



SMART PHONE

The twentieth century ushered in technological advances never previously seen. From the numerous new and technologically advanced devices that have been produced, perhaps nothing has captivated and addicted people to it to the extent that the “smart phone” has possessed its users.

The “smart phone” is a combination of every media related device. One is now able to carry, in the recesses of his pocket, a device which serves as a phone, internet browser, camera, multimedia player, radio, television and fully functional computer. Unfortunately, the day all these diverse devices were rolled into one super-device – the smart phone – was the day all the negative effects of these technologies were combined into one seemingly harmless device.

Deep Bond

What was initially viewed as a simple tool of communication has now become an integral part of people’s lives to the extent that the smart phone is, in many cases, the last thing a person sees when going to sleep and the first thing he sees when awaking in the morning. This deep bond and sense of attachment to the smart phone, however, has left its mark. This device, despite the many advantages and benefits that can be derived from its correct use, has been revealed as being one of the greatest inviters to sin of all time and has firmly gripped numerous people in its vice and evil.

At the simple gesture of a finger, one is able to load pornographic material of the filthiest nature. Hence 70% of children under the age of 18 have stumbled across pornographic material **while attempting to search for homework related information on the internet**. With almost every child carrying a phone in his hand, it then comes as little surprise that 90% of children under the age of 16 have watched pornographic material online. Surfing online has become the most common past-time for numerous people — but many have spiritually drowned in the massive waves of immorality and vice.

With social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, My Space, Twitter, BBM, etc., literally connecting all and sundry, mahram and non-mahram, it

comes as little surprise that people are falling into zina and cannot remain contented with their spouse. These illicit relationships are facilitated by the smart phone, and the haraam communication is concealed from others simply by locking it with a password. There are countless couples who enjoyed a happy marriage for many years after which, to their dismay, they found their marriages on the rocks due to one or both of the spouses falling into zina by means of social media. In the year 2009, a UK divorce firm revealed its findings that one out of every five divorces that were filed through them were blaming Facebook as the cause of their marriage breaking. A survey of other divorce lawyers revealed that 66% of divorce cases relied on Facebook as their primary source of evidence to prove their partner’s infidelity.

Very Near — Yet Very Far

Among the major vices of the smart phone is that while it has connected people to the entire world, it has disconnected a great number from Allah Ta’ala as well as from those closest to them. Often many people sitting in the same room are all engaged in conversation — yet there is pin drop silence. Each one is engrossed in chatting with someone else and oblivious of the presence of those who are nearest and dearest to them in the same room. With the “blessings” of the smart phone, spouses are sometimes as far away from each other as the east is from the west, though both are in the same room. Many people’s Tablet is NOT a pain killer — it is instead a *pain instigator* and a source of much heartache for their spouse. Likewise a great number of children feel forgotten and *off-loaded* ... because their parents are always busy *downloading*. And ... many children feel ignored ... because their parents are too busy playing games on their devices!!!

“De-Vice”

The only way forward is to “DE-VICE” (to detach oneself from the vice of the device). The following are some important steps towards “DE-VICING”:

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(FROM PAGE ONE)

① **ALLAH CONSCIOUSNESS:** The most important aspect is to acquire the consciousness of Allah Ta'ala and develop the awareness of death. The reality that **ALLAH TA'ALA KNOWS** all that one is doing or thinking, that He has the Power to take one to task at that very moment and that there is death and also a Day of Judgement when one's deeds will be exposed to all – the conviction of this reality must be firmly rooted in one's heart. Minus this conviction, and the consciousness of Allah Ta'ala, all other means of DE-VICING will not help in any way. Among the fundamental ways to attain this conviction is by accompanying people of firm imaan, daily remembering Allah Ta'ala by means of zikr and sacrificing one's wealth and time for the sake of deen.

① **ABSTINENCE:** If the smart phone has ever gripped you in its vice, do without it. DE-VICE by doing away with the device itself. Do not take chances. It could kill your respect, chastity, marriage and even imaan, may Allah Ta'ala save us.

① **SIMPLER IS SMARTER:** Get smarter — keep a simple phone without internet and chatting capability. This is safest.

① **TRANSPARENCY:** Maintain complete and unconditional transparency. Each spouse should, at all times, be able to monitor the other's internet browsing and messages (whether over social media, e-mail, whatsapp, etc.). In this regard, it is essential that no device is locked in a way which prevents the next person from accessing it at any time and monitoring its use. In the case of gmail accounts, each person having the password of the next will enable him to remotely access his account from his own device and view his web history, bookmarks, e-mails, etc. Parents also must have unconditional access to the devices of their children.

