



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva
Ha-Rav **Shlomo Aviner** Shlit"a

Text Message Q&A #124 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com
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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day! Here's a sample:

Falun Gong

Q: Should we protest the horrible abuses which Falun Gong is undergoing in China? After all, we are a small country and cannot solve all of the world's problems.

A: We cannot solve them, but we are obligated to protest as well as to act. The fact is that their government fears this and denies it.

Q: Why do we care? They are idol worshippers!

A: It does not appear that Falun Gong or Falun Dafa is idol worship. It is a technique of exercise with a little meditation and perfecting of one's character traits, such as truth and compassion. And we should certainly save them from injustice.

Q: But there is a swastika in their symbol, like the Nazis.

A: G-d forbid, they are not Nazis. The swastika is an ancient symbol from the Far East which the Nazis adopted. They are good and ethical people.

Q: Is it true that in China they take organs for transplant from members of Falun Gong against their will and they die from this? This is horrible! This is like what the Nazis did! Why are we silent?!

A: Some researchers make this claim but it has yet to be proven by international organizations. What is certain is that they abuse them in an extremely cruel manner, make false arrests and torture them to death.

Talit which Falls Off

Q: Does one have to recite another blessing if his Talit falls off?

A: No. Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata 1:69. Not like the opinion of the Mishnah Berurah 8:15.

Segulot

Q: Is there value in Segulot?

A: It depends on which. But the best Segulot are learning Torah and performing Mitzvot (When Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv had a great-great grandson – he merited having a great-great-great grandson in his life, which is extremely rare! – people told him that one who is the Sandek for a great-great grandson will not see Gehinom [see Leket Yosher Yoreh Deah 52]. Ha-Rav Elyashiv replied: "I worked my entire life to enter Gan Eden through the main entrance, not the side door!" Gedola Shimusha of Ha-Rav Tzvi Weisfish, p. 230).

Woman's Beauty

Q: I am a totally unattractive young woman, I am even ugly, and I am not okay with it. What can I do?

A: The essential beauty of a person is his inner, ethical and spiritual beauty. External beauty is relative. In the eyes of your husband, you will be the most beautiful in the world. The philosopher Voltaire said: What is beauty? If you ask a black man, he will respond: 'A black woman'. If you ask a Japanese man, he will reply: 'A Japanese woman'. If you ask a bull, it will reply: 'A cow'. If you ask a toad, it will reply: 'A female toad'. And if you ask a philosopher, he will answer with Incomprehensible gobbledygook..." We learn in the Talmud (Ketubot 16b-17a): "What should one sing as he dances before a bride at her wedding? Beit Hillel said: 'What a lovely, righteous bride!' Bet Shammai asked them: And if she is lame or blind, should you say, 'What a lovely, righteous bride?' The Torah says, 'Distance yourself from a lie' (Shemot 23:7). Beit Hillel replied, 'According to what you say, if someone made a bad purchase in the marketplace, should his acquaintances praise or disparage it when speaking to him? I would say that they should praise it.' Based on this our Sages said, 'One should always attune himself to his fellow's concerns.'" The Maharal in Netivot Olam, Netiv Ha-Emet comments that beauty and truth are subjective. The groom doesn't love his wife because she is beautiful. She is beautiful because he loves her.

Q: Is it permissible for me to have plastic surgery to remove an unattractive feature?

A: Certainly. May Hashem bless you (Tosafot 50b. Shut Igrot Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 2:66. Shut Tzitz Eliezer 11:41. Shut Yabia Omer 8:12).

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