



THE IMMENSE DANGERS OF COMPUTERS AND HANDHELD DEVICES

Compiled by Yinon Abraham

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32 Whitehall Rd
Gateshead
NE8 4ES

Letter of Haskomoh

Rabbi S.F. Zimmerman
Rov of Gateshead

שרגא פייבל הלוי זיממערמאן
אב"ד דק"ק גייטסהעד

יום ד' ל' טבת ה'תשס"ח

נס"ד

קמאָך אחי ורעי יכאי צ' ובהיזים קפדו נני
הנה כד' יזידי הרד כ' ינון אדריק שליטא עוסק
צב כמה שנים לעורר אע"פ צ' את הסקני הנכונט דהשטאט
ל הרדה מיני טכניקלי - ונבי קדמור העניין הן המציאות
והן צדדי צדלי שאל שליטא דענינ כמד קינעלום החסוד דעם

"The Dangers of Mobile Technology"

ועיינטי דה ומצאתי שצדקים הנאמנים הרה עם קמאט
הרדום הן קצמאם וכן קחנן ולבונק נולמוזיום
וע"כ בניי מדק הרד הנין שומיק אפרסמה וקרא אנזודים
קס"ס, קמאנו ושמזרכו שניקם דדרט - המצבא הרדום
הכוה דכודז ווקר

שרגא פייבל הלוי זיממערמאן



27-29 GRASMERE STREET WEST, GATESHEAD, NE8 1TS
TEL: 0191 477 1847 FAX: 0191 477 7688

Letter of Haskomo

בס"ד

ועד הרבנים דקהילה קדושה גייטסהעד

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We, members of the Vaad HaRabbonim of Gateshead, have seen the article written by Mr Y. Abraham about the enormous harm and danger that results to both adults and youth from owning a Mobile telephone with Internet accessibility. These articles can be of considerable value to Rabbonim and educators alike, who must understand the nature of these dangers in order to explain to others why such Mobiles must be banned from our society (concerning individuals who must have it for business purposes, a Sha'aloh must be asked). At the same time we wish to thank Mr Abraham for his continued input concerning this issue. This is doubtlessly a major זכות הרבנים תלוי בו and זיכוי הרבנים .

אברהם הנין איינשטיין : פסח אלויהו פאלק : אנדראס יעקב לעבאר

Introduction

What gives me the authority to write about this subject?

Ever since I left kollel (around eight years ago), I have been teaching in many yeshivos in Gateshead on a one-to-one basis. I have taught boys of varied abilities, including some who are very weak. I ran a non-profit shop that sold kosher phones and provided a service for trading in non-kosher phones for kosher ones.

I have discussed this topic with a number of Rabbonim including the Gateshead Rov, Rabbi Falk, Rabbi E. Leiberman and Rabbi A. D. Dunner.

I have also spoken a number of times to the secretary for the Vaad L'inyonei Tikshores (Committee for Matters of Technology), Rabbi Chaim Lang, in Eretz Yisroel.

This write-up is the product of a number of years worth of research, consultation with Rabbonim and mechanchim, firsthand dealings with bochurim and hours of dialogue with customer services representatives from various phone networks and shops. A shortened version of this booklet was used in Gateshead when enacting the takonos for the botei medrash (see later).

Shortly after I published the previous edition of this booklet, a young avreich contacted me and expressed his appreciation for my publication. He told me that he was tutoring teenage boys who lacked enjoyment and fulfillment in learning Torah. He related that in nearly every case that he dealt with, after some probing it came to light that the boys had been subject to some exposure from the Internet, via mobile phones, their sister's laptop, etc. He told me, "Boys are getting up to all the things written in your book and more, most of the time because of their parents' ignorance; and it makes no difference what family they come from!"

It is for this very reason that I chose to write this booklet, so that children should enjoy and love Torah the way they should! I recall having a kvius with a particular Gadol, who showed me a circular outlining the dangers of computers and the Internet. He asked me what my thoughts were. I told him that I agreed with what was printed, and asked him what he had to say. He responded that this circular had missed the most important point: Even if children use computers for perfectly innocent purposes, the greatest danger lies in the fact that they are not learning Torah during this time! Once the interest of the child is diverted from Torah, many bad things will follow suit.

A Word of Warning

It is of utmost importance to take extra care that no talmidim whatsoever should read this booklet, or else it will be a case of "yotzoh schoroh behefsedoh."

Devices

The dangers of abuse of Internet technology and the devastation this can have on our ruchniyus are well documented. What is less well known is the ease with which a person can access the “web” with the aid of a few **inexpensive** and **easily obtained** electronic devices. Furthermore, many people are unaware of the full potential contained in seemingly innocent items e.g. memory cards.

The aim of this pamphlet is to spread awareness of the range of capabilities stored within the new technology now available on the market - **forewarned is forearmed**.

Wi-Fi (Wireless Internet), High Speed, Unlimited Access

a. What Wi-Fi Is

b. How prevalent it is

c. Stories

d. How many different types of devices are compatible with this technology.

What Wi-Fi Is

Imagine the scenario - a man wishes to access the Internet whether he is using his PC (personal computer) in the office downstairs, or to read up on the news upstairs in his bedroom, or to shop on his laptop from the comfort of his back garden. To create separate connections for each of these would involve extensive wiring and new sockets, not to mention the expense.

To overcome this inconvenience a device called a “router” can be plugged into the Internet socket in the home. Alternatively a **USB hub transmitter** - costing a mere **£10** and available from any computer store - will perform the very same function. Both the router and the hub transmitter are as easy to attach (and detach) **as a plug in a socket**. These send out a wireless Internet signal (“Wi-Fi”) within a radius of 100-400 metres, which can be picked up by any compatible computer.

All laptops sold since 2003 contain a built-in Wi-Fi card to obtain these Wi-Fi signals, as do palm pilots and some mobile phones. However for older models and home computers, all one needs to do is plug in a small plastic device called a USB adaptor.

“Piggybacking”- Woe Unto the Neighbour ...

It is therefore self-understood that even if your own home computer has neither a modem nor Internet connection, as long as a neighbour, office or institution within a ¼ kilometre has Wi-Fi technology, your computer too can pick up these signals without your neighbour ever knowing, **and without ever spending a single penny!**

There is a process known as encrypting (passwording), which prevents anyone other than the owner from using the Wi-Fi signal he transmits. However, depending on the level of encryption used, it can be bypassed with relative ease. Also, there are many people who do not have any password whatsoever on their signal. Another thing to bear in mind is that although most routers purchased are encrypted by default, the code is often written on the router itself. Even if the password is set, it can be removed with ease by anyone in the home.

Leaving a wireless network open to the public is a tremendous michshol (“stumbling block”) for children and adults. It allows anyone with a device that connects to Wi-Fi to access the unrestricted Internet.

It’s strongly recommended that owners of wireless networks password-protect them, allowing Internet access only to approved people and devices.

A Router
transmits a signal from
100 - 400 metres



USB Adaptors
cost £10

How to Lock a Wireless Network

Warning: Passwording your router protects your next-door neighbours and other people outside of your home.

If you intend on protecting people inside your home, this step alone is not sufficient. In addition to applying a password you will need to physically lock your router in a cupboard, or get yourself a wired router (suggested shop: PC World Business).

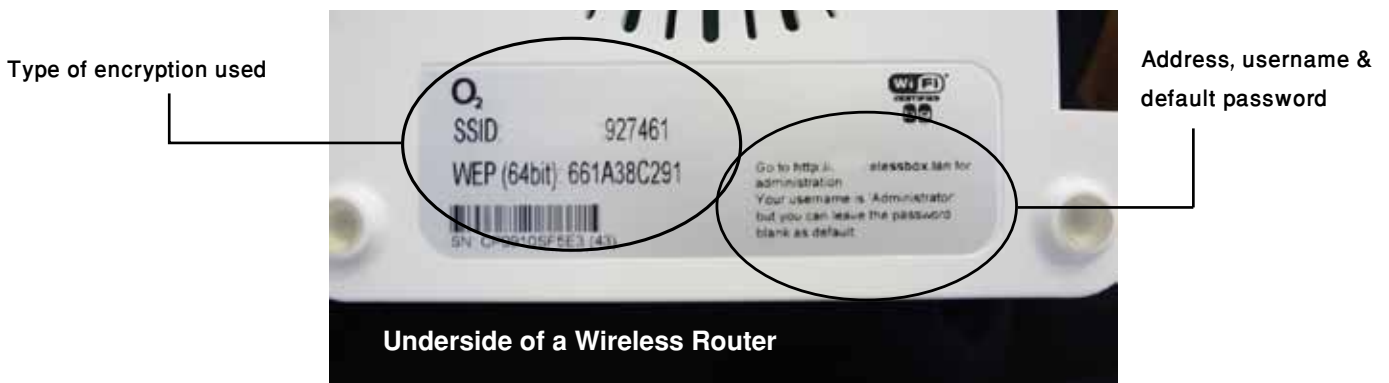
There are two ways of locking your wireless network:

The first is by creating a password, so that only someone with the password can access the Internet.

The second way, which is more secure, only allows access to devices on a “permitted list.” This works by using a unique identifier for each device, called a MAC address. With this system only specified computers and devices can access the wireless network.

1. Open the preferences for your router.

Often the preferences are set by opening your web browser and entering a URL with numbers (example: <http://192.168.0.1>) in the address bar. You may need a password. The default password and address is often printed on the router itself, or in the instructions that came with it.



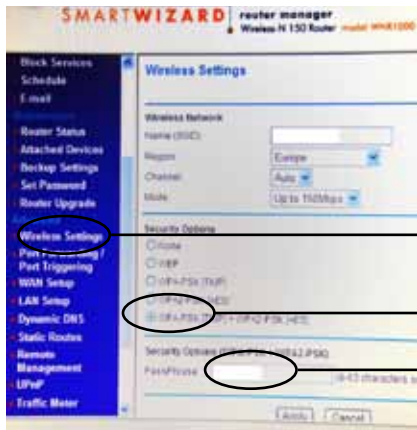
If you set the router password long ago and no longer remember it, you can often reset the password to the manufacturer’s default by pressing a reset button or pin on the router itself (holding it down for 20 seconds or so).



Alternatively, preferences may be set via a specific program for your router, which you installed on your computer when you added the router.

2. Find the wireless security settings.

Look for a tab that says “Wireless Security” or something similar. Click on it. There should be an option to “Enable.” You will need to choose which type of security you wish to use. We suggest using “WPA” or “WPA2” for maximum security.



1: Access wireless settings.

2: Set encryption.

3: Set password and click “apply”.

3. Enable WPA password and save/apply.

Enter a password and confirm. Then click on “Save Changes/Apply.” Your router should reboot and after a minute or two, you will be able to use it only with the password you chose.

These instructions have been taken from the webchaver website http://www.webchaver.org/Wi-Fi_protect.php

How Prevalent Is Wi-Fi

All Internet suppliers give a Wi-Fi router **free of charge**. It is also very hard to buy a router that has no wireless capability. Some of the most popular television and phone companies offer a Wi-Fi router and a subscription to “Broadband” (high-speed Internet access) **free of charge** with every package. This means that whereas in the past you had to worry only about one person who was beaming Wi-Fi into your house, you can now have up to **four signals** coming into your house. If you live close to a main road you can have many more than four signals coming into your house. All airports, libraries, train stations, trains, pubs, hotels and some busses offer **free** Wi-Fi. In some American states 100% Wi-Fi coverage is available (i.e. signals deliberately cover all residential areas for ease of Internet access).

A Quote From Wikipedia

In the early 2000’s, many cities around the world announced plans for city-wide Wi-Fi networks. This proved to be much more difficult than their promoters initially envisioned, with the result that most of these projects were either cancelled or placed on indefinite hold. A few were successful, for example in 2005, Sunnyvale, California became the first city in the United States to offer **city-wide free Wi-Fi**, and Minneapolis has generated \$1.2 million profit annually for their provider.

In May, 2010, London, UK Mayor Boris Johnson pledged London-wide Wi-Fi by 2012. Both the City of London, and Islington **already have extensive outdoor Wi-Fi coverage**.

In 2010 Mysore became India’s first Wi-Fi enabled city and second in the world after **Jerusalem**. A company called WiFiyNet has setup hotspots in Mysore covering the complete city and a few villages near by.

A Quote From the BBC

Mayor Boris Johnson Pledges London-Wide Wi-Fi by 2012

Boris Johnson has said that London will get a blanket Wi-Fi coverage by the time of the 2012 Olympics, with the Internet available everywhere.

The London Mayor said his vision was that **“every lamppost, every bus stop” in the capital would offer wireless Internet access**.

Story: A yungerman came in to me and asked if I could help him update his laptop via my Internet*. I was immediately able to inform him of something that he didn't know. Without realizing it, he had wireless access installed on his computer. His children could easily get hold of his laptop and access the Internet **with the press of a button**.

Story: A Rosh Kollel from Manchester called me up and asked if I could help him out. A company called PlayTV was offering him free unlimited phone calls to twenty countries. They told him that they would provide him with a telephone with a black and white screen. I called them up and they told me that the offer included them coming to the customer's house and giving him a wireless Internet router which would beam an **un-passworded Internet signal** over the whole house. I told the Rosh Kollel that this meant that his children would only need a small USB adaptor to connect to their home computer, after which they could have **unfiltered, unlimited Internet access**. And a neighbour's child could do the same!

*The Internet I use has a filter with a hechsher from R' Moshe Sternbuch amongst other Gedolim (enativ, www.enativ.com).

How many different types of devices are compatible with this technology? This is not a comprehensive list.



1.

1.Hand Held Game Consoles
 Pictured: Gameboy & PSP
 Both have full internet access.

2.

2.Tablet PC's & iPod
 This includes palm pilots
 Pictured: iPod touch & iPad.
 Both have full internet access.



