NETIQUETTE AND HALAKHAH: THE PROHIBITION OF (1) LOSHON HA-RA (2) MOTZI SHEM RA, (3) ONA’AT DEVARIM, (4) LO TELECH RACHIL B'AMEICHA [TAILBEARING](5) CAUSING HALBANAT PANIM [EMBARASSMENT] K’SH’FIKHAT DAMIM; AND STRIVING FOR, (A) LOSHON NAKI, (B) DEREKH EREZ KADMA LA’TORAH, (C) KIDDUSH HASHEM, (D) K’VOD HABRIYOT [RESPECTING ALL BITZELEM ELOKIM]

AJL 2014
David B Levy PhD; MLS
(1) Thesis (slide 3-4)
(2) responsible ethical use (slides 5-7)
(3) Cyberbulling (slides 8-17)
(3) Torah principles to govern internet behaviors (slides 18-46)
  (a) general principles (slides 18-20)
  (b) Derekh eretz (slides 21-23)
  (c) Loshon naki (slides 24-26)
  (d) Chofetz Chaim’s Hilchot Esurei Lashon Hara (slides 27-37)
  (e) not embarrass others especially in public causing halbanat panim,” whitening of the face” which is like murder “k’sh’fikhat damim” like murder (Bava Metzia 53b) (slides 38-46) ; Causing emotional stress with words [ona’at devarim]

(4) Organizations to Contact (slide 47)
The thesis of this paper is that the time age old antidote and corrective to this problem could be remedied by recognizing how to curtail speaking loshon ha-ra and motzi shem rah as laid out in the Chofetz Chaim’s Hilchot Esurei Lashon Hara. and seeking guidance in torah principles. Internet should be used in manners consistent with our torah lives, values, and principles. Never before has it been more critical
(1) Nicholas Carr in, *The Shallows*, argues that Internet has fostered superficial reading and thinking which is supported by Paul Cantor’s thesis in the book, *Leo Strauss: Towards a Critical Engagement*, about a Forgotten type of reading and writing. Students have shorter attention spans in sound byte, quick fix, fast food generation. Tech habits compromised students’ ability to focus, analyze, and immerse themselves in traditional learning.

- Technology can be addictive
- FB debases what true friendship is i.e. “800 friends” may be acquaintances one may never have met. Our masorah teaches that Hashem spoke to Moshe panim el panim. Chavruta learning is part of the yeshiva experience to convey a living masora No substitute for oseh likhah rav
- Being plugged in to technology means I am never completely all here, there, or anywhere. Hillel used to say, that “ani po, ha-kol po”
- Time wastage (bitul zeman)
- Jeopardize modesty (tzinut)
- Anonymity allows malicious to attack the most sacred in our heritage- KAVOD haTorah- reverence for Torah leaders and lomdus, which can threaten to promote a generation of jaded Jews for whom Torah leadership is a non-entity
- Online environment can breed insensitivity, loss of empathy, and callousness when one is alone in a room and does not see the other person to whom one is communicating. Cruel, insensitive, and hurting communications and remarks that can be checked by the Freudian sub-conscious risk turning into halbanas pnei chaveiro berabbim (humiliating someone in public).
Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 65:1): Eisav is likened to the swine which raises its hooves to say, “see that I am clean (because I have split hooves).” Yet swine not chew the cud i.e. ruminate. Some feel the “split hoof” of the internet is deceptive. However *caveat semptet*! Some sites on the internet and the behavior it promotes may not be “kosher” despite their appearance. Thus the need for filters
Arguments for: Disabilities and Social media

- Ticket out of isolation and into inclusion. Social media however only a tool and not a panacea toward inclusion and may in fact make us less connected in the most real and meaningful ways.
- People with speech impediments are able to articulate thoughts more clearly
- For deaf social media break through the sound barrier via twitter, ichat, and FB
Some arguments for responsible Internet use

- Hevei mechasheiv hefseid mitzvah keneged secharah (Pirke Avot 2:1) when determining merit of any act must calculate the gains versus the losses in an honest assessment. Do the losses outweigh the benefits: yatza secharo b’hefseido

- Must reach and educate “digital natives” and little “tech ninjas” “where they are at” (ba’asher hu sham). “teach a child according to his way” חֲנֹךְ לַנַעַר, עַל-פִּי דַרְכּוֹ. Must embrace iGeneration rather than push them away. Must understand the technology and social media to better understand the tech culture of younger generation

- Teach how to be tech responsible versus just tech-proficient by modeling proper use. If engage students on cyber-turf must guide them away from “put downs” and “snap judgments”

- Art of reputation management: convey that the digital decisions one makes today will stay with them the rest of their cyber lives

- Can promote inter-grade communication i.e. students enter contests designed by tweeting with hashtags (categorize tweets by category) to communicate about experiences on field trip or after camp to unite students across all grades and so that some of the shy students participate more through twitter feeds, and stay in touch via email, FB, and Skype.

