

On the Sinful Practices of Cutting or Shaving the Beard

The beard is one of the distinct features, given to men by God, to distinguish men from women. That a man would wish to shave off the beard and to have a smooth face like a woman is rebellion against God and His right ordering in creation. It is biblically and historically clear that God has always forbidden the practice of beard trimming. These are some of my sincere study notes and references on a very important subject.

Leviticus 19:27 “Ye shall not . . . disfigure your beard.”

Leviticus 21:5 “. . . ye shall not . . . shave the beard.”

Deuteronomy 22:5 “The apparel of a man shall not be on a woman, neither shall a man put on a woman’s dress; for every one that does these things is an abomination to the Lord thy God.” Note: This verse applies inasmuch as the beard is particular to manliness and the smooth face to that of women. Here God teaches that there should be a marked distinction between the two genders, hence, for a man to shave the beard would be effeminate.

Kings II 10:4-5 “And Annon took the servants of David, and shaved their beards, and cut off their garments in the midst as far as their haunches, and sent them away. And they brought David word concerning the men; and he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly dishonored: and the king said, ‘Remain in Jericho till your beards have grown, and then ye shall return’.” Note: All Christian men, in following this good example, should also feel shame at having their God-pleasing beard removed in any fashion, to any degree. For a man to shave willingly would show they have no shame, it is clear that a shaved man is not to be in Israel, the Church. The Lord Jesus Christ says this:

Matt 5:19 “Whosoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven”

Matthew 10:30 “The very hairs of your head are numbered,” says the Lord.

Then we have what are known as the Apostolic Constitutions, Book I, Sec. II (circa 250) “Nor may men destroy the hair of their beards, and unnaturally change the form of a man. For the law says: ‘Ye shall not mar your beards.’ For God the Creator has made this decent for women, but has determined that it is unsuitable for men. But if thou do these things to please men, in contradiction to the law, thou wilt be abominable with God, who created thee after His own image. If, therefore, thou wilt be acceptable to God, abstain from all those things which He hates, and do none of those things that are displeasing to Him.”

The early Christian Church leader Clement of Alexandria (150-215) in Book III of his work known as *The Instructor*, writes: “How womanly it is for one who is a man to comb himself and shave himself for the sake of fine effect, and to arrange his hair at a mirror, shave his cheeks, pluck hairs out of them, and smooth them! For God wished women to be smooth and to rejoice in their locks alone, growing spontaneously, as a horse in its mane. But He has adorned man, like the lions, with a beard, a sign of strength and rule. For it is not lawful to pluck out the beard, man’s natural and noble ornament. A youth with his first beard: for with this, youth is most graceful. By and by he is anointed, delighting in the beard ‘on which descended’ the prophetic, ‘ointment’ with which Aaron was honored. And it becomes him who is rightly trained, on whom peace has pitched its tent, to preserve peace also with his hair.”

Another early Church leader, Cyprian of Carthage (200-258), in his *Treatise on The Lapsed*, condemns a certain practice where those who commit sins, instead of mourning in repentance, would pull out their beard according to pagan customs, dress in fancy clothes, and try to appear respectable in the sight of all in their unseemly vanity: “. . . although it is written, ‘Ye shall not mar the figure of your beard,’ he plucks out his beard.” Again Cyprian notes that one of the practices of those fallen away from sound faith is the disfiguring of the beard:

“. . . there was no devotedness of religion; . . . there was no sound faith: in their works there was no mercy; in their manners there was no discipline. In men, their beards were defaced; in women, their complexion was dyed: the eyes were falsified from what God’s hand had made them; their hair was stained with a falsehood.” And in Treatise XII, in his *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, in which Cyprian compiles a list of 120 things that God-pleaser’s should be following, is this: “84. The beard must not be plucked. ‘You will not deface the figure of your beard’.”

Then we see the early Christian teacher known as Lactantius (250-320), who wrote in his book, *The Workmanship of God*, ch. VII: “Then the nature of the beard contributes in an incredible degree to distinguish the maturity of bodies, or to the distinction of sex, or to the beauty of manliness and strength.”

St. Basil the Great (329-379) “When I grab my beard, I know I am not a woman.”