7.

7.Compatible Cameras
 Any camera compatible with a technology called Eye-Fi will allow the user limited Internet access via wireless. You have to buy an Eye-Fi memory card to allow you to use this function. It is not possible to predict how much Internet access will be allowed on cameras in the future.



3.Compatible Smartphones
 Pictured: iPhone and BlackBerry.
 A second-hand smartphone costs £40, £50 brand new.

6.Compatible Home Printers
 Pictured: the HP 8500A Plus
 Allows full internet access via wireless.



6.



Wireless Router

3.



5.

5.Game Consoles
 Pictured: Xbox and Nintendo Wii
 Both have full Internet access.



4. Compatible Computers & Laptop
 (Most laptops since 2003)

4.



Mobile Broadband

A person who has no wireless access in his area is still in danger. His computer can be connected to the Internet via a mobile adapter.

How It Works

A mobile broadband adapter has a SIM card inside it. This means that wherever there is a telephone reception, the adapter will use that signal to provide Internet access. Once purchased, all one needs to do is connect this device to the computer via a USB port. It works like a pre-pay mobile phone contract; you top it up with credit that will allow you to download a certain amount of data.



A mobile broadband stick attached to a laptop

The Cost

A mobile broadband stick (dongle) can be purchased for as little as £20, with a month's worth of unlimited Internet access pre-loaded. It can be topped up with credit at £1 a day for **unlimited access**, and at £15 for a month's worth of unlimited Internet usage.

Storage & Video Devices

The Age of Information - USB Drives (Keys) and Memory Cards

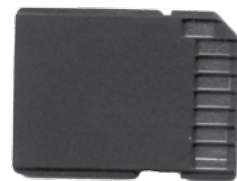
The storage of information is becoming more and more efficient. Vast sums are invested every year by companies wishing to research and develop the very smallest devices with the largest possible memories (measured in "bytes"). For example - whereas a sophisticated computer in 2002 could store 20-40 gigabytes of information, today the same amount can be stored on a **hand-held** device.



Pictured: iPod Classic with memory space for over **600 hours of video**. 160 gigabyte (GB) of information



A memory card (actual size) & USB drive
4 - 8 GB costs only **£9.99**



A regular storage key ("memory stick") costing under £10 can store 4 - 8 gigabytes of information and is small enough to be carried around on a key-ring.

The risks attached to misuse of such accessories should be obvious - pictures and videos can be downloaded (the technical term for recording information from a computer) from the Internet in their thousands and carried around in a person's pocket. Full computer programs can also be stored. Once downloaded, by simply plugging the key into one's home computer, the information can easily be transferred and the stored program can now be run. Whether or not the computer is attached to the Internet is completely irrelevant.

You can also run programs off USB memory sticks or memory cards with no computer installation required, enabling a person to **bypass all monitoring systems and passwords with ease** (method publicised in Hamodia by a child!).

Memory	Hours of Video	No of songs	No of Photos
1 gigabyte	4	500	330
2 Gb	8	1,000	660
4 Gb	16	2,000	1,330
8 Gb	32	4,000	2,660
16 Gb	64	8,000	5,320
80 Gb	320	40,000	26,600
160 Gb	640	80,000	53,000

MP3s and iPods - Entertaining Risks

Mp3s and iPods are devices for recording audio (song) and visual (photos and videos) material, and are generally used for entertainment. They are able to store hundreds more songs than a tape or CD. Both work according to the same principle - the quality and quantity of the recordings they can store is dependent on the capacity of their chip.

A regular Mp3 can record songs and store picture. However, more dangerous is a model called **Mp3-video**, which, in addition to the above, can also store video material. This can then be played back on the built-in screen.

People generally look at a regular MP3 player as a harmless device to give children. The Vaad L'inyonei Tikshores advises parents to be aware of where their children download songs from (because to put and **remove music*** on these devices you need to have computer access). Also, you need to know what your children are putting on these devices. Children have been known to download objectionable comedies and songs from their friends' computers. (I have included the letter from the Vaad L'inyonei Tikshores at the end of this section - Va'ad Le'inyonei Tikshores Letter Concerning Mp3 & Mp4. Page 13.).

An Mp4 player is made specially for videos but can also record audio. **(There is absolutely no need for a bochur to record shuir on an mp4 player or an mp3-video.)** It is not difficult to download a full-length film and transfer it to one of these machines. This can be watched with headphones, in total privacy **(under the bed-covers at night..!)**.

***Some mp3 players come pre loaded with complimentary music and videos!**



A Mp4 Player



The iPod Touch
Free High Speed
Internet in Your Pocket

Any Mp3 player with a colour screen the size of a British passport can be assumed to have the capacity for video playback. Mp3s of this nature have been banned by the Va'd Le'inyonei Tikshores in Eretz Yisroel.

iPods are used for storing and replaying audio and visual material. Older models could store only music and photos. These have been replaced by models such as the **new iPod nano** on which one can also play videos. The **iPod classic** has memory space for **hundreds of hours of video**.

Even more sinister is the iPod-Wifi, also known as iPod-Touch, which, besides incorporating all the features of the video product, also includes the capability of **high-speed** Internet access. It even has a built-in Wi-Fi sensor, **detecting whether there is a signal in the vicinity**.

It is important to know that many iPods come with **very addictive** games on them as well.

Story: A regular-looking boy from one of the yeshivos at which I used to learn came to my shop to print a picture. I used to speak to him about difficulties in the Gemara. He pulled from his pocket a small pocket drive with a huge storage capacity, and showed me that he had on that drive many illegal programs that he'd downloaded off the Internet. He told me that I, too, would benefit from learning how to access illegal sites. In the process of putting away his drive, he accidentally dropped something that looked like a small USB drive. In my innocence I asked him, "Why do you need a small drive if you have such a large drive?" He explained to me that what he had dropped was a Wi-Fi adaptor. I was later told by this boy's Mashgiach that this boy was visiting a family in the kehillah and "piggybacking" their non-Jewish neighbour's wireless Internet using this family's computer!

Story: There was a boy I learned with who came from a brilliant family and was a big baal kishron. He used to play on his iPod **right through the shiur**. When his chavrusa came late he found him upstairs in his room, playing games on his iPod.

Story: A Ram in a yeshivah in town told me that he suspected that a certain boy in the yeshivah was up to no good. He broke in to his cupboard and found an iPod. He told me, "You should have seen the **shmutz** that boy was watching." He related that it was not one boy who used to watch these films, but three boys (all of them from good families), and one of them would attend seder every day!

Va'ad Le'inyonei Tikshores Letter Concerning Mp3 & Mp4.

וועדת הרבנים לעניני תקשורת

מיסודם של גדולי ישראל שליט"א ובהכוונתם

טלפקס. 02-5381858

בס"ד, סיון תשס"ו

הודעה חשובה

הננו לעורר על דבר המכשירים הטכנולוגיים החדשים הטומנים בחובם סכנות רוחניות קשות, כדרך המצויה בעצם קידמת הטכנולוגיה, הנקראים אָם פִּי 4 [mp4] וכן מכשירי די וי די [dvd] המאפשרים חשיפה לתוכן קלוקל ה"י.

ע"כ הננו להודיע על דעת מרנן ורבנן גדולי ישראל שליט"א כי אין להחזיק, לסחור ולפרסם כלל וכלל מכשירים אלו.

כמו"כ גם במכשירי השמיעה אָם פִּי 3 [mp3] יש להקפיד לבל תהיה אפשרות התחברות לערוצי שמע בלתי מבוקרים.

וע"ז באעה"ח

ברוך שרגא צבי פרידמן ישראל פישביין עמרם אופמן יוסף בנימין וואזנר

Buying Technology Safely

With regards to all the aforementioned technological devices including mobiles, Argos, Tesco and many other stores have a tough no-exchange and no-refund policy on non-faulty goods. This means that if you return a product claiming you did not want it to have Internet access, they will not accept it back. It would be good practice to buy only from a store that has a 14-day money-back guarantee on used products so that you can check the product features thoroughly.

Buy Direct From Manufacturer:

Most manufacturers provide a 14-day money-back guarantee on used products when you buy direct, for example, Dell, Sony, etc.

Shops That Allow Returns on Used Products:

John Lewis has a return policy that allows you to return used electronics with a 10-percent penalty. Viking Direct and Staples have a full refund policy on all their products regardless of whether or not they have been used. Another solution is to buy from shops that have shop-floor models that can be tried

out, for example, Currys, Fenwick, John Lewis, Dixons and PC World (some of these shops do not have a 14-day money-back guarantee on used devices).

What to Look Out For

Some digital cameras have inappropriate pictures in the submenus (in the scene modes). Some cameras allow video playback on videos not taken by that particular camera. Certain models have a mode called Eye-Fi, which means that if a person inserts a compatible memory card (costing more than a standard memory card), it will enable his camera to connect to the Internet via Wi-Fi. At the moment this will only allow very limited Internet access (e-mail and backup). Unfortunately there is no way of predicting how much Internet access will be allowed on cameras in the future.

Second-Hand Technology

Much caution must be exercised when purchasing second-hand technology. Sometimes sellers will leave copies of highly inappropriate pictures on their memory cards as a hidden “extra” for the buyer. Even if they don’t, and they erase everything on the card before they sell it, it often occurs that the new owner erroneously erases the information from his memory card. For a small fee he can then recover all the information that was deleted ... including the images from the previous owner! All these problems apply to second-hand laptops and computers.

Using a second-hand SIM card means that all the people who contacted the seller will now be contacting the buyer, by calling or texting.

Story: A certain boy bought one of the very first kosher phones, in which the slot for the memory card was left in. Because the phone only had the capability for playback of pictures and music, the askonim involved in the promotion of these phones did not consider it too much of a problem. The boy decided to purchase a memory card for the phone, to use for music. Unsuspectingly, he bought a second-hand memory card, and when he plugged it into his phone, he was able to view (to his shock) the terrible pictures that the previous owner had stored on the card.

Computer Games - Kids’ Play... Or With Kid Gloves?

Many parents are unaware that computer games have advanced greatly over the last few years. Improvements in graphics and in the clarity of fine details, combined with a competitive multi-billion dollar industry, mean that many games can be as bad as if not worse than watching an adult film. Three-dimensional games are made to simulate reality to such an extent that the player feels as if he is actually walking through rooms and picking up objects.

Besides graphic scenes portraying extreme violence and bloodshed, games often contain generous doses of foul language and, at worst, scenes of explicit immoral behaviour. Responsible parents would need to check any three-dimensional game, even those produced for small children, from start to finish - which is obviously highly impractical.

Mobiles/Cell Phones

In order to understand the dangers that mobile phones pose, you first have to have a basic understanding of how they work. When you buy a mobile phone for the first time, you have a handset and a SIM card. The SIM card contains your phone contract and your phone number.



A new SIM card, with a top-up swipe card, can cost nothing*, with £5 worth of calls, texts or Internet included. To add credit, the swipe card is put through a machine and credited with the amount paid. This can be done at virtually any newsagent or general dealer, for anyone of any age.

*subject to deal

Pay As You Go - Total Anonymity

The “pay-as-you-go” contract means literally that - you pay as you go, with no commitment whatsoever. Parents do not receive any billing in the post, meaning there is little, or no way, to know who their children have contacted! It is important to note that although EC law requires the purchaser to register his name, address and personal details, it is a relatively simple matter to buy a SIM card from any shop selling phones (especially from “corner-shop” type stores) without giving any details. Furthermore, details are rarely checked, and even where given, a false name and address will not be traced.

Story: A grandmother told me with pride that at the school her grandchildren attend, the rule is that you can give a child any mobile phone, provided it has a contract that shows who the child has called or texted. The flaw with this rule is obvious: all a child needs to do is change the SIM card!

The Cost of Services on a Pay As You Go Contract (as of 30/05/2011)

	Internet	Text	Calls
Virgin	30p Daily Unlimited	10p	25p
O2	£1 Daily Unlimited	10p	25p
Orange	£2 Daily Unlimited	10p	20p
Voda-phone	15 meg* = £1	10p	20p
T Mobile	-	11p	10p
3	15 meg*	10p	20p

*15 meg allows the viewing of 3000 web pages

The Reason Why Mobile Handsets Are So Cheap

Story: At one time Sainsbury’s were selling a mobile handset with a SIM card included for £9 (non-Internet). I bought a few handsets for my shop. On the side of the box was a number to call in the event that the handset didn’t work. I understood that this must be the contact details for the company who supplied Sainsbury’s.

I phoned this number and told them that I was interested in buying 500 handsets. The salesman I spoke to told me it would cost me £22 per handset! I asked why that should be the case, since Sainsbury’s sell the same phone including a SIM card for £9! The salesperson explained to me that the service provider

(Orange) bought the handsets from them at £20 (probably in the tens of thousands). They locked the phones to their company (meaning the phones could only be used with an Orange SIM card), and gave a commission to Sainsbury's (20-30%, I assume) to sell the handset on their behalf (at a dead loss). The reason they did this is because experience shows that in most cases, people buying handsets will top up with minutes and texts far exceeding the cost of the handset.

Jargon

Bluetooth - Wireless technology that connects mobile phones, PDAs, laptops and other portable devices without using a cable for up to 10 metres.

Downloading - When you download something like a game or a video onto your mobile, it's there for good. You can watch, play or use it again and again.

GPRS - General Packet Radio Services - The technology behind that allows for a fast connection to mobile Internet and gives you the ability to download games, sounds and pictures.

Infrared - Wireless technology that connects enabled devices without cables within close proximity.

MMS - Multimedia Messaging Service - a message with a picture or video clip.

Service Provider - The company that has the direct relationship with you and sends you your bill - e.g. Carphone Warehouse.

SMS - Short Message Service - text messaging.

