97541 - Ruling on using materials to which “animal glycerine” has been added

the question

What is the ruling on using materials to which “animal glycerine” has been added, such as toothpaste, shampoo and body moisturizers. What is the ruling on mono-glyceride and di-glyceride, which are added to some kinds of bread? Is the basic principle that one should check or ask about the source of these materials, and find out whether they are animal or vegetable? Is checking on these things regarded as a kind of going to extremes? How should we respond to those who say that the basic principle is that a thing is permissible so long as it is not mixed with anything haram? Or those who say that religion is easy and we should not go to extremes or ask too much?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The materials which are used to manufacture creams, shampoos, toothpaste and soap are either:

1. Animal fats

2. or other substances, of vegetable origin or artificial.

If the substance comes from animal fats, then it is of two types:

(a) Either it comes from animals that are permissible to eat, and it has been slaughtered according to sharee’ah, or it comes from sea creatures that do not need to be slaughtered. The ruling in this case is that it is permissible, with no doubt.

(b) Or it comes from animals whose meat and fat are forbidden to eat, such as pigs, or it comes from a permissible animal but it has not been slaughtered in the proper shar'i manner, so it is "dead meat". The ruling in both cases is that it is haram, with no doubt.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

If a Muslim is certain or thinks it most likely that meat, fat or ground bones of a pig have got into any food, medicine or toothpaste etc, then it is not permissible for him to eat it, drink it or use it. In the case of doubt, then he should not use it, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt."

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz, Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzaaq 'Afeefi, Shaykh 'Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh 'Abd-Allah ibn Qa'ood.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (22/281).

In a statement issued by the Islamic Medical Sciences Organization in Kuwait – which discussed the issue of haram and impure substances in food and medicine, from 22-24 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1415 AH/ 22-24 May 1995 – it says:

[6.] Food substances which include pork fat in their ingredients which has not undergone any process to change it to something different, like some kinds of cheese, oils, fats, ghee, butter and some kinds of biscuits, chocolate and ice cream, are haram, and it is not permissible to eat them at all, based on the consensus of the scholars that pork fat is impure (naajis) and it is not permissible to eat it, and because there is no need to consume this substance. End quote.

Secondly:

It may become halaal if the fat has turned (via some process) into something else, so that it is no longer called fat and does not have the characteristics of fat. If that is the case then it does not come under the same ruling. This is what the scholars call istihaalah (process to change a substance to something else) and it may be looked at from two angles. That which was good and permissible but has become bad and impure, is now haram, and that which was bad and impure

but has become permissible and good is now halaal.

Ibn al-Qayyim said:

Based on this principle, alcohol is impure, even though its origin is pure. If the reason for its being regarded as impure is no longer present, then it is to be regarded as pure. This is the basis of sharee'ah and the basis of reward and punishment.

Based on this, the correct analogy is that this principle may be applicable to all other impurities if they have gone through a process of change. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) removed the remains of the mushrikeen from the site of his mosque, but he did not remove the soil. And Allah says of milk that it comes "from between excretions and blood" [al-Nahl 16:66]. The Muslims are unanimously agreed that if an animal eats impure things, but it is then detained and fed with pure things, its milk and meat become permissible. The same applies to crops and fruits: if they are watered with impure water, but are then watered with pure water, they become permissible, because of the change (istihaalah) in the impure thing, which becomes pure. The converse also applies: if the pure thing changes into something impure, then it becomes impure (naajis), like water, and food when it changes into urine and faeces. So how can the change affect it when good turns into bad, but not affect it when bad turns into good, and Allah brings forth pure things from impure things and impure things from pure things?

It is not the origin of a thing that matters, but what it is now. It is impossible for the ruling on impurity to remain when the name and character of the thing have changed. The ruling is connected to the name and character, and is present or absent depending on whether they are present or absent. The texts which deal with the prohibition on dead meat, blood, pork and alcohol do not deal with crops, fruits, sand, salt, soil or vinegar, whether in wording or meaning or text or analogy. Those who distinguished between the change (istihaalah) of alcohol and other things said that alcohol becomes naajis because of the process of change, then it may become pure because of a further process of change. It was said to them that blood, urine and faeces became impure because of a process of change so they may become pure because of a further process of change. Thus analogy is in accordance with the text.

I’laam al-Muwaqqi’een (2/p. 14, 15)

In a statement issued by the Islamic Medical Sciences Organization in Kuwait – which discussed the issue of haram and impure substances in food and medicine, from 22-24 Dhu’l-Hijjah 1415 AH/ 22-24 May 1995 – it says:

[8.] Istihaalah (process of change) means that a substance changes into another substance with different characteristics, so an impure substance may change into a pure substance, and a haram substance may change into one that is permissible according to sharee’ah.

Based on that:

Soap that is produced by the change of fat from pigs or dead meat becomes pure by means of this process and it is permissible to use it.

Cheese which is made by using rennet from dead meat of animals whose meat is permissible is taahir and it is permissible to eat it.

