

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 5

بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي شَيْبِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ

What has been narrated regarding the grey hair of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

- This chapter, like those before it, relates to the physical description (*ṣifāt khalqīyyah*) of the Prophet ﷺ. The term *shayb* refers to the grey hair, which is the change in colour of hair from its original colour (black or otherwise) to white.
- al-Imām al-Tirmidhī compiled this chapter to clarify whether grey hair appeared in the hair or the beard of the Prophet ﷺ, and if so, how much there was.
- The authentic narrations – some of which have been mentioned by al-Imām al-Tirmidhī in this chapter - show that the grey hair found in the hair of the Prophet ﷺ was very little, just a few scattered hairs in three places; namely the *ṣudghayn* or the two temples, the *ʿanfaqah* which is the patch of hair between the lower lip and the chin, and in the *mafriq* or parting of his head. Anas ibn Mālīk narrates:

لَمْ يَخْتَضِبْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ، إِنَّمَا كَانَ الْبَيَاضُ فِي عُنْفَقَتِهِ، وَفِي الصُّدْغَيْنِ، وَفِي الرَّأْسِ نُبْذًا.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not dye his hair. The whiteness was only in the patch of hair between the lower lip and the chin, in the temples, and there were a few hairs on the head. (Muslim)

- This *ḥadīth* is not mentioned by al-Imām al-Tirmidhī in this chapter.

Hadīth 37

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَنْسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ: هَلْ خَضَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟ قَالَ: لَمْ يَبْلُغْ ذَلِكَ، إِنَّمَا كَانَ شَيْبًا فِي صُدْغَيْهِ، وَلَكِنْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ خَضَبَ بِالْحِنَّاءِ وَالْكَتَمِ.

Qatādah said: I said to Anas ibn Mālīk: 'Did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ dye his hair?' He said: 'He did not reach that stage. There was only some greyness at his temples. However, Abū Bakr dyed his hair with ḥennā' and katam.' (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- (هَلْ خَضَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ) – ‘*Did the Messenger of Allah dye his hair?*’. Meaning, did the Prophet ﷺ use a dye to change the colour of his grey hair. The term *khidāb* refers to changing the colour of grey hair using *ḥennā’*, *katam*, or a similar substance.
- (لَمْ يَبْلُغْ ذَلِكَ) – ‘*He did not reach that stage*’. Meaning, the amount of grey hair found on the Prophet ﷺ was so little that it did not require dyeing with *ḥennā’* or *katam*.
- (إِنَّمَا كَانَ شَيْبًا فِي صُدْعَيْهِ) – ‘*There was only some greyness at his temples*’. Meaning that the Prophet’s ﷺ grey hair consisted of only a small amount at his temples (*ṣudghayn*), which is the hair between the eyes and the ears. As mentioned, this is one of the three places which the Prophet’s ﷺ grey hair appeared.
- (وَلَكِنْ أَبُو بَكْرٍ خَضَبَ بِالْحِنَاءِ وَالْكَتَمِ) – ‘*However, Abū Bakr dyed his hair with ḥennā’ and katam*’. Meaning, that Abū Bakr changed the colour of his hair using *ḥennā’* and *katam*, both of which are well known plants which are used in dyeing and changing colour. *Ḥennā’* changes grey hair to red, and *katam* changes it to black. When the two are combined using a measure of both, as mentioned in this *ḥadīth*, the grey hair changes to a colour between black and red; neither purely black nor purely red. The Prophet ﷺ forbade dyeing the hair with pure black, so this combination produces a middle colour between the two.
- In this *ḥadīth*, *Anas* denies that the Prophet ﷺ ever dyed his head or beard. There is a difference of opinion among the *Ṣaḥābah* regarding this matter which will be addressed later.

Hadīth 38

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: مَا عَدَدْتُ فِي رَأْسِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَحَيْتِهِ إِلَّا أَرْبَعَ عَشْرَةَ شَعْرَةً بَيْضَاءَ.

Anas ibn Mālik said: ‘I did not count in the head and beard of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ more than fourteen white hairs.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- In this *ḥadīth*, *Anas* reports that the grey hair found on the Prophet’s ﷺ head and beard was very little, numbering only fourteen white hairs.
- In another narration in *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, *Anas* narrates that the grey hair of the Prophet ﷺ did not reach twenty white hairs. Meaning, the total number of white hairs on the Prophet’s ﷺ head and beard did not reach twenty hairs.
- This is a very small number, which is why *Anas* mentioned in the previous *ḥadīth* that it was too little to require dyeing.

