

## MODULE 2

**Class Title:** Cell Phones

**Aim of Lesson:** To see how to regulate use of cell phones & to learn the etiquette of using them

**Category:** Popular Culture

**Lesson Format:** Power point presentation. Discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

(slide 1)

One day, as I barely sat down I heard a voice from the other toilet saying...

Hi! How are you?

(slide 2)

I am not the type to start a conversation in the loo but I don't know what got into me that day so I answered somehow embarrassed...uh...doing just fine.

(slide 3)

And the other person says: so what are you up to?

(slide 4)

(what kind of question is that?) at that point I am thinking this is too bizarre...so I say...uh...I am like you...just travelling.

(slide 5)

At this point I was just trying to get out of the loo as fast as I could when I heard another query

Can I come over?

(slide 6)

Ok now this question was too weird for me but I figured I could just be polite and end the conversation...so I say...No...I am little busy right now.

(slide 7)

Listen. I have to call you back. there is an idiot in the other toilet who keeps on answering my questions.

Don't you just love cell phones!

These are two people who are sitting in a public toilet, next to each other, in two different stalls. One is talking on the phone and the other is actually replying...the other person thinks that chap is talking to him so he is replying to the conversation that this other man was having on his cell phone!

Before we go on, can you tell me that the most fundamental thing which is wrong in this joke from an Islamic point of view? It is totally against the Sunnah to sit on the toilet and talk.

- Narrated AbuSa'id al-Khudri: I heard the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) say: When two persons go together for relieving themselves uncovering their private parts and talking together, Allah(swt) becomes wrathful at this (action). [Abu Dawud]
- A man said salaam to the Prophet (saw) while he was in the toilet, he did not answer the salaam. [Nasai, Ibn Majah]

Teacher: by the way, do any of you take your cell phone to the toilet?

Student: Sometimes there is lot of commotion in the house and the only peaceful place is the toilet.

Teacher: It is very clearly instructed by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that we should not talk in the toilet unless there is a dire need. So let this be a useful reminder for all of us, *inshaAllah*.

The point of telling you this "joke" was that this cellular phone technology is getting to be completely out of control in some places and this is one such example.

Haven't you guys been in some public place where someone is talking loudly on their cell phone without any care for people around them...one feels like telling them that hello! You are being a public nuisance.

So let's talk "cell phones" today.

(slide 9, teacher talking about the different phone images on screen)

Do any of you remember any of these things which are on the screen? Do you even remember having something like this in your homes or may be talking on something which is called a regular "landline"?

By the way, how many of you have a cell phone and even if you don't have cell phones do you have access to cell phones? Please raise your hands

That's what I thought...so all of you have the access to cell phones?

Does anybody remember this? You were probably not even born when this was there.

Yeah...and not even this...

You remember this?? When you were two years old? You made your first ever phone call and your mommy wrote in your baby book ..ohhh..this is the first phone call she made...

Basically what happened is, all of these poor little telephones, think of Alexander Graham Bell, have actually gone the way of dodo. Yup, extinct.

(slide 10)

This was the very first cell phone by the way. It was created in 1984 and it was named Dyna TAC 8000X – whew, what a mouthful of a name. It weighed two pounds and you could store only 34 numbers in it. So, all you guys who have like five hundred friends on facebook, forget about this one here. It didn't have the “life-saving feature” of “text messaging” and the battery had to be charged for ten hours and you could use it only for an hour. It cost almost 4000 dollars. That was the first cell phone.

(slide 11)

Then the evolution of the cell phone began. And as you see it started from here, and then went on to here and now there are so many different types I don't even know their names, they are so many different brands and have all sort of features in them. You probably know better.

Teacher: Is that a good thing or a bad thing, can somebody answer that?

Students: It's a good thing.

Teacher: Yes, it is a good thing. Technology is good. No problem with that.

(slide 12)

Life was simple when blackberry and apple were just fruits. Wasn't it! You said “apple”, people thought – an apple a day keeps the doctor away - and ate it. Simple!

(slide 13)

There are serious advantages of having cellular phone technology. Like I said before, cell phones are a good thing! You can communicate from and to anywhere.

You can ask for help any minute. Now, that is extremely important today. As the security situation in the whole world is getting to be extremely dodgy and complicated. It is useful for parents to keep in touch with their children as their kids go out for tuitions and friends places etc.

You can call your *dhobi* (washer-man), why not. Yeah your gutter gets clogged, you call up the gutter *wala* on his cell phone, *Alhamdulillah*. Lots of advantages.

