



Media Addiction

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Tonight's Program

- What is the goal of Media? Social Media?
- What are potential issues with Media?
- When has this come up in Judaism before?
- What should we do with the media at our fingertips?

Average Time Spent with Media in the US, by Media, 2019-2023

hrs:mins per day among population

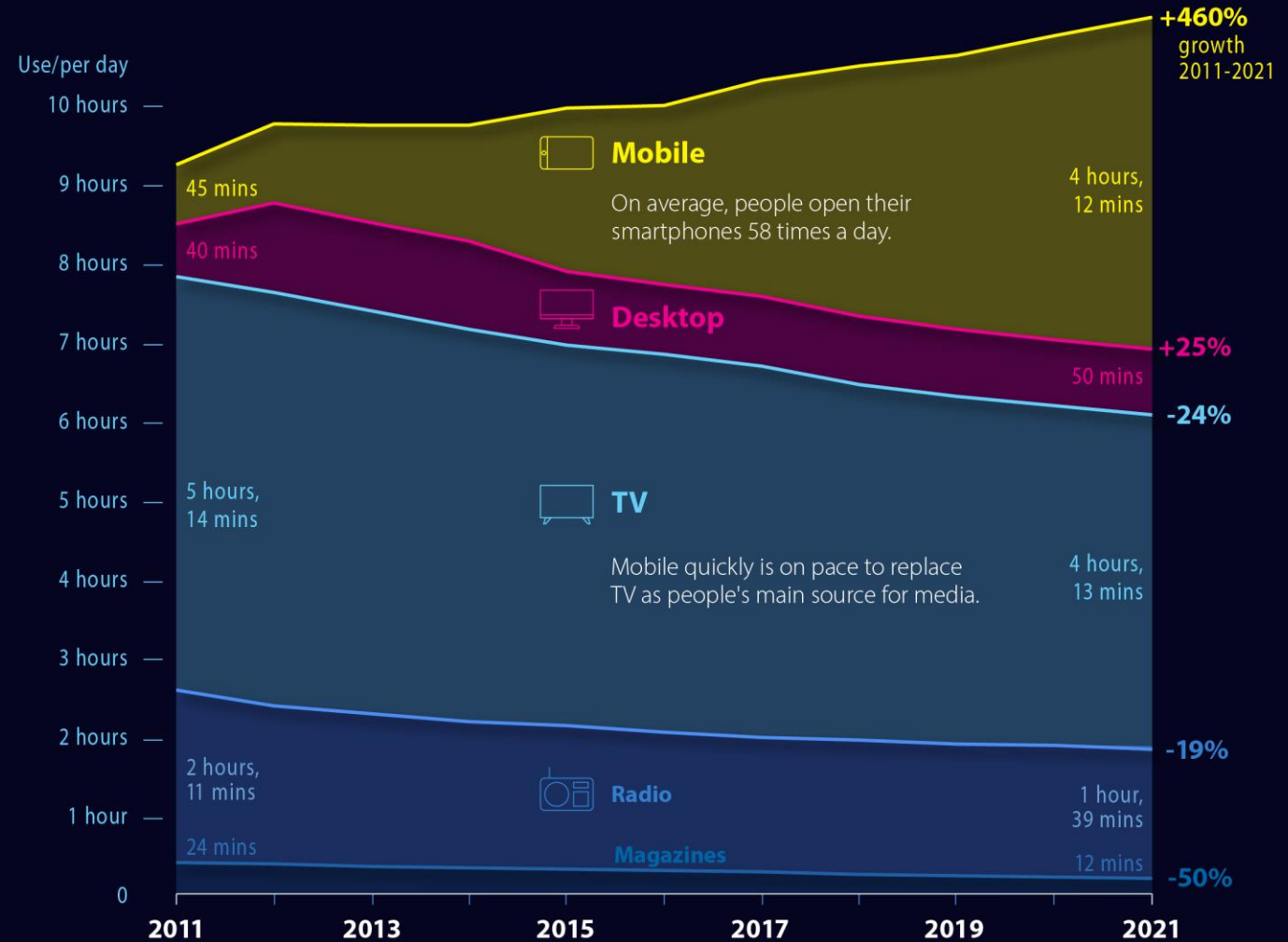
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Digital	6:49	7:50	7:59	8:09	8:20
— Mobile (nonvoice)	3:45	4:16	4:23	4:29	4:35
— Audio	1:07	1:10	1:16	1:19	1:22
— Social networks	0:52	1:03	1:03	1:03	1:04
— Video*	0:42	0:49	0:51	0:53	0:55
— Other	1:05	1:15	1:13	1:14	1:14
— Desktop/laptop**	1:54	2:03	1:59	1:56	1:56
— Video*	0:23	0:26	0:26	0:25	0:25
— Audio	0:16	0:20	0:20	0:20	0:20
— Social networks	0:07	0:07	0:07	0:06	0:06
— Other	1:08	1:09	1:06	1:04	1:04
— Other connected devices	1:10	1:30	1:38	1:44	1:49
Traditional media	5:33	5:31	5:13	4:57	4:45
— TV***	3:27	3:33	3:17	3:02	2:51
— Radio***	1:35	1:28	1:26	1:26	1:25
— Print***	0:19	0:19	0:19	0:18	0:17
— Newspapers	0:10	0:10	0:10	0:10	0:09
— Magazines	0:09	0:09	0:08	0:08	0:08
— Other traditional media	0:12	0:11	0:11	0:11	0:11
Total	12:23	13:21	13:12	13:06	13:05

