

## 1) The Beard - Sunnah Or Wajib?

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### **The Ruling Of The Beard – By Mawlana Yoosuf Ludhianvi (ra)**

#### Question:

1. What is the Shar`i status of a beard — Is it Waajib or Sunnat? Is the shaving of a beard Makrooh or Haraam? Many people understand the keeping of a beard to be a Sunnat, which if kept is meritorious and if not kept then there is no sin. How correct are these views?
2. Is there a specified length in the Shariah for a beard? If there is then what is it?
3. It is the habit of some Huffaaz that just before Ramadhaan they start keeping a beard and after Ramadhaan they shave it off. Will it be permissible to have such Huffaaz as Imaams for Taraaweeh or not? Will the Salaat read behind them be correct or not?
4. Some people view the beard with disdain and have a dislike for it. They prevent their children from keeping beards, and rebuke and chastise them. Some people make the condition of removing the beard prior to marriage. What is the ruling of such people?
5. Some people keep a beard for the duration of a Hajj trip and remove it after returning home. There are others who even shave their beards whilst on Hajj. Is the Hajj of such people accepted?
6. Some people do not keep a beard for fear that if they sin or do any wrong action, then they will bring disrepute and degradation to the bearded ones and that it will be an insult to the sanctity of the beard.

What is the ruling regarding such people?

#### Answer:

*Answer to question #1:*

To shave the beard or to trim it (less than a fist-length) is Haraam and a major sin. In this regard I will firstly cite a few Ahaadith and thereafter discuss some points:

(i). “It is reported from Hadhrat Aishah (radhiAllaahu anha) that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: „**Ten things are from the Fitrat (natural constitution of man); clipping the moustache, lengthening the beard,...**” [Muslim, page 129, vol. 1]

(ii). “It is reported from Ibn Umar (radhiAllaahu anhuma) that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: „**Clip the moustache and lengthen the beard.**” In another narration he ordered with the clipping of the moustache and lengthening the beard.”

(iii). “Ibn Umar (radhiAllaahu anhuma) reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„Oppose the Mushrikeen, fill (lengthen) your beards and clip your moustaches.”**”

[Agreed upon, Mishkaat, page 380]

(iv). “It is reported from Abu Hurairah (radhiAllaahu anhu) that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„Trim your moustaches and lengthen your beards. Oppose the fire-worshippers.”**” [Saheeh Muslim, page 129]

(v). “It is reported from Zaid Bin Arqam (radhiAllaahu anhu) that indeed Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„He who does not trim/clip his moustache is not from us.”**”

[Ahmad / Tirmidhi / Nisai / Mishkaat page 381]

(vi). “Ibn Abbaas (radhiAllaahu anhu) reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„Allaah Ta`ala has cursed those men who emulate women and those women who emulate men.”**” [Bukhari, Mishkaat, page 380]

(1) From the first Hadith we ascertain that it is from the natural constitution and necessity of man that they trim their moustaches and lengthen their beards and it is contrary to the natural habits of man that they lengthen their moustaches and trim/shave their beards. Those who do this are spoiling the natural traits created by Allaah Ta`ala. It is stated in the Qur`aan Majeed that shaitaan, the accursed, told Allaah Ta`ala that he will lead man astray and that he will instruct and encourage them to change their natural Allaah-given traits and features. It is stated in Tafseer-e-Haqqani and Tafseer Bayaanul Qur`aan that the shaving of the beard is also included in changing the natural Allaah-given features of man, because Allaah Ta`ala had naturally beautified the face of man with a beard. Therefore, those who shave/trim their beards fall under the scope of shaitaan`s ploy and they are guilty of altering their natural Allaah-given traits.

The way of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam) is an icon for the nature of mankind. It is for this reason that the way, Sunnat and methods of the Ambiyaa can also be taken as being the example of the Fitrat of man. In view of this, we note that it is the unanimous Sunnat of approximately 124 000 Ambiyaa to clip the moustache and lengthen the beard. This is the blessed group whom we have been instructed by Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) to follow. Therefore, those people who shave/trim their beards are acting contrary to the Sunnat of the Ambiyaa. It is as though this Hadith is warning us of being guilty of a combination of three sins by shaving/trimming the beard; (1) contravening the Fitrat of man, (2) submitting to shaitaan by altering the Allaah-given features and (3) opposing the Sunnat of the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). Hence, due to these three reasons, it is Haraam to shave the beard.

(2) The second Hadith instructs us to trim the moustaches and to lengthen the beards. It is Waajib to obey the instructions of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) and Haraam to act contrary to it. Hence, this is the reason why it is Waajib to keep a beard and Haraam to shave/trim it.

