

## halacha of the Week

With thanks to Rabbi Zelig Pliskin for kindly giving me permission to use extracts from his book, "Guard Your Tongue" (based on "Chofetz Chaim").



Rabbi Pliskin said he will be pleased to know these halachot are being publicised more widely, especially in view of the fact that his own father was a talmid of the Chofetz Chaim, who went to great lengths to make these laws better known.

## ~ שמיירת הלשון ~

## לשון הרע Stated in the Presence of the Subject

(that is, in front of the person to whom the לשון הרע relates)

Speaking about someone in his presence is very serious, even if you are only mentioning his faults in order to criticize him constructively (for the purpose of helping him to improve). Comments designed to correct a person's behaviour should always be delivered privately. Offending someone publicly is לשון הרע and a very serious sin. You may also be guilty of causing him embarrassment and humiliation.

**Menachem, Kalman, and Shlomo** were strolling along the avenue. Menachem asked Kalman, "Did you know that Shlomo doesn't come to davening on time?" Besides speaking לשון הרע Menachem is also guilty of embarrassing Shlomo. If Menachem wants to admonish Shlomo (tell him off), he should do so privately.

Many people were present at the party when Mrs. Heller requested a favour from Mrs. Feldman. "Sorry, I'm too busy now," refused Mrs. Feldman. "This isn't the first time I've noticed your lack of **חישׁ**," Mrs. Heller said loudly so that the others could hear. "Why don't you think about anyone besides yourself?" Mrs. Heller is guilty of speaking לשון הרע.

## פרק אבות of the Week

פרק ו  
ג הלויד מחברו פרק אחד או הילכה אחת או פסוק אחד או דבר אחד או אפילו אותן אחדות, צריך לנתק בו בבוד, שבען מצינו בזוז מלך ישראל, שלא لماذا מאהיותו אל לא שני דברים בלבד, קראו רבו אלף ומילך, שנאמר (תהלים נה). "אתה אנוש בערבי אלוף ומילך" (תהלים נה יד) ... ו אין בבוד אלא תורה, ... ו אין טוב אלא תורה שנאמר: "כִּי קָחْתָי לְכֶם תֹּרְתִּי אֶל תְּצַוְּבָי".

If you learn from your friend even just one perek, one halachah, one pasuk, one Torah statement, or even just one letter, you must treat him with honour. For we find that David, the King of the Jewish People, only learned two things from Achitofel, yet David considered him as his teacher, his guide and his close advisor, as it is written (as King David wrote in Tehillim):

"You are a man who is equal to me, my guide and my close advisor." (Tehillim 55,14)

True honour is gained only by studying Torah . . . and only the Torah is truly good, as it says: "I have given you a good portion, My Torah, do not forsake it."

(Mishlei [Proverbs] 4,2)

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