Streaming - With streaming, you can play a video immediately, without waiting to download it and save it to your phone. So you can see something like a news clip straight away, but you can't play it again. You need to be in a 3G coverage area to stream video.

Video Calling - With 3G allows you to experience face-to-face video calling, bringing you closer together, no matter how far apart you are.

3G - Mobile technology, allowing much faster data rates for mobile Internet and mobile video services.

WAP - Stands for Wireless Application Protocol and is the mobile version of the Internet.

Text Mobiles

As the name suggests, these phones do not have the facility to view images. They can hold up to **400 names** and numbers (contacts).

It is a simple matter for a boy to get hold of his friend's mobile, containing among other things his sister's number or his sister's mobile with her friends' numbers.

Text messaging is cheap and easy, sometimes as little as 5p per text for up to 918 characters in a single message. Although on a family phone, messages received can be viewed by all users, it has become common practise for girls and boys to buy their own, or at least to have their own SIM card. The ease with which one can buy a sim card whilst retaining complete anonymity has been discussed earlier.

Whereas a girl receiving a phone call may hang up in shock or embarrassment, the convenience of text messaging means she can think about it and respond at her own leisure. Meetings can be and have been arranged, with undesirable results to say the least. The Gateshead Rov zt "I used to say that mobiles have lead to **gilui arroyos and shfichas domim** (abortions), and that one who gives a mobile to his daughter is thereby being mafkir her.

Less Inhibitions

(A quotation from a transcribed shuir given by Rabbi Pinchus Jung, shlita, Menahel Ruchani Bais Rochel High School, Monsey) The complete article is published in the resources Page 27

"Texting erases inhibitions. Simply put, the type of language, message and recipient that would never happen in verbal communication all become possible with text."

"That's the quotation. What do they mean? I'll tell you; it's very simple. What they mean is avadda when we talk face to face, there's a certain embarrassment, there's a certain bushah if we wanted to say something improper. Over the phone, even a regular phone, there's a bit less embarrassment, maybe,

because we're not looking at the person. When you are texting, unfortunately a lot of these kids don't even know who they are texting, there is zero bushah. The worst and the lowest part of the person can come out in those text messages in a way that is really as far removed from our standard, our lifestyle, our mahalach as ehrliche Yidden imaginable. And therefore those can start off, as said, with a harmless change in arrangement, it can very quickly be generated to something very, very different."

Addiction to Texting

(A quotation from a transcribed shuir given by Rabbi Pinchus Jung shlita. The complete article is published in the resources Page 27)

"Texting is absolutely addictive. It robs enormous amounts of time, interferes with concentration which is particularly problematic for boys learning in Yeshivah. Ad kan. Maybe we can add, even for girls in sem, you know? They also need to be focused on what they are doing and not be distracted. But the fact is that it's addictive and like smoking, those people who don't smoke cannot understand it but others get addicted to it and they can't tear themselves away."

(This especially applies to those who understand the predictive text feature and have unlimited texting.)

Story: An askan was once approached by a rebbe who taught in a certain cheder. The rebbe told him that one of his talmidim used to fall into a deep sleep regularly during class. On enquiring, it turned out that this child used to text his friends till late at night **whilst in bed!** The askan asked the rebbe: how can you hope to educate someone who has had so little sleep?

The Stepping-Stone Effect

From my personal experience working in yeshivos, and from what I have heard from a lot of mechanchim and Rabbonim, a boy or girl who has a dedicated phone and who has regular use of it during term time, even if it is a kosher phone, will very, very likely upgrade his/her phone to a treif phone at some point. It's not worth making compromises on this issue.

The Ripple Effect

The most damaging problem associated with phones, and perhaps also the most ignored problem, is the ripple effect. Stage 1. One boy gets a phone and others follow his example. Stage 2. One boy gets a treif phone, breaking the rules of the yeshivah, and again, others follow his example.

Many people upgrade their phones to treif ones by accident. Sometimes they upgrade intentionally as there's a lot more functionality on a treif mobile. Networks often offer free Internet mobile upgrades when you have topped up or used them for long enough, in the hope that it will encourage people to use their phones more often for the additional features they now possess, i.e., e-mail and Internet.

FACT: For the above two reasons (stepping-stone effect and ripple effect) many yeshivos are stricter with their mobile-phone policy than with their video iPod policy! Later on I will relate a story which illustrates how these two principles work in causing major disruptions in a mossad (Page 23).

You Cannot Fight a Trend

It is imperative that the tzibbur upholds the takonos of schools and mosdos. In chinuch it's very hard to fight against a trend. Once it's the practice for everyone in the class to have a mobile, you're fighting against feelings such as "everyone on the hike had a mobile," and "all our friends in Sem text each other."

Story: A person told me that he allowed his son to have a simple phone with texting. He proudly related that his son had the same, simple phone for years! There came a time in the yeshivah when camera phones were popular, and I saw this boy with a camera phone. I approached his father and he told me that his son had copied his friends.

Twitter (Social Networking, Chat Site)

A relatively new development is that a person using a **regular text phone** can register to the Twitter site

and get news, jokes and chats sent to his phone via text. He can chat with or follow anybody he wants via text, for example, if a person would ask to follow Tesco on Twitter, he would get a constant stream of text messages to his phone with offers, etc. All this is a free service; the limit is 200 messages/tweets a day! In yeshivos this service is common knowledge, and certain yeshivos have boys who are famous for providing news updates via Twitter. Everything chatted about on Twitter becomes public, meaning that if a person knows someone else's user name, he can view everything that person has done for months on the Twitter Internet site.

An askan went online and found out that a boy from a yeshiva was using Twitter and had **50 followers** (five from within the same yeshiva). This boy had gone on to other sites and frequently downloaded inappropriate material. The language he used was also inappropriate (nivul peh and swearing)! One way the askan knew what yeshiva that boy attended is because he had discussed the yeshiva's menu!

Story: I was told firsthand by a father that at one time his daughter started crying regularly on Shabbos for no apparent reason. He approached her and asked what was troubling her. She told her father that she had a mobile, and had started receiving text messages from a boy. After some time she admitted that she had been continuously communicating with this boy for a few weeks. When it came to Shabbos she was filled with guilt, and that was what brought her to tears. (This crying on Shabbos is an indication of what a good family she came from.) He told her: Now you understand why the Gedolim are so against mobiles. You are just going through a phase. Boruch Hashem, he caught her in time, and she managed to pull clear of the bad influence.

It's worth reading the story from the Tribune (in the resources The Dangers of Texting Page 31). Before you read it, it's worth knowing that Rabbi P. E. Falk, shlita, told me that the girl involved called him in desperation after a tznius shiur, and Rabbi Falk referred her to a Rov who, boruch Hashem, helped her out.

I also **highly recommend** reading A Letter From a Kalla Teacher on Page 32.

Opinions of Gedolei Yisroel

A Nussach That We Use When Advertising Kosher Mobiles

Please note that Gedolei Yisroel strongly advise against bocuhrim and girls having their own mobile phone even when kosher, due to the michshoilim and many mishaps that have occurred as a result of it. Should the use of a mobile be essential, they should ideally temporarily use their parents kosher text free one.

Communicating by text has proven to be a major cause for inappropriate contact, and both terrible and irrevocable damage has been caused by it.

This Nussach was sanctioned by Rabbi Falk & Rabbi Leiberman.

A Quote from the Nussach of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Hebrew

Congregations (Kedassia)(The full letter is included in resources The Kedassia Letter Page 35)

The use of text messaging is also very dangerous, and has caused much damage r"l within fine families. It is therefore important that each person, man or woman, should judge their situation very carefully, and anyone for whom it is not absolutely essential, should only have a mobile phone with no possibility of text messaging.

Bochurim and girls should not have their own mobile phone at all, nor should they have regular use of a mobile. They should not have access to a mobile with text messaging even on a temporary basis, as this can have serious consequences.

Finally

The following letter is from a תשובה of Harav Hagaon R' Yosef Binyomin Vosner to an organization called Mishmeres Avoseiyenu in Eretz Yisroel. It was written before he became the Rov of Kehal Yitav Lev London

(over 5 years ago). HaRav Vosner was one of the Rabbonim who presided on the special Beis Din in Eretz Yisroel for technological matters (see Va'ad Le'inyonei Tikshores Letter Concerning Mp3 & Mp4. Page 13). It was this beis din that developed the kosher text free phone in Eretz Yisroel . This is a free translation, I recommend going through the original text of the תשובה printed in the resources on Page 37.

The Opinion of the Gedolei Haposkim on הפסד ממון and SMS (Text Messaging)

Concerning what you asked about sending messages via SMS. You should know in truth that we did not decide this answer on our own. When it came to this particular question (SMS) we asked the Gedolim and they **all unanimously agreed** that we should ban this feature.

When we held a meeting in the house of my master, my elder, the Baal Hashevet Levi (Rav Shmuel Vosner), someone asked: is this not a גזירה שאין רוב הציבור יכול לעמוד בה? He answered that when it comes to things which the **very foundation of Yiddishkiet stands upon this rule does not apply!** Even if most of the tzibbur will not be able to stand up to this we still have to make an issur. Also, it's not clear that most people won't be able to stand up to this, as they managed until now without SMS. Its a matter of going back to how things were before!

Also when the Gedolim were asked concerning the financial loss that people would suffer from the fact that the contracts were cheaper, etc. All the Gedolim agreed that כל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו - all that a man has he should give up for his soul.

Even someone who says that he knows that he has never been nichshal, still has two important points to consider:

- 1.) In order to save the tzibbur as a whole including many people who would be nichshal, we must all unite under the ruling of the Gedolei Yisroel.
- 2.) Secondly, and more importantly, many people have said like R' Yishmoel, "I will read and not tilt" (the lamp on Shabbos), I will use the device and not be nichshal, In the end they also were nichshal (this includes good people), in a moment of weakness, Hashem yerachem

The Gedolei Yisroel, in addition to their Torah and avodah, deal with all the problems and mischsholim, all the homes on the verge of collapse or that have already collapsed. All this is on their hearts, they are the ones who know how to judge the situation correctly, and there is nobody else who can truly understand the issue...

Internet Phones

Checking The Kashrus of Your Mobile

1. Any mobile phone currently available on the market with a **camera** can access the Internet via WAP.
2. If a phone has an i icon on its keys, (usually this tends to be on the zero key) with a single press this button will allow a user to connect to the Internet.



3. A large colour screen is also sometimes an indication.
4. Another way to check is by going through the phone menu. Any of the following keywords or icons mean that your phone has the capability of connecting to the Internet: a globe logo, a house logo, homepage, surf & fun, GPRS, WAP, downloads. Obviously there are more keywords however most phones that can connect to the Internet are fashioned in a "user-friendly" way.
5. All phones that have Bluetooth have Internet access (apart for the kosher text-free phones). The reason for this is that Bluetooth was a more recent advance in technology.
6. **98%** of all mobiles available work Internet, many times bought in error.

In order to give the reader a full understanding of the gravity of Internet-enabled phones, I need to describe briefly some of the services on a mobile phone with Internet. Later on I will describe how easily a person can be trapped into viewing inappropriate material on them.

A Phone With Internet, "A Pocketful of Znus"

“Search Engines”- The World at Your Fingertips

In order to find the information one is searching for, among the millions upon millions of web pages which exist, a search engine is used. By typing a few words into the text box, the search engine lists hundreds of thousands of websites where the words typed occur. These can then be accessed by the click of a button. One can search for information on literally any subject under the sun. There is also an option to search for images. If selected, the search engine responds by showing miniature images of the desired subject. One of the most popular search engines is Google (although dozens of others exist). Many Internet programs access Google by default.



YouTube

Using a search engine similar to Google, this extremely popular website will allow the user to search for a video on any topic he decides to learn about. Anyone and everyone can upload a video for free to this site, to show any aspect of their private/public lives. It can be a video of literally anything in the world; there are videos of Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Rabbi Mattisyahu Salamon, the Satmar Rebbe, etc. (If you can get those kinds of video, you can surely get anything else!) From what I understand, the video content is uncensored or, at best, very lightly censored. Due to the immense popularity of this site, many Internet phones include a button that connects directly to this site.

Twitter/Facebook/Myspace (Social-Networking Sites).

These sites allow the user to create a public profile of who they are, including all their personal information, where they live, their hobbies and interests, and any type of picture of themselves. They can constantly update their profile with things they have done or are doing, and send a constant stream of messages, e-mails and texts via the website to anyone who has an interest in them (their “friends”). The site enables a person’s friends to see when he’s online (either on his phone or computer) and send him a message, commonly referred to as a “blog” or “tweet.”

Talking With Strangers: A person can be searched for by name and location, either on the website or from a search engine (google). Due to the immense popularity of these sites, a lot of phones have a button that connects directly to them.

Highly Addictive: People have been known to spend five hours in a single stretch on these particular websites!

The Cost:

The cost of unlimited Internet access on a mobile is from as little as 30p daily on a Pay As You Go!

From a quick glance at the above features, I am sure the reader can see that the Internet is many, many more times dangerous than a television, and all this is just scratching the surface!

But the Internet on My Phone Is Disconnected ...

Problems

Mar’is Ha’ayin, Chillul Hashem and Insufficient Protection

Rabbonim from Manchester and London (both letters are included in resources Page 35 & Page 36) make clear that disconnecting via the company is not sufficient protection. The Manchester Rabbonim have stated that there is a problem of chillul Hashem involved as well.

When disconnecting from the Internet via the company (O2, Orange), the block only applies to the SIM card, not to the handset. In England some people upgrade their phones every year. Often they leave their old handsets lying around their house (to try and get a good price for them). When a child takes an old handset and puts a SIM card in it, he now has all the features enabled.

I have seen even the most responsible parents give an old Internet phone to their yeshivah children during the holidays, because they have no other handset at hand!

