48960 - Cutting more than a “handful” of the beard

the question

What is the ruling Cutting more than a “handful” of the beard.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) – regarding both his commands to others and his own actions – is to let the beard grow. It was proven that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded men to leave the beard alone and let it grow naturally. Al-Bukhaari, Muslim and others narrated that ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Trim the moustache and leave the beard.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5443; Muslim, 600. According to another report: ‘Be different from the mushrikeen: cut the moustache and let the beard grow.” Narrated by Muslim, 602.

And Muslim (383) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Trim the moustache and let the beard grow; be different from the Magians (Zoroastrians).”

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (5/136):

What is meant by letting the beard grow is leaving it alone and not cutting it, so that it will grow thick. This is the teaching of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as regards his words and commands to others. With regard to his own actions, there is no report that says that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) removed anything from his beard. With regard to the hadeeth narrated by al-Tirmidhi from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb, from his father, from his grandfather, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to remove something from the width and length of his beard – al-Tirmidhi said that this is a ghareeb hadeeth

(al-Tirmidhi, 2912). This isnaad of this hadeeth includes ‘Umar ibn Haroon who is matrook (rejected), as al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said in al-Taqreeb. Hence it is known that this hadeeth is not saheeh and cannot be used as evidence to oppose the saheeh hadeeths which indicate that it is obligatory to leave the beard alone and let it grow.

With regard to what some people do, shaving the beard or trimming something from its thickness and length, this is not permissible because it goes against the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and his command to let the beard grow. A command implies that a thing is obligatory unless there is an indication to suggest otherwise, and we know of no such indication in this case.

Shaykh Muhammad al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Cutting anything from the beard goes against the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who said: “Leave the beard alone”, “Let the beard grow,” etc. Whoever wants to follow the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and follow his teaching should not remove anything from his beard at all, because the teaching of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is that nothing should be removed from the beard. This was also the way of the Prophets before him.

Fataawa Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, 11/126.

Some of the scholars are of the view that it is permissible to remove anything more than a “handful” of the beard [the hair of the beard that comes beneath the hand if the beard is seized in the hand], basing that on the action of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him). Al-Bukhaari (5892) narrated: When Ibn ‘Umar did Hajj or ‘Umrah he would take hold of his beard and would trim any excess.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said: Whoever quotes the action of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) to show that he used to cut whatever of his beard was longer than the “handful” during Hajj cannot use this as evidence, because this is ijtihaad on the part of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), and proof is to be found in reports (from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon

him)), not from ijtihaad. The scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) clearly stated that the reports from the Sahaabah and those who came after them that are proven to be sound are what constitute evidence and proof, and they take precedence over any opinion if it goes against the Sunnah.

Fataawa wa Maqaalaat al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 8/370.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Qaasim said in his essay Tahreem Halq al-Lahyah (Prohibition on shaving the beard), p.11:

Some scholars granted a concession allowing removal of whatever is longer than the “handful”, based on the actions of Ibn ‘Umar, but most of the scholars regard that as makrooh. This is more correct, for the reasons stated above. Al-Nawawi said: The preferred view is that the beard should be left as it is and should not be shortened in any way at all… and it says in al-Durr al-Mukhtaar: with regard to cutting it any shorter than the “handful”, no one said that this is permissible.

See also question no. 9977 and 1189.

May Allaah send blessings upon our Prophet Muhammad.