ten good deeds.

The nose acts as a room for satin was mentioned in Islamic books. Muslims are instructed to clean their nose three times when they get up by water to expel the possibility of existence of devil inside the nasal cavity all the night⁶.

The nose also has been used as site of protection against evil eye and malevolent beings by wearing of silver ring in the nostril or wearing of Quran verses which were written in small metallic plate and is attached to one of the nostrils.

People may tease others by commenting badly on their nose shape in different cultures. If one feels a relative did not respect him or her in front of others, he or she will tell him you put my nose on the ground. It is used also as a sort of threatening, I will weep the ground with your nose.

Even in dreams, the nose has explanation. If women dream of a nose, they are mostly very contented with her partners, the opposite can be of course the case if the nose is injured or is ugly. If a man dreams of the nose, one good intimate partner should guarantee⁷. Table I is a list of the supposed characteristics that you can read from a person's nose type. While today they may seem more myth than fact, some people believe certain nasal features carry important insights into a person's character⁸.

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Bulbous tip	You have a preoccupation with saving
Small tip	You do not consider money important
Flared nostrils	You are a big spender and an adventurous risk-taker
Long nose	Routine work is not your speciality
Short nose	You have a talent for old-fashioned hard work but you crave emotional stability
Broad nose	You have stability and a purposeful nature and a powerful sex drive
Long and narrow nose	You are intelligent witty and engaging
Long and broad nose	You have lots of staying power and concentration
Fat nose	You are optimistic and are usually good in business
Ski-jump nose	You are intuitive
Arched	You are elegant and creative

Table-I. The shape of nose and the personality

The nose has also been expressed in proverbs in different cultures as shown in table II⁹.

Arabic	Your nose is a part of you even if it was cut
Arabic	If the camel once gets his nose in the tent, his body will soon follow
Arabic	Do not put the nose in other people matters
Indian	The baby is not yet born, and yet you say that his nose is like his grandfather's
Germany	He sticks his nose in everything
Germany	Justice has a waxen nose
Germany	Never tickle the nose of a sleeping bear
French	A big nose never spoiled a handsome face
French	A person is unlucky who falls on his back and breaks his nose
French	Who blows his nose too hard makes it bleed
French	The one with a running nose always wants to blow someone else's.
Irish	It's often a man's mouth broke his nose
Dutch	He who hurts his nose, hurts his face
Spanish	Wipe the nose of your neighbour's son, and marry him to your daughter
Swedish	Who is in front everywhere often gets a nose-burn
Danish	Keep your nose out of another's mess
Russian	Let everyone pick his own nose
Hungarian	He crushes pepper under the nose of somebody
African	It is difficult for two long-nosed lovers to kiss
Tibetan	It is easy to see the fly on the other person's nose, while ignoring the horse on your own

Table-II. Proverbs include the nose in different cultures



Fig-1. Greetings



Fig-4. Mutilation



Fig-2. Acceptance of request



Fig-3. Job

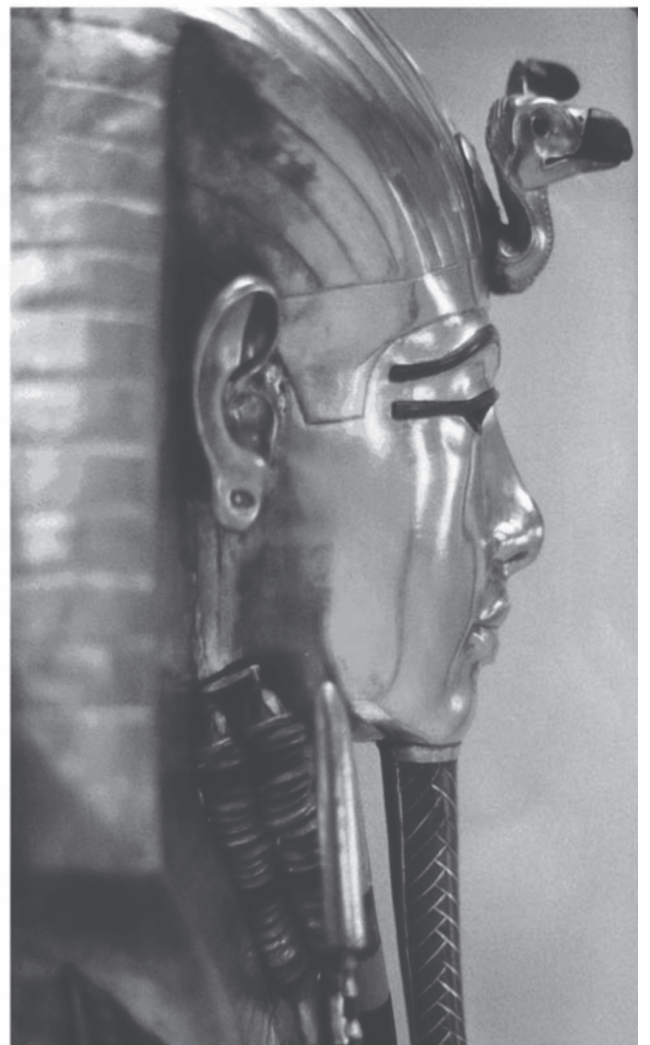


Fig-5. Tutankhamoun golden mask

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