143669 - The limits of the moustache and ruling on the sides of the moustache

the question

Allah has blessed me by enabling me to follow the Sunnah, as He enabled me to let my beard grow. I want to know what are the limits of the moustache so that I can trim it accordingly. When I want to cut my moustache, I am afraid that I may remove part of the beard, but if I leave it alone, I am afraid that I may be leaving part of the moustache and thus going against the Sunnah, and so on. Hence I want to adhere completely to the Sunnah. So what are the limits of the moustache on the face that the Muslims should reduce?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The moustache is a name given to the hair that comes down over the mouth, and this is how the jurists defined it. See: *Al-Misbah al-Munir fi Gharib ash-Sharh al-Kabir*, p. 308; *Al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 25/316.

There is no confusion about the upper and lower limits of the moustache, because it cannot be confused with the beard. Rather what may be unclear is the two sides of the moustache. Some of the jurists regard them as part of the moustache, as is the view of the Hanbalis and one view among the Hanafis and Malikis; others regard them as part of the beard, such as some of the Hanafis, or as part of the moustache, but they say that there is nothing wrong with leaving them, such as the Shafa`is.

The correct view is the first one, because of the command to trim the sides of the moustache. Ahmad (21780) narrated that Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) went out and joined some elders of the Ansar

who had white beards, and said: “O Ansar, dye your hair red [with henna] or yellow [with safflower or saffron] and be different from the people of the Book.” I said: O Messenger of Allah, the people of the Book wear pants and do not wear waist wrappers. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Wear pants and waist wrappers; be different from the people of the Book.” I said: O Messenger of Allah, the people of the Book wear khuffs and do not wear sandals. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Wear khuffs and sandals; be different from the people of the Book.” We said: O Messenger of Allah, the people of the Book trim their beards and let the sides of their moustaches grow. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Trim the sides of your moustaches and let your beards grow; be different from the people of the Book.” Al-Albani classed this hadith as authentic (hasan) in *Sahih al-Jaami`*, no. 13070.

It was narrated by Ibn Hibban (5476) and al-Bayhaqi in *as-Sunan* that Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Something was said to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about the Zoroastrians and he said: “They let the sides of their moustaches grow and shave their beards, so be different from them.” Ibn `Umar used to trim the sides of his moustache as he would shear his sheep and camel. Shu`ayb al-Arna`ut said in his commentary: Its isnad is authentic (hasan). Al-Albani said in *As-Silsilah as-Sahihah* (6/333): This is a good (jayyid) isnad and its narrators are trustworthy; there were some reservations about Ma`qil ibn `Ubaydillah, but they do not affect the status of the report. End quote.

Al-`Iraqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The scholars differed as to how the moustache is to be trimmed: should the two ends of the moustache also be trimmed, or should they be left as many people leave them? Al-Ghazali said in *Ihya’ `Ulum ad-Din*: There is nothing wrong with leaving the ends of the moustache, as `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and others did, because that does not cover the mouth and does not dip into one’s food, because they do not reach the food. End quote.

Abu Dawud narrated from Abu’z-Zubayr that Jabir said: We used to let the ends of the moustache grow, except during Hajj or `umrah. Some of the scholars regarded it as disliked to let the ends of

the moustache grow, because it is resembling the non-Arabs and even resembling the Zoroastrians and the people of the Book. This view is more likely to be correct, because of the report narrated by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih* from `Umar, who said: Something was said to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about the Zoroastrians and he said: “They let the sides of their moustaches grow and shave their beards, so be different from them.”. And Ibn `Umar used to trim the size of his moustache as he would shear his sheep and camel. Ahmad narrated in his *Musnad* (21780) when narrating the hadith of that Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him): We said: O Messenger of Allah, the people of the Book trim their beards and let the sides of their moustaches grow. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Trim the sides of your moustaches and let your beards grow; be different from the people of the Book.”(*Tarh at-Tathrib*, 2/77).

It says in *Matalib Uli an-Nuha* (1/85): Trimming the moustache is mentioned in the hadith, which refers to trimming the hair that comes down over the lips, or trimming the sides of the moustache, but shaving it is more appropriate [meaning that that was stated by Imam Ahmad]. It says in *An-Nihayah*: Shaving the moustaches means going to extremes in cutting it, and that includes the sides of the moustache, because of the hadith of Ahmad: “Trim the sides of your moustaches and do not resemble the Jews.” End quote.

See: *Hashiyat Ibn `Abidin*, 2/550; *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, 6/144; *Al-Mawsu`at al-Fiqhiyyah*, 25/322.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. 103623.

And Allah knows best.