



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

הַלְּכָה of the Week

~ שְׁמִירַת הַלְּשׁוֹן ~

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.

לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ

Someone who only speaks **לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** occasionally is guilty of a serious sin. However, those who habitually gossip about the faults of others are guilty of a much more serious sin, since they deliberately and repeatedly disregard one of Hashem's **מצוות**.

Habitual offenders can often be found sitting around making disparaging remarks about others:

"Reuven is a good-for-nothing; just the other day he..."

"Don't think that Leah is so special; she comes from a family that..."

"Do you know what I just heard about Shimon?"

Our Rabbis have labelled these people **בָּעֵלי לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** (Ba'alei Lashon Hara - habitual speakers of Lashon Hara). The Talmud (Erchin, 15b) states that someone who constantly speaks **לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** commits sins greater than idolatry and murder. The **בָּעֵלי לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** of constantly speaking evil of others is so enormous that a **עֲבָרָה** **תִּשְׁוֹבָה** loses his share in **עוֹלָם הַבָּא** (the World to Come) unless he does **תִּשְׁוֹבָה**. (Yerushalmi Paiah 1:1)

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*Beware of **לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** when speaking on the telephone. If the person with whom you are speaking insists on speaking **לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ** you should rebuke him (tell him off).*

*If this is not possible, find an excuse to hang up: "Excuse me, something has just come up," (it has - the **לְשׁוֹן הַרְעָ**!) and end the conversation.*

פָּרָקִי אֲבוֹת of the Week

פרק ה
טו ארבע ממדות בנותני צדקה. הרוצח שיטן ולא יתנו אחרים, עינו רעה בשל אחרים. יתנו אחרים והוא לא יתנו, עינו רעה בשל. יתנו יתנו אחרים, חסיד. לא יתנו ולא יתנו אחרים, רשע:

There are four types of donors to **צדקה**:

- one who wishes to give, himself, but wants others not to give: he begrudges others;
- one who wants others to give but does not want to give himself: he begrudges himself;
- one who wants to give and wants others to give is pious;
- one who does not want to give and does not want others to give is wicked.

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