Note: ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; *excludes time spent with video via social networks; **includes all internet activities on desktop and laptop computers; ***excludes digital

Source: eMarketer, April 2021

Changing Media Consumption

In a single decade, the way we in which consume media has shifted dramatically. Everyday mobile use has skyrocketed, underscoring the move away from offline media.



Media's Manifesto

- Control your attention
- Your time
- Your money
- Always

Potential Issues with Media

- Content provided
- Use of your time
- Effect of Consumption –
 - What it causes you to do
- Potentially all consuming

Maccabean Media

Maccabees I 1:11-1 (2nd Century BCE originally in Hebrew) In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us." This proposal pleased them, and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, removed the marks of circumcision and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

Maccabees 2 4:9-20 (2nd of 1st century BCE in Greek) He [Jason] took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel ... There was such an extreme of Hellenization ... that the priests were no longer intent

upon their service at the altar.

Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing, disdainingly the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige. ...

- Hellenization
- Stopped offering sacrifices in Temple
- Idolatry

Herod's Heresy

Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, 15: 267-276 (37-100 CE)

Herod revolted from the laws of his country, and corrupted their ancient constitution, by the introduction of foreign practices, which constitution yet ought to have been preserved inviolable; ... in the first place, he appointed solemn games to be celebrated every fifth year, in honor of Caesar, and built a theater at Jerusalem, as also a very great amphitheater in the plain. ... but opposite to the Jewish customs; for we have had no such shows delivered down to us as fit to be used or exhibited by us;... but to natural Jews, this was no better than a dissolution of those customs for which they had so great a veneration. It appeared also no better than an instance of barefaced impiety, to throw men to wild beasts, for the affording delight to the spectators; and it appeared an instance of no less impiety, to change their own laws for such foreign exercises: but, above all the rest, the trophies gave most distaste to the Jews; for as they imagined them to be images, included within the armor that hung round about them, they were sorely displeased at them, because it was not the custom of their country to pay honors to such images.

- Wrong type of shows
- Against tradition
- Cruelty
- Idolatry

Talmudic Entertainment

Tosefta Avoda Zarah Chapter 2 (2nd Century CE)

- One should not go to theatres of non-Jews because entertainments are arranged there in honour of the idols. This is the opinion of R. Meir. But the Sages say: Where such entertainments are given there is the prohibition of being suspected of idolatrous worship, and where such entertainment is not given. the prohibition is because of being in 'the seat of the scornful.'
- Those who visit stadiums or circuses and witness there [the performance] of sorcerers and enchanters, or of bukion and mukion, lulion and mulion, blurin or salgurin — lo, this is 'the seat of the scornful,' and against those [who visit them] Scripture says, Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked . . . nor sat in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. From here you can infer that those things cause one to neglect the Torah.
- One may go to the theatre if the non-Jews for needs of state, but if he conspires with them it is forbidden. Going to an Istarton (Gladiatorial arena) this is murder. R. Nathan permits it for two reasons: first, because by shouting one may save [the victim], secondly, because one might be able to give evidence [of death] for the wife [of a victim] and so enable her to remarry.
- It is permitted to go to stadiums, because by shouting one may save [the victim]. One is also permitted to go to a Circus for the purpose of maintaining order in the country, providing he does not conspire [with the Romans], but for the purpose of conspiring it is forbidden.
(Based on Soncino Talmud translation)

• העולה לתרטיאות של גוים אסור משום עבודה זרה דברי ר' מאיר. וחכמי אומ' בזמן שמזבחין אסור משום עבודה זרה, אם אינן מזבחין אסור משום מושב לצים:

• ההולך לאיצטריונין ולכרקומין ורואה את הנחשים ואת החברין בוקיון ומוקיון מוליון סגלריון סגלריא הרי זה מושב לצים שנ' ובמושב לצים לא ישב כי אם בתורת י"י חפצו הא למדת שמביאין את האדם בטל מתלמוד תורה:

• העולה לתרטיאות של גוים אם היה ציירו מפני צורך מדינה הרי זה מותר אם מתחשב הוא הרי זה אסור. היושב באיסטרטון הרי זה שופך דמים. ר' נתן מתיר משום שני דברים מפני שצווה ומציל נפשות ומעיד על האשה שתנשא.

