

Makeup on Shabbos

The Gemara in Shabbos¹ states that women may not apply makeup on Shabbos. The extent of the prohibition is subject to a dispute between the Tannaim. Rabbi Eliezer states that it is violation of the issur d'oraysa of tzoveia (coloring), while the Chachamim maintain that it is only prohibited d'rabbanan. The Semag, as well as a number of Rishonim², follow the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer that makeup is an issur d'oraysa. However, the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch rule that the prohibition to use makeup on Shabbos is d'rabbanan³. This is the opinion of the Mishnah Berurah and Aruch HaShulchan⁴.

WHY IS APPLYING MAKEUP NOT A D'ORAYSA?

The reasoning of the Chachamim needs explanation. If coloring is one of the 39 avos melachos, why would coloring the face with makeup only be a d'rabbanan? The Chayeh Adam⁵ explains that a primary condition in all of the melachos is that the act must have a permanence to it. Makeup on the face is only temporary, for it is not meant to last for a long time, and thereby does not fit the Torah definition of a melachah. Acharonim⁶ question this reason, by pointing out that "permanent" and "temporary" do not have clear definitions. For example, in regard to the melachah of koseiv (writing), while Rashi seems to maintain that if result will not last a long time it is not called permanent, the Rambam states that as long as it lasts for the duration of Shabbos, it will be an issur deoraisa⁷. The melachos of boneh (building) and kosher (tying) also have their own criteria for permanence. Therefore, using makeup on the face, although it will not stay for a long time, might still fulfill the qualification of permanence when viewed in the proper context and would be considered a melachah.

The Mishnah Berurah⁸ suggest a different approach, that a melachah performed on the skin of a person is not an issur d'oraysa. Some Poskim understand this to be a general rule in hilchos Shabbos, that the 39 melachos are not applicable when applied to a persons' body. For example, some qualify the halachic status of stitches on Shabbos by this concept⁹. However, this idea is challenged from other places in hilchos Shabbos¹⁰. Others understand the Mishnah Berurah as saying that the Torah's definition of tzoveia (coloring) is when the material itself is being colored. Makeup is merely a coloring on top of the skin meant to improve a person's appearance, but it does not change the skin color. Therefore, it does not qualify for true tzoveia and will be an issur d'rabbanan¹¹.

MAKEUP THAT "DOESN'T LAST AT ALL"

These explanations are to understand the Chachamim's opinion that applying makeup is not an issur d'oraysa. Even so it remains forbidden, albeit as a d'rabbanan. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein¹² writes in a short teshuva, that one may apply powder to the face, for it does not last at all. In later teshuvos¹³, it is clear that some people had understood Rav Moshe that all makeup powder may be used on Shabbos. He therefore clarifies that he was referring specifically to talcum powder, similar to what is used for babies, that doesn't really adhere to the skin, and does not last on the face at all. Rav Moshe notes that a majority of powders do not meet this criterion. Many have oils or other ingredients mixed in to provide a base that enables the powder to stay on for longer. Others manage to stay on for a decent amount of time even without the base. These would not be considered "not lasting at all" and would be forbidden for use on Shabbos.

Rav Moshe ends off that one cannot give a general rule for powdered makeup, rather each type and brand of powder needs to be carefully assessed.

It should be noted that some Poskim disagreed with Rav Moshe's heter. As was explained above, according to the Rambam, all makeup is considered to be non-lasting, yet is still assur to use d'rabbanan. Meaning, Chazal forbade the use of makeup even though it is not permanent. In the view of these Poskim, there is not sufficient evidence to warrant a creation of levels of "semi-lasting" which is forbidden, and "not lasting at all", which is permitted. This is the opinion of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l and others¹⁴.

Although in the original teshuvah, Rav Moshe only mentions white talcum powder, he adds in the subsequent letters that the same would apply to similar powders of color¹⁵. Other Poskim differentiate between white and colored powders¹⁶.

WHAT IS CALLED "NOT LASTING"?