- Set boundaries and limits that prevent using internet for instance during family time
Proliferation of technologies has provided students with new methods of bullying.

Cyberbullying refers to the use of email, cell phone, text messages, instant messaging, defamatory websites... to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviors by an individual or group, that is intended to harm or harass others.

Bullying has been around for generations but new technologies make it easier to permeate cyberspace by the ease of instantaneous mass communication facilitated by social media etc. Anyone with a computer or smartphone on a social network can spread bullying at the click of a mouse.
Measuring components of Uncivil comments that can characterize or lead to Bullying in the “Digital Wild West”

- (1) insulting abusive language, baiting, hating
- (2) name calling. Flaming, lurking, aggression, voyeurism
- (3) verbal fighting/sparring/ incitement/stalking
- (4) character assassination (ad hominem attacks)
- (5) conflagration, intimidation, hateful vehemence
- (6) belittling, defamation, libel [hard to prove in court]
- (7) obscene language directed against victim
- (8) inappropriate tone that is not polite
- (9) general verbal harassment, recurring nastiness, personal malice, or threats aimed at victim
- (10) slippery slope from venting and bloviating to bullying?
Frequency of Bullying Victimization Among 11–16-Year-Olds

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<th></th>
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<th>20%</th>
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- Every day
- Once or twice a week
- Once or twice a month
- Less often than monthly
- Never

Average Quarterly Revenue per User of Various Companies, 2012

Source: ComScore

Picture of anonymous possible troll

From: Netiquette and Online Ethics, Opposing Viewpoints, Berlatsky, Noah (editor), NY: Gale Greenhaven Press, 2013, p.28
## Number of Uncivil Comments in 150 Comments

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Bullies may harass by sending unsolicited unwelcome emails i.e. repeated spamming.
Anti-bullying measures: ensure students’ rights to safe physical and psychological environment

- “serious talks” with involved students and parents with school counselor
- Changing class or school of involved students
- Violence prevention program (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, Gies, Evans, 2001)
- Implement anti-bullying program of specific groups
- Expect Respect program (Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez, Robertson, 2003); Steps to Respect program
- Safe2Tell program
- Effective measures increase academic success and decrease absenteeism and dropout rates
- School counselors must be up-to-date on literature of anti-bullying
- Must understand: (1) what constitutes bullying, (2) the extent of bullying, (3) signs of victimization, (4) effects of bullying, (5) causes of bullying behavior and preventative strategies to deal with cases of bullying
- Conflict resolution mediation to deal with power-imbalance
- Assemble a library of children’s books dealing with bullying
Possible Solutions for Cyber safety: not chumrot but precautions

- Enforce age requirements for certain sites
- Have children share passwords only with parents
- Review childrens' emails and web history
- Nip in the bud “grooming” i.e. when someone initiates online contact with young person with intention of an inappropriate relationship. Signs can include: letters, gifts, and phone calls from unknown number
- Encourage open lines of communication between children and parents
- Teach children never to share personal info such as name, age, address, phone #, social security number and never meet in person someone who “friended them online”
- Visit netsmartz.org to learn about Internet safety
- Friend your teens on FB to see who their friends are and what they are posting
- Teach how to use privacy settings
- Create news alerts for teens’ name on google, Yahoo, and msn to protect their digital identities
- Talk to teens about what is appropriate and not-appropriate online
- Use Blocking software and filters
- Keep computer in public area of the house
- Talk to kids on dangers of cyberbullying and notify school counselor if it happens
Teach children that if they would not say something to someone in public they shouldn’t write it online. Never send an email when one may be angry!

From: Netiquette and Online Ethics, Opposing Viewpoints, Berlatsky, Noah (editor), NY: Gale Greenhaven Press, 2013, p.69
(1) Rabbi Yisroel Salanter principle: “Not everything one thinks should be said. Not everything one says should be written. Not everything written down should be published.”; Anonymity and instantaneousness of internet often allows things that would never be said or written go public so that there is a blurring of propriety and mentchlkheit.

