Privacy – Handout

# Bamidbar Rabbah 20:21

In the merit of four things, the Jews were redeemed from Egypt—they did not change their names; they did not change their language; they did not disclose each other's secrets; and they did not break barriers of morality.

# Leviticus 1:1-2

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר ה’ אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר…

The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them..

# Talmud Bavli Yoma 4b

Rabbi Musya, grandson of Rabbi Masya, said in the name of Rabbi Musya the Great: From where is it derived with regard to one who tells another some matter, that it is incumbent upon the latter not to say it to others until the former explicitly says to him: “Go and tell others”? As it is stated: “And the Lord spoke to him from within the Tent of Meeting, saying….”

# Rashi on Talmud Bavli Yoma 4b

The verse says “laymor” which is short for “lo emor” – meaning: “Do not say these words unless he gives you permission.”

## Notarikon (Exodus 1:13)

וַיַּעֲבִדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּפָרֶךְ -> **פה רך**

## Gematria (Genesis 14:14)

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם... וַיָּרֶק אֶת-חֲנִיכָיו ... שְׁמֹנָה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת -> **אֱלִיעֶזֶר 318**

## Temurah (Jeremiah 25:26)

וּמֶלֶךְ שֵׁשַׁךְ, יִשְׁתֶּה אַחֲרֵיהֶם -> **בבל**

# Mishneh Torah – De’ot 7:5

If someone tells matters which – if they would be heard by other people, would cause physical or monetary damage, or even cause him distress or to be frightened – this constitutes lashon hara.

# Leviticus 19:16

לֹא-תֵלֵךְ רָכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ, לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל-דַּם רֵעֶךָ: אֲנִי ה’

You shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

# Rashi on Leviticus 19:16

Gossiper — I say that because all those who sow discord between people and all who speak slander go into their friends' houses in order to spy out what evil they can see there, or what evil they can hear there so that they may tell it in the streets

# Mishneh Torah – De’ot 7:2

Who is a gossiper? One who collects information and then goes from person to person, saying: "This is what so and so said;" "This is what I heard about so and so." Even if the statements are true, they bring about the destruction of the world.

# Proverbs 11:13

He that goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

# Talmud Bavli – Sanhedrin 29a

And from where is it derived that when the judge leaves the courtroom he may not say: I deemed you exempt and my colleagues deemed you liable, but what can I do, as my colleagues outnumbered me and consequently you were deemed liable? About this it is stated: “You shall not go as a talebearer among your people” (Leviticus 19:16), and it says: “One who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but one who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter” (Proverbs 11:13).

# Ein Yaakov - Sanhedrin 3:11

There was a disciple concerning whom there was a rumor that after twenty-two years he disclosed a secret thing which was taught in the bet midrash. R. Ami drove him out of the bet midrash, and announced: "This man is a revealer of secrets."

# Leviticus 19:18

Love your neighbor as yourself

# Sefer HaChinuch: Mitzvah 243

The commandment of love of Israel: To love with love of the soul each one of Israel - meaning to say that we have compassion for an Israelite and for his money, just like a person has compassion for himself and for his own money; as it stated (Leviticus 19:18), "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." And they, may their memory be blessed, said (Shabbat 31a), "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow."

# Rabbenu Yonah: Shaarei Teshuva 3:228

A person is obligated to conceal a secret revealed to him by his fellow in a secretive manner, even if revealing it would not involve Rechilut, because revealing the secret causes damage to the owner…and, secondly, one who reveals a secret, deviates from the path of modesty and violates the wish of the secret’s owner.

# Rabbenu Gershom

It is forbidden for one to read the mail or a personal message of one’s neighbor without the latter’s permission.

# Shulchan Aruch: Choshen Mishpat 228:6

If it has a defect, the seller must inform the buyer.

# Mishna Ketubot 75a

If that city has a bathhouse, then the husband cannot complain about even secret defects, because he should have asked those close to her.

# Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder

# Ibn Ezra on Exodus 20:13

with your hand; or with your tongue to testify falsely to have him killed; or in your being a talebearer; or to purposely give bad counsel; or when a secret is revealed to you with which you can save him if you reveal it to him - if you don't reveal it, you are like a murderer.

# Shulchan Aruch – Choshen Mishpat 426

The obligation for a man to save his friend in body, money, or the like. One who saw his fellow drowning, or threatened by thieves or by a wild animal, and could have either saved him himself or hired others to save him – and he did not – or someone who heard that gentiles or informants are plotting against someone or preparing to ensnare him – and he did not reveal this to his friend and tell him – or someone who knew that a gentile or violent man was approaching his fellow, and he could have appeased him and changed his attitude towards his fellow – and he did not appease him – in all such situations, he has transgressed, “Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.”

* A doctor who has information about a condition that may put the public at risk (such as severely impaired vision or a contagious disease) must share his knowledge with the appropriate parties—even if the patient specifically requests that he keep it a secret. In fact, if the doctor withholds the information, he may be guilty of the Biblical prohibition, “Do not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow’s blood.”
* Under certain conditions, one can reveal private information that will save someone from financial losses.
* If a person is sharing the negative information for a constructive and beneficial purpose, the prohibition against doing so does not apply. For example, if you are asked for information about a potential spouse or employee, and you know information that would prevent serious harm (e.g. the potential groom has an extremely bad temper, or the employee is a thief), you are permitted to reveal this information.

# Chofetz Chaim – Hilchot Lashon Hara 4:10-11

In such a situation that the information may be revealed, the one asking for the private information should stress that he is not asking out of curiosity, but for a specific constructive reason; namely, he is thinking of making a match or hiring the person.

Additionally, when answering, take care to keep in mind that one is only permitted to reveal the information for a constructive and beneficial purpose, but not out of malicious intent. This means being careful not to reveal more than what is necessary, and it goes without saying that any exaggeration is prohibited.