

## Selling perfumes and cosmetics (make-up)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Question:** Selling cosmetics, make-up and perfumes is very common among some traders. They argue that they advise women to not use them outside the house, so is this dealing permissible?

**Answer:** All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

It is not permissible to sell cosmetics containing in their compositions human foetuses, afterbirths like the umbilical cord, placenta or others, as there is in such act a transgression against the human race which is forbidden by established texts of the Sharee'ah.

Moreover, it is not permissible to sell cosmetics which contain in their industrial composition animal foetuses like those of pig and all kinds of Al-Maytah (the dead animals – cattle, beast not slaughtered), as they are at the origin forbidden for their impurity. It is also the case with perfumes which contain intoxicating alcohol, as it is known that it is not permissible to sell something forbidden and take advantage of it, like intoxicants, pig, Al-Maytah or alike, in accordance with the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "**Allaah and His Apostle made illegal the trade of alcohol, dead animals, pigs and idols**" He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then said: "**May Allaah curse the Jews, for Allaah made the fat (of dead animals) unlawful for them; yet they melted the fat, sold it and ate its price**"<sup>1</sup>. The scholars agreed that it is not permissible to take advantage of the fat of dead animals and pigs, and to use fats which have become impure for nutrition or for anointing one's body with. They are forbidden as are forbidden eating the meat of dead animals and dampening oneself with an impurity. Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ said:

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رَجْسٌ

[Say (O Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): "I find not in that which has been inspired to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be Maytatah (a dead animal) or blood

<sup>1</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Sellings" concerning selling the dead animals and idols (1/529), Muslim, chapter of "Sharecropping" (2/742) (hadeeth 1581), from the hadeeth of Jaabir Ibn `Abdullaah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا.

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poured forth (by slaughtering or the like), or the flesh of swine (pork, etc.) for that surely is impure]<sup>2</sup>

It is not also permissible to sell cosmetics which cause harm to the face by disfiguring it or which produce black spots or cause harm to the body or cause different skin diseases, as they contain chemical products which harm the skin or the eye. In addition, the harm should be removed, from the person who uses them or the person who buys them, in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ saying: "**There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm**"<sup>3</sup>.

This been said, if these beauty products do not contain something illicit, impure or harmful, the principle, except the mentioned cases, is that it is permissible for the woman to use them as long as they are not apparent to people other than those Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ allowed her to show to. It is permissible for the same purpose to perfume herself by whatever she likes on the condition that it contains no intoxicating alcohol -as it is previously mentioned-. However, it is not permissible for her to use perfume absolutely when she is in a state of Ihram<sup>4</sup> during a Hajj or a `Umrah, in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ saying regarding a who is in a state of Ihram: "**...and do not wear anything perfumed with saffron or Al-Wars**"<sup>5,6</sup>, and it goes for the man and the woman also, when mourning the dead in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ saying: "**It is not legal for a woman who believes in Allaah and the Last Day to mourn for more than three days for any dead person except her husband, for whom she should mourn for four months and ten days.**"<sup>7</sup>. When she goes out of her house even towards the mosque, she should remove the remaining scent from her body, and if she goes out perfumed and adorned, she commits by this a major sin, even with the consent of her husband, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "**Any woman who uses perfume and passes the people so that they may get its odour, she is a fornicatress**"<sup>8</sup> and the Prophet's ﷺ

<sup>2</sup> Soorah al-An'aam [6:145]

<sup>3</sup> Reported by Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Judgments" concerning the one who builds in his property which harms his neighbour (hadeeth 2431), Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 2921), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما. An-Nawawee said in the 32nd hadeeth of "Al-Arba`een An-Nawawiyya": "This hadeeth has many ways of narration which strengthen each other", Ibn Rajab said in "Jaami`Al-'Uloom Wal-Hikam" (page 378): "It is as he said". This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (3/408).

<sup>4</sup> The state in which one is prohibited from doing certain things which are lawful at other times. Umrah and Hajj are performed in such a state.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Wars: plant of Yemen used as a liniment and yellow dye. (Genus Memecyclon tinctorium).

<sup>6</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Hajj" concerning what is impermissible for the Muhrim (man or woman)to wear (1/441), from the hadeeth of Ibn `Umar رضي الله عنهما.

<sup>7</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Funerals" concerning the mourning of a woman more than three days for someone other than her husband (1/306), Muslim, chapter of "Divorce" (2/692) (hadeeth 1486), from the hadeeth of Um Habeebah رضي الله عنها. The reason of mentioning this hadeeth is that Zaynab Bint Abee Salama said: I entered upon Um Habeebah, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ when her father Aboo Sufyaan died. Um Habeebah asked for a perfume which contained yellow scent or Khalooq (other kind of scent), with which she perfumed one of the girls, and then rubbed her cheeks and said: "By Allaah, I am not in need of perfume, but I heard the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ saying: (then she mentioned this hadeeth).