(2) Chazal tell us “Al ta’amín b’atzmecha ad yom moscha” Don’t be certain about yourself until the day of departure from this world.
More torah principles/guidelines for internet safety

- (4) practice privacy by using discretion & understanding halakhic difference between **reshut harabbim, reshut ha-yahid, & reshut carmalit**

- (5) Be responsible and always conscious “know that there is a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all your deeds written in Hashem’s book” i.e. Hashem knows everything we think, do, and write (Pirke Avot). **והשתכל בהשלשה דברים ואי אתה בא לידי עבירה דע מה למאולה ממך עין ראה ואוזן שומעת כל מעשיך הספר כספי וכתבי

- (6) Transparency: don’t use deceptive identities online and pose as someone you are not. Disclose biases, **midvar sheker tirchak and vihyitem neki’im**.

- (7) Be careful of confidentiality. Torah forbids revealing secrets (megaleh sod). Torah forbids defaming people by revealing confidential information or speaking **loshon ha-ra** and **hotza’at shem ra**. One may not describe other people or organizations in an bad light.

- (8) Do not defame or provoke defamation (avak lashon ha-ra). Avoid potentially explosive topics. One is not permitted to enable other people to defame (lifnei iveir and mesayei yedei ovrei aveira). Do not “troll”. Trolling is positing of inflammatory comments with intent to provoke
More torah principles for guiding internet behaviors

- (9) Ban bullying- Torah forbids causing emotional distress to others (ona’at devarim). This prohibits insulting, bullying, or causing another embarrassment.

- (10) Bitul torah may neglect time away from learning torah or family tie of parental duties and spousal duties detracting from shalom bayit and chinuch.

- (11) You may not damage the Jewish community by spreading misunderstandings or incorrect teachings (ziyuf haTorah and chillul Hashem). Strive to create a positive image of Judaism (kiddush Hashem) to outsiders who may misconstrue trends of thought and practice out of context or with little or no background

- (12) Practice modesty/Tzeniut i.e. don’t post or look at pictures of people inappropriately dressed; follow standards in your community for online inter-gender communication
the Torah's "ways are sweet and all of its paths are peace" (Mishlai 3:17)

לפאתיהו כים והמקים מאש

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah would say: If there is no Torah, there is no common decency; if there is no common decency, there is no Torah. If there is no wisdom, there is no fear of God; if there is no fear of God, there is no wisdom. If there is no applied knowledge, there is no analytical knowledge; if there is no analytical knowledge, there is no applied knowledge. If there is no flour, there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour. (Pirke Avot 3:2)

רבי אלעזר בן אزارיה אמר Explicit.

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derech erez kadma la’Torah” (Vayikra Rabba 9:3).
There is no wisdom like the wisdom of derech eretz (Avos DeRebi Noson 28).

Think of all of your actions in [terms of] derech eretz (Derech Eretz Zuta 2).

Any one who is a master of derech eretz, and is not learned enough to know more than Bible, so long as he guards against sin - eternal reward is prepared for him (Tanna DeBay Eliyahu Raba 2).

Four things require constant work: Torah learning, good deeds, prayer and derech eretz (Brachos 32b).
"VaYelech Moshe" (and Moshe went" - Deuteronomy 31:1). Just before Moshe was about to die, he "went" to speak final words to the Jewish people. Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah, points out that the word "went" is extraneous, and therefore provides an extra lesson. If Moshe were only saying "goodbye," the Torah did not have to add the word "went." What Moshe did was to go around to all of families to say goodbye to each and every person. When you are taking leave of someone, show derekh eretz and appreciation. You say "goodbye" like a mentch. Moshe "went" to do derech eretz.
Loshon naki is not just “the power of nice” but politeness or employing phrases such as: "please," thank you," "you're welcome," "good morning," "excuse me," and "I'm sorry”, and avoiding lascivious and vulgar speech etc. but a consciousness of the power of speech. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said “a person should never let an unseemly word issue from his mouth (Pesahim 3a). To purify speech the Hasidim sometimes take on a ta’anais dibur.

In Pesahim 3b we learn that two disciples sat before Rav. One said, “You made the subject as savory for us as a stuffed pig.” The other said, “your analysis has made me as tired as a kid out of breath.” Rav would not speak to the first disciple after that.