Ointments, creams and cosmetics that contain pork fat are not permissible to use unless there is certainty that the fat has undergone a process of change (istihaalah) and turned into a different substance. But if there is no certainty, then they are naajis (impure).

End quote.

Thirdly:

If it is not known whether the animals whose meat is permissible but need to be slaughtered properly in order to become halaal were slaughtered according to sharee’ah or not, then the basic principle is that they should not be used, because the basic principle with regard to slaughtered meat is that it is haram unless it is known that it is halaal. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade eating game meat that had drowned in water because it was not known whether it died as the result of being hunted or from drowning. And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade eating game caught by a dog whose owner had released it

and mentioned the name of Allah when releasing it, but he found other dogs with him. The reason for that is that it is not known whether it was his dog that caught it or the other dogs.

It was narrated from ‘Adiyy ibn Haatim (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If you release your dog and mention the name of Allah, if he catches something for you and you find it alive, then slaughter it; if you find he has killed it but has not eaten any of it, then eat it. If you find another dog with your dog and it has been killed, then do not eat, for you do not know which of them killed it. If you shoot your arrow and mention the name of Allah, then (the game) vanishes from your sight for a day, and you only find the mark of your arrow on it, then eat if you wish, but if you find it drowned in water, then do not eat it.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (5167) and Muslim (1929).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

… The ruling remains in effect unless there is evidence to the contrary, such as the ruling on tahaarah (purity), the rulings on breaking wudoo’, the ruling on remaining married, the ruling on possession and the ruling on commitments, all of which remain in effect unless there is evidence to the contrary. This principle is indicated in the hadeeth in which it is said concerning hunting: “If you find it drowned, do not eat it, for you do not know whether the water killed it or your arrow,” and “But if there are other dogs with him, then do not eat it, for you mentioned the name of Allah over your dog, not any other.”

Because the basic principle concerning meat is that it is haram, and there is some doubt as to whether the condition that makes it permissible was fulfilled or not, the game remains haram as it originally was.

I’laam al-Muqawwi’een (1/339, 340).

Fourthly:

If the substance is artificial or of vegetable origin, it is permissible to use it in these products unless it is harmful or poisonous either in and of itself or when added to other substances.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is nothing wrong with lipstick, because the basic principle is that it is permissible unless it becomes apparent that it is haram. … But if it becomes clear that it is harmful to the lips, because it dries them out, then in this case it is not allowed. I have been told that it may dry out the lips. If that is proven then one is not allowed to so something that will harm one.

Fataawa Manaar al-Islam (3/831).

Fifthly:

The Muslim should be careful with regard to his food, drink, clothing and all matters in his life. He should be careful to ensure that his wealth is halaal and he should be careful to ensure that what he eats and drinks are things that the Lord has permitted to him. And he should be careful in all areas of his life to ensure that nothing of them goes against the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

It is essential to distinguish between products that are used in daily life and meat. The basic principle in the former case is that they are permissible unless there is proof to the contrary, and the basic principle with regard to meat is that it is haram – as stated above by Ibn al-Qayyim – unless there is evidence to the contrary.

The scholars of the Standing Committee, when asked about pork fat in some kinds of soap and toothpaste, said:

We have not heard through any trustworthy channels that some cleaning materials contain pork fat, such as Camay and Palmolive soaps and Colgate toothpaste. Rather we have only heard of that through rumours.

Secondly: the basic principle with regard to such things is that they are taahir (pure) and it is permissible to use them, until it is proven from a trustworthy source that they are mixed with pork fat or some similar impure substance which it is haram to use. In that case it is haram to use them. But if the news is no more than a rumour and is not proven, then it is not obligatory to avoid using it.

Thirdly: The one who has proof that the cleaning material is mixed with pork fat must avoid using it, and he must wash off whatever of it is on him. But the prayers that he offered during the time when he was using it do not have to be repeated, according to the correct scholarly opinion.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzaaq ‘Afeefi, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Qa’ood.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (5/385, 386).

And they said:

With regard to the manufactured cheese which many people say contains pork fat, we have no proof that it contains pork fat. The basic principle is that things are permissible, but if a person is certain that it contains pork fat or he thinks this is most likely to be the case, it is not permissible for him to use it.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzaaq ‘Afeefi, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Qa’ood.

Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (22/111)

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

We have found some publications which say that some soap is made from pork fat. What is your opinion?

They replied:

I think that the basic principle is that everything that Allah has created for us on earth is permissible, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He it is Who created for you all that is on earth” [al-Baqarah 2:29]

If someone claims that something is haram because it is impure etc, then he must bring evidence,

but believing all kinds of illusions and everything that is said makes no sense. If he says that this soap is made of pork fat, we say to him, “Bring proof.” If it is proven that most of it is made of pork fat, then we must avoid it.

Liqaa’aat al-Bab il-Maftoohah (31/question no. 10).

And Allah knows best.