

## Male cutting his hair short or leaving it to grow

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Question:** One of the students of knowledge asked: Many school students ask one another concerning the ruling on leaving one's hair to grow and shaving it off. They are confused about this issue because of what the school presses on them from the obligation of shaving all of the head or cutting it very short and because of what the students see from some practicing teachers who let their hair grow and do not cut it, but they maintain and groom it.

So therefore I say<sup>1</sup> – seeking assistance from Allaah – that leaving the hair is Sunnah, as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)<sup>2</sup> said: "It is Sunnah. If we were able to manage and control it, we would keep it. But there is discomfort and trouble with (keeping) it (long)." And Ibn Al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said in Zaad Al-Ma'aad: "And it was not preserved from him (صلى الله عليه وسلم)<sup>3</sup> that he used to shave his head except during the sacrificial ceremonies of Hajj (nusuk)."

There are many authentic ahaadeeth that clarify the description of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) hair. It is stated in al-Mughnee: "It is recommended that a person's hair be according to the description of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) hair. If it is long, then it should go to his shoulders and if it is short, then to the earlobes. And if it grows longer than that, then there is no harm in that. This has been reported on Ahmad."

Indeed, keeping one's hair and leaving it to grow must meet certain requirements, among which are:

1. There must be sincerity to Allaah, the Most High and following of the guidance of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in order to attain reward and merit.
2. There should be no imitation of women in his leaving of the hair to grow, such that he does with his hair what the women do with their hair, from the aspects of beautification that is specific to them.
3. He should not desire by it to imitate the People of the Book or anyone else among the idol-worshippers. Or in imitation of the haircuts and hairstyles of sinful Muslims, such as music and film artists or whoever treads their way, such as the shameless ones among the sports figures.
4. One should clean it and groom it every other day. And it is recommended to oil it, perfume it and split it down the middle of the head. And if it grows long, then one can put it in locks. As for shaving the hair off, then Shaykh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) has written a detailed discussion on this subject and divided it into four types. A summary of what he said is as follows: If the shaving of the head is done for (1) Hajj or 'Umrah or (2) for a necessity such as medical treatment, then this is established and prescribed in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, and there is no doubt about its allowance (under these circumstances). As for it being done for any other reason besides those mentioned above, then it falls into being one of two types:

(3) First: That he shaves it with the intention of making worship to Allaah (ta'abbud), to practice his Religion (tadayyun) and to abstain from the worldly affairs (zuhd) and not for Hajj or 'Umrah. An example of this is such as his making the shaving of the head a trademark of the people of piety and Religion or from the highest level of abstinence and worship. Or that he places those who shave their heads as being better or

<sup>1</sup> These are still the words of the questioner

<sup>2</sup> (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

<sup>3</sup> (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

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more practicing or more pious than those who don't shave it. Shaykh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: "This is an innovation that neither Allaah nor His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded. It is neither obligatory nor recommended according to any of the Imaams of the Religion. Nor was it done by the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)<sup>4</sup> and those who followed them in righteousness, nor by the scholars who were well known for their piety and their worship, whether from the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), the Taabi'een, those who followed them or those that came after them."

(4) Second: That he shaves his head for a reason other than the sacrifice of Hajj or 'Umrah, and for other than a necessity, and not for trying to please or get closer to Allaah. The scholars have two opinions concerning this:

The first opinion: The dislike of it: This is the madh-hab of Maalik and others and it is found in one of the reports on Ahmad, may Allaah have mercy on them all.

Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: "They used to dislike that." The proof used by those who hold this opinion is that shaving the head is a trademark of the people of innovation, for the Khawaarij used to shave their heads. And the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "Their sign is the shaving of the head." Also, some of the Khawaarij consider the shaving of the head as the completion of repentance and religious sacrifices. It is established in the Saheeh that: "When the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was distributing the war booty on the Day of the Conquest, a man with a thick beard and a shaved head came to him..." And it is stated in the Musnad of Imaam Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: "He is not from us who shaves his head." Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه)<sup>5</sup> said: "The one who shaves his head persistently is a devil."

The second opinion: Its allowance: This is the most known opinion with the followers of Aboo Haneefah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) and ash-Shaafi'ee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) and it is found in a report from Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) also. And their proof is what Ahmad, Aboo Dawoud and An-Nasaa'ee have reported with an authentic chain, as has been stated by the author of Muntaqaa al-Akhbaar, on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) that: "The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw a young boy who had shaved part of his head and left the rest of it, so he forbade them from that. And he said to them: '(Either) shave all of it or leave all of it.'" Afterwards, three small children were brought to him and he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) shaved their heads.

Because he forbade al-qaz', and that is to have some of the head shaved, then this provides evidence for the allowance of shaving all of it. Ash-Shawkaanee said in Nail-ul-Awtaar commenting on the hadeeth that the author of al-Muntaqaa mentioned: "In it is proof for the allowance of shaving all of the head. Al-Ghazalee said: 'There is no harm in it for the one who desires cleanliness.' And in this is a refutation against those who hold that it is disliked."

Furthermore, it is stated in Al-Mughnee: "Hanbal said: 'My father and I used to shave our heads during the lifetime of Aboo 'Abdillaah. So he would see us while we had our heads shaved and he would not forbid us from it.'" Ibn 'Abd-il-Barr said: "The scholars have unanimously agreed upon the allowance of shaving the head. And this is sufficient as a proof."

I say,<sup>6</sup> and with Allaah lies the success, this second opinion is what is more established to me due to the authenticity of its reports and their conclusiveness. And Allaah knows best.