• הולכין לאיצטריונין מפני שצווה ומציל נפשות ולכרקום מפני ישוב מדינה ואם מתחשב הוא הרי זה אסור:

Destroyer of Cities

Jerusalem Talmud Taanit 4:5 (~350-400 CE)

ולמה חרב [טור שמעון]? יש אומר מפני הזנות וי"א שהיו משחקין בכדור (בשבת).

Why was Tur Shimon destroyed? Some say because of licentiousness and some say because they played ball (on Shabbos)

Korban Haedah to Taanit 4:5 (Rabbi David Hirsch Frankel 18th century)

שהיו משחקין בכדור. בשבת א"נ שהיו מבטלין ימיהם בהם ולא עסקו בתורה :

That they would play ball – on Shabbat, or that they would waste their days with it and not learn Torah.

- Wasting time destroys cities

Rome's Ruse

Breishit Rabbah Parshah 80:1 (500 CE)

... ריש לקיש שאיל שלמיה דרבי ופיסי עלוהי דיוסי מעונאה, אמר לו רבי, צריכין אנו להחזיק טובה לאמות העולם, שהן מכניסין מומסין לבתי טרטיאות ולבתי קרקסאות שלהן ומשחקין בהם כדי שלא יהיו משיחין אלו עם אלו ויבואו לידי קטטה בטלה, יוסי מעונאה אמר מלה דאורייתא ואקפדת עלוהי,

Reish Lakish said to Rabbi Yehuda to appease him after the Yosi Me'ona incident, "Rebbe, we need to thank the nations of the world for bring mimes into their theaters and circuses and performing for them, so they don't come to talk to each and get into meaningless fights, Yosi Me'ona said a word of Torah and you're so bothered by it?!? ([Toronto Torah Tetzaveh 5782](#))

Rabbis realized goal of the 'free' Roman entertainment was to keep them happy and not fighting or rebelling.

Deal with large quantity of off duty soldiers.

In fact, the ancient games were imperially [sponsored](#).

Dangers of Sporting Events Nowadays

Responsa Igrot Moshe Yoreh Deah 4:11 (R' Moshe Feinstein 1895-1986)

Is it forbidden to go to theaters and sports stadiums nowadays because of “do not walk in their ways”?

The places called theaters where they have all forms of entertainment, and similarly Stadium, places where sports are played, is not an issue of “Do not walk in their ways” (Vayikra 18:13), since that specifically when it is a rule for the non-Jews do something for no reason... it might be an Idolatrous practice, but when there is a reason why they are doing it, like by Stadia and circuses mentioned in Gemara Avodah Zarah 18b, which is for entertainment, there is no issue of idolatry,

it is forbidden because of the prohibition of “seat of scorners.” And all who go violate the prohibition of seat of the scornful and wasting time from learning.

Not just on this time but it will cause you to stop completely from the Torah as is explained there. Even more so the theatres that can be found in our country, and the sports stadiums, even in other countries, that people simply do without connection to idol worship. It seems to me that the pastors of the Christian Church, which is the majority religion in USA, also frown upon matters of theatres and stadiums. Also for those who believe in Muhammed (Islam), which is the religion of countries of Turkey and all the Arab countries. If so in the majority of countries where theatres and stadiums are found there is no connection to their religions, so there is no prohibition of “Do not walk in their ways.” They are forbidden because of Moshav Leitzim and Bittul Torah. There is also the severe prohibition to incite the evil inclination of illicit urges in oneself because most of them are places of profanity and incites licentiousness.

Beware of the trap

**Rivash (Rabbi Yitzchak ben Sheshet Brefet, Spain
14th century)**

Even according to Rav Sheshet since he believes that there is no askmakhta by gambling. In any event it is disgusting, abominable, and repulsive. It has felled many victims, and mighty are those it has killed.

אָפּלוּ לְרַב שֵׁשֶׁת, דְּסָבִירָא לֵיהּ הִתָּם: דְּלִיכָא אֲסֻמְכָתָא
בְּקָבָא; מִכָּל מְקוּם דְּבָר מְכַעַר וּמְתַעֵב וּמְשַׁקֵּץ הוּא. וְרַבִּים
חָלְלִים הָפִיל, וְעֲצוּמִים כָּל הָרוּגִין.

