

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

The Beard in Islam

By Qazi Fazlullah

In the Holy Quran, Allah has ordered us 10's of times to obey Allah and obey his messenger. He also said, **“Say (O' Muhammad) if you love Allah then emulate and copy me, He (Allah) will love you” (3:31).**

Mankind by nature obeys and copies great people and the Prophet Muhammad is the greatest personality amongst human beings, so he is to be obeyed and to be emulated by the Muslims. But sometime they prefer their desires over the orders, teachings, and practices of the Prophet.

Allah said, “So let those beware who dissent from his (the Prophet's) order (Sunnah) lest fitnah (trial, affliction, dissention, strife etc) strike them or a painful punishment” (24:63).

The Messenger of Allah said, as narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn A'as “None of you can believe (truly & perfectly) until his passionate desire follows what I have brought”. It means until my Sunnah becomes like his natural demand and requirement, so a Muslim should follow his Sunnah in such a way until it becomes his nature. But alas, sometimes some Muslims make fun of the Sunnah and joke about the beard. Not to follow a Sunnah is a violation and a sin, but to make a joke with it is disbelief. Some of them say “Islam is not in beard”, yes Islam is not the beard but beard is in Islam.

Beard for Muslim men is Wajib or Aukadus-sunan as it is, 1. Nature 2. Practice of all the messengers and prophets 3. Prophet Muhammad has ordered very clearly to keep it.

In the Holy Quran, Allah said that when Satan (Shaitan) was ordered to go out of the garden, when he did not prostrate to Adam, he said, "I will take them away (of the right path), I will cause them to follow their passionate desires, I will enjoin them to cut of the ears of the cattle so they will change (tamper with) the nature of Allah".

Now changing and tampering the nature of Allah is actually the obedience of Satan, and the beard is one of the natural practices as A'aisha Siddiqa narrates from the Holy Prophet that ten practices are from nature.

Now nature and its demands may not be changed, tampered with, but if Allah and his Messenger have ordered otherwise. Urination is a natural call, but if someone tried to divert it, it will cause him some physical problem and illness. To quench one's thirst is a natural requirement, but if someone will ignore it and put it aside by not responding to nature, eventually he would be dehydrated and might die. To sleep when it is required is natural, if someone did not for a long time, he will lose his senses and it will damage his brain. So is the case of the beard, both physically and spiritually.

Regarding the beard it is understood that this was the practice of all the messengers as in the story of Musa (Moses) and Haroon (Aaron) that Musa caught him from his head (hair) and from his beard and pulled him. It means that he had a beard and it was as long as to be grasped with.

In Islamic Jurisprudence it is said that when the practice of a previous messenger or prophet that is related in the Quran and Sunnah and not abrogated by a new order, then that is a part of Shariah as a verified issue by Quran and Sunnah implicitly.

There are certain Ahadith of the Prophet in this regard, some are written below:

1. Sayyida A'aisha said, "Practices are natural Sunnah (practices) (she mentioned in it) to cut/trim the moustaches and to let the beard (grows/ hangs/becomes thick and big)," (Muslim Shareef).
2. Abdullah ibn Umar relates from the Messenger of Allah, "cut/trim the moustache and let the beard (grow/hangs)," (Muslim Shareef).
3. Abdullah ibn Umar narrated from the Messenger of Allah, "Oppose the idolaters, have a plentiful beard and cut the moustache," (Bukhari & Muslim).
4. Abu Hurairah said, The Messenger of Allah said, "cut the mustache and let the beard hang down and oppose the Zoroastrians," (Muslim Shareef).

Now these Ahadith of the Prophet are clear that, firstly the beard is an order of the prophet. Secondly, he ordered to keep it hanging and make it plentiful and opposes the non-Muslims; it means that the non-Muslims were either shaving it or trimming it. Similarity and resemblance to non-Muslims where the Messenger

of Allah has ordered otherwise is Haram (prohibited). And that is according to all four schools of thought.

Hafiz ibn Kathir related that when two people came to the Prophet on behalf of Governor Bazan clean shaved, the Prophet said, “May you be perished, who has ordered you to do so?” They said, “our lord (the Governor of the King of Persia), the Messenger of Allah said, “But my Lord (Allah) has ordered me to keep my beard plentiful and to cut off my moustache”.

Even though they were non-Muslims, but the Prophet asked them as this was an unnatural act, now what about the limits.

Some scholars are of the view that it should be grown out without touching it and that is the viewpoint of Qatadah and Hasan (both are from the Tabieen, Mufasssireen, and Muhaditheen), but the majority of the ummah said to cut off that part that is longer than a fistful is allowed and permissible, as narrated by Imam Tirmidhi from Amr ibn Shuaib, from his father, from his grandfather, that the Messenger of Allah used to trim his beard in length and width. Imam Bukhari narrated that whenever Ibn Umar performed Hajj or Umrah, he would hold a fistful of his beard and then trimmed the extra part. Ibn Hajar Al Asqalani, the interpreter of the book of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muhammad in Kitabul A'asar, also narrated this practice of Ibn Umar.

Having the beard is the practice of all the Messengers, Sahabah (companions), Tabieen, and Salaf-Saliheen. So this is an Ijma Amali (practical

consensus), which makes it Wajib or Aukadus Sunan. Some people say that this is only a distinction of man and woman, so if that is a trimmed beard, still that is ok. For the purpose of distinction that is ok, but that is not the beard required as Sunnah, if someone has it then it is as if he is worshipping day and night. Also it is seen that the beard controls one from wrongdoing as if he intended to do something wrong and thinks of his beard, then he stops.

From a physical point of view a physician Allamah Iqsara'e said that hairs are hollow from inside, so steam comes out of the body through hairs and the steam's nature is that it goes up. So the head's hairs are long, so still the steam goes out of it very easily as it's natural structure is vertical, but if the beard hairs are too long in which its structure is down growth, then the body can push the steam to a certain extent but not too far, but if the hairs are much longer than a fistful then the steam does not go out completely. After that it starts going up once again and not only it affects the senses but also another flow of steam is coming down and these two flows collide and that is not good for the hairs or for the senses. And if shaved or trimmed so again the steam comes out, spreads on the face and will affect the senses of sight and smell. Also in the case of shaving when the skin is rubbed so as we know the blood flow rushes towards the rubbed area and puts extra pressure, which again is not good for the face and senses. When the head hair is trimmed or shaved, the steam's nature is to travel upwards in the air and not on the skull, so that is not harmful.

Note: To shave the private parts is recommended in Shariah because that is cleanliness, and with the shaving the area is rubbed and the blood flow rushes to that area which is also good for the function of that part. These details are from the writings of the experts, especially from the writings of Allamah Iqsara'e, who was an ancient physician and a scholar of anthropology and herbs.

Anyhow, if someone does not keep the beard, so as a Muslim he must not look down upon it as that is an insult to the Sunnah, and those who have a beard must consider it before doing something wrong, that it is also an insult to the beard.

The hadith where the Prophet ordered to leave the beard hanging and oppose the Jews and Christians, this opposition is not the reason or only reason for that order as this order is related in other Ahadith without this also.