It can help you to organize your day especially if you are the forgetful sort. I remember in our golden days, when you guys were not born and when I was in college, we used to have these big fat organizers called filofax, very trendy in those days. Every body used to have one and we used to write down all our appointments but now it's very simple. You have this little tiny thing, it goes in your pocket and you have your day all organized!

Teacher: Do any of you use it for that purpose? You do. Ok. One hand up out of so many.

It can help you with your work.

My husband has this blackberry and he is seriously dependent on it for his work. There are people who have overseas meetings over their phones so need to travel minimizes. So there are many advantages of cell phones.

It is a source of information. As you have internet connections on your cell phones, right? You can down load all sorts of information.

It is also a source of entertainment. You have got lots of gaming options/applications on cell phones which can be used for entertainment. So these are all these advantages of the cell phone so saying that cell phone technology is bad is not a good idea, right?

(slide 14)

Communication technology has actually made the world easily accessible to us. Not like in our days! When I was your age there was no such thing as a cell phone.

(slide 15)

Let's get down to the basics here. What exactly is a cell phone? In spite of all the fancy in built applications, a cell phone is nothing more than a communication device.

(slide 16)

What is communication? In a nutshell, communication is the activity of exchanging information or ideas.

(slides 17 & 18)

There is good communication and there is bad communication.

For example, we are sitting over here. What are we doing? What is going on in this room? Communication! Now if one of you takes out a cell phone from your pocket or bag – and you know very well you are not allowed to bring one to the class room - but you sneak it in and then you start texting and I catch you, will that be good communication or bad communication?

Students: Bad communication

Teacher: If I ask you a question and you do not reply deliberately? Is that good communication or bad communication?

Students: Bad communication

Teacher: If you try to be smart and ask silly questions just to disrupt the whole class. Is that good communication or bad communication?

Students: Bad communication.

Teacher: If I start scolding you for no reason at all or picking on some of you. Would that be good communication or bad communication?

Students: Bad communication

So communication is of different types.

Good communication is a positive activity. It helps in building relationships, learning new things & healthy entertainment among other things.

We have been created by Allah (swt) to interact and learn from each other through effective communication. He did not create us to be loners. He created us to be communicators. Allah communicated with us through the Qur'an and through His Messengers. And we communicate with Allah (swt) when we stand in front of Him in *Salah* five times a day.

Teacher: Good communication or bad communication?

Students: Good communication.

Bad communication is something that is of little or no benefit, something which doesn't bring a community or a group of people together for a shared purpose.

Then what happens is that good communication turns bad because of "noise".

In communication technology language, "noise" is not just this (teacher claps) or this (teacher bangs on desk). That is not the only thing that is termed as noise. Anything or any action that disrupts a perfectly fine communication is termed as noise.

Like I said you are sitting over here right now and I am trying to convey a message to you, trying to communicate and one of you just goes off to sleep. That would also be noise even though sleeping is a silent activity. Why? Because it disrupts a flow of message in communication.

Noise could be physical too as in restaurants where often the music is blaring so loud, you can't even hear yourself think, let alone have a decent conversation with someone.

(slides 20 - 23)

So cell phone addiction is also noise. It can disrupt good communication.

The question is: are YOU an addict?

Back when we could only talk on landlines, talking on the phone was only one part of life. These days we let mobiles rule our lives. We turn them off reluctantly only when we are forced to, and check them regularly. If a call comes, all too often we take it – never mind what else is happening.

Thanks to mobiles, the social skills we once took for politeness have been replaced by communication skills. Many of us act – especially the young – as if being permanently connected is a good thing (you can instant message on mobiles and access social networks). We've been seduced into the technology society.

(slide 24)

Cell phones **are** a good thing; their benefits outweigh their faults, and we can hardly undo progress. But we've made icons of them. We buy new models like they were fashion items, want all the latest gadgets on them, even though we may never use them. We're slaves to our mobiles. Take time and ask yourself – is that a good thing?

Teacher: Now, how many of you, use the cell phone every day? Raise your hands. (all students raise their hands)

Teacher: Why do you use your cell phone every day? What you do on it? You call your friends,

Student: No, texting

Teacher: Give me an example of a text message that you send? Or a text message that you receive?

Student: hey! Are you coming to school tomorrow?

Teacher: And then what reply do you get?

Student: No

Teacher: how many times do you text?

Student: I don't keep count.

(slides 25 - 27)

What is this thing with texting?

