

Question: A **ʿāfi** has been leading the **Tarāwī** prayers in a certain Masjid for 40 years. He is a very courteous and amicable person. In short, he is the embodiment of good character. Many members of the congregation are also his students. Unfortunately, he does not keep his beard in accordance with the Sunnah. We are now faced with a dilemma. If we prevent him from leading the **Tarāwī** prayers, it might have a negative effect on the congregants. We would really value your advice regarding this matter.

Answer: The **ʿ** of a person who cuts his beard (shorter than one fist) is **Makrūh**. Therefore, taking into account his amicable nature and good character, you should subtly try to encourage him to keep his beard in accordance with the Sunnah. It is apparent from the information that you have given us that he adheres to the laws of **Sharīʿah** in all the other aspects of **Dīn**. He should therefore make a concerted effort to practice on this great Sunnah of our Holy Prophet (SAW) as well. In doing so, he will gain even more closeness to our Noble Prophet (SAW). This will also, by the grace of Allah, become a means of creating a strong sense of camaraderie between him and all the congregants.

On the other hand, if he is not prepared to practice on this great Sunnah of our Noble Master, then regrettably you would have to relieve him of his post. We acknowledge his good character, but the laws of **Sharīʿah** will always and should always receive precedence over every thing else.

This ruling has been extracted from the following authentic sources:

- (1) **Shāmī**
- (2) **Fatāwā Maʿmūdiyyah**
- (3) **Aap ke Masā'il**
- (4) **Fatāwā Darul Uloom Zakariyya vol. 2, pg 489**

And Allah knows best.