Hadīth 39

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ سُئِلَ عَنْ شَيْبِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: كَانَ إِذَا دَهَنَ رَأْسَهُ لَمْ يُرَ مِنْهُ شَيْبٌ، وَإِذَا لَمْ يَدَهْنُ رُئِيَ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ.

Jābir ibn Samurah was asked about the grey hair of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He said: ‘When he applied oil to his hair, no grey hair could be seen; but when he did not apply oil, some of it could be seen.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- (كَانَ إِذَا دَهَنَ رَأْسَهُ لَمْ يَرِ مِنْهُ شَيْبٌ) – ‘When he applied oil to his hair, no grey hair could be seen’. Meaning, the few white hairs would become hidden by the oil and therefore would not be noticeable because of their small number. However, if he did not oil his hair the white hairs would be noticeable.
- This *ḥadīth* supports the *ḥadīth* of Anas, that the grey on the head and beard of the Prophet ﷺ was just a few hairs, not reaching twenty, to the extent that when he applied oil to his hair and beard, those few hairs would become concealed and hidden.

Hadīth 40

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: إِنَّمَا كَانَ شَيْبُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ نَحْوًا مِنْ عِشْرِينَ شَعْرَةً بَيْضَاءَ.

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said: ‘The grey hair of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was only about twenty white hairs.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- (نَحْوًا مِنْ عِشْرِينَ شَعْرَةً بَيْضَاءَ) – ‘Was only about twenty white hairs’. This *ḥadīth* shows that the grey hair of the Prophet ﷺ was around twenty white hairs. This perfectly aligns and supports the two previous *aḥādīth* of Anas (37, 38) and the *ḥadīth* of Jābir ibn Samurah (39).

Hadīth 41

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَدْ شَبْتُ. قَالَ: شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ، وَالْوَاقِعَةُ، وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ، وَعَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ، وَإِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ.

Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās said: Abū Bakr said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, you have gone grey.’ He replied: ‘Sūrat Hūd, al-Wāqī‘ah, al-Mursalāt, ‘Amma Yatasā‘alūn, and Idhā ash-Shamsu Kuwwirat have made me grey.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

Hadīth 42

عَنْ أَبِي جُحَيْفَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، نَرَاكَ قَدْ شَبْتَ. قَالَ: قَدْ شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ وَأَخَوَاتُهَا.

Abū Juḥayfah said: They said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, we see that you have gone grey.’ He said: ‘Sūrat Hūd and its sister chapters have made me grey.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- The point of relevance (*shāhid*) in these two narrations is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ in the first narration:
- (شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ، وَالْوَاقِعَةُ، وَالْمُرْسَلَاتُ، وَعَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ، وَإِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ) – ‘Sūrat Hūd, al-Wāqī‘ah, al-Mursalāt, ‘Amma Yatasā‘alūn and Idhā ash-Shamsu Kuwwirat have made me grey’. And in the second narration he ﷺ said:
- (شَيْبَتْنِي هُودٌ وَأَخَوَاتُهَا) – ‘Sūrat Hūd and its sister chapters have made me grey’. Meaning, its sisters among the *Sūrah*s of the Qur’ān that contain descriptions of the terrors and severity of the Day of Judgement. These *Sūrah*s describe the horrors of that Day, which is why the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘Whoever wishes to look at the Day of Judgement as though seeing it with his own eyes, let him

recite: Idhā ash-Shamsu Kuwwirat, Idhā al-Samā'u Infaṭarat, and Idhā al-Samā'u Inshaqqat.'

[Tirmidhi - Ḥassan]

- This is because these *Sūrahs* describe the immense terrors and hardships that people will face on that Day. Therefore, the slight grey hair that appeared in the Prophet's ﷺ hair was not the result of concern for worldly affairs, lost opportunities, or attachment to the worldly life, as is the case with many people whose hair turns grey for such reasons.
- Rather, his grey hair resulted from his deep concern for the Hereafter. This also shows the tremendous impact of the Qur'ān and the great benefit it brings to whoever reflects upon it and understands its meanings.
- Whoever truly reflects on the Qur'ān will inherit *taqwā*, and the drive to prepare for the Day of Return. This is unlike the one whose worldly life has consumed them until it becomes their greatest concern. They go grey because of worldly anxieties and they worry constantly about it.