הנהו תרי תלמידי דהוו יתבי קמיה דרב, חד אמר: קויתונא האי שמעטאת דבור אחור מסנוק, וחד אמר: קויתונא האי שמעטאת גדרי מסנוק, ולא אמרארי רב בדידי דהלאיך
In punishment for obscene speech troubles multiply, cruel decrees are proclaimed anew, the young men of Israel- may such things happen to their enemies- die, and the fatherless and widows cry out and receive no answer. For it is said, "Therefore the L-rd shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall He have compassion on their orphans and widows; for everyone is profane and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh obscenity. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still (Isa.9:16) [B. Shabbat 33a]
In Derekh eretz zuta 3 R. Eliezer ben Yakov said: “When a handsome and distinguished man allows an unseemly word to issue from his mouth, what is he like? A large dining hall with a taner’s ill smelling drain pipe running through its middle.

In B. Kettubot 5a-b the sages taught in the school of R. Ishmael: Why is the entire ear hard and the lobe soft? In order that when a man is about to hear something unseemly he can plug his ear with the lobe. Our masters taught. A man should not allow his ears to listen to unseemly chitchat, because being delicate they are of all parts of the body, the first to catch fire.
The Chafetz Chaim lists 31 mitzvot which may be violated when a person speaks or listens to Lashon Hara. Of the 43 sins enumerated in the Al Cheit confession recited on Yom Kippur, 11 are sins committed through speech. Halachot discussed in the Chafetz Chaim are more specific, basically revolving around:

1. "Lo telech rachil b'ameicha," [Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people] (Lev. 19:16)

Rashi notes The Hebrew word for tale-bearer is "rakhil", which is related to a word meaning merchant. The idea is that a tale-bearer is like a merchant, but he deals in information instead of goods. In our modern "Information Age," the idea of information as a product has become more clear than ever before, yet it is present even here in the Torah.

(2) ye shall not wrong one another (Lev. 25:17, which according to tradition refers to wronging a person with speech).

Leviticus 25:17 has traditionally been interpreted as wronging a person with speech. It includes any statement that will embarrass, insult or deceive a person, or cause a person emotional pain or distress.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
Commonly-used examples of behavior that is forbidden by “you shall not wrong one-another”:

- (a) You may not call a person by a derogatory nickname, or by any other embarrassing name, even if he is used to it.
- (b) You may not ask an uneducated person for an opinion on a scholarly matter (that would draw attention to his lack of knowledge or education).
- (c) You may not ask a merchant how much he would sell something for if you have no intention of buying.
- (d) You may not refer someone to another person for assistance when you know the other person cannot help (in other words, it's a violation of Jewish law to give someone the run-around!).
- (e) You may not deceive a person, even if no harm is done by the deception; for example, you may not sell non-kosher meat to a non-Jew telling him that it is kosher, even though no harm is done to the non-Jew by this deception.
- (f) You may not sell a person damaged goods without identifying the damage, even if the price you give is fair for the goods in their damaged condition.
- (g) You may not offer a person a gift or invite a person to dinner if you know that the person will not accept.
- (h) You may not compliment a person if you do not mean it.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
In the three most recent parshayot: behaalotecha, shelach lecha, and Korach, there is repetition of loshon ha-rah. Rashi notes the meraglyim did not learn from Miriam’s loshon ha-ra of denying the uniqueness of Moshe’s nevua from other neviem [לא קם לארץ כמשה עוד נביא והbrates את התמונות], when they spoke loshon ha-ra against eretz yisrael not by denying that it is a land flowing with milk and honey (eretz zavath halav ve-devash) but rather for saying, "הארץ אשר עברנו בה מצאה את ארה ואכלת ושביהată היא."

We are further warned in speaking loshon ha-rah in Num. 17:5 - "You shall not act similar to Korach and his company" who sustained a dispute. לא-יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָּתוֹ, not lishem shamayim and cast aspersions upon Moshe and Aaron’s authority by disrespectfully saying רב-לכָּם--פי כָּל-הָעֵדָּה כֵּלָם קדָשִׁים.
Example of rechilut in 1 Sam. Ch. 21-22

- Do'eig the Edomite (I Samuel Chs. 21-22) is often used to illustrate the harm that can be done by tale-bearing. Do'eig saw Achimelekh the Kohein give David bread and a sword, a completely innocent act intended to aid a leading member of Saul's court. Do'eig reported this to Saul. Do'eig's story was completely true, not negative, not secret, and Achimelekh would have told Saul exactly the same thing if asked (in fact, he did so later). Yet Saul misinterpreted this tale as proof that Achimelekh was supporting David in a rebellion, and proceeded to slaughter all but one of the kohanim at Nob.
The person who listens to gossip is even worse than the person who tells it, because no harm could be done by gossip if no one listened to it. It has been said in Eretz Yisrael that lashon ha-ra (disparaging speech) kills three: the person who speaks it, the person who hears it, and the person about whom it is told.

A baraisa was taught in the academy of R. Yishmael: Whoever speaks Lashon Hara proliferates iniquities equivalent to the three cardinal sins- idol worship, illicit relations, and murder.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
The prohibition of Loshon ha-rah is stated clearly in the Torah. Deut. 24:8 - "Take heed concerning the plague of leprosy" because it is a punishment of Lashon Hara.

Deut. 24:9 - "Remember what the L-rd your G-d did unto Miriam by the way as you came forth out of Egypt." Specifically, she spoke against her brother Moses.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
Deut. 19:15 - "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin" because, unlike in a court for monetary matters, the testimony of a solitary witness is not binding, so that his testimony damages the defendant's reputation without any beneficial result.

It is forbidden to say negative things about a person, even in jest. It is likewise considered a "shade of lashon ha-ra" to say positive things about a person in the presence of his enemies, because this will encourage his enemies to say negative things to contradict you! A mere wink or gesture can catapult a communication into loshon ha-ra.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
Ex. 23:1 - "You shall not utter a false report." Acceptance of a false report also follows from this.

Lev. 19:14 - "Before the blind do not place a stumbling block." This applies to both the speaker and the listener since they are helping each other violate the commandments.

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
Lev. 19:12 - "You shall not hate your brother in your heart," referring to contradictory behavior such as acting friendly but then speaking negatively about him behind his back.

Lev. 19:18 - "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the children of your people," such as speaking against someone in anger and for something that was done against the speaker.

This verse contains two mitzvot: (1) stop someone from speaking Lashon Hara and (2) don't embarrass him in the process. (Note: rebuke is not a simple topic, especially because the one being scolded may not always listen. This is covered in some detail in the second section of the book, Hilchot Rechilut.)

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
Verses sighted that prohibit repeating a loshon ha-raḥ or when rechilut is spoken cont.

- Lev. 19:18 - "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- ב'תְּזוּדֶת תִּשָּׁפְּטָא וְאָרָּבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּּמוֹ
- Deut. 10:20 - "To Him [and (by implication) his wise ones] shall you cleave."
- אַתָּ-יְהוָּה אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִּירָּא, אֹתוֹ תַעֲבֹד; וּבוֹ תִּדְבָּק, וּבִּשְּמוֹ תִּשָּבֵעַ
- Ex. 23:2 - "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil." The above two commandments refer to keeping good company, which includes those who will refrain from improper subjects in their discussions

http://www.torah.org/learning/halashon/intrcomm.html
The Mishnah in Bava Metzia 3:10 notes Just as there is wrongdoing in buying and selling, so there is wrongdoing with words. One should not say to someone, “How much is this item, if he does not want to buy it. If someone was a penitent- one should not say to him, “Remember your past deeds.” If someone was descended from proselytes- one should not say to him, “remember the deeds of your forefathers . For it is stated : And you shall not wrong or oppress a proselyte

כשם שאונאה במקח וממכר כח אנאה_BINDING Ла נאמר ולבחמה כח והכアナ אנני רצת לייך את
יאמר ולבחמהحفظ גז ויה והכアナ אנני רצת לייך את
היה בעל תשובה לא יאמר ולזובר מעשים
הראשים אנוס היא בן גרים לא יאמר ולזובר
מעשה אבותיכ שנאמר (שם ומח) וגו לא תהוה ולא
חלוץ

Embarassing someone in public
The gemara in Bava Metzia 53a elaborates: How then do I explain the verse and a man shall not wrong his fellow? - It must deal with verbal wrong

אמר רב יוחנן משמש רבי שמעון בן יוחאי: דה בוגר ויה יהב ויהי במקלי ויהי nutzen ויהיนาม דלך אונאת דב-rich מאיונאת ממון. שיזה נאמר בוייראת מאלהיך ויזה לא נאמר ובויראת מאלהיך.