① **NO WiFi:** Do not install WiFi in your home. In many homes it ignited a **Wild Fire** of immorality and vice. If genuinely necessary (not for entertainment and idle surfing — which often leads to drowning in sin), keep securely locked with the password only known to the parents.

① **CURFEW:** Agree on a device curfew in the home, from asr, or at least from maghrib, to approximately two hours after esha. There should be a strict curfew on devices during all meal times and other quality time which should be dedicated to the children. In the case of genuine necessity for homework, etc., this must be very strictly controlled and limited to the bare minimum access.

① **SORRY, NO CHILDREN:** Children do not need a cell-phone, let alone a smart phone. If the circumstances necessitate it, a simple phone with no internet access may be given and the usage be closely monitored.

May Allah Ta'ala enable us to DE-VICE and keep us safe from the vice of every device. Aameen.

SELFITIS

Among the greatest qualities of a Believer is humility. Conversely, pride and arrogance are among the worst diseases that can afflict a person. A humble person is beloved to Allah Ta'ala and is also loved by people, while a proud person or one who loves to "show off" falls from the grace of Allah Ta'ala and is disliked by people as well, though they may appear to respect him.

Pride and vanity are not detected by means of an X-ray or CT scan. Instead they are manifested in one's utterances, reactions to situations, choices, manner and general conduct. One of the recently discovered symptoms is "selfitis".

Inflamed Ego

The American Psychiatric Association has defined "selfitis" as being "the obsessive, compulsive urge to take photos of one's self and upload them on social media." In essence, the victims of this illness are major attention seekers. The APA further explained that the suffix "itis" by which the word ends generally refers to inflammation. Hence bronchitis refers to inflammation of the lungs and tonsillitis to the inflammation of the tonsils. Thus this mental disorder was named "selfitis" as the people who suffer from it are generally prone to having "inflamed egos."

The ahaadeeth have sounded numerous warnings for people who engage in the sin of photography. Apart from these warnings, when a person is filled with such vanity and conceit that his ego tricks him into thinking that the entire world is simply dying to share every moment of his mundane life with him, and thus he cannot see past his own face, how is he supposed to see the majesty and glory of Allah Ta'ala?

When we will stop trying to attract the attention of people to ourselves in whichever way, including posting pictures of ourselves or our activities on social media, insha Allah we will attract the special attention and blessings of Allah Ta'ala towards us. This will make our lives in this world contented and peaceful.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

BLACKMAIL

Q *I was, for a long time, involved in an illicit relationship with a boy. Our relationship eventually reached the point where I trusted him and sent him pictures of myself. Some of the pictures I sent him were quite revealing and explicit. We broke up a few weeks back and now he wants to use the pictures I sent him to blackmail me. Please advise me as to what I can do. I really regret what I did and I know that it was very foolish.*

A Alhamdulillah, it is excellent that you have terminated the illicit relationship. This is, however, not sufficient. You must also restore the relationship with Allah Ta'ala, your Creator and Sustainer, by sincerely repenting. Perform two rakaats of Salaatut Taubah. Then sit in seclusion and cry before Allah Ta'ala, begging Him to forgive you. Ponder over the innumerable bounties and favours which Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with and also think of the extent of ingratitude we have shown for these favours by disobeying Him. As a form of compensation for having sinned give some sadaqah as well. Make a firm resolve and promise Allah Ta'ala that you will never return to this sin in future.

After sincerely repenting to Allah Ta'ala, continuously beg Him to conceal your sins in both this world and the next and to allow you to maintain your dignity and respect among people. Allah Ta'ala has the power and ability to turn people's hearts. He can change the heart of this person who wishes to blackmail you and cause him to abandon all intentions of disgracing you. Recite the following du'aa abundantly from the recesses of the heart:

اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِنَا وَآمِنْ رُؤُوعَاتِنَا

(O Allah Ta'ala, conceal our faults and allay our fears). You must nevertheless cut off all contact with this person and all other non-mahrams. Do not personally contact him for anything – even to discuss the blackmail. Instead ask someone senior in your family to speak to him or someone who has influence over him to desist from his evil intention.

Al-Hadi Comment:

A plague of such vices is sweeping through our communities, but most people do not seem to even know that such a pandemic exists. The evil and immorality of many actions have left many hearts. Hence, chatting with non-mahrams on social media is almost the norm and not even considered as a sin. This illicit contact often results in the exchange of pictures. Many such affairs eventually finished off like the situation described in the question.