Story: I once told a good boy that he was causing a chilul Hashem by publicly using an Internet-compatible phone. He immediately responded that it can't be so wrong, and he pointed to the mizrach. "That Maggid Shiur uses a mobile that can be connected to the Internet," he said.

Adults Who Have a Heter to Use a BlackBerry:

A lot of difficulties arise when an adult uses a BlackBerry in public.

1) Lack of a Role Model: Generally speaking, a person who uses a BlackBerry, depending on whether or not there is a filter installed, has the nisayon of addiction – far greater than if he has a text phone. A BlackBerry has an organizer, notepad, text e-mail, Internet access, and absolutely everything one needs for business. The person looks as if he's completely "sold" to his device; it robs him of any spare time he has to communicate with his children, daven, etc. At best, his children do not see in him a role model of how to daven or learn. A basic requirement of chinuch is to spend time with one's children and daven for them. When does he have that time available?

2) Encouraging Others to Buy – חוטא ומחטיא (Rav Elyashiv)

Parents and mechanchim underestimate the lengths the companies go to, to make BlackBerries and iPhones look attractive. A lot goes into the look of the case, the feel of the buttons, the way the applications respond to touch, and the sounds you hear when the keys are pressed or the phone rings. The mobile producers expend lots of money and effort on the look of the case simply to advertise their products.

I have often been told by good avreichim and boys that they regularly have a yetzer hora to upgrade their phone; they need a "geshmacker" touch-screen device.

3) Portable = Problematic

The rule which I have heard often from the Va'ad Linyonei Tikshores is that the more portable a device is, the more problematic it is. One askan said at a gathering in E. Yisroel that when he sees a Kollel man coming into Kollel with a laptop, he is "bechezkas showing kosher videos to his children."

4) Total Confusion – Expecting Children to Split Hairs

We all know that the Internet is a dangerous thing. Of what use is it to lecture our child on the dangers of Internet when our actions are in contradiction to what we say? You have people in shul who show their friends the latest application on the iPhone, then there's a discussion of what's better - an iPhone or a BlackBerry. That's chinuch?

Another area that causes confusion is when you have a raffle (Chinese auction etc.) and among the prizes are devices which are highly dangerous for ruchnius. Imagine a kollel like Kollel Chazon Ish running a Chinese auction in which one of the prizes is a television set or Barbie doll. It would do more than raise a few eyebrows! Yet a certain tzedakah involved in children's chinuch includes in their annual auction prizes like: Nintendo Wii (full WiFi access); BlackBerry (caption reads "make a wish"); and an iPod Touch (full WiFi access)! All of the above devices make a television look like a mussar sefer! A person should rethink ten times before purchasing a BlackBerry. A mechanech once commented to me bitterly, "They say they need it for business, do they need dynamite for their business?" This is a precise mashal. If you need a BlackBerry, realise it's dynamite! You don't bid for a BlackBerry in a Chinese auction.

A Quote from the Nussach of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Hebrew Congregations (Kedassia)

Anyone who requires the use of a phone with Internet access for business purposes, should ask a shaalo of a competent Rov as to whether he is permitted to do so. If he receives a heter to use this type of phone, he may not use it for purposes other than for business, and should only use it privately. Such a phone may not be seen in public places, such as shuls, at chasunas etc, and he should be particularly careful to ensure that it does not come into the hands of members of his family. He should therefore have an approved kosher mobile for general use.

The following stories were included in a letter written to the Gateshead Rov, shlita, before he spoke about this topic in his first Shabbos Shuvah drashah.

Story: The boy I was assigned to learn with at a certain yeshivah was a bit of a wonder case. He was finding it hard at school and had learning difficulties, but with strong willpower had succeeded in becoming a big masmid. A few years ago he would have been a shining example of a boy who succeeded because he worked hard. The chavrusa went well for quite a while.

One day he turned up with a camera mobile (capable of browsing the Internet). I warned him that he was setting a bad example, but to no avail. It's important to note that at that time, in that particular institution, no boy would dare bring such a device to yeshivah, just like no one would dare bring a pocket television to yeshivah. I told the Mashgiach what my chavrusa was doing and even predicted the damage he would cause. I do not know what steps the Mashgiach took. I am speculating that because he was such a good boy at the time, the Masgiach did not want "to rock the boat."

Needless to say, in the course of time this boy became more and more distracted, to the extent that I simply could not continue learning with him anymore. During shiur, when this boy got bored, he played games on his mobile under the table. A few other boys copied his bad example. At one point I observed four boys busy with their phones during shiur. One of the boys sitting right next to the Maggid Shiur had the chutzpah to take a picture of him in the middle of the shiur and pass it around on Bluetooth.

This boy moved on to another yeshivah. From time to time there was indication that boys were using Internet mobiles in the yeshivah. At times I would observe boys playing with them under the tables, and sometimes I would see them walking with them on the street. The general hasmadah in the yeshivah was slackening. Towards the end of my second year of attending shiurim from the same Maggid Shiur, I saw one of the boys (a big baal kishron) playing with something under the table. I leaned down and discovered that it was one of those internet mobiles. I soon noticed that he, too, was becoming more and more distracted. I approached him and told him off. I told him, "You are a senior bachur; you should be setting an example for the younger shiurim . Why do you need an Internet mobile? I will trade your phone for a text-enabled mobile - for free!"

He responded, "I AGREE WITH YOU. BUT I DONT NEED TO TRADE IN MY MOBILE BECAUSE I ALREADY OWN A TEXT-ONLY MOBILE. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN I JOINED THE YESHIVAH EVEN THE BETTER BOYS HAD THESE TYPES OF MOBILES? EVERYONE IN THIS YESHIVAH HAS THIS TYPE OF MOBILE."

(It's interesting to note that when certain takanos were enacted in the yeshivah, this boy handed in three mobiles!)

Needless to say, I was shocked. It dawned on me, both because of the attitude of the boys at the time and because of the level of attendance at shiurim, sedorim, etc., that he was telling the truth. At the time I had no idea what these boys were getting up to. I used to daven on Yom Kippur in the yeshivah. I remember seeing the boys walking about empty-eyed even on Yom Kippur itself. Unfortunately, in my naivety, I wanted to believe that these boys were disconnected from the Internet.

This is not the only such occurrence that I have witnessed in yeshivos. In another incident, things went out of control when a good boy set a bad example and others followed. It's important to note that when I tell the above story to mechanchim elsewhere, even those working in primary schools, they tell me that they have had similar experiences, or much worse!

Story: The person who made the greatest impression on me was Harav ... He told me that he had confiscated Internet mobiles from boys and discovered that they had downloaded the most immoral comedies. He also told me that he had been helping out a boy in inyanei kedushah and was getting nowhere! He asked him, "Does your father have an Internet mobile?" The boy admitted that every so often he "pinched" his father's mobile and used it. When the Rav approached the father and told him to get rid of his mobile, the father assured him **that he kept it in a locked office**. It took him months to convince that father to get rid of his phone. [Note: This story took place before the invention of BlackBerry phones.]

He once told me in detail exactly what a child had admitted to looking at on his parents' mobile (not worth repeating). He also related that a bachur had told him, "I use my mobile to keep up with the sport," to which he had replied, "That's like someone telling me that he has a zonah in his bedroom and all he uses her for is to play chess!"

Solutions

Extreme Measures

Someone once asked Rabbi Avigdor Miller, zt"l, how we should respond to the rampant problems with tznius on the streets nowadays. He responded: We have a parashah in the Torah called Sotah, and then we have the parashah of Nazir next to it. The Torah tells us, "He who sees a sotah in her disgrace should distance himself from wine." Under normal circumstances one can drink wine; to stop drinking wine is **extreme**. We see from here that when there is a strong yetzer hora around, we may have to do things which are extreme, even by the standards of previous generations.

1) Developing an Affordable Kosher Mobile

The non-kosher mobile is the most dangerous device of all the devices we have discussed. Every one of the problems mentioned before – video features, music players and communication devices - exist on this instrument of destruction. The only solution is to make a device which has only the essential features, a kosher phone like in Eretz Yisroel.

A kosher phone must not have a music player, camera, games, text messaging and Internet. In addition, it is extremely important that a kosher handset looks different from a non-kosher handset to avoid problems of mar'is ha'ayin/ chillul Hashem. It is for this reason that the kosher phone has a hechsher. Such a phone has been on sale in England for over two years (nonprofit). We have seen sales of over 4,000 handsets. It's important to note that many people bought these handsets for sending their children on errands and hikes, keeping a text-enabled handset for themselves for business. I witnessed quite a number of cases where fathers who owned a BlackBerry bought kosher handsets for their households.

We saw the greatest sales when we were able to sell cheap handsets. There was a time when we had a phone called Nokia 1208 which we sold for £30. In the space of two days we succeeded in selling 200 handsets! When I was last in Eretz Yisroel (2007) I met with Reb Chaim Lang (the secretary of the Vaad L'inyonei Tikshores). He took me to see a number of shops selling kosher phones. Due to the fact that the contracts were so cheap, they had huge sales - 225,000 contracts. He told me that the kosher contract was the most popular one in Eretz Yisroel!

We are currently trying to produce an affordable kosher phone. See Oz Nidberu: What We Do Page 40

2) Limiting BlackBerries Strictly for Business

At the time of publishing I was informed by askonim in Eretz Yisroel of a kosher BlackBerry; it has no voice, text or Internet option. It is intended solely for use as an organizer and for e-mail. This option is by far the safest available to date. It is hoped that steps will be taken to make this available in England.

3) Raising Awareness in the Community - Oz Nidberu Organization

I opened a tzedakah organisation in the U.K. to publish small, cheap leaflets to raise awareness of parents and to be mechazek bochurim, especially before bein hazmanim. A sample of one of these leaflets is printed in the resources ("Oz Nidberu: A Leaflet to Raise Awareness" on page 33.). I distributed leaflets in yeshivos around Gateshead and received excellent feedback. Boys told me that the leaflets had both short- and long-term effects. Even boys who use phones were more careful than they would have been had we not published the leaflets.

If you are interested in other activities we do, you can have a look at Oz Nidberu: What We Do Page 40

4) Understanding Human Nature Al Pi Torah

Aspect 1: Curiosity

Many people underestimate their own curiosity (and even more so, the curiosity of their children). For instance, they have games on their mobile or computer and they cannot stop themselves from wasting time gaming. They feel guilty for being "immature" and they are mischazek for a few days, but a few days later they are back to square one.

The Most Powerful Mussar

A very distinguished talmid chochom and baal mussar came to me to buy a phone. He asked me to explain the difference between the colour phone I was selling and the black-and-white model. I told him that there was no difference, but I added jokingly that the games on the colour phone were much better. He told me that if that is the case, he doesn't want the colour model. I was shocked. I expressed my surprise that a person like him should have any interest in the games. He responded, "There is no surprise. A mench is a mench (a person is a person).

"This is an open admonishment to those who have Internet at home and expect their children to be "mature" enough not to use it when their parents are out. (Apart from this, a child is not as responsible as an adult, and more prone to taking big risks). Can they truly expect their children to have more self-control than they themselves have?

Aspect 2: The Yetzer Horah for Arayos

There are those who will say that even though the dangers of the Internet are so great, they do not apply to them or their children. Perhaps they feel they are too busy with other occupations to do something wrong; they are heavily involved in Kodesh occupations; they had a good upbringing; they had good Rebbeim; they enjoy their learning; they have a kvius in sifrei mussar or Chassidus; they have a very good relationship with Hashem, etc. Perhaps they are also involved in campaigning against the dangers of the Internet. ...On this point I wish to share a thought I heard from a Gadol.

We have a parashah in the Torah called Sotah, and then we have the parashah of Nozir next to it. Chazal tell us that we learn from here that "He who sees a sotah in her disgrace should distance himself from wine." (It's important to note that the Mesillas Yeshorim writes that the Torah uses the parashah of Nozir to show us how to distance ourselves in inyonei kedushah.) This seems surprising. Surely the last person in the world who should become a nozir is a person who saw the sotah suffering. Such a person doesn't only **believe** in the punishment, he **saw** the punishment with his own eyes.

The answer is that a person can have a lot of experience in belief and fear of Hashem, and he can know that there is definite physical danger in sin. However, when a person is confronted head-on by trials in areas of arayos, all his beliefs and experiences melt away to nothing! The only solution is for a person to accept upon himself takonos to prevent him from coming near temptation in the first place. That's why we tell a nozir, "Go around, go around; do not go near a vineyard."

As Heard From the Gateshead Rov

A person came to the Chazon Ish at a time when mixed dancing was rampant in America. He asked him why the Rabbonim were so against mixed dancing. He claimed that he had been doing it for years with no ill effect. The Chazon Ish replied, "If you have been involved in this activity and were not affected, you don't need a Rabbi; you need a doctor." A person who has Internet in his home that is accessible to his children, yet his children have no interest in using it out of **lust** or plain **curiosity**, such children need a doctor!

5) Knowing Our Children

Unfortunately, from what I know from my experience in yeshivos, there is absolutely no way to tell if a child is strongly inclined to ta'avah or not. It makes no difference what yeshivah he is in! It also makes no difference how long he's been in yeshivah (if the problem is not addressed). Sadly, it sometimes makes no difference how good a family he comes from.

If a child is inclined this way, (and sometimes, even if he isn't, but he's just curious) and he has Internet access at home, he will have little power to resist its temptation for long! I recommend you read the letter from a bachur in Brisk in Oz Nidberu: A Leaflet to Raise Awareness Page 38. For this reason it's of paramount importance to remove (better still not to bring in) anything that is unsafe for kedushah in our homes.

It is my tefillah that in the zechus of doing all we can to protect our children, they will grow up to give true nachas to us and to Klal Yisrael.

