



KOF-K

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בס"ד

Halachos of Soap

Soap is used to mainly clean dishes, body, hands etc. Soap is made primarily from fats such as from tallow (fat from beef), lard (fat from pork) and various plant derived oils and fats, in addition to sodium hydroxide. It can be made from vegetable oils as well. A chemical reaction to the above ingredients causes soap.

Halachic Issues

Fat from a non-kosher animal is called "*chelev*."¹ *Chelev* is forbidden to eat, but one is allowed to have enjoyment from it.²

The *Mishnah* in *Yoma*³ says one of the items which are not allowed on Yom Kippur is "anointing." Some say the reason is because anointing is like drinking and just as eating is forbidden on *Yom Kippur*, so too anointing is forbidden. Some *poskim* take this *halacha* a step further and say that using non-kosher soap is forbidden since it is smeared on oneself it is anointing and we consider anointing like drinking.⁴

Many *poskim* are of the opinion that "anointing is like drinking" only applies to the *halachos* of *Yom Kippur* and not to other areas of *halacha*,⁵ therefore using non-kosher soap is permitted. Some say the term "anointing is like drinking" only applies to oils but not to fats.⁶ On the other hand there are some *poskim* who maintain that using such soap is not permitted based on the concept of "anointing is like drinking."⁷

Custom

The *Biur Halacha* says "the custom is to permit soap made from non-kosher ingredients and only some of those who are scrupulous are careful with this. However, if one is able to obtain soap which is made from kosher ingredients it is definitely proper to do so."⁸

¹ Refer to Mesechtas Pesachim 21-23.

² Rambam Machalut Asuros 8:15.

³ 73b.

⁴ Refer to Bais Yosef Y.D. 117, Taz 4

⁵ Refer to Shach in Nekudas Hakesef Y.D. 117, Kaf Ha'chaim 117:17,

⁶ This is based on the opinion of Tosfas in Mesechtas Yoma "u'kishemen."

⁷ Refer to G'ra O.C. 326, Kaf Ha'chaim 117:15-16. If one is in pain and he needs this soap specifically then it is permitted (Refer to Taz ibid, G'ra ibid).

⁸ This is the opinion of the Darchei Teshuva Y.D. 117: 33 as well.



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The *Aruch Ha'shulchan*⁹ says since our soap is not edible even to a dog it its *pogem* and there is no concern about using this soap even for healthy individuals. This is the custom in all of *klal yisroel*."

Many say that based on the above, the custom is to be lenient in regard to using non-kosher soap.¹⁰ However, when washing dishes one should make sure to buy only *kosher* soap since some soap may stick to the dishes and one may end up eating the non-kosher soap. The same is true when washing vegetables since some soap may remain on the vegetable and one will come to eat the non-kosher soap.

The Bais Din maintained that since our soaps are nifsal from eating, one does not have to be concerned about using non-kosher soap for washing fruit. There exists a custom in klal yisroel to use kosher soap for washing dishes. Therefore, one should ask their own Rav what to do.

⁹ Y.D. 117:29.

¹⁰ Refer to Yechaveh Da'as 4:43.