

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The beard ¹

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) whenever those who neglect to remember him do so.

The beard is the Sunnah of all the Prophets (upon them all be peace). Let us look at the benefits of males wearing a beard. Doctor Daniel G. Freeman, of University of Chicago, did research on the reproductive value of male beardedness. To test his theory, Doctor Freedman and his graduate students asked a group of undergraduates about their feelings about beardedness by giving them questionnaires and interviewing them. Furthermore, one of the graduate students interviewed seven women about their feelings towards men with beards. The female students rated a bearded male face as more masculine, independent, sophisticated and mature compared to a clean-shaven male face. They concluded from their studies that a beard increases “sexual magnetism” and attractiveness and makes men more appealing to women. The presence of a beard makes a man appear more masculine to a women, and she feels more feminine towards him.ⁱ

This research carried out by Doctor Freedman in the field of social psychology² shows that the presence of a beard on a man’s face makes him more sexually attractive to women.

Man’s personality

In a 1973 issue of Psychology, Robert J. Pellegrini, a psychologist from California State University published the results of an experiment on the perception of male personality as a function of different states of beardedness or beardlessness. To carry out the experiment, Pellegrini hired eight full-bearded young men from the ages of 22-25 years, who were willing to have their beards completely shaved off. All of those eight men were Caucasians. Each of the bearded men was professionally photographed in each of the following states:

1. Full beard
2. Goateed
3. Moustached
4. Clean shaven

Upon completion of the photographic sessions, there were a total of thirty-two photographs, i.e. four photos of each of the eight men. In the experiment, those photos were randomly distributed to subjects who were asked to rate their first impression based on a number of personality traits. The subjects who evaluated the photos comprised 64 male and 64 female psychology students. Hence, each photo was judged by two males and two females.

The results of this study by Pellegrini indicated a generally positive correlation between the amount of hair on the person’s face and his being perceived as masculine, good-looking, dominant, mature, courageous, liberal, non-conforming, older healthy and attractive.ⁱⁱ

Medical benefits

According to the research of herbalists, allowing the beard to grow prevents a person from contracting diseases of the throat and of the gums.ⁱⁱⁱ

An American Doctor Charles Holme...

States, “I don’t understand why people feel uncomfortable growing a beard. When people have hair on their heads then what is the problem with keeping the hair on the face. If a person is suffering from loss of hair on the head then the person feels shy but it is astonishing that people today shave the beard with pleasure. A long beard saves a person from the cold affects reaching to the neck^{iv}

¹ See Volume One, Chapter Thirty Seven for this Sunnah

² The science of the functioning of living organisms and of their component parts.

We find the beard is not only a command of the sacred law but beneficial for a person too. The Doctors and Philosophers of many years ago would keep a beard; take for instance, Charles Darwin, Abraham Lincoln, Louis Pasteur and many others. It is only recently people have been removing it.

The job interview

A person went for an interview once and he got the job with the condition that he shaved his beard. The person refused and left the interview room. On his way out he saw a picture depicting Jesus on the wall. Taking this off he presented this to the interviewers and said, 'If Jesus came to the interview, would you have told him the same.' The interviewers were dumbfounded, the person left leaving the picture with them. This is the attitude Muslims should have, meaning, if you want our expertise then you take us as we are physically and spiritually.

Myths

You may hear that some people say that bacteria grows in the beard and is unhygienic. The answer to that is shaving the beard rid natural cells from the face, hence leading to cancer of the face. The question to ask is that how can the beard have bacteria when one washes it five times a day whilst doing ablution.

Save yourself

Another benefit of the beard is that it saves a person from sin. For instance you can change your clothes and become one of the common people, however, the beard differentiates from a believer to a non-believer. So a person will think twice before going to place which are disallowed.

Time wasted in shaving

Doctor Herbert Mescon from Boston University calculated that if a teenager begins shaving at the age of 15, then in his 55 or so years of shaving, he is likely to spend approximately 3350 hours, equivalent to 139 days, at this task in his lifetime.^v

Where does the hair go?

A man should think, how he can possibly place the hair which Allah (The Exalted) has commanded him to keep and a practice of the Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) down the same drain pipe as one urinates. Is this the respect we have for a practice loved by the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)? We are so weak in faith that we want to follow the practices of the west rather than the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). We are living in such a time where the women are wearing shirt and pants and trimming their hair, whilst the men are disfiguring themselves with rings on their faces. If a person does not keep a beard then how can he be recognised as a male, may Allah (The Exalted) have mercy on us and give us the ability to follow the Sunnah closely.

ⁱ The survival Value of the beard. Psychological Today 3: 36-39

ⁱⁱ Impressions of the Male Personality as a function of beardedness. Psychology 10: 29-33

ⁱⁱⁱ The status of beard in Islam. Moulana Shah Badi ud Din Ar-Rashidi

^{iv} Qowmi Sahat, (Healthy community), August 1994

^v "On beards, no beards and other hairy problems." Science Digest: 51-52. Arthur J. Snider.