75525 - Doubts about the obligation to let the beard grow and answers to them

the question

A number of Muslim scholars have issued fatwas stating that letting the beard grow is obligatory for every Muslim, and that the reason for that is so that they will not resemble the kuffaar, as is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in more than one hadeeth. But everyone can see on television that many of the Jews let their beards grow, so doesn't that contradict the reason for letting the beard grow, and may alter the ruling and make it Sunnah only?
Similarly, wasn't the command to be different from the kuffaar by letting the beard grow due to the Muslims mixing with them at the time of the Islamic conquests, so the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) wanted to make us distinct from them. This no longer applies because Islam has prevailed over the Arab lands, praise be to Allaah. Does this also make it only Sunnah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We have quoted the evidence that it is haraam to shave the beard in the answer to question no. 1189.

Secondly:

With regard to the view that the reason for it being obligatory to let the beard grow was in order to be different from the mushrikeen, and that this reason no longer applies and so it is not obligatory to let the beard grow – the answer to this is as follows:

1-The view that the reason no longer applies is the view of one who ignores reality, because it may be said: who are the majority among the mushrikeen – those who shave their beards or those who let them grow? Undoubtedly the majority are those who shave their beards .

2-Moreover, being different from the mushrikeen is not the only reason, so we cannot say that the ruling no longer applies because the reason for it is no longer there, because there are other reasons, such as the fact that shaving the beard is an imitation of women, and changing the creation of Allaah, and that letting the beard grow is one of the sunnahs of the fitrah and is the way of the Messengers.

Even if we assume that “being different from the mushrikeen” no longer applies as a reason, the shar’i ruling remains in effect because of the other reasons.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about what some people say about the reason for letting the beard grow being to be different from the Magians and Christians as it says in the hadeeth, and that this is a reason that no longer applies nowadays, because they let their beards grow.

He replied:

We may answer this in several ways:

1-Letting the beard grow is not only for the sake of being different, rather it is also part of the fitrah as is proven in Saheeh Muslim, as letting the beard grow is part of the fitrah with which Allaah has created mankind, so that they regard as beautiful that which is in accordance with it and regard as ugly that which goes against it.

2-The Jews, Christians and Magians nowadays do not all let their beards grow, and not even a quarter of them do that, rather the majority of them shave their beards as is quite obvious.

3-If a ruling is established in sharee’ah for a reason that no longer applies, and this ruling is in accordance with the fitrah or is one of the symbols of Islam, then it remains even if the reason no longer applies. Do you not see that raml (walking at a fast pace) in tawaaf was originally intended

so that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his companions could demonstrate physical strength in front of the mushrikeen who said: There have come to you people who have been weakened by the fever of Yathrib. This reason no longer applies, but the ruling remains in effect, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did raml in the Farewell Pilgrimage.

To conclude: What is required of the believer, if Allaah and His Messenger have enjoined something, is to say: We hear and obey, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allaah (His Words, the Qur’aan) and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), to judge between them, is that they say: ‘We hear and we obey.’ And such are the successful (who will live forever in Paradise)”

[al-Noor 24:51]

And they should not be like those who say: We hear and disobey, or who give false reasons and baseless excuses. This is the situation of one who does not submit truly to the command of Allaah and His Messenger. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allaah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allaah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed into a plain error”

[al-Ahzaab 33:36]

“But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission”

[al-Nisa’ 4:65]

I do not know how the one who says such things will be able to face his Lord on the Day of Resurrection. We must hear and obey and heed the command of Allaah and His Messenger in all

cases. End quote.

Majmoo’ Fataawa Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (11/129-130).

And he also said (may Allaah have mercy on him): Letting the beard grow is the way of the Messengers. Allaah says of Haroon that he said to his brother Moosa (interpretation of the meaning):

“O son of my mother! Seize (me) not by my beard, nor by my head! Verily, I feared lest you should say: ‘You have caused a division among the Children of Israel, and you have not respected my word!’”

[Ta-Ha 20:94]

The last and best of the Messengers, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), let his beard grow, as did the caliphs who came after him, and his companions and the leaders and common folk of the Muslims in all but the most recent period, when many of them have gone against the way of their Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and their righteous predecessors (may Allaah be pleased with them). But this is the way of the Prophets and Messengers and their followers, and it is part of the fitrah with which Allaah created people, as is proven in Saheeh Muslim. Hence the correct view is that it is haraam to shave it, as was the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him), because of the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to let it grow.

As for saying that the reason for letting it grow is to be different from the Jews and that this no longer applies, this is not acceptable, because the reason is not only to be different from the Jews.

Rather what is proven in al-Saheehayn is: “Be different from the mushrikeen” and in Saheeh Muslim it also says: “Be different from the Magians.” Moreover, being different from these people is not the only reason, rather there is another, greater reason, namely following the guidance of the Messengers (peace and blessings be upon them) by keeping the beard.

And the obligation to follow the fitrah.

And not changing the creation of Allaah in ways that Allaah has not permitted.

All of these are reasons why it is obligatory to keep the beard and let it grow, as well as being different from the enemies of Allaah, such as the mushrikeen, Magians and Jews.

Moreover, the claim that the reason for letting the beard grow no longer applies is not true, because most of the enemies of Allaah today among the Jews and others shave their beards, as is well known to anyone who has any knowledge of other nations and their actions. Even if we assume that most of them today let their beards grow, this does not alter the fact that it is prescribed in Islam to let the beard grow, because the fact that the enemies of Islam imitate something that is prescribed for the Muslims does not mean that it is no longer prescribed. Rather we should adhere more closely to it because they are imitating us and following us, and they are regarding it as something good and returning to the fitrah. End quote.

Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen (16/46-47).

And Allaah knows best.