(3) In the third and fourth Hadith it is mentioned that to trim the moustache and lengthen the beard is amongst the hallmarks of Muslims. On the contrary, it is the sign and hallmark of the fire-worshippers and Mushrikeen to lengthen the moustache and to trim/shave the beard. Our

Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has encouraged all Muslims to adopt the hallmarks of Islaam and shun those of the non-Muslims. It is Haraam to abandon a sign of Islaam and adopt one of an astray nation. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **“Whosoever imitates a nation is one of them.”** [Jaamius Sagheer, page 8, vol. 2]

Hence those people who shave / trim their beards, thereby abandoning a sign of Islaam and adopting one of the kuffaar, whose opposition Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has stressed upon, ought to fear the warning of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) that on the day of Qiyaamah, their resurrection will be amongst the non- Muslims. Nauthubillaah.

**(4)** The fifth Hadith states that those people who do not trim their moustaches are not from amongst us. It is clear that this same warning applies to those who shave their beards. This is a very severe and stern warning for these people who shave their beards simply due to their desires, fancies and shaitaani deceptions. Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has expelled such persons from his group. Can anyone who has even the slightest attachment to Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) be able to bear this warning?

Our Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has such a dislike and abhorrence for the shaving of the beard that when the messenger from the Shah of Iran presented himself in the presence of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) he (the messenger) was clean-shaven and his moustache was long:

“Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) detested looking at his face. He (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„Woe unto you, who has commanded you with this?“** They replied: **„Our rabb, that is, Kisrah, has ordered us with this.“** Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: **„But, my Rabb has ordered me with lengthening the beard and trimming the moustache.“**” [Al-Bidaaya Wan Nihaaya, page 269, vol. 4 / Hayaatus Sahaabah, page 115, vol. 1]

Hence those people who act contrary to the instruction of the Rabb of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) are in actual fact obeying the command of the deity of the fire-worshippers. They should consider how they are going to show their faces to Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) on the Day of Qiyaamah. If Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) expels them from his group on account of their altering their Allaah-given features, then upon whom will they depend on for intercession?

**(5)** We also ascertain from the fifth Hadith that it is Haraam and a major sin to shave/trim the beard and to lengthen the moustache, because Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) would warn against any major sin in this way that the perpetrator thereof will be expelled from his group.

**(6)** In the sixth Hadith Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has cursed those men who imitate women and those women who emulate men. In commentary of this Hadith, Mullah Ali Qaari (rahmatullahi alaih), author of Mirqaat, states that the words “La`anallaahu”(Allaah has cursed) is a phrase which is used as a Bid-dua (curse), that is, may the curse of Allaah Ta`ala be on such people or it also implies an informative sentence, that is, Allaah Ta`ala has placed His Curse on such people.

Besides the above-mentioned evils of shaving the beard, one of the evils is that of imitation

of females. Allaah Ta`ala has made the beard a means of differentiation and distinction between the genders. Hence, those who shave their beards are removing this distinction and resemble women. This is an act liable for the curse of Allaah Ta`ala and Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam).

Considering all these texts, there is a consensus amongst ALL the Fuqahaa of the Ummat that it is Waajib to lengthen the beard and this is also a hallmark of Islaam. To shave it and trim it (to less than the minimum fist – length) is Haraam and a major sin, whereupon Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has issued severe warnings. May Allaah Ta`ala grant all Muslims the guidance to save themselves from Haraam actions.

*Answer to question # 2:*

The Ahaadith stipulate that the beards be lengthened. A narration, whose Sanad (chain of narrators) is weak, which appears in Tirmidhi Shareef under the section Kitaabul Adab [page 100, vol. 2], states that the excess hair in the length and breadth of the blessed beard of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) would be trimmed. An explanation to this appears in a narration in Bukhari Shareef under the section Kitaabul Libaas [page 875, vol.2] wherein it is reported that when Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiAllaahu anhuma) completed his Hajj and Umrah and upon removing his Ihraam he would take his beard into his fist and trim off the extra hair. A similar narration on this subject is also reported regarding Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiAllaahu anhu) [Nisbur Raaya, page 458, vol. 2].