Up to a point even the Christian Latin’s had beards and their famous Jerome is a good testimony against their current practice of commonly cutting or shaving the beard. Jerome’s tendencies toward the antichrist Masoretic text are more than problematic, but he did teach about the beard in a Christian manner. His writing *Against Jovinianus*, attests to the great purpose of the beard: “Why are you distinguished from the female sex by a beard, hair, and other peculiarities of person? How is it that you have not swelling bosoms, and are not broad at the hips, narrow at the chest? Your voice is rugged, your speech rough, your

eyebrows more shaggy. To no purpose you have all these manly qualities...” Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo and early Church writer, well respected in the West, but often of unsound faith, did testify to many occurrences in his times and did manage to observe some things rightly. Regarding the creation of man, Augustine does correctly admit that the beard is a sign of beauty particular to man, as he wrote in, *The City of God*, Book XXII, Creation of Angels and Men.

The Council of Trullo (A.D. 692) strongly commented on the beard saying, “The custom of shaving the beard is repugnant to God.”

One old Greek Christian saying goes like this, “There are two kinds of people in this world that go around beardless - boys and women, and I am neither one.”

Greeks were shocked, later on, to find out “that Latin priests shave off their beards...” For shaving a beard was pagan custom that was indeed contrary to Christianity, and its contrary innovation within the Latin church was one of many heresies. By the year 1054 it all mounted up, being a cause of the Great Schism between the church in Rome and the other four churches in the East.

The Russian Church Council of the Stoglav, in 1551, defended good Christian teachings against the encroachments and errors of the Latinized west, stating in Question 25. “Concerning those who shave their heads and beards: Through our sins – weakness, indifference, and negligence have come into the world. At the present time men who call themselves Christians and are thirty years of age and older shave their heads, beards, and whiskers, and wear clothing and costumes taken from lands of dissident faith; how then can a Christian be recognized? . . . Chapter 40. The sacred rules likewise forbid all Orthodox Christians to shave their beards and to cut their whiskers. For such is not an Orthodox but a Latin and heretical tradition . . . and the rules of the Apostles and church fathers strictly forbid and denounce this.”

Church leader Gabriel (Petrov) of Novgorod, in a book titled, *The Little Russian Philokalia*, Vol. 3, once went to a service where the Archpastor Andrew Samborsky, having a shaved off beard, was supposed to serve together with him. Seeing Samborsky, Gabriel said: “What kind of man are you? Our Church does not accept those who shave the beard. Get out!”

In the book *Peter the Great*, by Robert Massie, on p.244, we see that to Russian Christians the beard was a symbol of religious belief and self-respect. It was an ornament given by God, worn by the prophets, the Apostles and by the Lord

Himself. Tsar Ivan expressed the traditional Muscovite feeling when he declared, "To shave the beard is a sin that the blood of all the martyrs cannot cleanse. It is to deface the image of man created by God." Pastors refused to give a blessing to men without beards; as they were considered shameful and beyond the pale of Christendom. Patriarch Adrian said, "God did not create men beardless . . . Shaving is not only foolishness and dishonor; it is a mortal sin."

Russian old Orthodox Christian men, in imitation of Christ, do not shave. They see their beards as "a mark of humility". p.127, Solovki, by Roy Robson, 2004.

In the book, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, page 325, it speaks of a Russian old Orthodox Christian rule that they live by, "with the smoker and shaven man you must not pray . . .you must not be friends, you must not persistently argue with."

From the Service of Christian Clerical Ordination, in the third section, there is a questioning period of the candidate before the ordination where he makes the following promise: "I promise . . . not to cut my hair nor my beard . . . for through such unseemly behavior I risk belittling my rank and tempting believers" (Promise #5). It is important to note here that, in confirmation of his promise the candidate kisses the Holy Gospel and the Cross and signs his name.

The 11th-century North African sage Maimonides understands the beard as a protest against idolatry, noticing that the heathen priests shaved their beards. In Antioch, the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians, a clean shaven man is believed to have been abandoned by his wife, which brings him to act in such an unbecoming manner. In the Christian city of Byzantium and also on the Christian island of Rhodes the shaving of the beard was prohibited by law - Harpers Dictionary of Classical Antiquities (1898).

From an article in Vol. 3, No. 4 of the Protestant Christian magazine Acts & Facts titled, *The Beard Comes From the Brain*, by Brian Thomas, explains, "A scientist might explain that men have beards because in males LH stimulates testicular Leydig cells and other tissues to produce yet another hormone, testosterone. In response to specific levels of androgenic hormones (primary testosterone), hair follicles in certain areas of the body build 'androgenic hair,' which includes beards." But God giveth a body as it hath pleased Him (1 Cor. 15:38). I sure wouldn't want to cut my beard any more than castrate myself, they are both one and the same thing in the eyes of God. It also says, back in the book of 1 Corinthians at 6:9-11, effeminate men shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

We do not see a prophet, Apostle, priest or any man of God that did not have a beard, with the exception of Joseph; he was forced to shave, being a prisoner (according to pagan Egyptian law men in the presence of Pharaoh must be shaven). Egyptian wall paintings show all the male Jewish slaves bearded while on the same wall the male Egyptians all have a shaved face. The only other time a godly man was without facial hair was during purification rituals, a one time and temporary event that was never to be an ongoing practice. It has been said that the Apostle in the book of Acts cut his hair, that was not clearly his beard and has to do with the previous sentence here as it was a vow taken. Those rituals of punishment are no longer fully practiced by Christians, for it is understood that by His stripes we are healed, and such ritual is represented by the practice of baptism, therein imitating Christ.