In Igros Moshe, Rav Moshe does not give a clear definition as to what is considered "not lasting at all". One talmid relates that, Rav Moshe explained that the parameter is if it can easily come off with the wipe of a tissue¹⁷. Another witness records that on a different occasion Rav Moshe said that it is when the powder can be simply come off by blowing on the face¹⁸. Makeup that would take effort to remove is unlikely to qualify as "not lasting at all".

After Rav Moshe clarified his position orally and in writing, some of his talmidim performed extensive research on various brands and types of powders to determine if they may be used on Shabbos. They even performed trials on Rav Moshe's infant great-grandchildren in his presence. Obviously, those tests would not provide accurate information about today's

powdered makeup. Moreover, those involved in those trials reported that the results were not always reliable, as certain powders yielded different results for different people.

CONDITIONS OF USE

Aside for properly identifying the powder that meets Rav Moshe's criteria, there are a number of other conditions that need to be met for the makeup to be permitted to use.

- One must be sure to apply the makeup on a face that is completely clean. If there are any remnants of makeup from before Shabbos that will provide a base for the powder, the powder may not be used.
- The face must also be completely dry. If water or any other moisture on the face will combine with the powder, the makeup will then stay on the face longer and would then be prohibited to use.
- Many "Shabbos Makeup Kits" come with a moisturizing spray that is to be applied before using the powder. This will provide a base for the powder, allowing it to adhere to the face longer. This small modification to the process clearly undermines the entire heter, and it would be prohibited from applying the powder¹⁹.
- Rav Chaim Na'ah²⁰ warns not to mix different colors together. Therefore, a different brush must be used for each color, and one should be careful not to apply one colored powder on top of another.
- Rav Moshe writes that one should prepare the powder in advance of Shabbos. Rav Dovid Heber of the Star-K cites talmidim of Rav Moshe who explain that he was concerned that powder that is clumped together which would render the breaking into a powder an act of tochein (grinding). Some argue that the fact that it originated as a powder would make it exempt from the melacha of tochein. For more on this point see footnote²¹.

LIP GLOSS AND CLEAR NAIL POLISH

Rav Moshe states²² that the use of lipstick or creams is always forbidden. Besides for the problem of tzoveia, it is also a violation of memachek (smoothing). Rav Moshe adds that even liquid lipstick, while not an issue of smoothing, will be considered tzoveia. He seems to be referring to lip gloss, that comes in a liquid. Although it is clear gel, talmidim report in his name that the fact that it creates a shine is also tzoveia²³. This is relevant to nail polish, that even clear polish is a form of coloring and may not be used on Shabbos²⁴. There are powders that are marketed to allow applying them on the lips on Shabbos. There is a debate whether after becoming moist it would still be considered non-lasting. However, the degree that it stays on in various situations, such as when one eats with this powder on the lips, might be an indication that it is too permanent for Rav Moshe's heter.

CONCLUSION

Today, one may find "Shabbos makeup" on the market, which is a powder that is purported to fit the criteria for

Shabbos use under Rav Moshe's guidelines. It is a given that any brand of "Shabbos makeup" must have a hashgacha from a living, reliable and well-known authority, familiar with the subtle criteria set by Rav Moshe. (It is challenging to derive this from the teshuvos alone). To quote a well-known Posek, "experience has shown that the difference between the makeup which is permitted and forbidden is so slight that it is almost impossible to differentiate between them"²⁵. **However, one must keep in mind that the hashgacha is only on the powder itself. As demonstrated above, there are a number of other conditions that need to be met in order to allow such makeup to be used. Due to all the various conditions, many Rabbanim hesitate to allow it, as there are too many potential avenues for the process to be done incorrectly. One should seek the guidance of a Rav before using any of these products.**