It is clear from this that the minimum length for a beard must be fist-length [Hidaaya – Kitaabus Saum]. So, just as it is Haraam to shave the beard, it is similarly Haraam to trim it to less than a fist-length. It is stated in Durrul Mukhtaar:

**“However, none has consented to trimming it (beard) less than that (fist-length), as some westerners and hermaphrodites do. To shave the beard off completely is the practice of the Jews of India and the fireworshippers.”**

[Shaami, page 418, vol.2]

This same subject is mentioned in Fathul Qadeer, page 77, vol. 2 and Bahrur Raa`iq, page 302, vol. 2. Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaih) states in Ash`atul Lam`aat: **“It is Haraam to shave the beard. It is Waajib to let it lengthen to more than a fist-length (hence to cut it less than this is also Haraam).”** [Page 228, vol. 1]

It is mentioned in Imdaadul Fataawa: **“It is Waajib to keep a beard and it is Haraam to trim to less than a fist-full. Owing to the Hadith of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam): „Oppose the Mushrikeen, lengthen the beards and trim the moustache” [agreed upon].**

**It is stated in Durrul Mukhtaar that it is Haraam for men to trim/shave their beards. The Sunnat length is fist-length.”** [Page 223, vol. 4]

*Answer to question # 3:*

Those Huffaaz who shave or trim their beards are guilty of a major sin and are termed as Fussaag. Their Imaamat for the Taraaweeh Salaat is not permissible and in following them the Salaat becomes Makrooh-e- Tahrimi (i.e. Haraam in practice). As for those Huffaaz who keep a beard only for Ramadhaan and shave it thereafter, the same ruling applies to them. Those who make such persons Imaam for Fardh and Taraaweeh Salaats are also classified as

Fussaaq and sinners.

*Answer to question # 4:*

Prior to understanding the answer to this question it is appropriate that one keeps in mind the basic principle that to jest at or censure any sign of Islaam or to belittle any Sunnat of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) is kufr, whereby a person leaves the fold of Islaam. We have established above that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) has classified the beard as a sign of Islaam and a unanimous Sunnat of ALL the Ambiyaa (alaihimus salaam). So those folk who have a dislike for the beard and look upon it with disdain, or they prevent any of their friends from keeping one, or they rebuke and censure them if they keep a beard, or those who do not accept as a husband if they have a beard, then all such people should start pondering and question their Imaan.

It is necessary for such people to repent and renew their Imaan and Nikah. Hakeemul Ummat Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi (rahmatullahi alaih) writes in Islaahur Rusoom on page 10: "In short those customs where the beard is shaved off or trimmed to less than a fist-length, or the moustache is lengthened, which is common nowadays amongst the youth who regard it as appealing. It is stated in a Hadith which appears in Bukhari and Muslim that the beards should be lengthened and moustaches trimmed. In this Hadith Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) used the scale of Amr (command) for both these things. This is for compulsion. Hence, it is established that these two things are Waajib and to omit a Waajib act is Haraam.

Hence, the shaving of the beard and the lengthening of the moustache are both Haraam acts. Over and above this it is mentioned in another narration that whosoever does not clip his moustache is not amongst us [Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Nisai]. Since it is established that these acts are a sin, then those who continue on these acts and are pleased with it, and those who regard lengthening the beard as a defect, in fact, they even mock at those who have beards and they rebuke them. For all such acts, it is difficult to say that one's Imaan remains intact.

It is Waajib for all such persons to repent and renew their Imaan and Nikah. They should also mend their ways and make their features to conform with the desires of the Order of Allaah Ta`ala and Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam)."

*Answer to question # 5:*

As for those people who shave their beards during the course of Hajj or after returning from Hajj, their condition is more pitiful than normal people, since they cannot even refrain from a major sin at the House of Allaah Ta`ala. in the Court of Allaah Ta`ala only those Hajj are accepted which are free from sin. Some Ulama have written that a sure sign of acceptance of Hajj is that a person who returns from Hajj undergoes such a change in his life that he now becomes more wary of Allaah Ta`ala and he refrains from sin. That person whose life does not change after making Hajj — just as he used to previously omit the Faraaidh he does the same after Hajj, and just as he was involved in major sins before his Hajj his condition is identical after the Hajj — then such a person's Hajj was in reality not a Hajji it was merely a joy-trip. Although according to the Shariah his Fardh duty is discharged but he is completely deprived of any blessings, Barkat and reward. What a sad state of affairs that a person spends so many thousands of rands, undergoes so many difficulties during his trip, and yet he does not get the Taufeeq to repent from his evil ways. If a person, whilst on a Hajj trip, commits adultery or theft and he does not feel any regret over his action or repents, then how can such

a person's Hajj be accepted?

