



## הלכה of the Week

~ שמירת הלשון ~

### מצות Thirty-One

By speaking **הרע** לשון you violate (break) numerous Torah commandments. A total of thirty-one מצות - 17 prohibitions and 14 positive commandments - have either a direct or indirect connection with **הרע** לשון.

#### “Who Wants Life?”

The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 19b) relates that Reb Alexandry called out:

**“Who wants life? Who wants life?”**

A large crowd soon gathered. The people said to him, **“Give us life!”**

Reb Alexandry then quoted to them from תהלים (34:13-14),

יג מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֹפֵץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לִרְאוֹת טוֹב: יד נָצַר לְשׁוֹנָךְ מִרָע וּשְׂפְתֶיךָ מִדִּבֵּר מְרֵמָה:  
טו טוֹסוֹר מִרָע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב בִּקְשׁ שְׁלוֹם וְרַדְפָּהּ:

**“Who is the man who desires life and loves days that he may see the good? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”**

At first glance this seems puzzling. What new idea did Reb Alexandry reveal to those people? He simply cited פסוקים that everyone knows.

The Chafetz Chayim explained it in the following way:

When the people first heard Reb Alexandry's offer of life they thought he was selling a drug or medicine that had the power to increase a person's life span. Instead, he showed them a spiritual drug that can actually give a person long life in this world as well as in עולם הבא (the World to Come). (It is worth noting that the Chafetz Chayim lived for almost one hundred years.)

## פְּרָקִי אֲבוֹת of the Week

פְּרָקִי ה

טו אַרְבַּע מִדּוֹת בְּתַלְמוּדִים. מִהָרָה לְשִׁמּוּעַ וּמִהָרָה לְאַבְדָּה, יֵצֵא שְׂכָרוֹ בְּהִפְסָדוֹ. קִשְׁשָׁה לְשִׁמּוּעַ וְקִשְׁשָׁה לְאַבְדָּה, יֵצֵא הִפְסָדוֹ בְּשְׂכָרוֹ. מִהָרָה לְשִׁמּוּעַ וְקִשְׁשָׁה לְאַבְדָּה, זֶה חֵלֶק טוֹב. קִשְׁשָׁה לְשִׁמּוּעַ וּמִהָרָה לְאַבְדָּה, זֶה חֵלֶק רָע:

There are four types of student:

- One who grasps quickly and forgets quickly, his gain is offset by his loss;
- One who grasps slowly and forgets slowly, his loss is offset by his gain;
- One who grasps quickly and forgets slowly, this is a good portion;
- One who grasps slowly and forgets quickly, this is a bad portion.