

169819 - Ruling on combing the hair every day

the question

Is it prohibited for men to comb their hair every day?

Detailed answer

It is recommended to comb the hair and put oil on it, because of the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever has hair, let him take care of it.” Classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albani in *Sahih Abi Dawud*.

The phrase “let him take care of it” means let him make it look good and clean it by washing it, put oil on it and comb it, and not leave it dishevelled, because cleanliness and looking good are recommended. (*Hashiyat 'Awn al-Ma'bud*, 9/1183).

But going to extremes in taking care of one’s hair and appearance is blameworthy, because of what it involves of extravagance and wasting time and effort for no benefit. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade combing the hair more than every second day. Narrated by Abu Dawud, 3628 and at-Tirmidhi, 1678; classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) in *Sahih at-Tirmidhi*.

Ibn al-Athir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Regarding the words “every second day,” Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: That means putting oil on the hair one day, and not the next day. He stated that in *Al-Mughni*, 1/67.

Ash-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The hadith indicates that it is disliked to spend too much time on taking care of the hair every day, because it is a kind of indulging in luxury, and it was soundly narrated by Abu Dawud that Fadalah ibn 'Ubayd said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to forbid us to go to extremes in luxury.

What is meant by luxury is putting too much effort into adorning oneself and constantly paying attention to one's looks. (*Nayl al-Awtar*, 1/159).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The correct view is that there is no contradiction between them – that is, between the hadith “Whoever has hair, let him take care of it” and the hadith which says that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade combing the hair more than every second day – because the individual is enjoined to look after his hair but is forbidden to go to extremes and be overly concerned about his looks and living a life of luxury. So he should look after his hair but not make his appearance and fine living his main concern; rather he should comb his hair every second day. This is the best way to understand the two hadiths. (*Hashiyat as-Sunan*, 11/147).

It was narrated from Jabir ibn `Abdillah (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came to us and saw a dishevelled man with messy hair. He said: “Could he not find something with which to calm his hair down?” Narrated by Ahmad, 14321; Abu Dawud, 3540; and an-Nasa’i, 5141. Classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him).

Malik narrated in *Al-Muwatta’* (1494) from Zayd ibn Aslam that ‘Ata’ ibn Yasar told him: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was in the mosque, and a man came in with dishevelled hair and beard. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gestured to him to leave, as if he meant that he should tidy up his hair and beard. So the man did that, then he came back and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Isn’t this better than one of you coming with his head dishevelled as if he is a devil?”

Ibn `Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There is no dispute that the hadith narrated from Malik is mursal, but its meaning can be attributed [to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)] based on the hadith of Jabir and others... It encourages men to comb their hair and beards, and indicates that it is disliked to neglect that and be so heedless about it that the hair becomes dishevelled and ugly. (*At-Tamhid*, 5/50).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is recommended to comb one's hair every other day, and to take care of the hair by putting oil on it, and to also put oil on the body. And he (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted the evidence mentioned above.... Ahmad said: What is meant is putting oil on the hair one day and not the next day.

The point is that putting oil on one's hair and body should be moderate, according to one's situation, and even if someone needs to do that every day because he has a lot of hair and his skin is dry, that is permissible, because of the report narrated from Abu Qatadah, who had a huge forelock, so he asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about that, and he instructed him to take care of it and comb it every day. Narrated by an-Nasa'i.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever has hair, let him take care of it." Narrated by Abu Dawud. And it was narrated that Jabir said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw a man with dishevelled hair, so he said: "Could he not find something with which to calm his hair down?" Narrated by Ahmad, Abu Dawud and an-Nasa'i. End quote.

Conclusion: What is required of a man is to comb his hair and not leave it dishevelled and messy, but he is not allowed to go to extremes in taking care of his hair. But if he takes care of it without going to extremes, then there is nothing wrong with that.

And Allah knows best.