210653 - Are Cosmetics Prohibited for Men?

the question

What is the ruling on using cosmetic materials for men, such as putting cream on the skin to beautify it (to whiten the skin)? Is that permissible? Because using cosmetics for men is something that is very widespread in the subcontinent.

Summary of answer

• Whatever is specifically for the adornment or beautification of women only, such as lipstick, nail polish, and so on, it is not permissible for men to adorn themselves with it.
• There is nothing wrong with using things that are for the purpose of removing defects, such as using creams to remove spots from the face.
• In the case of cosmetics that are used only for the purpose of beautification or adornment, it is not appropriate for men to use them.
• If the use of something will lead to a change in the colour of the skin, from dark to light for example, if that change is temporary then there is nothing wrong with it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The ruling on men using cosmetics such as creams and so on varies from one case to another. To explain further:

- In the case of things that are used only for the purpose of beautification or adornment, it is not appropriate for men to use them, because the woman is the one who needs beautification. What is appropriate for the man is the marks of masculinity such as roughness and toughness; being feminine or effeminate is not appropriate for him.
- Whatever is specifically for the adornment or beautification of women only, such as lipstick,

nail polish, and so on, it is not permissible for men to adorn themselves with it, because that comes under the heading of imitating women, and imitating them is forbidden and is a major sin.

- If the use of something will lead to a change in the colour of the skin , from dark to light for example, if that change is temporary then there is nothing wrong with it, but if the change is permanent, then it is not permissible, because that comes under the heading of changing the creation of Allah , may He be Exalted.

It should also be noted that using these types of cosmetics is not appropriate for men, as stated above.

- There is nothing wrong with using things that are for the purpose of removing defects , such as using creams to remove spots from the face, because this comes under the heading of medical treatment.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

What is the ruling on using creams and preparations to whiten the skin or to remove acne or other blemishes?

He replied:

“With regard to the former, then no; that is, you should not use anything to change the colour of the skin , because this is worse than tattooing for which the one who does it is cursed.

With regard to removing acne and the like, there is nothing wrong with that, because this is treating disease , and there is nothing wrong with treating disease. There is a difference between that which is intended for the purpose of beautification and that which is intended for the purpose of removing a defect. The former is not permissible if it is done permanently, whereas the latter is permissible." (Fatawa Nur `Ala Ad-Darb, 22/2)

It should also be pointed out that whatever of such preparations is made from impure substances

or harmful chemical substances, it is not permissible to use it in any case whatsoever.

And Allah knows best.