

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

## הלכה of the Week

~ שמירת הלשון ~

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.

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### When it is Difficult to Remain Silent

If you find yourself in the company of people who are gossiping about others and you are not able to leave them, even though you may feel uncomfortable being the only silent person present you are nevertheless forbidden to speak לשון הרע.

No person likes to appear dull or unsociable. However, the consolation (*the thing that makes you feel better*) is that the harder it is to remain silent, the greater the reward. (Pirkei Avot 5, 26: "בן הוא אומר, לפום צערא אנרא" - "Ben Hei Hei says: The reward is equal to the amount of difficulty involved.")

Remember, the Rabbis teach us that it is **better for a person to be considered foolish by man throughout his entire life than to be considered wicked for one moment in the eyes of ה'.**

(Mishnah, Eduyot 5,6: "...מוטב לי להקרא שוטה כל ימי, ולא לעשות שעה אחת רשע לפני המקום")

We are also taught: "For every second that one remains silent he will merit (deserve) a reward that is of a greatness that is beyond the understanding of even מלאכים (angels / heavenly beings)." (Igeret HaGra)

## פרקי אבות of the Week

פרק ה

יה ארבע מדות ביושבים לפני חכמים. ספוג, ומשפך, משמרת, ונפת. ספוג, שהוא סופג את הכל. משפך, שמכניס בזז ומוציא בזז. משמרת, שמוציאה את היין וקולטת את השמרים. ונפת, שמוציאה את הקמח וקולטת את הסלת:

There are four types of students who sit before the Rabbis:

a) a sponge;      b) a funnel;      c) a strainer;      d) a sieve.

A sponge absorbs everything.

A funnel takes in from one end and lets out from the other end.

A strainer lets the wine flow through and holds back the waste.

A sieve takes out the coarse meal and holds back the fine flour.

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