Shops Where You Can Buy Kosher Phones (Text Free)

London : Y Liss 5B Northfield Rd 07538 655 797

Gateshead : Family Abraham 32 Whitehall Rd 0191 477 7724

List of available Mobile Handsets with No Internet or Picture Messaging

For the benefit of those people who have a heter to use a text enabled phone, we are making the following information available:

The only mobiles we know of that are not Internet enabled are the two available in the Carphone Warehouse 0800 049 0049

Phones4u: Look up the number in your local directory

- Nokia 100 (from what I have been told, this model is better quality)

- Nokia 1800/ 1616

(All these phones can be connected to all networks apart from 3G)

Please note:

1. Price is no indication as to what features your mobile will have, as networks heavily subsidize phones.
2. 99% of all mobiles sold in the past 4 years, have Internet enabled on the handset. Many times it is taken for granted that Internet is enabled and they do not mention this on the phone specifications.
3. With regards to mobiles, Argos, Tesco (and many other stores) have a tough no exchange or refund policy on non-faulty handsets. If you return a handset claiming you did not want it to have Internet they will not consider it a defect .
4. For kashrus reasons the askonim do not recommend using 3G, Vodaphone and T-Mobile as network service providers! We recommend using Orange, O2 and Tesco instead.

General Information

Most times reception issues on your phone are network related issues not handset related. Find out from your network if they provide a reception in the place you travel to.

We have found that unlocking can cause problems in certain handsets with messaging. It is best to buy phones that are correctly connected to start with.

Resources

Awaking Awareness and Precious Advice

Transcribed from divrei chizuk by the esteemed mechanech Rabbi Pinchus Jung, shlita, menahel

ruchani Bais Rochel High School, Monsey

The Gemara tells us in *Sanhedrin: Hashem Yisbarach* showed *Adam Horishon dor, dor vedorshov* – every generation of the future *doros* and those who would *darshen* and explain the Torah; *dor, dor vechachomov* – each generation and the *chachamim*, the leaders, the *chachmei hador*, the *Gedolei Yisrael* of each generation. We look up to and respect the *Gedolei Yisrael* and particularly, of course, our own *Rebbe'im*. Perhaps one can even add to this that there is something called *dor, dor venisyonosov*. Each generation has its own particular *nisyonos*.

The *nisyonos* of yesteryear are not the same as the *nisyonos* of this year, and as we all know, the world is changing at a very rapid pace and we are facing new *nisyonos* which were totally unknown only a matter of a few years ago. After Sept. 11, I read a great line: “The -isms of yesteryear have become the -wasms of today”. What did the writer mean? He meant to say the -isms - whether Communism or Socialism, Bundism or Zionism - have long been buried in the dustheap of history. They’re the -isms of yesteryear. They’ve become the -wasms of today. They’re long forgotten; they’re barely relevant anymore. We might just pick them up in history. But they’re not the *nisyonos* that are facing us now.

What are, then, the *nisyonos* of the present age in which we are living? Well, the *dor, dor vedorshov; dor, dor vechachomov* of today have very clearly pinpointed the obvious, and that is that our *nisyonos* nowadays are presented to us by the modern technology and its incredibly fast advancement and sophistication, which we have at the present time and although admittedly some of this might be helpful, might be useful, might be time-saving, might be almost essential for business these days – there is no doubt at all that this has presented *Klal Yisroel* with unprecedented challenges. And we know more than that: that unfortunately, *ba'avonoseinu harabim*, so many – particularly of our youth – have been lost and estranged from Torah and *mitzvos*, from *Yiddishkeit* and *derech hayashar*, because of this technology, because of the communications, because of the advancement – so-called advancement – of which we have *mammash* in our pockets today.

And one of the features which is most relevant is surely the cell phone, which is not only an instrument of communication. It’s just so interesting that it’s called the cell phone. Many of you will know from the

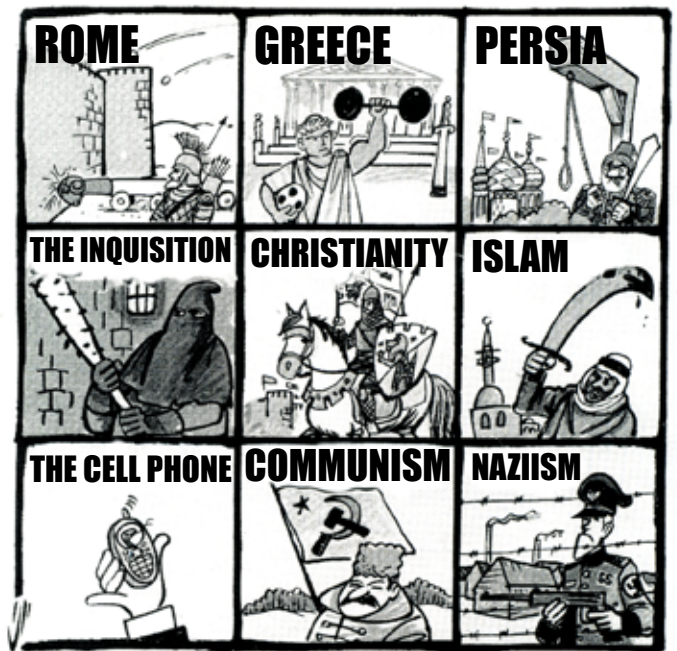
literature which is being published in recent times, that it says at the front, “Jewish children imprisoned with the worst cellmates imaginable.” That means that the cell phone unfortunately can give us connection with the most undesirable elements of society.

Now, as many of you are surely aware, because of this, *chashuva askanim*, with the total backing of *Gedolei Yisrael* who we all know, have managed to arrange, after a tremendous amount of research, effort, time and expense, the purely voice cellular phone, which is only for talking. The idea is because, as we know today, as opposed to a regular phone at home – a ground line, as we call it – cell phones can be used for so many different things, ranging from television to cameras to connecting to the Internet – a whole list of *mammash avos nezikin* which can cause untold and indescribable harm to a *Yiddishe neshamah*, and particularly to the most vulnerable, which are the young *neshamos*.

Before we get to this, it definitely is *kedai* to talk about the disadvantages of cell phones *bichlal*. We are addressing the *nashim tzidkanios* and we need to know, number one – *aleph* – that if we become obsessed with anything (and typically as many apparently are obsessed with their cell phones and busy with them shall I say 24/6, because *baruch Hashem* we have a Shabbos Kodesh) and as a result we become distracted from much more important things and we’re forever, forever talking on the cell phone, then even the kosher phone – even the purely voice cellular which we are recommending now – which is approved by the Rabbanim, would also create a problem.

Let’s discuss number two – even a *gashmiusdik* problem when people – and we’ve all seen this – are so into their phone conversations as they’re wheeling their stroller across the road and hardly looking at the traffic. It’s

THE DESTROYERS OF TORAH IN EVERY GENERATION



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mammash sakanas nefoshos. And this needs to be said because surely a mother's first priority is her *mishpachah*—one would have thought so.

And therefore number three is about when we are walking down the road, in one hand holding Yankele, in the other hand holding Rochele and we are talking to somebody else instead of talking to our children and guess what? When we do that we're actually delivering a very loud and clear message to little Yankele and little Rochele that Mummy has got somebody much more important than you. Ah hah! But we'll tell them that they're more important, but they can see through it and we are transparent and they realise that the person at the other end is obviously, despite what you are saying to me, more important than me. Because you are talking to her all the time and you're not communicating with me – an important point to be made whichever cell phone we might be using.

Number four will be that if we do give our children a cell phone, and typically our daughters, but the same *sakanah* can apply with our sons, *sof, sof*, do remember that you do not have the same control with calls made by a cell phone as you would have with a ground line, when somebody calls up and asks for one of your children and you say, "Who on earth are you?" And you're not going to be able to do that with a cell phone. So do remember the control is somewhat limited. That is number four.

And finally, number five is that there are many terrible, terrible hotlines which unfortunately some kids call which carry the worst poison for the *neshamah* thinkable. I believe that an awareness needs to be there. Okay. So *bekitzur*, a cell phone isn't the greatest *brachah* at the best of times. What we are being advised to do is what's called *bocher hara bemiuto*: We choose the least damaging option and that is what we should use. At least the *meushar*, once again, through *Vaad Harabonim* – an approved phone, the purely voice cellular. Remember again that if you give your teenager a phone for safety or for convenience – for safety typically when he or she is not at home, or for convenience when he or she is shopping for you to check out the stores don't have what you wanted, they could be using that phone for other less desirable purposes.

But here comes the least desirable of all – and on this one I'd like to quote from the pamphlet which probably you received in the mail, but even so. There is something called text messaging. Everybody is familiar with this by now. Text messaging on the surface is totally innocent and totally harmless. You send somebody a message because they were not available to pick up the phone and you tell them "I was supposed to be with you at 5 o'clock, well I'm being delayed, I'll only make it for 6 o'clock." Okay, fine. That is totally innocent. No harm done. It's the same as leaving a message on the answer phone or getting someone else to tell them.

So *vos is azoi geferlech* – what's so terrible with text messaging? Okay, now we know stories, unfortunately, *askanim, mechanchim, menahalim* and *menahalos* can tell you countless stories – shocking stories of people who have fallen down the slippery slopes, whether it's with the Internet which we haven't yet begun discussing or with the text messaging. So let's talk about the text messaging because that one is not so familiar as yet. And instrument of communication. It's just so interesting you know what? We cannot afford to be ignorant.

There are three points in this pamphlet under the heading "The spell of the Cell." I'd like to read them out and comment on them.

Number 1:

Texting erases inhibitions. Simply put, the type of language, message and recipient that would never happen in verbal communication all become possible with text.

That's the quotation. What do they mean? I'll tell you; it's very simple. What they mean is *avadda* when we talk face to face, there's a certain embarrassment, there's a certain *bushah* if we wanted to say something improper. Over the phone, even a regular phone, there's a bit less embarrassment, maybe, because we're not looking at the person. When you are texting, unfortunately a lot of these kids don't even know who they are texting, there is zero *bushah*. The worst and the lowest part of the person can come out in those text messages in a way that is really as far removed from our standard, our lifestyle, our *mahalach* as *ehrlische Yidden* imaginable. And therefore those can start off, as said, with a harmless change in arrangement, it can very quickly be generated to something very, very different.

Number 2:

Texting erodes normal interpersonal communication skills. The mask of the cell phone has generated a subculture of texting social circles. So again, you could text everybody to say what time the Rebbe is arriving. You could text everybody to say what time the *shiur* is. But unfortunately, it has created this subculture – this very low level, low lifestyle, which again is not us. It's not *mamleches kohanim vegoy kadosh* and we have to be wary. *Hayom omer lo aseh kach umachar omer lo aseh kach.*

Number 3:

Texting is absolutely addictive. It robs enormous amounts of time, interferes with concentration which is particularly problematic for boys learning in Yeshivah. *Ad kan.* Maybe we can add, even for girls in sem, you

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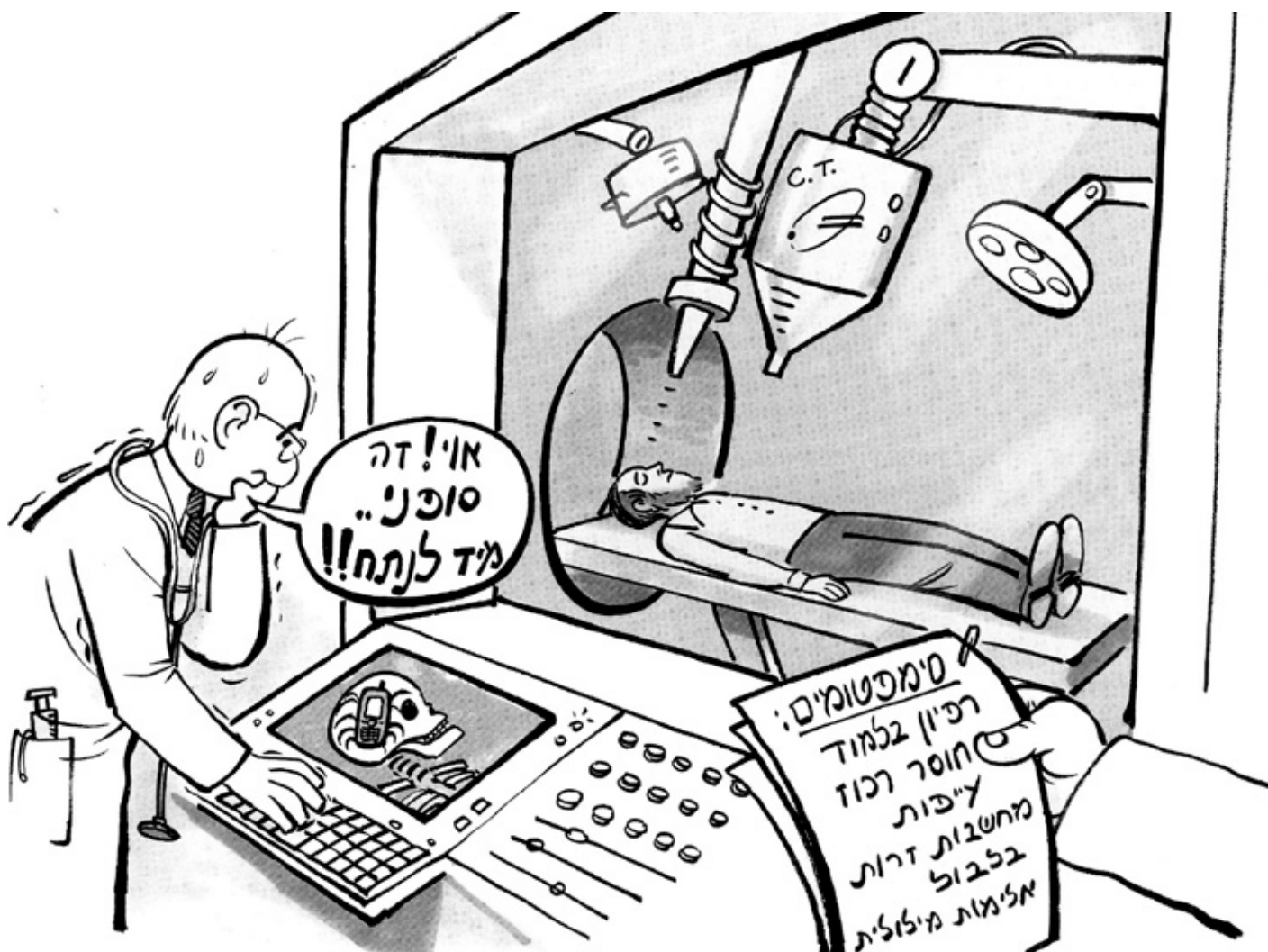
know? They also need to be focused on what they are doing and not be distracted. But the fact is that it's addictive and like smoking, those people who don't smoke cannot understand it but others get addicted to it and they can't tear themselves away. And so, too, with the phone *bichlal*. We need to be aware of this and particularly with texting. So the warning is there and we need to be alert to it and realise the value of a phone where there can simply not be any texting and as mentioned in passing before, this is so very important – there is no Internet access.