Hadīth 43

عَنْ أَبِي رِمَّةَ التَّيْمِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَمَعِيَ ابْنُ لِي، قَالَ: فَأَرَيْتُهُ، فَقُلْتُ لِمَا رَأَيْتُهُ: هَذَا نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ، وَعَلَيْهِ ثَوْبَانِ أَخْضَرَانِ، وَلَهُ شَعْرٌ قَدْ عَلَاهُ الشَّيْبُ، وَشَيْبُهُ أَحْمَرُ.

Abū Rimthah at-Taymī said: 'I came to the Prophet ﷺ with a son of mine. So I was shown him and when I saw him, I said: 'This is the Prophet of Allah.' He was wearing two green garments, and his hair had begun to show grey, and his grey hair had a reddish tint.' (ṣaḥīḥ)

- (فَأَرَيْتُهُ) – **'I was shown him'**. Meaning, he was shown the Prophet ﷺ. This may have been his first visit to the Prophet ﷺ, not yet knowing him, so he asked about him.
- (هَذَا نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ) – **'This is the Prophet of Allah'**. Meaning, he said this when he was shown the Prophet ﷺ and he saw him. He said this confirming that he had found him.
- (وَعَلَيْهِ ثَوْبَانِ أَخْضَرَانِ) – **'He was wearing two green garments'**. Meaning, he was wearing the lower wrap (*izār*) and the upper cloak (*ridā'*). The description of his clothes as being green does not mean that they were pure green in colour. It may have been a green mixed with black like the striped Yemeni garments that were common.
- (وَلَهُ شَعْرٌ قَدْ عَلَاهُ الشَّيْبُ) – **'And his hair had begun to show grey'**. This is the point of relevance (*shāhid*) from the *ḥadīth*. This can have two possible meanings.
 1. The first is that the Prophet's ﷺ hair contained a large amount of grey hair. If this was the intended meaning, then it would contradict the previous authentic narrations which establish that his grey hair was very little.
 2. The second is that grey hair was present in his hair without specifying the amount. This meaning fully agrees with the earlier narrations that he had very little grey hair. This second meaning is the stronger of the two interpretations.

- (وَشَيْبُهُ أَحْمَرُ) – **‘And his grey hair had a reddish tint’**. This statement raises the question: was the redness due to dyeing it, or from the oil he would apply to his hair, or was it naturally red? The earlier narrations suggest that it was because of the oil, or that it was naturally red, because the earlier *ḥadīth* of Anas (37) mentions that he did not dye his hair because the greys were so little.

Hadīth 44

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ سَمُرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي رَأْسِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْبٌ إِلَّا شَعْرَاتٌ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ، إِذَا أَدَّهَنَ وَارَاهُنَّ الدُّهْنَ.

Jābir ibn Samurah said: ‘There was no grey hair on the head of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ except a few hairs at the parting of his hair; when he applied oil, the oil would conceal them.’ (Ṣaḥīḥ)

- In this final *ḥadīth* which al-Imām al-Tirmidhī concludes this chapter with, the *tābiʿ* Simāk ibn Ḥarb asks Jābir ibn Samurah if there was grey hair in the head of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Jābir responded by saying:
- (لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي رَأْسِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ شَيْبٌ إِلَّا شَعْرَاتٌ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ) – **‘There was no grey hair on the head of the Prophet, except a few hairs at the parting of his hair’**. The *mafriq* of the head refers to the middle of the head where the hair is divided. This fully agrees with the *ḥadīth* of Anas mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, of which al-Imām al-Tirmidhī does not mention in this chapter (see chapter introduction).
- (إِذَا أَدَّهَنَ وَارَاهُنَّ الدُّهْنَ) – **‘When he applied oil, the oil would conceal them’**. Meaning, because they were so few, once the Prophet ﷺ oiled his head with oil, perfume or something similar, the grey hair would not show at all, but would disappear under the oil.
- Point of benefit: The *Ṣaḥāba*’s description of the grey in the Prophet’s ﷺ head is evidence that he would sometimes uncover his head. In fact, it may have been obligatory at times, such as when wiping over the head during *wuḍūʿ*, and during *Ḥajj* while in the state of *Iḥrām*.
- Point of benefit: Grey hair is a warning to its owner and a sign that death is drawing near. Therefore, prepare yourself before death arrives, because grey hair is the herald of mortality. We ask Allah to grant us righteous deeds and a good ending.