<sup>8</sup> Reported by Aboo Dawood, chapter of "Combing the hair" concerning a woman putting perfume in order to go out (4/258), At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Good manners" concerning what is reported about the interdiction for a woman to use perfume then go out (hadeeth 2786), Ahmad (4/413) from the hadeeth of Aboo Moosaa Al-Ash'aree رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is judged authentic by Al-Albaanee in "Saheeh Al-Jaami'" (hadeeth 323), it is judged as Hassan (good) by Al-Waadi'i in "As-Saheeh Al-Musnad" (hadeeth 827).

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الله عليه وسلم saying: "If any woman of you attended (the prayer) in the mosque, then she should not have herself perfumed."<sup>9</sup>; because adornment and perfume is something required for the woman in her house with her husband, but not when she goes out whatever the destination may be.

It is clear that selling beauty products to a woman we know that she will use them in displaying herself or use them when going out, is not permissible as it is a help in sin and transgression. In fact, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "I will not leave after me any affliction more harmful to men than women"<sup>10</sup> and his saying صلى الله عليه وسلم: "So avoid the allurements of women: verily, the first trial for the people of Israel was caused by women"<sup>11</sup>.

As for selling cosmetics for someone we know he will use them for beautification in a licit way, there is no problem in selling him these products, and if we do not know the condition of the buyer (if pious or not), then the ruling of permissibility is dependant upon what is commonly known in his society as regards the use of these cosmetics; if the majority of women in his society use cosmetics for a licit adornment, there is no harm in selling it, and if the majority use it for temptation and immorality, it is not permissible to sell them, as the rule stipulates: "The ruling in an issue follows the majority, and the rare issue is not considered" and "The majority in something has the same ruling as the whole thing". Al-Qaraafi رحمه الله said: "The principle is to consider the majority and give it priority over the rare issue, that is how the Sharee'ah is, as in the matter of purity of water and in the covenants of Muslims, in addition, the testimony of enemies is forbidden because they are often unjust; indeed, there are many other such examples in the Sharee'ah"<sup>12</sup>. It is then more appropriate for the seller- in such case- to change his commercial activity to another which is more secure for his faith and dignity.

However, if displaying women themselves is rare and not widespread, and he does not notice it, it is permissible for him to sell these beauty products, based on the principle that people are of good faith. If he has doubt about a buyer, then he should abstain from selling him these products, in accordance with the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم saying: "Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt."<sup>13</sup> and his saying صلى الله عليه وسلم: "So whoever forsakes those doubtful things (lest he may commit a sin), definitely keeps his religion

<sup>9</sup> Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Prayer" (1/207) (hadeeth 443), from the hadeeth of Zaynab the wife of `Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنهما.

<sup>10</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Marriage", concerning what one might fear of the woman's evil omen, Muslim, chapter of "Heart melting traditions" (2/1256)(hadeeth 2740) from the hadeeth of Ussaama Ibn Zayd رضي الله عنهما.

<sup>11</sup> Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Heart melting traditions" (2/1256) (hadeeth 2742) Ahmad (3/22), from the hadeeth of Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudree رضي الله عنه.

<sup>12</sup> "Al-Farooq" of Al-Qaraafi (4/104) with some modifications.

<sup>13</sup> Reported by At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Description of the Day of judgment, heart melting traditions and scrupulousness" (hadeeth 2518), An-Nasaa'ee, chapter of "Drinks" concerning the exhortation to leave ambiguities (hadeeth 5711), Ahmad (4/267-270-441) from the hadeeth of Al-Hassan Ibn `Alee رضي الله عنهما. This hadeeth is judged authentic by Ahmad Shaakir in his "Recension of Musnad Ahmad", (3/169) Al-Albaanee in "Al-Irwaa'" (1/44) and Al-Waadi'i in "As-Saheeh Al-Musnad" (hadeeth 318).

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and honour blameless, and whoever indulges in these suspicious things is about to fall in what is clearly illegal"<sup>14</sup>.

This been said, it is not permissible to sell these cosmetics and perfumes to someone who uses them in order to commit a sin, or in things which Allaah عزَّ وجلَّ has forbidden, even with giving advice to him to not use them in committing sins and immoralities, as the principle is to judge people according to appearances (likely to use cosmetics in a good way or not) until the contrary is proven. It is clear that advice maybe accepted or not, and the commercial transaction cannot be correct until the seller is certain that the buyer will accept his piece of advice and act accordingly.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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<sup>14</sup> Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Faith" concerning the virtue of he, who saves himself from suspicious things for the sake of his religion (1/19)and Muslim, chapter of "Sharecropping" (2/750) (hadeeth 1599) from the hadeeth of An-Nu'maan Ibn Basheer رضي الله عنه.