Some suggest that Absalom offers an exception for shaving. The responses I have found on this point are like that seen in the Encyclopedia Biblica which show Absalom's shaving being accounted as vanity and sin due to his weighing it, that is, for taking the hair into account. There is also the book titled, *The Body Temple*, written by two modern Christian doctors, which explains the Absalom story in a similar manner. If we look at the story of Absalom we will see that his experience was in the ways of worldliness and therefore against God. The ambitious person sometimes sacrifices principles to get ahead, but God measures worth by obedience towards Him.

Habitual shaving is not natural and needs constant attention. Cut throat razors are just that. As with the ways of this world that are contrary to the ways of God, razors have a high price. God made the hair of a woman and beard of a man as a differentiation - to delineate between us. Men naturally grow a beard as God intended and it is a disgrace to cut it. As with all things, let's be conforming ourselves to the everlasting ways of the Creator, not going right or left, then we shall have the blessings that are for those who obey God. Seeing this evidence we know it is shameful for a man to shave, therefore, let us rejoice in the ways of the Lord. For men to have a beard is to all the more be imitating Christ.

We are simply not allowed the practice of shaving. As God made man in His image, we, in a round about way, mutilate God if we cut beards. It is mockery of God for a man to have his beard removed, and so it is that this was one of the sufferings the Lord Himself encountered. For centuries Christians have understood that Isaiah foretold of the crucifixion, in how the guards plucked out the beard of Christ, to mock His good practice of keeping one. "I gave My back to the smiter's, and My cheeks to them that plucked out My beard: I did not hide my face from shame and spitting. Isaiah 50:6." So the beard is a sign of created beauty particular to man and to not have a beard would, conversely, mar that beauty and make a man ugly in the sense that one is trying to improve on what God has done. Not cutting a beard is an obligation on men.

Here is another thought, about goatee's. As the Lord will separate the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:23) it is not at all a good idea to be thinking that we should have such a thing as a goatee. The devil is often represented by westerners as having a goatee. There just is no good reason for the sinful habit of trimming or shaving the beard or mustache, no matter who it is that says otherwise. It is a real shame to see the evil mandates to shave. A Russian man who would trim his beard was not to be allowed Christian burial unless he began to demonstrate wholehearted repentance for some 40 days.

There are some men who, from consequences of godlessness, are unable to grow a beard, or have a very light growth, or even no growth of hair on the face whatsoever. These men are not necessarily condemned for their beard being absent, if they have indeed demonstrated repentance. I personally know many full blooded Indian men who do in fact shave, though many people wrongly think they naturally have no facial hair follicles. The fullness or length of a beard is not important, and God never expects one to do what one is unable to do. What is important is that one simply allows what hair will grow on the face to do so freely and unencumbered. In vanity some men may wish to deface their beard, but Christians are called not to be vain or pleaser's of men, but to be humble and obedient before God above all other things.

According to the Jewish *Zohar*, the beard is considered to be a channel of holiness and blessing and therefore is not to be shaved or trimmed by any method. Rebbe Yisroel Newman, known as the Tzemach Tzedek, said that any means of removing hair from a man's face is forbidden. Period. Responsa 93, a commentary on the Yoreh De'ah legal code, ruled that shaving a beard is against Halacha, or Jewish law. Negative Mizvah #44 states that one should not shave. The Talmud describes the beard as an "adornment of the face" and implies that a beardless man cannot be handsome.

In a strict Islamic court any man who practices shaving his beard is not allowed to give witness in court as he is disobeying Allah, and therefore his testimony is not worth anything. There is a YouTube video showing the U.S. Supreme Court ruling for the beard of a police man practicing Islam. Al Jazeera news showed video of Afghanistan police politely encouraging men with trimmed beards to let them grow according to natural law.

In the UK the compulsory rule to shave in the military is lifted for all Sikh on religious grounds. Guruka Singh explains in a YouTube video the purpose of the beard for men saying that, it is a protection.