ורבי אלעזר אומר: זה בגופו זה בממונים. רבי שמעון בר נחמני אמר: זה - נתין להישבעו, והיה שמעול בר נחמתי אמר: זה - נתין להישבעו, והיה

לגיון לחיישון. -にて תנו קמיה לדר בנהום

When one is embarrassed “Azil sumaka v’ati hivara,” the features lose their red color and turn white; thus, the Talmudic term for humiliation, “halbanat panim,” whitening of the face.

Talmudic usage of Hebrew “K” at the beginning of “like murder” i.e. humiliation is “k’sh’fikhat damim”
David HaMelech’s retort to his tormentors included the admonishment that one who shames others in public forfeits his eternal reward. This notion is in fact stated authoritatively a number of times in the Talmud. Commentator's offer several possibilities to explain the basis for such a severe prohibition.
And Mar Zutra bar Toviyah said in the name of Rav- and others say, it was Rav Chana bar Bizna who said in the name of R. Shimon Chasida; and others say it was R. Yochanan who said in the name of R. Shimon ben Yochai- It is better that a person cast himself into a fiery furnace- than that he should shame his fellow in public. From where do we know this? From TAMAR. For it is written: As she was taken out (to be executed) she sent to her father-in-law, Judah the pledges he had left with her, but she refused to shame him in public by naming him as the father of her child.

Rabbi Yonah in Sha’arei Teshuvah identifies embarrassing others as avak retzichah, a sub-category of murder (see Pirke Avot 3:11).

Rambam in his pirush al ha-Mishnah observes that shaming others does not appear to be a prohibition that one would intuitively associate with such a severe punishment as losing one’s portion in the future reward. However, the action is indicative of the nature of its protagonist. One who would engage in such behavior, writes the Rambam, can only be one of low character and underdeveloped morality, an individual whose behavior in general will inevitably result in spiritual condemnation. Thus, the Rambam, who declined to impose martyrdom to avoid humiliating others, apparently feeling the homicide/humiliation comparison to be non-literal, is here loyal to that position. In his view the transgression itself did not earn the punishment, but rather revealed a personality who will prove himself in other ways to be deserving of such punishment.

R. Shimon b. Tzemach Duran, the Tashbetz, notes that in the process of humiliating another, one commits two distinct transgressions, evolving from two different passages in the Talmud. The first is the topic of the Talmudic text cited earlier (Bava Metzia 58b), ona‘at d‘varim, “verbal” oppression, subsumed within the biblical prohibition, “a man shall not oppress his friend.”

The Talmud displays an exquisite sensitivity to the potential of even an accidental misplaced word to cause great anguish: This attitude is also evidenced by countless enactments of the Rabbis designed “sh’lo l’vayesh,” not to embarrass

If the prohibition of verbal oppression addresses the hurt feelings and emotional scarring caused by embarrassment, another element of the offense yet remains to be covered by “you shall not bear iniquity because of him.” In addition to the pain felt by the humiliated individual, there is the completely separate component of the stripping away of human dignity, the lowering of status within society. In this respect, it would seem more likely that the degree of publicity attendant to the incident would have a direct effect on the severity of the offense. This follows along the lines of the aforementioned comments of the Alshikh, the Tikkunei Teshuvah, and the P’nei Yehoshua; the Divine image, the source of human dignity, has been compromised.

Indirect loshon ha-ra

- It is forbidden to say negative things about a person, even in jest. It is likewise considered a "shade of loshon ha-ra" to say positive things about a person in the presence of his enemies, because this will encourage his enemies to say negative things to contradict you! A mere wink or gesture can catapult a communication into loshon ha-ra

- See: Brown, Benjamin, “From Principles to Rules and from Musar to Halakhah: The Hafetz Hayim’s Rulings on Libel and Gossip”
Secular Organizations to contact

- Allaince Against Fraud (AAF)
  www.fraud.org/aaft/aaftinfo.htm
- American Library Association (ALA)
  www.ala.org
- Berkman Center for Internet & Society
  http://cyber.law.harvard.edu
- Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT)
  www.cdt.org
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
  www.ftc.gov
- Internet Society
  www.isoc.org
- National Telecommunications and Information Adm. (NTIA)
  www.ntia.doc.gov
- Pew Internet & American Life Project
  www.pewinternet.org
- Wired Safety
  www.wiredsafety.org
- Internet and Online Ethics TC. Library website:
  http://libguides.tourolib.org/netiquette