Are we denying that the Internet has its uses to people in business? It's undeniable. Some of them will say it's essential and we can hardly argue with that. Fine. On the other hand, though, the dangers are very, very real. There are websites which are so low, so shocking that there's no words to describe it that even goyim – even goyim in education and in government – have decried it and discussed this in the strongest of terms possible. And therefore we need to be aware that Internet access for a youngster is *mammash* a saton, is *mammash* a trap, and can *mammash* cut them off from the *eitz hachaim Rachmana litzlan*. This has been mentioned in the *psak halachah* of *Gedolei Yisroel*, *Gedolei America* and *Gedolim* who we know and respect very profoundly and their words are a guide to us. They are *ner leragleinu ve'or linsivoseinu*.

So the advantage of a phone which is purely voice – *men ken nur reddan*, you can only speak on it – which has, as said earlier on, enough disadvantages and enough *nisyonos* with it that should be seen as a top priority, as mentioned before, to at least, at least be *bocher bera bemi'uto*.

Now, some people are going to turn round and say okay, you know, you're talking about the youngsters. I'm not a youngster anymore. I'm a man of the world. I'm a woman with children and maybe grandchildren. I'm okay and I'm a bit older. I'm immune. It won't hurt me. I've seen it all before, anyway. There is an answer in *Pirkei Avos*. You might want to look at *perek beis, mishnah dalet*. It says in the *mishnah*: “*Al taamin beatzmach ad yom mosoch.*” Don't be so overconfident. Don't trust yourself. We're only *bassar vedam*. We're only flesh and blood. Said the Bartenura quoting the Gemara in *Brachos*: “*Yochanan Kohen Gadol shimesh bikehunah gedolah shmonim shana* – eighty years he acted as *Kohen Gadol* – *ulivasof naaseh tzedoki* – and in the end he was derailed and he became a *tzedoki*, an *apikorus*. So therefore it would be foolish that we should trust ourselves and we should be so convinced that we will be okay come what may – that we are so stable that none of the *nisyonos* of the present age can rock our boat. It's not true. We are fooling ourselves. So that argument we have to dismiss totally.

We have to see the difference between work and conversation. There is work which is one thing for those who do



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work to earn a *parnasah* and what they might have to do and the gadgets that they might need. If they're really *ehrllich* they'll discuss it with their Rabbanim and their *manhigim*. And home – home is a totally different thing. Home must be a *mikdash me'at* – workplace is *och nisht hefker* but there should be a clear-cut distinction. For instance, there is a world of difference between having the Internet in the office and having Internet access at home, whether it's through a computer or through a cell phone. Remember *mikdash me'at* is not any building with a mezuzah on. A *mikdash me'at* is a home which maintains a proper standard, a *Torahdik* standard, which is surely a really high standard, and that way we can have as much of a guarantee as is *shayach* that the next *dor* will, *im yirtzeh Hashem*, go on the *derech hayashar*.

This is what everybody will claim is their greatest aspiration, well then we have to live up to it and make sure that we are not the ones who create the *michsholim* in front of our children's eyes, which will in the end, *Rachmana litzlon*, mislead them. So the *Gedolei Hador* have done their bit and they have promoted this. The *askanim* also have done their share. It's now very much up to us. So if we do our part and we get ourselves at least a kosher phone, we are making a statement and the statement is: I care. I'm aware of the *nisyonos* of the day, I take seriously the words of my own Rebbe and the *Gedolei Yisrael* and I am willing to do something about it. So then we earn ourselves the necessary *siyatta diShmaya*.

Oh, here comes the great question. But I've got a friend. He's fine, she's a fine woman and they use the regular cell phone. They use a BlackBerry or any latest discovery out there. Some people have friends who smoke, who maybe are chain smokers. Some people have friends who drink too much. Some people have friends who live on junk food. Some people have friends who are reckless drivers. You know what? We're not going to copy them because of that. We're not going to put ourselves in physical danger. We might even like some of these people. We might have them as *chaverim*, but not necessarily are we going to admire their bad habits. *Adderabba*, if we could save them from it, it's the greatest *chessed*.

Kol sheken when it comes to a *sakanah* of the *neshamah* – and this is quite, quite clearly a *sakanah* of the *neshamah*. Again, as all *Gedolei Yisrael* have said in *Eretz Yisrael* and in America. In fact do you know what the truth is? You don't need to be a *Gadol BeYisrael* to see this and to realise that one of the greatest pitfalls and stumbling blocks of the modern world is the modern technology and that *mammash* one can say *Rabbim challalim hipilah ve'atzumim kol harugeha*, and that unfortunately many have been lost to it. Many young people with so much potential – each *neshamah* is a *velt*. Each *neshamah* that we lose is the end of the world. And so, too, the quotation from the Gerrer Rebbe, *shlita*, which has been published in *Hamodia* exactly as we're saying – each generation has its *nisyonos*. In previous generations there was the *nisyon* of the *Haskalah* and we said there were the -isms of yesteryear, and this generation the threat lies in the new technology which causes great disruption and damage. This is how the *yetzer hara* sophisticatedly creeps into the *Yiddishe* homes. We have to take action immediately to remove him from within us.

This is a quotation in English from what the Gerrer Rebbe gave as a message on this urgent topic:

“Halevai that this kosher phone – the approved phone – the me'ushar one should become a status symbol – that when a youngster or a young woman has this phone, it shows that they are amongst the elite who take Gedolei Yisrael seriously – who take the nisyonos seriously and who understand what we are facing today”. Yes, *nisyonos* which our parents did not know and our grandparents *avadda nisht*.

Now, when addressing the women, perhaps we should remind them of the *midrash* in *Parashas Korach* where the *Tanchuma* says. That On ben Peles was *zocheh* to *nifla'os*. One of them was *“On ben Peles ishto hitzilatu – his wife saved him.”* What did his wife do? So his wife made sure that he was *shikor* and he was tired and he slept at the time when Korach got his *chevrah* together, when Korach and *adaso* were all swallowed up by the ground and *On ben Peles* was absent. And who engineered this to save his life? That was his wife. And when a woman is an *eishes chayil* she is a pillar of support for her husband in Torah, in *ehrllichkeit*, in *Yiddishkeit*, and here too she could easily have a positive *hashpa'ah* on him to make sure that he should use the kosher gadget if they're available, otherwise *“ee ikke darka achrina,”* says the *Gemara*, when we've got two options, one is kosher one is not, if we go on the wrong one, even if we wouldn't drift away, we would be called *resha'im* and *avvada* the *nisayon* of drifting is very real so it's really *be'emes* a *chiyuv* to go in the safe way.

And finally, to conclude the message here, let us remind ourselves. The *Gemara* says, *“bischar nashim tzidkonios shehayu be'oso hador nig'alu Yisrael miMitzrayim.”* At the time of *galus Mitzrayim*. And in a sense, you know, we are still in *Mitzrayim*. The *tumah* in the atmosphere is like *Mitzrayim* was in those days. But it was in the *sechar* of the *nashim tzidkoniyos* that we were saved from *galus Mitzrayim*. And there's also a *midrash* that *bischar nashim tzidkonios asidim lig'ol* – says the *Yalkut*. And so we rely heavily on the input and the *hashpa'ah* of the *nashim tzidkonios*. They will set the tone, they will encourage their husbands in the right direction, like the *Gemara* says – the Torah, the share they have in their husbands' Torah, whether he's learning full-time or part-time, but they give him the backing and the support, the encouragement, so too whether it's in the *aseh tov* or *sur mera*, their support is

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crucial. We hope very much that the *noshim* will support their husbands in this, too, even if it does cost a few more dollars, it's money well spent. Nothing can be too much when it comes to *hatzalas nefoshos*. No price is too high and in that *zechus*, we should be *zocheh* to the *geulah sheleimah bekarov, amen*.

From the Hamodia parshas Chayey Soroh 2009

The Dangers of Texting

To the Editor

This letter comes from the deepest and most painful place in my heart. I know that the contents are sensitive, yet, with tears pouring from my eyes, I beseech you to print it - it can make a huge difference to so many lives!

I am a 23 -year-old housewife, Baruch Hashem happily married for a few years now. But - and this "but" is a strong one - I live in constant inner turmoil, all because of a mobile phone that wasn't kosher.

Looking back a few years, I was the paradigm of a "top girl" Ehrlich, talented, capable, warm and sociable - I was beloved by teachers and classmates alike. I was a deep, mature and serious girl, with a close relationship to Hashem, and as a top student, I graduated with honour. The phones rang with countless shidduch suggestions, all top of the top Yet no one knew what lurked within.

You see, I had a mobile phone. To cut a long story, very short, through a misunderstanding, (I had been trying to text someone else), I began texting somebody that I shouldn't have.

Everything that is now being brought to light and raised for discussion is oh so true! Text messaging is a powerful tool of the Yetzer Hara! It removes inhibitions, bringing destruction and heartbreaking pain. As a result of texting, the next year and a half was spent living a lie My friends, parents, siblings, teachers and classmates were all singing-my praises, while I spent my life torn apart, so badly wanting to be what I once was, yet unable to resist grip of the Yetzer Hara! The only thing that prevented me from taking a giant leap, from which there would have been no return, was that I just couldn't do that to my poor parents, who were sailing along, blissfully unaware of what was taking place in my life.

The first hint of change took place when I attended a Tznius Shiur. The evening moved me powerfully. I got in touch with a local Rav, and it is him to whom I owe everything! I met him countless times, pouring out my pain and heartache. His understanding, compassion and deep care motivated me to break away from the clutches of the Yetzer Hara. The Rav guided me through it all, providing a sympathetic and listening ear whenever I needed it.

Baruch Hashem I met my intended shortly afterward. He was everything I had ever dreamed of - a Ben Torah, Yerei Shamayim, sterling middos And here is where my "but" continued; I came into my marriage with all the goodwill in the world. I begged Hashem each day to let me forget my past, and most of the time I succeeded! When times were rough my siddur turned wet from tears, and I had to place an emergency call to my Rav. The baggage I carry makes true happiness and fulfilment that much more difficult to achieve.

So, you may ask, why am I sharing snippets of my story with you?

I'll tell you the answer: With the uproar over kosher phones, it shatters my heart each time I hear people disrespecting the views of our Rabbanim! To those of you who think that the Rabbanim are out of touch with today's needs, let me break a little piece of news to you: The Rabbanim know way more than you do! You see, it is to THEM who we turn to extricate us

from the mess. Not to you, my dear brothers, sisters, in-laws, friends. Looking at me, and chatting with me, you would never dream what I once was ... it is only to our special and patient Rabbanim that we bare



TEXT PHONE
The Bin of Sin

our hearts. So yes, if the Rabbanim say that mobile phones are destroying homes and families, it means it's true

To those of you who believe that "it doesn't help anyway, because no one normal would do anything wrong, and the ones who really need it wouldn't get a kosher phone anyway, I tell you that you are playing with fire! If it happened to me, with my warm and stable upbringing, my healthy social status, and my close relationship to Hashem then it can happen to anyone! You are not immune! I personally know countless other "stories". who's parents and families share the very same view as you do! Don't wake up when it's too late, and the damage is irreparable!

To those of you who think that texting is too convenient to give up, and that you're strong enough to resist temptation, please think twice. Remember that your children are not quite as strong as you, and that they won't fall for having a kosher phone themselves, while you keep your old one. It just doesn't work. And no, you won't realise right away when the first sign of trouble crops up - remember that I was living life as a supposed "top girl" for a year and a half without anyone detecting anything from the outside; it's inside where the burning scars remainTo the organisers of the tznus shiur, a powerful thank-you for saving a lost and forlorn Yiddishe neshamah.

To my Rav, my lifeline, I thank you from the depths of my heart for the countless hours you spent with me on the phone, for always understanding and sympathising, and above all, for removing the blindfold from my eyes and helping me build a life with a wonderful husband who is truly suited to me.

To Hakadosh Baruch Hu, I don't deserve this kindness and chessed. I beseeched of You that I was opening my "eye of a needle," and in return You have more than opened "an entrance to the Ulam." Thank you for giving me a second chance. My gratitude to You is overwhelming!

And finally, to those of you who are ensnared in the same trap as I was: My heart goes out to you! I implore you, don't ruin your lives for the moment. Your future shalom bayis and happiness is worth so much more than anything you can have now! Please, please, turn to a respected Rav for help in dealing with it all! I have been there, and I know your suffering ... but with gratitude and siyatta diShmaya life will, iy'H, get better!

