

Letting the beard grow

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: Some imams told me that there is no proof that letting the beard grow is obligatory, and that increasing beard growth is not counted among acts of worship that we are ordained to perform, but it is a tradition of the Arabs. So is this saying true? What is the argument of those who say so? Give us a fatwa about this issue and may Allaah reward you.

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

Know that in principle, letting grow the beard is obligatory according to the majority of the scholars of the jurisprudential Schools, and among them those of the four Schools and others. Ibn Hazm has even reported that there is Ijmaa` (a scholarly consensus) as regards this issue¹. The reference of the Ijmaa` is the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ hadeeth:

- "Trim closely the moustaches and let the beards grow, oppose the Magians"² and his saying صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
- "Do the opposite of what the polytheists do. Have full beards and shorten the moustaches"³ and in another narration:
- "Cut the moustaches short and keep the beards"⁴.

These are some arguments regarding the obligation of leaving the beard grow and the prohibition from shaving it, as this goes against the order of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Moreover, Allaah عَزَّوَجَلَّ warns against disobeying the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ by saying:

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

[And let those who oppose the Messenger's (Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commandment (i.e. his Sunnah legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements, etc.) (among the sects) beware, lest some

¹ See: "Maraatib al-Ijmaa'" by Ibn Hazm (157).

² Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Purification" (hadeeth 603), Ahmad (hadeeth 9020), Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 710), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Clothes" (hadeeth 5892), Muslim, chapter of "Purification" (hadeeth 625) and Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 709), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا.

⁴ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Clothes" (hadeeth 5893), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا.

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Fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant, etc.) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.]⁵

Also, because shaving it is changing Allaah's creation. Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ said, reporting the saying of Iblees (Satan):

وَلَا مَرْنَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ

...and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allaah⁶

That is why shaving it is considered a mutilation, Ibn Taymeeyah said: "Shaving it (i.e. the beard) is like a woman who shaves her head's hair or more serious, as it is considered among the prohibited mutilation". In fact, in shaving the beard, there is imitation of women. Besides, Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ made men beautiful by their beards and made them different from women by them.

Furthermore, Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما narrated that: "The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cursed effeminate men (who assume the manners of women) and those women who assume the manners of men"⁷, because shaving the beard is changing the Fitrah (natural state) with which Allaah تعالى has created mankind. Besides, shaving it is an imitation of the disbelievers, and the Sharee'ah ordered us to be different from them, as in the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sayings: "**Be different from the polytheists**" and: "**Oppose the Magians**". For this reason, the one who shaves it incurs sin, as he does not abide by the obligation of leaving it grow, as mentioned in the previous proofs. We have no doubt that growing a beard is among Sunan Al-Fitrah (practices that are in accordance with the natural inclinations of man) that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ applied regularly. Besides, there has been nothing reported indicating that a Companion shaved his beard; on the contrary, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ordered to let it grow. Thus, it has become an apparent feature of Muslims by which they are distinguished from polytheists and deviated people.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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⁵ Soorah an-Noor [24:63]

⁶ Soorah an-Nisaa' [4:119]

⁷ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Clothes" (hadeeth 5885), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Marriage" (hadeeth 1979) and Ahmad (hadeeth 2306), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما.