

IMPORTANCE OF BEARD

Source: Darul Uloom Bury, UK

The society we live in today has had a great impact not only on Muslims but on many other religious people too. The society we live in today has had a great impact not only on Muslims but on many other religious people too. This is to such an extent that people are often ready to criticise an injunction of their faith merely because it does not comply with ways, fads or modes of today's society.

Is this what we call faith?

All religious scholars are unanimous that that all Prophets عليهم السلام kept beards. Furthermore, the Prophets have classified the beard as something (that is) part of nature (*Fitrah*). 'Allamah Suyuti explains human nature is based on keeping a beard and does not need a special order to be part of a particular faith. Thus, the beard is part of human nature to which all humans (men) have to adhere.

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ mentions in a *Hadeeth* 10 points of nature. Out of these ten, he ﷺ mentions is the lengthening of the beard. Allah the Almighty narrates the incident when Sayyiduna Harun Alaihissalam calls out to his brother Sayyiduna Musa عليهم السلام, "O son of my mother! Do not seize (me) by my beard, and nor by my head." (94:20)

This verse clearly shows that Prophet Harun عليهم السلام had a lengthy beard.

The first nation ever to shave their beards was the nation to whom Allah the Almighty sent Sayyiduna Lut عليهم السلام, the people of Sadoom (Sodom). Hadhrat Hasan Basri reports a *Hadeeth* that the nation of Lut was punished for 10 sins they committed; the Prophet ﷺ mentioned 'trimming the beard' from the 10 sins. These sins then resulted in severe punishments from Allah the Almighty as mentioned in the Holy Quran in numerous chapters. Gradually other nations also started to trim and shave their beards but were less in number. However in the 17th century, the King of Russia, Patrice propagated 'shaving of the beard' in Europe and was successful in his mission. In the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and western influences swamped nations. By the mid 20th century, these influences had penetrated the Muslim world, which has gradually resulted on corrupting Muslims. Today, this is the reason why we see that most Muslims unfortunately either trim their beard or shave it off.

We have to remember that cultures change day in day out, cultures are man made; hung on man's ideologies, perceptions and ideas. On the other hand, the *Shariah*, the Islamic holy divine law is from Allah the creator of all, who is the best of all planners. The *Shariah* is such that it is compatible to every era till the day of judgement.

In the *Shariah* (Islamic law), it is *Haram* (unlawful) for men to shave the beard, this ruling is with the *Ijma* (consensus) of the scholars of all the Schools of Thought. Among the scholars who have attested to this consensus, include Allamah Mahmood Khattab G, Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri Hanafi, Allamah Muhammad Ashraf Ali Thanwi, Allamah Hasfaki, Allamah Kamal Ibn Al-Humam Hanafi, Sheikh Ahmad Nafrawi Maliki, Allamah Abu Muhammad Ibn Hazm Zahiri, Allaamah Shaykh ul islaam Ibn Tayimyyah, and many other scholars.

Various present day scholars have misunderstood from what some *Shafiee* scholars have stated that to shave the beard is *Makrooh* (disliked). This has been mentioned by Imam Nawawi, Rafi'ee. Allamah Abbadi states, Allamah Ibn Rif'ah refutes

this, as *Imam Shafiee* has mentioned in his famous work *Kitab Al-umm*, which is thought to be one of his final works: “to shave the beard is *Haram*.”

This has also been mentioned by *Allamah Haleemi*, *Allamah Qaffal Shashi*, *Allamah Azrai* and many other *Shafiee* scholars.

There are many *Ahadeeth*, which clearly state the above. Primarily the famous *Hadeeth* narrated on the authority of ‘*Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar* and others that the Prophet ﷺ ordered us to lengthen our beards. This *Hadeeth* has been narrated with six different words, all of which refer to lengthening the beard and leaving it alone without interfering. This is why in the *Shariah* (Islamic law) if one was to shave the beard or trim it to less than a fist length then he will be sinful. *Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri* writes, “None of the scholars have permitted trimming the beard to less than a fist length.” Various other scholars such as *Allamah Hasfaki*, *Allamah Ashraf Ali Thanwi* and *Mufti Rasheed Ahmad* have mentioned similar to this.

The Prophet ﷺ’s beard was dense, and would cover his chest. The *Sahaba* ﷺ realised, by the movement of he ﷺ’s beard, that the prophet ﷺ would recite from the Holy Quran in *Zuhr* and *Asr*; clearly indicating that the beard was lengthy. In the same manner *Hadhrat Abu bakr* ﷺ and *Umar* ﷺ possessed a dense beard. *Hadhrat Uthman* ﷺ possessed a fine beard stretched out in length where as *Hadhrat Ali* ﷺ’s beard was spread in width covering the area between his shoulders. Therefore, when the Prophet ﷺ ordered us to lengthen our beards we have to follow his and his *Sahaba*’s *Sunnah* and their method of keeping a beard. The Prophet ﷺ says, “Hold fast unto my ways and the ways of the guided caliphs after me.”

Hadhrat Molana Hussein Ahmad Madni writes, “It is clearly narrated from *Hadhrat Umar* ﷺ, *Ammar Ibn Yasir* ﷺ, *Abdullah Ibn Umar* ﷺ and *Jabir* ﷺ that their beards were more than a fist length, and they would order the Muslims to do the same.” *Hadhrat Sheikh Moulana Muhammad Zakaria* writes, “It has not been narrated from any of the *Sahabah* that they trimmed their beards to less than a fist”. When *Abdullah Ibn Umar* ﷺ would perform *Haji* or *Umrah*, he would hold on to his beard with his fist and trim the remaining. In reality, we have explicitly been ordered to increase and lengthen our beards without any interference whatsoever, but as *Abdullah Ibn Umar* ﷺ and other *Sahaba* would often trim their beards up to a fist length, the scholars have given permission to do this.

In the eighth year of Hijri, the Prophet ﷺ sent a letter with *Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Huthafah* to *Feroz*, the king of Persia. *Feroz* tore the letter apart and ordered *Bazan*, the king of Yemen to send two officers to the Prophet ﷺ to kidnap him. They arrived in *Madinah Munawwarah*, on seeing the Prophet ﷺ, started to shiver. However the Prophet ﷺ asked them, “Who ordered you to leave your moustache and shave your beard?” They replied, “Our Lord” (referring to their King). The Prophet ﷺ declared, “But my Lord orders me to trim the moustache and lengthen the beard”. Those who shave their beards should decide for themselves whether their Lord is *Allah* or someone else! Just imagine how much pain the Prophet ﷺ must be going through due to all of those people who shave, as these two men were fire worshippers, but never the less, the Prophet ﷺ could not bear to look at their faces.

Some people have a misconception that lengthening the beard is unattractive. This view is seriously flawed as the Prophets especially *Sayyiduna Muhammad* ﷺ possessed great beauty as *Allah* the almighty chooses those who are perfect in

character and creation. It is reported in a narration, “Allah the Almighty sent each and every Prophet with a beautiful face and a melodious voice.” Many *Sahaba* relate that the Prophet ﷺ possessed the most beautiful face.

Allah the most wise has distinguished between men and women just as he has distinguished between the male and female animals; and the distinguishing feature in itself holds great beauty. Allah the almighty mentions some of his bounties he has bestowed upon Mankind, he says “He (Allah) fashioned you and perfected your shapes.” (64:40) Some scholars narrate a weak narration “Glory to the one who beautified the men with beards and the women with plaits”. Allamah IbnAl-Qayyim explains, “The beard has many benefits, such as beauty and dignity.”

In many *Ahadeeth*, the prophet ﷺ has cursed men who imitate women and those women who imitate men. There is no doubt that shaving the beard is a clear imitation of a woman’s face.

Many scholars have stated that shaving the beard is *Tagyeeru Khalqillah* (changing the creation of Allah). Allah mentions in the Holy Quran the promise of Satan, “Indeed I will order them (Mankind) to change the nature created by Allah” (4:119). In effect, the one who shaves his beard is obeying Satan. The great Caliph Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz would say, “Shaving the beard is *Muthlah* (mutilation). Verily the Prophet ﷺ has prohibited *Muthlah*”. A similar verdict has also been narrated from the great Imam of Madina Munawwarah, Imam Malik.

The sin of shaving the beard is not only a *Kabirah* (Major) sin, but it is also *Bagawah* (open offence). The prophet ﷺ says, “My nation will be forgiven except those who sin in the night and then boast about their sin the following day.” Although one may not boast about this sin verbally but indirectly, he will boast by showing his face to the people. Some sins are limited to the time of the act or omission, for example, *Zina* (adultery & fornication) is a grave sin; the sinner is sinning for the duration of that act. Whereas this sin’s time remains for as long as the beard remains shaven or trimmed to less than a fist’s length. The person will be regarded a sinner for every second his face is devoid of a proper beard, therefore sinning for that entire time span. this means it’s severity aggregates and persists more than other sins.

In the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster, many Muslims attained the status of *Shahadah* (Martyrdom). Due to the excess amount of bodies it was difficult to identify each individual. Regarding *Salat Ul-Janazah* the problem arose that how will we be able to differentiate between a Muslim and non-Muslim? Finally, it was decided that the prayer would be lead upon those deceased who possessed beards. People in the world have hopes that people will benefit them after their death, by performing *Salat Al-Janazah* and carrying out other deeds. However, in a situation like this, would this be possible?

Similarly in the grave when the deceased is asked, one of the questions is, “What would you say about this person? (Referring to the Prophet ﷺ) Some scholars are to the opinion that the Prophet ﷺ will be present in front of the deceased! How do you think the Prophet ﷺ will react when he sees a person who has shaved his beard?

Furthermore, on the day of judgement when the Prophet ﷺ will intercede for the Ummah and quench the thirst of the Ummah at the *Hawdh of Kauthar*, the angels will stop some of the people. The Prophet ﷺ will say that these people are from my Ummah (nation); thus let them proceed. The angels will reply, “You do not know what innovations they invented after you”. The Prophet ﷺ will reply “Destruction for those who innovated after me”. A point to ponder upon is that the Prophet ﷺ will not recognise these innovators because they will possess beards and their outer Islamic appearance, so what about those who do not possess beards. The Prophet ﷺ will not need to be informed that these were innovators, as he mentions in another *Hadeeth* that the deceased will be resurrected in the condition he died in. The Prophet ﷺ will not

even look at these people just as this would hurt the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ says, “Whoever so hurts me, displeases *Allah*. And who ever displeases *Allah*, is likely to be punished.”

People claim to love the Prophet ﷺ but still do not keep a beard. What kind of love is this? There was once a poet in the city of Delhi, *Mirza Qateel*, famous for praising the Prophet ﷺ. An Iranian citizen decided to visit this poet assuming that he was a great pious scholar. On arriving in Delhi, he was informed that this poet has gone to the barbers. He proceeds towards the barbers and what does he see? The poet is having his beard shaved. He cries out “‘O’ the one who claims to love the Prophet ﷺ, you are shaving your beard!” The poet replies “yes, but I am not hurting anyone’s feelings”, they continued their debate. Finally, the Iranian exclaimed, “you claim that you are not hurting anyone’s feelings, I warn you that you are hurting the feelings of the one who is the leader in this world and the hereafter, the Prophet ﷺ”. On hearing this remark, he fainted, when he regained consciousness he accepted and admitted his mistake, repented to *Allah*, The most forgiving and thanked the Iranian for guiding him.

In reality when a person loves someone, he will fulfil every command of his. We cannot see the love a person possesses in his heart for someone except by his actions. We have been guided to judge people according to their apparent and visible actions. The Prophet ﷺ has repeatedly said, “I have not been ordered to cut open the hearts of people.” (to see their intention) When a disbeliever recites the *Shahadah*, he will be classified as a Muslim, despite of what his beliefs are in reality. Thus if a person shaves his beard it cannot be judged that he loves the Prophet ﷺ. Nowadays we see the love people possess for celebrities and football players, which is evident; people are ready to dress the way they dress, live the way they live; emulating them in every way possible, so why is it that people are not ready to accept the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ?

Unfortunately, many Muslims nowadays mock and joke about the beard. If someone has a beard, he is labelled a ‘beast’. To make a mockery of any minor order of the *Shariah* is *KUFR* without any doubt; the same applies to undermining a sin. The great *Muhaddith Allamah Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Siddiq Al-Gimari* says, “To mock the beard is *KUFR* with the consensus of all the Muslims”. The consequences of this would be that the *Nikah* (Marriage) would invalidate and renewing the *Imaan* (faith) will be necessary.

May Allah Accept us all and give us the tawfeeq to practice Islam completely.