But I know Rabbi's who do!

For the right reasons...

Rambam Mishneh Torah Shabbat 24 5 (Maimonides 1138-1204 CE)

מתר לרוץ בשבת לדבר מצוה כגון שירויץ לבית הכנסת או לבית המדרש. ומחשבין חשבונות של מצוה ומודדין מדידה של מצוה כגון מקוה לידע אם יש פשעור או בגד לידע אם מקבל טמאה. ופוסקין צדקה לעניים. והולכין לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות ואפלו לטריטאות וטרקלין של כותים לפקח על עסקי רבים בשבת. ... שכל אלו וכיוצא בהן מצוה הן ונאמר (ישעיה נח יג) "עשות חפציד" וכו' חפצד אסורין חפצי שמים מתרין:

It is permissible to run on Shabbat to a matter of a commandment—for example, if he runs to the synagogue or to the study hall. And we may make calculations of a commandment. And we may [also] make measurements of a commandment, such as to know if there is the [requisite] amount [of water] in a *mikveh*, or to know if a garment [is large enough] to contract impurity. And we may allocate charity to the poor. And one may go on Shabbat to synagogues and study halls—and even to the theaters and circuses of the Cuthites—to supervise matters affecting the public. ... As all of these—and that which is similar to them—are commandments; and it is stated (Isaiah 58:13), "doing your business." It is your business that is forbidden; the business of the Heavens is permissible. (Sefaria) (Shabbat 150a)

- Room to go to theater if for the sake of communal affairs, for a mitzvah

Racetrack Racket

Responsa Mahari Bruna 71 (1400-1480 CE, Germany)

נשאלתי אם מותר לצאת ולראות שמחת הערלים כשממרים ומריצים סוסיהם כל הקודם סוסו ירויח זהב וכה"ג, אם יש לדמותו לצידת חיות ועופות שאוסר בפ"ק דע"ז (יח:) והתרתי דלא דמי כלל כי אין זה לשמחה אך ללמוד אומנות ולקנות סוסים לרוץ בהם להנצל מאוייבים וכן ראיתי מבעלי מעשים: אך בהא מספקנא אם מותר לילך ולראות כשמשמחים יחד לרכוב זה כנגד זה במוטות וכדים שקורין לטעד"ן :

I was asked if it is permitted to go out and see the rejoicing of the non-Jews when they race horses against each other and whoever's horse is first wins money, if this can be compared to trapping animals and birds which is prohibited (Avodah Zarah Chapter 1). I permit it, as it is not similar at all, since it is not for rejoicing, but to learn a trade and purchase horses to run from enemies, and so I have seen from people who have done this. However, I am unsure whether it is permitted to go and watch when they rejoice [by watching] people ride opposite each other with sticks and jugs [shields?] which are called "leteden". (Translation by Ezer Diena)

- Business permitted
- Maybe not if it's violent

Watching - Who, what, when, where and why?

1. Proper content
2. Not coming at the expense of other valuable activities
3. Not leading towards bad direction
4. Media to live, not living for media

Rabbi Yitzchak Blau

If Modern Orthodoxy wants to stand for ideals like nuanced thinking, becoming educated about the world, communal involvement, avoiding superficiality, and promoting a better outlook on women, it should discard Hollywood and abandon the television. Our most precious values should make us even more wary of this medium than are the Haredim. Of course I do not own a television. I am Modern Orthodox.

[“Modern Orthodox Arguments against Television”](#)

Summary

- What can be wrong
 - Moshav Leitzim - Seat of the scorners
 - Bitul Talmud Torah
 - Problematic content
 - Idolatry
 - Make you forget Torah
 - Incite desires
 - Make you accessory to crimes
 - Lead to other sins afterwards
 - Bad Habit
- When can it be used
 - Public need
 - Business
- **It is a tool.**
- **Use it responsibly.**
- **Don't be used**

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March 9 **Drinking on Purim**

Sunday, March 13 10:00 am **Drug Abuse, the Pandemic, and the Jewish Community**
A panel discussion

To receive updates and materials in advance visit <http://tiny.cc/drugspanel>



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בס"ד

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A PANEL DISCUSSION

Featured Panelists:



R' Chaim Metzger
Moderator



Dr. Michael Kirzner
Addiction Medicine
University of Toronto



Rabbi Charles Gryzman
Senior Rabbi
Zichron Yisroel - Ayin
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David Kaufman
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WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

Please submit questions and sign up at:
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SUNDAY, MARCH 13

10 AM: OPENING REMARKS, FOLLOWED BY PANELIST PRESENTATIONS

10:45 AM : Q & A

ZOOM LINK: <http://tiny.cc/chaimmetzger>