Having one's sins, and more specifically one's illicit photos, exposed to all and sundry would result in a major scandal and cause one untold disgrace. However, even if the photos and sins were not exposed in this world, if one passes away without sincerely repenting, they will be exposed on the Day of Judgement in the presence of all of mankind – including one's parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, etc. On that Day we will have no choice but to hang our heads in shame when confronted by the undeniable evidence of our sins. It is thus necessary for us to cultivate the fear of the Hereafter so that we eventually fear standing before Allah Ta'ala even more than we fear our reputations being dragged through the gutter while we live.

Picture-Making

Furthermore, Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) has explicitly warned: ***“Among the people who will receive the worst punishment on the day of Judgement will be those involved in picture-making”*** (Saheeh Bukhaari #5950). There is profound and unlimited wisdom in all the prohibitions of Allah Ta'ala and Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).

The harms in conventional photography have been multiplied manifold with the advent of digital photography. Many sins which were almost non-existent in our societies have reached pandemic proportions with the aid of digital photography. With almost no home left unscathed by this scourge, it comes as no surprise that even the last vestiges of hayaa are being stripped from our lives. If people hid and sinned in the past, they now sin while posing for the camera and waste no time in uploading the evidence of their disobedience to Allah Ta'ala to the various platforms of social media where they invite friends and strangers alike to comment on their absurd exhibitions of immorality.

It is thus incumbent to totally refrain from photographs of animate objects in any form – conventional or digital. May Allah Ta'ala save us all from these trials and grant us the ability to live as true Muslims – Aameen.

ADDICT?

“Cornell Information Science published research earlier this month that looked at (among other things) the difficulty some people have in quitting Facebook and other social networks. They even have a label for the failure to quit: “social media reversion.”

The study used data from a site called 99DaysofFreedom.com, which encourages people to stop using Facebook for 99 days.

The site and study are interesting because they revealed the difficulty people have in quitting Facebook because of addiction. Participants intended to quit, wanted to quit and believed they *could* quit (for 99 days), but many couldn't make more than a few days.

The addictive aspect of social networking is associated with FOMO - fear of missing out. Everyone is on Facebook. They're posting things, sharing news and content and talking to each other 24/7.

Social media addiction is real, and it can damage careers, degrade life and even harm relationships.

For most of us, though, we're simply being manipulated by the social sites and content creators to waste far too much time in a way that benefits them, not us.” (Computerworld)

Al-Haadi Comment:

Modern technology can be used for various permissible purposes and can also sometimes be very beneficial. However, generally for the majority of people the harms far outweigh the benefits. Thus for most people abstention is the best decision. Numerous people started off on a “harmless” note and very

From the advices of ...

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FAQEEHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of *Faqeehul Ummah* Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*rahmatullahi 'alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islaahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is an answer to a question posed to him.

NEVER BE COMPLACENT

Letter:

I am entangled in various sins. I am lazy when it comes to acts of worship. Evil and base qualities have overtaken me. I am dominated by nafs (base desire) and Shaitaan. I do not complete my ma'moolaat (daily practices). I fail to fulfil the rights of people. Please advise me.

Reply:

Iblees complained that “it is because of Aadam ('alaihi salaam) that I have been removed from paradise and have become accursed. Thus I will not slacken in my efforts to mislead the children of Aadam ('alaihi salaam). I will try my best to involve them in sin until their very last breath.” Upon this Allah Ta'ala declared: “I will give them the ability to repent.” Upon this Shaitaan exclaimed that all his efforts will then be destroyed. The servant will repent and his sins will be forgiven.

Thus it is a lifelong battle against Shaitaan. The person who becomes complacent over his nafs (base desire) is in a very big deception (and is heading for destruction), since being complacent and to drop one's guard with regard to one's enemy results in such disaster. As long as the help of Allah Ta'ala is with us, everything will go well. I will make du'aa for you and you make du'aa for me as well. May Allah Ta'ala safeguard us from all those actions that displease Him. (Maktoobaat vol. 1, pg. 97)

soon thereafter found themselves addicted.

Social media addiction harms oneself and others — at times very clearly and most of the time in a very subtle way. Like many who are addicted to substance abuse, the biggest hurdle in overcoming social media addiction is being in a state of denial. Therefore, the first step to overcoming this addiction is to acknowledge that one has a problem. Among the signs of addiction, or being on the verge of addiction, is repeatedly using

social media at frequent intervals throughout the day.

As a first step to escape from the claws of social media is to fix a time for using it. Stipulate two or a maximum of three 15 minute “social media slots” for the day at a time when no family or work will be neglected. Then strictly stick to the specified time slots and firmly suppress any urge to check what may have come in or to post anything to others. Also switch off audible message alerts.

May Allah Ta'ala guide us all to His pleasure at all times. Aameen.