(slides 28, 29)

Communication is a means of keeping in touch with people, something that is beneficial, it improves our skill to interact with people but then why is it that despite an advanced means of communication i.e. the cell phone, the communication skills of “texters” these days is zero?

(slide 30)

How can you know that you are addicted to a cell phone?

Anybody who is addicted to anything whether it is alcohol, smoking or a sport does not realize themselves, somebody else tells them. There are people who want to protect them, the people who want the best for them, who help them and say: Hey! Get some help, there is a problem here.

And I am telling you that now - there is a problem here with this texting.

(slide 31)

Read through your text messages. Are they just a bunch of "yeah, ok, cool, lol" comments, or are you exchanging important information? Texting dirty jokes or gossip is absolutely not on.

The cell phone issue has got something to do with morality and that is the reason why we are talking about it over here. If in school or in college or anywhere, you are specifically told that cell phones are not allowed but you sneak yours in, then what do you think you are doing? You are turning a perfectly fine communication device in to something ugly and for no reason at all, just like grapes...you can either have grape juice or you can have alcohol from it...isn't that true?

Teacher: What is wine made of?

Student: grapes

Teacher: and what is grape juice made of?

Students: grapes

Teacher: So it depends on how the grapes have been used. Same is with cell phones and texting. The biggest problem with texting is that it is very addictive. If your parents or people around you are saying to you that why are you always texting or on the phone whether it is the dining table, a restaurant or a family occasion, you are doing tik tik tik...you are ignoring what is happening right in front of you and you just text, then there is a problem here. Please try to recognize that. If you cannot stay without this little piece even for the two hours that you have your class or something and you have this urge to sneak it in somehow, then you are hung on it, you are addicted!

(slide 32)

Another problem is taking pictures of others without their permission with a cell phone camera.

Teacher: have any of you have taken pictures of people without asking their permission and posted them on face book? When we identify a problem in ourselves, only then we can correct it.

I would like to mention here that even though in the United States the level of *haya* (modesty) is very low yet they have this law that if you take anybody's picture without their permission in a state of nudity or semi-nudity then you can actually be prosecuted by law.

Kids are bullied and pictures are taken, dirty jokes are circulated. As responsible people, we must try to understand our responsibilities and accept our mistakes.

(slides 33, 34)

There is *Surah Nur* in the Qur'an in which Allah (swt) has said very clearly that:

O you who believe, do not enter any houses, other than your own houses unless you seek permission and greet their inmates with Salam. That is good for you, so that you may be heedful. (Surah Nur 24: Verse 27)

Even if you do not find anyone in them, do not enter therein until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you, "go back," just go back; it is more decent for you. Allah is All-aware of what you do. (Surah Nur 24: Verse 28)

when you go to somebody's house ask permission to enter, if they say come in then go in otherwise go back home. You are not supposed to go into people's homes without their permission. Why is that? That is protection of privacy.

Do you know that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was very particular about other people's privacy?

(slide 35)

So you think that it is not violation of privacy that you just take someone's pictures and post them on facebook ... Can you imagine how sinful that activity is?

Remember a few months ago, two young brothers were beaten brutally to death in Sialkot (Pakistan)? And how did we find that out? People were standing there making videos with their cell phones! If this is not moral decadence then what is?

I have heard of incidents when girls were insulted in public and somebody took pictures of them and got a kick out of it.

You see, as human beings, we have a lot of control on what we do with technology. Cell phones are not a bad thing. But if misused for sinful purposes, then a *halal* and beneficial technology or activity becomes *haram*.



We should keep a check on ourselves. We MUST keep asking ourselves: am I addicted to texting? Am I making unnecessary calls? Am I invading someone's privacy?

It is in your control to do what you want with this instrument that is in your hand.

If your parents have trusted you enough to give you a cell phone for your security, value that trust. Use it for entertainment but not for indulging in sinful activities.

If you have identified an issue within yourself today, do something about it. Monitor yourself for one week and see what messages you receive and send and how beneficial are they. See how much time you spend without your cell phone and have a cell phone free day or start with a cell phone free hour because we need to look for a solution.

There is a dear friend of mine who decided that she will tell all her friends that from *Maghrib* to *Fajr*, she will not be available on her cell. It is very annoying sometimes that you are in the middle of your *salah* and the phone goes tun, tun..or you could be in your class and you have put it on silent mode but its constantly vibrating. It is very distracting.

We need to start with baby steps to wean ourselves off the cell for once in a while. While you offer your *salah*, turn the cell phone off. You don't have to be available all the time. Please share your experience of trial and error with me after the holidays and so will I, *InshaAllah*.

Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*