In the zechus of Klal Yisrael following the wise directives of our caring Rabbanim, may Hakadosh Baruch Hu speedily put an end to all nisuonos, and bring Moshiach bekarov, bimeheirah beqameinu amen!

Name and address withheld

A Letter from a Kallah Teacher ("Wings of Triumph" From Binah Magazine 12 Tishrei 5772)

The first time it happened is etched in my mind. Dassy sat nervously on the chair opposite me, her hands clasped tightly in her lap. I had the material I planned on covering during this lesson spread before me, ready to begin, but it was clear to me that her mind was elsewhere. I was accustomed to the minds of kallos taking flight to all sorts of exotic destinations (the sheitel macher's salon is but one example), but usually after beginning the lesson, it is quickly anchored into place. This time, though, Dassy was not just distracted but also visibly distressed. Finally I closed my notebook, looked at Dassy, and said softly, "You seem upset and distracted. Do you want to talk?"

This simple invitation opened the floodgates. Dassy opened her mouth to speak, but instead of words, a strangled sob came out, and soon she was weeping uncontrollably. I had seen many a kallah become overwhelmed by pre-wedding jitters, and I waited patiently for Dassy's tears to subside. After a few moments, instead of speaking, she fumbled in her purse for her cell phone, flipped it open, pushed a few buttons, and then handed it to me. "Read this exchange," she managed to whisper.

I glanced at the screen and began reading. It was an exchange between Dassy and her chassan - an exchange that never would have occurred face to face or in a phone conversation. An exchange that never should have occurred PERIOD. And it wouldn't have, if not for that dreadful tool known as texting.

Recourses

It was an exchange that eroded all the trust, good will, and positive feelings that had been carefully built up between the two of them. An exchange that could destroy the fragile buds of connection that had just begun to flower.

Which it ultimately did, leaving broken hearts and shattered dreams in its wake.

Dassy's story was the first time I was closely involved with a situation that illustrated the destructive power of text messaging, but it was certainly far from the last. From then on, I was witness to its devastating destructiveness over and over again. The stories kept coming, and each time, I was stunned anew.

Rivkah was another student of mine a bright-eyed girl, happily married to a wonderful young man. One day she called me in tears, asking to meet with me. "It's not about me," she burst out as she fell through my door in obvious distress. "It's about my sister. Oh, Mrs. Rosen, you must help! You'll never believe what happened to her!"

Unfortunately, I believed it. Simply because I had seen it, in various versions, too many times. In this particular situation, her sister had been waiting on line at the bagel shop when a young man in line



behind her asked her if he could just use her cell phone for a minute to place a call. Unsuspecting, she gave it to him. The call he "had to place" was to none other than his very own cell phone. And now he had her cell phone number.

His attempts at contacting her via text began that very night. At first, the girl was able to ignore it, but when the messages continued coming unrelentingly, her armor began to chink. She was living with difficult family circumstances and not an overabundance of love and attention. Before long, a completely unacceptable and destructive relationship had begun to develop. Rivkah called me, hysterical, as soon as she found out.

Another dramatic example stands out in my mind. A woman called me, desperate for help. She was the happily married mother of a growing family who had gotten entangled, unwittingly, in an emotional

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relationship via text. It began so innocently; someone was helping her navigate the medical world after the birth of her special-needs baby, and she, needy and traumatized after a difficult birth and devastating diagnosis, began turning to him for more than just medical referrals and information. Although she had beautiful shalom bayis, her husband couldn't be that pillar of support for her because he, too, was reeling from the news. So, via text, she found a new place for encouragement and comfort, and it didn't take long for her to find herself completely addicted. She came to me, bewildered and devastated. How frightening it was to witness how a happy marriage could be so terribly derailed!

How devastating for another one of my girls, who once scrolled through her husband's phone and discovered a text just one text, but that was still one too many -to a woman at his workplace ... and the trust upon which a beautiful shalom bayis was built was thrown to the wind. Who knew how long it would take to rebuild it once again?

Or how about the young divorcee who was referred to me? The one who was married just about a year when her then-husband was forced to give her the final ultimatum - it's either me or that friend you text incessantly - and she chose the friend.... She ended up with her BlackBerry in one hand and a get in the other.

And then there were less dramatic ramifications of text-addiction - more subtle, perhaps, but eating away at relationships all the same. How bitterly one of my girls cried to me that her husband should have married his BlackBerry instead of her -and if only he'd take as good care of her, give her as much attention, as he does that detested device!

And wives, I saw, can be just as guilty; take the example of the young woman who is so addicted to texting that she sleeps with her phone right near her bed and checks it incessantly, even through the evening and night. What kind of message does that give her husband of just a few months?



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הרבנות דהתאחדות קהלות החרדים

Office of the Rabbinate
of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations

140 Stamford Hill, London N16 6QT

Tel: 020 8802 6226 Fax: 020 8809 6590

Sunday 5th Menachem Av 5769

בס"ד

קריאה קדושה

After seeing the severe negative consequences resulting from the use of mobile phones, with fine innocent people being ensnared in its dangerous net and it causing them to sink to the depths *r"l*, and a number of families destroyed as a result *r"l*, we feel it is necessary to stand up to this threat and enact the following restrictions:

1. Mobile phones that can provide internet access are forbidden to be used by men or women. This applies even if the phone company has disconnected this particular phone from the internet.
2. Anyone who requires the use of a phone with internet access for business purposes, should ask a *shaalo* of a competent Rov as to whether he is permitted to do so. If he receives a heter to use this type of phone, he may not use it for purposes other than for business, and should only use it privately. Such a phone may not be seen in public places, such as *shuls*, at *chasunas* etc, and he should be particularly careful to ensure that it does not come into the hands of members of his family. He should therefore have an approved kosher mobile for general use.
3. The use of text messaging is also very dangerous, and has caused much damage *r"l* within fine families. It is therefore important that each person, man or woman, should judge their situation very carefully, and anyone for whom it is not absolutely essential, should only have a mobile phone with no possibility of text messaging.
4. *Bochurim* and girls should not have their own mobile phone at all, nor should they have regular use of a mobile. They should not have access to a mobile with text messaging even on a temporary basis, as this can have serious consequences.

Now that kosher mobile phones approved by the UOHC Rabbinate, with no internet access or text messaging, are available, only these mobile phones should be used.

We are confident that the members of our Kehilla, who are all *Yirei Hashem* and are concerned to fulfil the *Rotzon Hashem*, will abide by the ruling of the Rabbinate and will remove this evil from among us. In this merit, may they be blessed with goodness and *chessed* in their homes, and with the fulfilment of our *tefillos* for all the personal and communal *yeshuos* that we require and with the speedy arrival of the *Geula Sheleima*.

הרבנית רחל שניידר

אנשי חיים וציונים (א"י)

אנשי פנימינה

אנשי חיים וציונים

אנשי חיים וציונים

אנשי חיים וציונים

אנשי חיים וציונים

אנשי חיים וציונים

The Manchester Letter

בס"ד ר"ח אדר תשס"ז פה מנשטטר יצ"ו

בקשה נחוצה

לדאבון לבנו שמענו על השבר הגדול, אשר נכשלו באופן מבהיל, כמה וכמה בני אדם, אנשים נשים וטף, בעבירות חמורות רח"ל, ע"י השתמשות בטלפונים שיש להם חיבור וקשר לאינטרנט ואביזרייהו.

אי אפשר עוד להעלים עין מהחורבן הנורא היוצא מכלי משחית זה, ולכן מצאנו חובה בנפשנו לעורר ולבקש מכל יראי ומבקשי ה' שלא להשתמש כלל וכלל בטלפונים אלו, ולהוציאם מביתם ומרשותם ולהרחיקן הרחק כמטחוי קשת בל יראה ובל ימצא בגבולנו כלים אלו למיניהם, ובין איש ובין אשה וכש"כ נערים ונערות לא ישתמשו בהם כלל וכלל כאשר כבר נתקבל בהרבה קהלות קדושות בכל רחבי העולם.

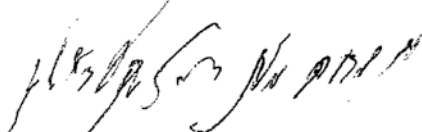
ובכלל זה הם כל הטלפונים מאותו סוג שיש בהם האפשרות להתקשר לאינטרנט, לטלביזן או שמקבלים תמונות, בין שהוא מחובר לאינטרנט ובין שאינו מחובר לאינטרנט (רצ"ל שביקש מהקאמפני לנתקו), ויש בזה משום חילול ה' שהרואה שומר תורה ומצוות משתמש בטלפון כזה אין יכול להבחין כלל שהוא ניתק האינטרנט, וגם הבעלים בעצמם עומדים בנסיון לחזור ולחברו שוב.

וכמו"כ כל הכלים הנמצאים שאפשר להגיע על ידם לאינטרנט לדוגמא PDAs וכדומה וכן כלים העתידיים להתחדש שיש בהם משום סכנות אלו.

בס"ד עלה בידי כמה עסקנים לסדר האפשרות להחליף בחנם טלפונים אלו בטלפונים שאין בהם מכשולים אלו.

ולכן באנו בזה לבקש בכל לשון של בקשה מכל מי שרוח ה' פועם בקרבו למהר ולהזדרז להחליף את שלו ושל כל בני ביתו, ואל יתפתה במה שיש לו מהם שום מעלה או צורך ואפילו חסרון כיס.

וכל השומע יתברך בכל מידי דמיטב ולהתקרב לקוב"ה ושכינתיה ולהיות בין מקבלי פני משיח צדקנו במהרה בימנו אמן.

וע"ז באנו על החתימה: 

מנחם מענדל שנעעבאלג בנימין זאב קויפמאן גבריאל קרויס

משאו של מרן הגאון הגדול

רבי אהרן ליב שטיינמן שליט"א

ראש ישיבת 'גאון יעקב' וראש מולל פוניבז'

נאמר בפני מאות ראשי הישיבות ומרביצי התורה

אין אפוטרופוס לעריות



כל המכשירים, ועל זה צריך להילחם בכל החומר. וצריך להגיד בכל החומר שאדם שלא מבין את זה אין לו מקום בישיבה, אחרת זה חורבן של הישיבות. אסור לרחם בנושא זה, זה אכזריות לרחם על כך. אין לנו ברירה. אדם שיימצא אצלו מכשיר כזה, זה סכנה בשבילו וזה סכנה בשביל כל הישיבה וכל עולם התורה בסכנה. הקב"ה יעזור, שיצילנו ונוכל לבער את הנגע הזה ולא תהיה בשום ישיבה פרצה כזו וכל אחד ואחד יפחד מזה. ונוכח ליעוד של מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' לגאולה האמיתית לעולם ועד. ■

"לא באנו סתם לכנס. צריכה להיות החלטה מעשית. כפי ששמענו שיש הרבה ח"ו שכבר ירדו. זו סכנה גדולה שאי אפשר לדעת לאן תגיע. מה יש להוסיף אחרי שכולם דיברו. יש כאלה שמלכתחילה לוקחים את הטלפון מכוונות לא טובות. להם ודאי אין מקום בישיבה. אבל רוב הבחורים אומרים, שהם ח"ו לא יסתכלו בדברים הגרועים אלא רק רוצים קשר עם הבית וכו'. כך מסתמא רוב הבחורים לא חשודים שעושים בכוונה. הוא בטוח שהוא עדיין לא יעשה, אך בחורים אלו לא חושבים דבר אחד.

הגמ' בסנהדרין (דף כא:): אומרת, "מפני מה לא נתגלו טעמי תורה שהרי שתי מקראות נתגלו טעמן ונכשל בהן גדול העולם, כתיב לא ירבה לו נשים אמר שלמה אני ארבה ולא אסור" וכתוב ויהי לעת זקנת שלמה נשיו הטו את לבבו וכו'. שלמה המלך, שהיה חכם מכל אדם. אמר אני מרבה נשים ולא אסור, והוא נכשל! (לפי דרגתו הנשגבה). שלמה המלך, אע"פ שהיה בטוח שלא ייכשל, ונחשב לחכם הגדול ביותר בכל הדורות, והוא היה בטוח שלא ייכשל, ונכשל! ואם חז"ל אמרו כך על שלמה המלך אז פשוט שאף אחד לא יכול לומר: אני אעשה ולא אכשל!

המכשירים הסלולאריים מסכנים את כל הכלל כולו. כי אם אין ישיבות אין כלל ישראל!, צריך ללכת ולהחזיר את

דעת גדולי הפוסקים על הפסד כספי ו-SMS

... ובדבר שאלתכם על ענין שליחת הודעות דרך מכשיר הסלולר הנקרא: SMS. תדעו נאמנה שלא החלטנו בזה על דעת עצמנו, ובהגיע תור ענין זה עשינו סיבוב בין הגדולים - ראשי העדה שליט"א - וכולם פה אחד הסכימו שיש לבטל ענין זה. ובהיותנו כל ה'ועד' בביתו של מו"ז בעל 'שבט הלוי' שליט"א ונענה אחד מן הנוכחים שמה יש לחוש שזה גזירה שאין רוב הציבור יכול לעמוד בה? היתה תשובתו שבענינים הנוגעים ליסוד היהדות אין כלל כזה!!! וגם אם אין רוב הציבור יכול לעמוד בה חייבים לאסור - ובפרט שאין כאן גדר של "אינו יכול לעמוד" שהרי זה ענין שהתרגלו אליו בשנים האחרונות וכל השנים היו בלי זה, ועל כן יחזור הציבור להתרגל בלעדיו...