As for the school's executive board preventing the general mass of students from letting their hair grow, then this regulation is only in the way of "suppressing the means and preventing the evil." And this is because of what the school has noted in that a group of students, not small in number, keep their hair long not for the sake of following the Sunnah. But rather, they only do so for the sake of resembling and imitating the famous amongst the shameless celebrities and sports figures, regardless of whether they are Muslims or not. And this is done by them combing their hair in a manner that resembles the hair of these celebrities, expressing their love for them, their amazement with them and with what they are upon. Also, the harm of these students, who blindly follow, is not just limited to themselves and that's all. Rather, their influence extends to their school colleagues and so they become affected by this false way, which leads to the wearing down of the students to having weak souls amidst their group. This is especially since they are

<sup>4</sup> (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

<sup>5</sup> (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

<sup>6</sup> These are still the questioner's words

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in this age in which they have constantly changing personalities, numerous desires, and are quick to be influenced and quick to make decisions. So you will find that the student at this age will receive more influence from his colleagues in school than from the incentives of his teachers or even his parents!! This is what I have to say and Allaah knows best.

**Answer:** Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ): All praise is for Allaah, and may the peace and blessings be upon Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his family, Companions and those who follow his guidance.

To proceed, I strongly support the words that were stated in the last part of the fatwaa for it is traced back to an important legal principle, which is "Preventing the evil (mafsadah) comes before bringing about the good (maslahah)." So how can it be when there is no sort of maslahah (beneficial good), but only imitation of the disbelievers or the sinful people? And the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in the authentic hadeeth: "...And whoever imitates a people is one of them." There are many other ahaadeeth in various subjects of the Religion that bear this same meaning. I have mentioned about forty ahaadeeth from them in my book "Hijaab Al-Ma'at-ul-Muslimah", which I have printed recently under the title "Jilbaab Al-Mar'at-ul-Muslimah."<sup>7</sup>

So due to this, I will always give the ruling that it is not permissible for the male youth and students to let their hair grow long and that they should either shave it off or cut it short, as the general masses of Muslims are doing today, and with Allaah lies the success.

And furthermore, it is not for anyone to say today that it is disliked to shave the head, for there is no proof for that other than that it was a trademark of the Khawaarij. But today, they – and from among them are the Ibaadiyyah – do not adhere to this practice anymore, from what I know. And if they are found in some land to still be abiding by this practice, then the people of that land should contradict them in that due to what has been stated previously. And if this is not the case, then the fundamental principle is the allowance (to cut), as is stated in the hadeeth of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) which has been authenticated in Al-Muntaqaa. And Muslim has also reported it as I have verified in al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah (no. 1123).

As for the hadeeth: "He is not from us who shaves his head" then it is a shortened version of the hadeeth of Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree (رضي الله عنه), with the wording: "He is not from us who shaves (his head), tears (his clothes) and wails." This is the way a group of the scholars have reported the hadeeth, such as Imaam Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) in his Musnad (4/411) and the two Shaykhs in their (respective) Saheeh collections. Al-Bukhaaree (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) introduced it in his Saheeh by saying: "Chapter: What is forbidden from the act of shaving due to a calamity." So therefore, the hadeeth is specific for someone who shaves his head as a means of announcing his grief due to the death of one of his relatives. What consists of this person's objection of Allaah's Divine Ordainment is the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) linking it to his words "tears", meaning his clothes and "wails" meaning raises his voice in wailing.

And what supports this is the occasion in which Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree (رضي الله عنه) reported this hadeeth, for he reported it at the time when he was on his deathbed as occurs in the two Saheehs. And it is verified in Irwaa-ul-Ghaleel (no. 771) and in Ahkaam-ul-Janaa'iz. As for the narration from Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) that has been mentioned in the previous fatwaa, then I have not come across its chain of narration and I do not deem that it is authentic. But if it is authentic, then it is likely that it is in reference to imitation of the Khawaarij based on what has been stated previously.

As for the saying that growing the hair on one's head long is Sunnah, then there is no proof for it by which an argument can be established. And it is not sufficient in that regard to say that it is

<sup>7</sup> Please see the article: The recommendation of the niqaab (translated by Aboo Talhah Daawood ibn Ronald Burbank (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)).

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authentically reported on the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (that he had long hair), for that was from his customs ('aadaat). And it has also been authentically reported on him (صلى الله عليه وسلم) that he entered Makkah while having four locks (of tied hair), as is mentioned in my book "Mukhtasar ash-Shamaa'il al-Muhammadiyah" (35/23). And "locks" means braids and plaits. But this was just an Arab custom, which some of them did not do all the time. So can it be said that this was the Sunnah also? Of course not! So then in customs like this, there must be a specific proof that asserts that it is a Sunnah of worship. But how can this be when the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has placed an equality between the one who shaves his hair and the one who leaves it to grow as is found in his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying: "(Either) shave all of it or leave all of it." Rather, he shaved those three children's heads as was mentioned in the fatwaa. And that is an authentic hadeeth also, which I have verified in my book "Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz wa Bid'ihaa" (pg. 166).

So it is not for any of the youth that are being tested with imitation of the disbelievers or of the sinful people in their hairstyles, to use the "Sunnah" as a pretext (i.e. excuse), for it is a Sunnah of custom and not a Sunnah of worship. And this is especially since many of these youth do not imitate the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in what is obligatory upon them, such as trimming the moustache and growing the beard.

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ

Verily, therein is indeed a reminder for him who has a heart or gives ear while he is heedful<sup>8</sup>

Perfect are You, O Allaah, from all imperfections, and by Your praise, I bear witness that no deity has the right to be worshipped except You. I seek forgiveness in You and repent to You.

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<sup>8</sup> Soorah Qaaf [50:37]