The shaving of the beard is in one respect even worse than other major sins like theft or adultery, since these sins are limited to a specific time, whereas the sin of shaving lasts for 24 hours. A person who shaves is involved in this sin whilst in Salaat whilst keeping fast, whilst on Hajj or Umrah, and even during his performing of Salaat keeping of fast, etc. he falls under the curse of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam). He is involved in the actual sin in the midst of his Ibaadat.

Hadhrat Sheikh Moulana Muhammed Zakariyyah (rahmatullahi alaih) states in his treatise The compulsion of the beard:

**“When one looks upon such people (who shave) then this thought comes to mind that death does not have stipulated time. And if such people have to die whilst in this shaven state, then how will they ever be able to face the blessed countenance of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), when the first sight of him will be in the grave. Together with this, occasionally this thought also comes to mind that other major sins like adultery, homosexuality, alcoholism, dealing in interest, etc. are all restricted to a specified time. Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: „An adulterer does not commit adultery whilst in the state of Imaan.” The Mashaikh have written that the object of this Hadith is that during the course of the act of adultery, the Imaan of the adulterer leaves him/her. But after the act is complete, then the Noor of the Imaan returns to one. But, the sin of shaving is such that it remains with one all the time. Whilst performing Salaat then this sin is being perpetrated, whilst in the state of fasting, this sin is with one, the same applies to Hajj. This sin is being perpetrated whilst performing every act of Ibaadat.”** [Page 4]

Hence, it is compulsory for every person who intends Hajj or Umrah, that he correct his distorted (shaven) features and appearance prior to presenting himself in the House of Allaah Ta`ala and the sanctified Masjid of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), he must make sincere repentance that he will never again return to this sin. Otherwise, Allaah Ta`ala forbid, that his condition not be like the poem of Sheikh Saadi (rahmatullahi alaih): **“The mule of Isaa (A.S.), even if it goes to Makkah, when it returns it will still be the mule of Isaa (A.S).”** He should also reflect that when he presents himself at the Mubarak Grave of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), then what face will he show? How much of pain will he not cause Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) with his distorted (shaven) features?

*Answer to question # 6:*

The concern of such people outwardly appears to be commendable. Their concern appears to be one of respect and honour for the beard, but if they reflect carefully, they will realise that they are prey to the ploys of shaitaan. This is the ploy of shaitaan whereby he involves many people in sin. Understand this by way of one example; a Muslim defrauds and betrays others, whereby the image of the entire Islaamic brotherhood becomes tainted. Now if shaitaan comes to him and makes him regret his action of spoiling the image of Islaam and the Muslims, and he „convinces” him that it is a necessity for the sanctity of Islaam that he, Nauthubillaah, leave the fold of Islaam and becomes a Sikh. Now, due to this evil thought, should he leave the fold of Islaam? Or not? In fact, if he really has the sanctity and honour of

Islaam at heart, then he will never leave the fold of Islaam; rather he will refrain from all such actions which bring disrepute to the name of Islaam and the Muslims.

Similarly, if shaitaan inspires a person thus that if he keeps a beard and perpetrates an evil act, then it will bring disrepute to all the bearded ones and it will be contrary to the sanctity and honour of the beard. Then because of this thought, the beard will not be removed, rather this person will make a concerted effort to reform his ways and refrain from such sins which bring disrepute to bearded ones and which are against the sanctity of the beard.

Why don't these people not have this thought that they will keep their beards and refrain from sins? If these people had the reality of the sanctity of the signs of Islaam at heart, then the call of the Imaan and intelligence is that they keep a beard. They should make this firm resolve that they will refrain from all major sins. They should make dua that Allaah Ta`ala grant them the Taufeeq to safeguard this sign of Islaam by keeping a beard. Nevertheless, we will never be successful in safeguarding the sanctity of this great sign of Islaam based on this imagined fear.

There can never be any reason for depriving oneself of this great hallmark of Islaam. It is necessary for every Muslim (male) to bring into practice this sign of Islaam in themselves and also make a concerted effort in bringing it alive in their societies, so that on the Day of Qiyaamah every man is resurrected with it, thereby deserving the intercession of Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam).

“It is reported from Abu Hurairah (radhiAllaahu anhu) that Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said: „**All of my Ummat will enter Jannat except the one who refuses.**” The Sahaabah (radhiAllaahu anhum) asked: „**Who is the one who refuses?**” Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) replied: „**Whosoever follows me will enter into Jannat, and whosoever disobeys me, he has indeed refused.**” [Saheeh Bukhari, page 1082, vol. 2]

(Written by Maulana Yousuf Ludhianvi in: DIFFERENCES IN THE UMMAT AND SIRAAT-E- MUSTAQEEM)