



100909 - Ruling on shaping the beard and removing hair from the soul patch

the question

There can be no doubt that Islam enjoins us not to shave the beard but is it obligatory for the Muslim not to remove anything from the beard at all? I mean shaping it and tidying it up when it is left to grow, so that it will not be short; rather it will be of moderate length, and it will be clear that the one who has such a beard is letting it grow. My question has to do with shaping it and trimming the ends from time to time; is that permissible, even if it does not reach the length of a handful that some of the scholars speak about? Another issue: is the hair that grows under the lower lip, in the middle, regarded as part of the beard? I always reduce the hair in that area because it bothers me. My last question: there is something that occurred to me that may sound strange, which is that it is strange that the basic principle regarding the beard is that it should not be trimmed or shaped, because it is very rare that the beard grows in fully when it first appears at adolescence, and it is very rare that it grows fully as a person grows older. So how can it make sense that it is obligatory for every Muslim in this world never to touch his beard, meaning trimming it and shaping it when he leaves it to grow?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Answer:

The sound evidence indicates that it is obligatory to let the beard grow and leave it alone, and this dictates that one should not remove anything from it. That is confirmed by the action of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) as there is no authentic report from him to indicate that he removed anything from his beard.



The scholars of the Permanent Committee for Ifta' were asked: What is the ruling on shaving the beard or removing anything from it?

They replied:

Shaving the beard is prohibited, because of what was narrated concerning that in the clear, authentic hadiths and reports, and because of the general meaning of the texts which forbid resembling the disbelievers. One example of that is the hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Be different from the polytheists; let your beards grow and trim your moustaches." According to another report: "Trim your moustaches and let your beards grow." And there are other hadiths which convey the same meaning.

Letting the beard grow means leaving it as it is, and keeping it thick without shaving, plucking or cutting anything from it. Ibn Hazm narrated that there was scholarly consensus that trimming the moustache and letting the beard grow is obligatory, and he quoted as evidence a number of hadiths, including the hadith of Ibn `Umar quoted above, and the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam, according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever does not trim anything from his moustache is not one of us." Classed as authentic by at-Tirmidhi. He said in *Al-Furu`*: This wording, according to our companions - meaning the Hanbalis - implies that it is prohibited. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Qur'an and Sunnah, and scholarly consensus, indicate that it is enjoined to be different from the disbelievers and it is prohibited to resemble them in general terms, because resembling them outwardly is a cause that leads to resembling them in manners and attitude and blameworthy deeds, and even in terms of beliefs, because it generates love and affection towards them in one's heart, just as love in one's heart causes one to imitate them outwardly. At-Tirmidhi narrated that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "He is not one of us who imitates others; do not imitate the Jews or the Christians..." According to another version: "Whoever imitates a people is one of them." Narrated by Imam Ahmad. `Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) would reject the testimony of one who plucked his beard. Imam Ibn `Abd al-Barr said in *At-Tamhid*:



It is prohibited to shave the beard, and no one does that except men who imitate women.” The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had a very thick beard, as Muslim narrated from Jabir. It is not permissible to remove any part of the beard because of the general meaning of the evidence which indicates that doing so is prohibited.

End quote from *Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da’imah*, 5/133.

Secondly:

The hair that grows beneath the lower lip and above the chin is called *al-`anqafah* (the soul patch). There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is included in the beard; the more correct view is that it is not part of it.

It says in *Al-Qamus al-Muhit* (1/134): The lihyah (beard) is hair that grows on the cheeks and chin. End quote.

It says in *Al-Insaf* (1/134), describing how to do wudu’: Hair other than the beard includes the eyebrows, the moustache, the soul patch, and the beard of a woman, and so on; it comes under the same ruling as the beard according to the correct scholarly view, and that is the view of the majority. End quote. What is meant is that it is like the beard in the sense that it is obligatory to wash thin hair when doing wudu’, and it is recommended to run one’s wet fingers through thick hair. This clearly indicates that the soul patch is not part of the beard.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: With regard to hair that grows beneath the lower lip, can it be cut or should be left as it is?

He said: It is called the soul patch and is not part of the beard, and it should be left as it is unless it is bothersome to you.

End quote from *Liqat al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 6/19.

Thirdly:

There is nothing strange about the command to let the beard grow and leave it as it is, even



though it may not grow in fully, or it may be sparse in patches. If it is left as it is, it is adornment and beauty, no matter what shape it takes, as is obvious, and reducing it or shaping it takes away its beauty in most cases.

The individual should comply with the rulings of Islam, and not object to them based on his own opinion, taste or habit. The Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them) used to let their beards grow, and there is no report from them to suggest that they shaped them or shortened them. They were the most perfect of this ummah in knowledge and taste, and they did not see anything wrong with doing that, because what Allah, may He be Exalted, has created is all good. Ahmad (19493) narrated from Ya`qub ibn `Asim that he heard ash-Sharid say: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw a man letting his izar (lower garment) drag on the ground, so he rushed over to him and said: "Pull up your izar and fear Allah." He said: I am knock-kneed. He said: "Pull up your izar, for whatever Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has created is good." And that man was never seen after that except with his izar coming to mid-calf.

Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut said: Its isnad is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim. Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *As-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, 1441.

The one who is knock-kneed is one who has some crookness in his legs.

Think about this hadith, for it contains a lesson and a reminder to those who claim that not trimming the beard is contrary to beauty and good looks. Rather everything that Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has created is good, and all that is required of the believer is to submit to His command, follow His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and give precedence over that to his own whims and desires.

May Allah increase us and you in knowledge and enable us to follow the Sunnah.

And Allah knows best.