גם כשנשאלו הרבנים על הפסד ממון, שיש לאנשים הפסד כספי רב בשבירת התוכניות, והיו שסידרו להם הוולות ומבצעים ומחזיר שיחות נמוך בהרבה וכו' וכו'. בכל זה הסכימו הגדולים ש'כל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו'. ואף מי שטוען שיודע בנפשו שאינו נכשל בזה, מ"מ שני דברים לנגד עיניו; כדי להציל את הכלל שבהם רבים שעלולים להיכשל חייבים להתלכד יחד תחת הוראות גדולי ישראל שליט"א. ועוד, וזה העיקר: שכמה וכמה שטענו כדרך שאמר רבי ישמעאל: "אני אקרא ולא אטה", אני אשתמש במכשיר ולא אכשל, ולבסוף נכשלו! ומהם גדולים וטובים. ברגע של חולשה נכשלו, ה' ירחם. וגדולי ישראל שבנוסף לתורתם ועבודתם מגיעות אליהם כל הבעיות והמכשולות וכל הבתים העומדים על סף שבירה או שכבר נשברו, הכל מונח על ליבם, והם המה יודעים נכונה מה להכריע ואין מי שיכול להבינם על נכון...

מתוך מכתב תשובה של הגאון רבי יוסף בנימין ואזנר שליט"א שנשלח לועד 'משמרת אבותינו'.

Recourses

Oz Nidberu: A Leaflet to Raise Awareness

<22 Kislev, 5765 (2005) p. 1>

Maran HaRav Shmuel Haleivi Wosner

Unabridged version

The following article was taken from
The Yated Neeman ©

"What remains for us is 'this Torah,' but Chazal stressed 'this Torah' and not merely Torah. It must be the Torah as we received it at Sinai. That is 'this Torah.' And if not in the original form that is not Torah. If Dovid Hamelech said, 'Toras Hashem temimoh meshivas nofesh' this is parallel to yiras Hashem tohoroh omedes le'ad. Torah without yiras Shomayim and tohoroh without Torah does not endure. Our Sages said in Brochos, yiras Hashem omedes le'ad is he who studies Torah in purity. This gathering today to honor Hashem and the holy Torah is about something that has reversed His Torah 'omedes le'ad.'

"The holy yeshivas in our Holy Land are the designated purpose of the holy Torah. The Zohar Hakodosh on Parshas Vayeilech says that when the Jews entered Eretz Yisroel 'each and every soul sang, "Vezos haTorah asher som Moshe lifnei Bnei Yisroel,"' i.e. when HaKodosh Boruch Hu gave the Torah, He gave the Torah in our Holy Land, and He gave them the lands held by the non-Jews. In Emunoh Uvitochon the Ramban, commenting on the verse in Parshas Shemos, 'E'leheschem me'ani ami meEretz Mitzrayim le'ereetz tovoh urechovoh' says this entire verse speaks of the Torah.

"We in Eretz Yisroel must contend with the power of the will of secular Jews and porkei Torah. And we have no power to defend ourselves other than the power of Torah. And the power of Torah rests in the holy yeshivas, the yeshivos gedolos and yeshivos ketanos in our Holy Land. Torah without yiroh and without tohoroh will not continue to exist for generations. If we want to perpetuate the Torah throughout the generations for eternity the Torah must be accompanied by tohoroh and kedushoh. Before Matan Torah the condition was 've'atem tihiyu mamleches kohanim vegoy kodosh.'

"I have studied the issue of cellular telephones thoroughly. The telephone has two enormous and very terrible detriments. But before we speak about pritzus and tzenius and gilui arayos in the most alarming manner, years ago I heard that the reality for everyone is that even a kosher cellular phone hounds the person day and night, wherever he goes, giving him no rest. This is the reality and it cannot be denied. I have seen avreichim who, be'avonoseinu harabim, came to kollel, took out the book—the Katzos or the gemoro—and laid the phone on the table to remain in constant contact with the family.

"Before we speak of the great harm done to the kedushoh and tohoroh of Yisroel, the phone itself takes away any remnants of peace and quiet. Through the media [i.e. internet] the phone comes along and steals our peace and quiet. The phone is the opposite of rest, even for a tzaddik gomur. And I ask you, how can one bring a cell- phone into the beis medrash where the pure words of G-d are spoken, and then the phone rings in the middle of the shiur? What have we done with the words of Chazal that he who interrupts his learning to engage in idle conversation is fed glowing coals? Everything Chazal said is eternal. Telephones are a leading cause of bitul Torah.

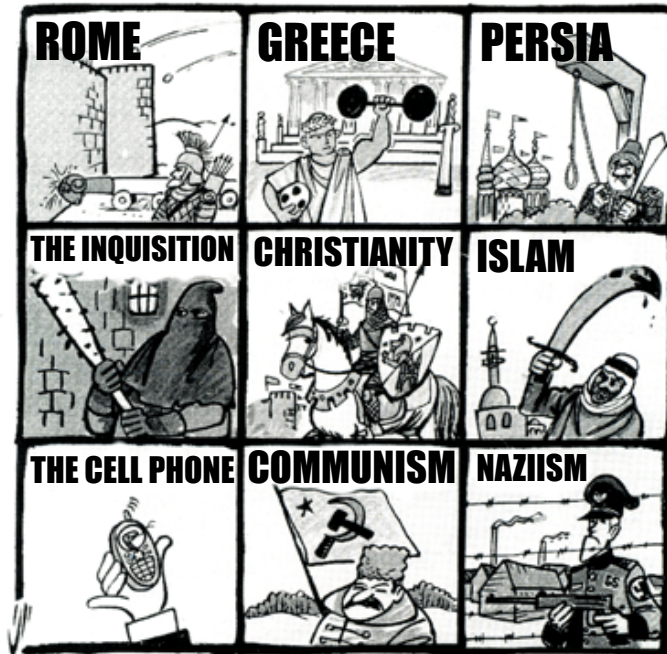
"The other aspect of the telephone is the maaseh Soton that prevents the growth of Torah and yiras Shomayim in our Holy Land, which has increased and succeeded be'ezras Hashem, bringing peros hilulim leHashem in the holy yeshivas. And this applies to all of our brethren in Beis Yisroel who are chareidim ledvar Hashem, whether they are Chassidim or Ashkenazim or our Sephardi brothers. To study Torah is Elokim chaim, to raise generations for Torah and to set up a legion for Melech Malchei Hamelochim, and the cellular telephone is combating this. The latest invention that brings [bochurim] to the lower depths is pictures.

"Hatzafoni archik me'aleichem.'The tzafoni is the telephone, which can

be concealed inside a pocket and hidden from parents, who do not realize their sons are walking around with a phone in their pocket, do not know who they talk to and where they call from, and this reality is undeniable. The incidents of michsholim of pure bnei Yisroel and benos Yisroel brought before us in which whole families were ruined, both in Eretz Yisroel and elsewhere, **is clear proof this is a obvious case of a maaseh Soton unknown since the days of Matan Torah.**

"Even if the telephone is prohibited in the commercial world, in cases where it is demonstrably needed it will of course only be permitted with a kosher cellular phone for conversation alone, which will receive the approval of Vaadas Harabbonim Le'inyonei Tikshores. **But in the yeshivas, both the yeshivos gedolos and the yeshivos ketanos, as well as the seminaries and Beis Yaakov schools, there is no place for this instrument of destruction. Neither a kosher instrument of destruction nor a treif one.** And in my

THE DESTROYERS OF TORAH IN EVERY GENERATION



Recourses

© Copyright to the Hamodia: HAMODIA 9 SHEVAT, 5765 I JANUARY 19, 2005 Because of tznius considerations, some material was left out of this query. Hamodia reminds its readers that Gedolim forbid the use of Internet except for business purposes under specific guidelines. -Ed.

Q. As a widely read Jewish publication, Hamodia is in a unique position to help Klal Yisrael. By definition, any topic that needs to be discussed that a majority of the Jewish community is oblivious to is not easy to print. Subjects the community prefers to ignore will not endear your paper to readers. It's always that way. But that doesn't absolve you of your responsibility. Please, don't cower from a rare opportunity to truly benefit the future of our people. Use your G-d given influence the way it was designed to be used. At last, you have an opportunity to do something, to print something useful, instead of silly crosswords and whining editorials about "enough is enough" and when will the bloodshed finally end ... Mitzva haba liyadecha al tachmitzena. I am about to reveal something I've never discussed with a living soul, and thought I never would. Your answer could save my life, or, not. More important than to read your answer, I am writing this so that it can be printed, in its entirety, and read, because there are hundreds of people in my situation.

I'm a 21-year-old Yeshiva Bochur. I went to prominent American Yeshivos all my life and am now learning in a famous* Yeshiva Gedola in Eretz Yisrael. Modesty aside, I was at the top of my classes and Shiurim, widely respected by friends and Rebbeim. I planned to learn many years and go into Chinuch. I would find a perfect shidduch quickly, some Rosh Yeshiva's daughter, raise a beautiful family, and spread nachas all around. A perfect life awaited; I was the frum community's model son. As far as anybody knows, all this is still true.

When I was in the first year of beis medrash (age 16), my parents brought the internet into our home, and my secret life began. To condense the story, I was very quickly hooked on devarim assurim. (Let's not kid ourselves. Like every person on this planet, I was always curious, and all the blockers my parents set up fell away quickly, without their knowledge. Like any person that becomes addicted to something, I quit many times, once for a whole year, for months, many times. I buried my head in the Torah to save myself as best I could. But it always came back. Going against everything I'd ever learned, I continued. I slowly trained myself to shut G-d out whenever I wanted to. That led me to more and more aveiros,

rachmono litzlan. Without going into detail, suffice it to say that I'm terribly ashamed of myself, because I am not a loyal Jew anymore. But all this is secret. I allow none of it to show through. As much as I want to help myself, I've realized I can't, but I can't get help either; I can bring myself to discuss my dark side with no one.

The only difference between me and others who went off the derech, is that because I am afraid to face the people who would lose respect for me, I pretend to toe the line. And therefore, I am unhelpable. There are, hundreds, maybe thousands, of yeshiva guys who are seriously addicted to a secret life such as mine. I know. I see it, it takes one to know one. You can imagine what kind of rocky futures are awaiting us. I read all The Jewish Observer articles on the evils of the internet. I want this letter to be published to say, you have no idea how prevalent and far reaching the effect already has been, and will continue to be. What you do see is less than the tip of the iceberg. My question to you is, how do I get out? Is this a behavioural addiction that only a psychologist could help? Can I turn to a rebbi (and avoid involving my parents)? Or is there a way I can help myself? Without being overdramatic, you are reading the last gasp of a drowning soul.

(*A prominent Mashgiach in Gateshead gave me a copy of a letter that he wrote to this boy in Yeshivas Brisk in Yerushalayim.)

The best advice I have heard from mechanchim over the years is...

- A. Tell your Parents: You have to be clear with your parents that when you come home it is of paramount importance to you that all Internet devices are kept out of reach, passworded etc. (All this should be said bederech eretz, of course. Unfortunately the best of parents are ignorant of what a yetzer horah the Internet is.)
- B. Keep in touch: You should keep in touch with a Maggid Shiur, Mashgiach etc., someone you feel comfortable with, and he should be mechazek you regularly.
- C. A Knas: Some people give money to a Maggid Shiur or Mashgiach, that in the event they go online during Bein Hazmanim, he can give it to tzedoko. The amount should be enough that you feel the pinch - £50 - £100.

It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway...

Daven for siyata dishmaya, and keep yourself busy over the holidays either with kosher outings or in other activities. Make sure you keep a geshmaker kvius in learning, preferably in a beis hamedrash.



For feedback or to sponsor: ארגון אז נדברו
32 Whitehall Rd Gateshead NE8 4ES

אז נדברו

ארגון לחיזוק לימוד התורה בטהרה
 שליט"א With the Haskomo of the Rabbonim

What we do...

A Publication for Mechanchim & Families

We are in the process of preparing a publication to increase the awareness of the great spiritual dangers that lurk in a lot of household technological devices (i.e. gaming consoles, home printers, digital cameras, computers, music systems, iPods, MP3 players and childrens' electronic games).

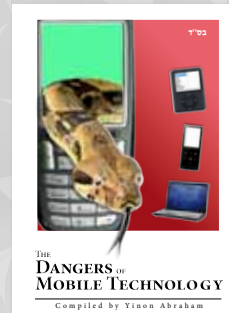
It will be sold in Gateshead and Manchester with the haskomo of the Gateshead Rov and Rabbi P.E. Falk. We plan to complete a new version of this book before Chanuka.

The new book will have:

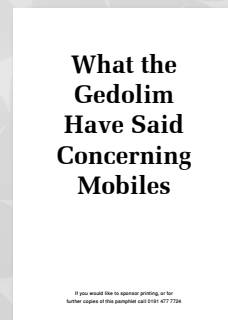
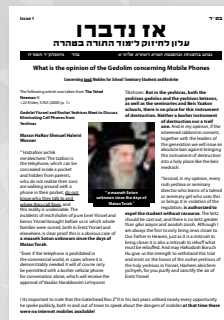
- Stories
- An updated list of devices which have undesirable features
- Solutions

Publications For Yeshivos

We produce small publications to increase awareness and to be mechazek bochurim especially before bein hazmanim.



Our current book.
 Published in 2006



Pictured: Four publications that were widely publicised in Gateshead. Rabbonim and Roshei Mosdos were consulted when we compiled them.

Kosher Mobiles (Phones without text messaging & Internet)

We have a fund to make the kosher phone more affordable and accessible, especially for those who want to have a kosher family phone (as opposed to a business one).

Kosher Mobiles Trade In for Bochrim etc.

Due to new technological advances, the dangers posed by the regular text phones have become far greater than what they were, especially for youth. We have a fund to help bochurim trade in non-kosher handsets for kosher ones.

Please help us assist Klal Yisroel to continue walking in the footsteps of previous generations.

The running of this organization relies solely on tzedoko funds.

We need your financial support for this task.

All donations can be handed in to:

Abraham, 32 Whitehall Rd, Gateshead, NE8 4ES.



Over 4000 kosher handsets sold in the UK