A post titled, *Truth About Hair*, reported by C. Young, tells of something largely unknown. Since the Viet Nam War the inner workings of the military became aware of something very significant in this area. There were at that time many covert government studies which conclusively found how having uncut hair is not only a protection, but something akin to what is called a sixth sense. The tests, without fail, always showed that uncut hair allowed a person to either escape or stop danger, while destruction always was brought upon the person with cut hair. For this reason a circle of government medical staff began to grow their hair and beards long, with more than satisfying results. It is well known that the body is very capable of taking care of itself, with almost supernatural abilities, if given an opportunity.

Remember, the many good reasons for every part of our bodies. Even modern science has now determined that hair is an extension of the nervous system, it can be correctly seen as exteriorized nerves, sensors that transmit vast amounts of important information to what are called the brainstem, the limbic system, and the neocortex. Kirlian photography shows the difference between uncut hair emitting energy and that cut hair is missing this significant element. Cut hair brings a numbing effect, where the sending/receiving of transmissions are hampered.

Having cut hair causes a person to become seriously unaware of distress, making a person insensitive in every respect and especially frustrating their sexuality. But our society wrongly teaches that hair style is a matter of personal preference, of fashion or convenience, simply a cosmetic issue. To solve problems our world begins by accepting that our realities are in error. We should throwout mirrors, which are only vanity to start with. Remember the story of Sampson and Delilah. Those men who think of themselves as being clean-cut (shaven) have always been seen as unclean and untrustworthy by those of us who are more down to earth and reality based.

It is truly apparent today that the natural law has long been forgotten, as we see cross-dressing transvestism in abundance all around us everywhere we look, whether men or women, it is practically impossible to tell the difference between them. As for me, I accept the natural understanding of Scripture and the good example of the renowned ancient Christians. The good natural law, given to man in their conscience by God, is more than enough so that all people could know the truth on such topics, if they hardened not their hearts. But these days it is as though most of the masses of people are very prideful in themselves. For the most part people are hateful towards Almighty God and His long established precepts. There is an unmistakable early Christian mandate for beards. Men who even trim their beard have been compared to a eunuch, which is likewise forbidden. We are not allowed to self-mutilate our bodies, not even tattooing or piercings, etc.

In case we are unable to make the connection, this applies to women practices just as much as towards men. With their all too common Butch hair cuts, the abnormal behavior in practicing leg shaving, also the forsaking of head-coverings, and the desire to wear the pants in the family, all serve to show the nearly highest form of dementia going on all around us. Never ignore good and sound council, but be rejecting everything which is impermissible to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Men with facial hair don't care what others think of them, and real men don't color their hair darker colors to make themselves look younger. Modern practices remove authentic individuality, making sterile clones who need to be accepted by employers and also hopefully accepted by narrow minded, shallow women. That's why authoritarian types like employers and police often profile men with facial hair as those who don't follow orders on command. We see today the fulfillment of the words of the Lord that ultimately the world-at-large would become worse than Sodom & Gomorrah, worse than ever in all recorded history, and that is precisely our whole position.

I end, continuing from an earlier quotation, The Paedagogus (Clement of Alexandria). From his book titled, The Instructor, Book III, Chapter 1, On True Beauty. "It is then, as appears, the greatest of all lessons to know one's self. For if one knows himself, he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God . . . by well-doing, and by requiring as few things as possible. Now, God alone is in need of nothing, and rejoices most when He sees us bright with the ornament of intelligence . . . Chapter 3. Against Men Who Embellish Themselves. To such an extent, then, has luxury advanced, that not only are the female sex deranged about this frivolous pursuit, but men also are infected with the disease. These are haters of hair, adorning their locks like women. Living for unholy acts of audacity, these fickle wretches do reckless and nefarious deeds . . . As for dyeing of hair, and anointing of grey locks, and dyeing them, these are practices of abandoned effeminates; and their feminine combing of themselves is a thing to be let alone. For they think, that like serpents they divest themselves of the old age of their head by painting and renovating themselves. But though they do doctor the hair cleverly, they will not escape wrinkles, nor will they elude death by tricking time . . . But these dishonor the reverence of age, the head covered with grey hairs . . . But for one who is a man to comb himself and shave himself with a razor, for the sake of fine effect, to arrange his hair at the looking-glass . . . such luxury has deranged all things; it has disgraced man. A luxurious niceness seeks everything, attempts everything, forces everything, coerces nature. Men play the part of women, and women that of men, contrary to nature; women are at once wives and husbands . . ."