

ARTICLE

Revive a Sunnah: The Turban

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One must affirm that there can be absolutely no doubt in the fact that each and every Sunnah of our beloved Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam is considered supreme and well worthy of emulation by a true believer of and follower of his esteemed lifestyle. In fact a true lover of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam would be prepared to give his life for the practical preservation of even one Sunnah. A true Ummati of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam is one who endeavors to emulate every Sunnah, whether it is connected to the Ibaadat (worship) of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam or his habit or lifestyle (the manner of his eating, walking, dressing etc.)

Concerning the turban Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Moulana Mohammed Zakariya Khandalwi Rahmatullah alayhi has written in 'Khasâil-e-Nabawi' (commentary of Shamâil Tirmizi):

The tying of the turban is a 'Sunnat-e-Mustamirrah' (perpetually adhered to practice of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam has enjoined the tying of the turban upon us. It has been reported: "Tie the turban. It will increase you in forbearance." (Fathul Baari) It is also reported that somebody enquired of Hadhrat Ibn Umar Radhiallahu anhu whether the tying of the turban was sunnat or not. He replied in the affirmative.

It is reported in one hadith that Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said: "Wear the turban as it is a sign of Islam and it distinguishes between a Muslim and a Kâfir." (Ainee)

Ahâdith pertaining to the Turban

Hadhrat Huraith Radhiallahu anhu reports that Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam addressed the people while wearing a black turban (Sahih Muslim Vol.1 Pg.439)

In another narration it is reported: "I saw Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam wearing a black turban." (Shamaail Tirmizi Pg.8)

Hadhrat Jaabir Radhiallahu anhu reports that on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam entered Makkah Mukarramah while wearing a black turban. (Sahih Muslim Vol.1 Pg439)

Hadhrat Ibn Abbas Radhiallahu anhu reports that during the illness just prior to his passing away, Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam addressed the Sahabah Radhiallahu anhum while wearing a black turban. (Sahih Bukhari Vol.1 Pg536)

Hadhrat Anas Radhiallahu anhu reports: "I saw Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam performing wudhu. He had on a 'Qitri' turban..." (A type of thick coarse cloth with an element of redness in it). (Abû Dawûd Pg.19)

The Sahabah and the Turban

Abu Umar Radhiallahu anhu reports that he saw Hadhrat Ibn Umar Radhiallahu anhu purchasing such a

turban which had designs on it. Thereafter he requested for a scissors and cut it off. (Ibn Majah Pg.26)

A lengthy incident has been mentioned in Sahih Bukhari where Hadhrat Abdullah bin Ateek Radhiallahu anhu says: "It was a moonlit night when I fell down breaking my calf. I used my TURBAN to form a bandage around it and proceeded ahead....." (Vol.2 Pg.577)

Sulaiman Radhiallahu anhu says: "I saw those Sahabah who were from the Muhâjirîn-e Awwalîn (those who were among the first to migrate to Madinah) wearing turbans of cotton material." (Mussanaf Ibn Abi Shaibah Vol.8 Pg.241)

It is mentioned that on the day of the martyrdom of 'Uthmân Radhiallahu anhu, Hadhrat Ali Radhiallahu anhu had on a black turban. (Ibid Vol.8 Pg.235)

Nafi' Rahmatullah alayhi says: "I saw Ibn Umar Radhiallahu anhu wearing a turban the tail of which hung between the shoulders." (Ibid Vol.8 Pg.2)

The Scholars of Hadith and the Turban

It is mentioned concerning Imaam Bukhari Rahmatullah alayhi that when he prepared to travel towards Samarqand, he tied a turban and wore leather socks. (Muqadama Fathul Bari Pg.493)

It is also reported regarding Imâm Muslim Rahmatullah alayhi that once he placed his 'chaadar' (shawl) on his turban in front of his teacher and left the class. (Ibid Pg.491) This proves that Imaam Muslim Rahmatullah alayhi attended the lessons of Hadith wearing a turban.

Virtue of the Turban

The mere fact that the wearing of the turban is proven to be Sunnat is in itself a sufficient and complete appraisal of its virtue and should provide the necessary impetus towards its adoption. However, there exist a multitude of narrations expounding the virtue of the turban. Many of them are 'Da'if' [weak]. However it is an accepted principle that a coupling of a multitude of 'weak' narrations concerning the virtue of a specified act lends credence towards its practice and acceptability of the said virtue.

Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam is reported to have said: "Hold on to the turban as it is a sign of the angels. Also let the loose end hang from the back." (Baihaqi)

"Adopt the turban as it will increase your forbearance." (Mustadrak of Hâkim)

"Some of Allah Ta'âla's angels stand at the door of the Musjid and seek repentance on behalf of those wearing white turbans." (Al Maqaasidul Hasanah pg.466)

"The turban distinguishes the Muslims from the Mushriks (polytheists). (Ibid)

"Allah Ta'âla causes his mercy to descend on the people wearing turbans on the day of Jummah and his Angels make du'â for such people." (Dailami)

It is perhaps due to these very narrations that the Fuqahâ [Jurists] have accepted the fact that the reward of the Salaat performed while wearing a turban is greater than one performed without it. (Fatawa Rashidia Pg.326; Fatâwa Rahimia Vol. 4 Pg.359). Hence despite the weakness of these narrations, their number

lends credence to the opinion that such increase in reward is in fact promised.

The length of the Turban

Allama Suyuti Rahmatullah alayhi has written in 'Alhaawi fil Fataawa' that there is no narration from which the length of Nabi's Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam turban can be proven. (Tuhfatul Ahwazi Vol.1 Pg.49)

Hadhrat Sheikh Zakaria Rahmatullah alayhi writes; "No mention can be found among the reliable traditions concerning the length of the turban of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam" (Khasaail-e-Nabawi Pg.67)

The loose end of the Turban

It is preferable that the turban be tied in such a manner as to allow either one or both ends of it to hang down in the form of a tail or loose end. The loose end may be allowed to hang in the back or the front. However most narrations mention the tail as being at the back. Some Scholars have attested to the permissibility of tying the turban in such a manner that no loose end is left hanging at the back or the front. (Jam'ul Wasaa'il Vol.1 Pg.168)

The colour of the Turban

In the light of the Ahâdith it is learnt that a white turban is the most preferable while black is also Sunnah. However the adoption of any colour will be regarded as fulfilling of the Sunnah as long as some mention is found of it in the Ahâdith.

The Turban and Salaat

Hadhrat Moulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi Rahmatullah alayhi has written the following in reply to a question; "To make Imaamat (lead the congregation) without a turban is completely permissible without any degree of reprehensibility.However there is no denying of the fact that with a turban, the reward is increased." (Fatâwa Rashidia Pg.326)

Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri Rahmatullah alayhi writes; "From the Fiqhi (juristic) point of view we find that it is mustahab (preferable) that Salaat be performed while wearing three items of clothing, one of them being the turban." (Faizul Bari Vol.2 Pg.8)

In conclusion let us understand that complete success lies in following and emulating every aspect of the blessed lifestyle of our beloved Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. The Sahaba Radhiallahu anhum understood this. Therefore their emulation knew no bounds. The eating, drinking, sleeping and dressing of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam became theirs. Let us also follow in their footsteps. May Allah Ta'âla grant the entire Ummat the ability to revive all the Sunnah practices of Nabi Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. (Âmîn)