- 1 שבת דף צה ע"א
- 2 ע' בית יוסף סי' שג בשם הסמ"ג. ע' א"ר ס"ק מ שמביא כמה ראשונים דקי"ל שחייב מה"ת
- 3 רמב"ם פרק כ"ב הלכה כ"ג
- 4 ב"י עצמו, ערו"ה ס' ל, משנ"ב עט. חיי אדם כלל כד סע' א מביא ב' דיעות בלי הכרעה.
- 5 שם סע' ב
- 6 ע' מנחת חינוך מלאכת צובע, אבני נזר או"ח סי' רעז אות ז
- 7 ע' שער הציון סי' שג ס"ק סח שמביא מח' רמב"ם פ"ט הל' שבת הל' יג ורש"י שבת דף קב ע"ב. ע' רשב"א שבת דף קטו ע"ב ד"ה הא, שגדר של מלאכה מתקיימת היא כפי הצורך של אותו מלאכה
- 8 שם
- 9 צ"א (ח"כ:יח) ותורת יולדת (מהד"ח תשע"ו עמ' לד הערה לח) מביאים שזהו שיטת מרן הגר"ר אברמסקי זצ"ל
- 10 ע' גמ' שבת דף צה ע"א שיש איסור בונה בגוף האדם, ובדף קד לגבי כותב על בשרו
- 11 קצות השולחן סי' קמו אות כ
- 12 אג"מ או"ח סי' קיד. ע' יביע אומר ח"א או"ח סי' לו וביתו"ד ח"ד סי' כח שג"כ כתב להחיות, משום שבאמת סרק על פניה הוא דבר שמתקיים, ודלא כחיי אדם, ממילא אופיר מאבק שאינו מתקיים, הוי מותר. אבל זהו דלא כבעל אג"מ שמשמע שאינו מתקיים ג"כ אסור, אלא שיש עוד מדריגה של "אינו מתקיים כלל" ועדיין צ"ע.
- 13 אג"מ או"ח סי' כז, ח"ו סי' כה
- 14 ששכ"ה פרק יד הערה קנה, שבת הלוי ח"א סי' צז, ח"ו סי' לג. ע' לשון הר"מ פ"ט ה"ג היא "אבל צבע שאינו מתקיים כלל כגון העביר סרק פטור". וזהו ממש לשון של אג"מ ואעפ"כ הוי אסור מדברבן. וצ"ע.
- 15 כ"ש דין פירסט מפני בשנת תשל"ו
- 16 שבת הלוי שם, וספרי זמנינו בשם מהר"ם מבריסק ח"א סי' כג
- 17 ממו"ח בעל מסורת משה
- 18 אור יצחק ח"א או"ח סי' קלה אות ח עיי"ש היטב
- 19 א' מהמוכרים כותבים שיש להמתין חצי שעה עד שנבלע לגמרי
- 20 קצות השולחן שם. יש לעיין בזה שאם נתערב על השולחן יהיה צביעה מתקיימת, אבל עם הפנים, אם אינו מתקיים כלל למה הוי נחשב לצובע.
- 21 רמ"א סי' שכא סע' ח כותב כלל לגבי לחם שמותר לפרר דאין טוחן אחר טוחן, וא"כ ה"ה כאן שהאבק כבר נטחן, אפי' אם נעשה כגוש א' לא יהיה איסור טוחן לפרו"ח א"כ. אבל תפא"י בכלכלת השבת אות ח' מזהיר לגבי טאביק שיש ליזהר מלפרוץ משום טוחן. וע"ע קצות השולחן סי' קמו אות טז שהכלל אין טוחן אחר טוחן אינו אלא לענין אוכלין ולא לשאר דברים ויש לעיין עוד.
- 22 אג"מ ח"א שם
- 23 מסורת משה ח"ד או"ח ריח, וכ"ש מדיון פירסט ששמע מרבינו זצ"ל, וכ"כ מהרב הבר שליט"א מבאלטימור בשם תלמידים שאע"פ שאינו צבע אלא מבריק השפתיים, יש מקורות שמבריק ג"כ בכלל צובע ע' מקורות בספר ודברת במ ח"ב סי' קל וקובץ הלכות שבת ח"ב עמ' תתנח
- 24 ששכ"ה פרק יד סע' נז
- 25 Halachically Speaking Vol 3 issue 5 25

