

## I-came, I- phone, I- conquered:

/ Applications Up the Wayze-oo with Barry Silverberg

Dear readers:

I know, I've been away a long time; you've been very patient.  
Let me start with a couple of original jokes:

...

Q: How do you get ten English teachers to agree on one teaching method?  
A: Shoot nine of them.

...

"I used to think that Druze towns didn't invest a lot in landscaping.  
Then I saw Horfeish. Now I'm a believer."

...

In Canada, every Easter I would hear songs about how 'He is risen.' For years I thought that my Christian neighbours worshipped the Pilsbury dough boy.

...

→ Ahh. Feeling a little better? That had nothing at all to do with today's piece, which is about phones and intelligence. Now that I have a 'real' cellphone (one that my students don't burst into laughter over when I pull it out), I have to show that I can use it for more than propping up the table. It's not easy. As Moses puts it in "Shmot:" "Gerr Haitti Be'Eretz Nokia."

Here are some of the things I can do with it:

I can swish my finger across the screen when I hear it ringing and, in many cases, say hello before the caller hangs up.

I can distinguish between an incoming call, a message and a wutzapp, most of the time, and answer appropriately. There are still messages that appear 3 days or weeks after they were sent and I don't know why.

I can take a photo and often remember to get my fingers out of the way. (In a pinch, I photograph salamis and carrots so that if anyone asks why there are long orange things in the picture, well those are today's salamis and carrots.)

I can begin recording a video clip.

I can move all my photos and clips onto my computer.

I can use my fingers to prod those tiny little letters, both in Hebrew and English. I can find most of the letters in under 10 seconds, although some of the tricky ones may take up to a minute. I know how to erase errors so I don't have to have those messages that look like this.

I can, sort of, pinch the screen to make the picture larger or smaller.

I know where the charger is and I can charge up the appliance at will.

I know this is pretty lame for somebody who, in 1972 could code instructions for IBM 360 using assembler language and once completed a simulation of a 'Go Fish' game involving several thousand punched cards in PL/1. But a lot has changed since '72.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS I CAN'T DO YET WITH MY CELL PHONE:



- Once I have started filming a video clip, I can't make it stop, I press the camera and record buttons wildly, and the result is another ten tiny clips that I then have to erase. On most of them you can hear me shouting, somebody stop this thing!
- I can't send pictures.
- I can't choose a ringtone.
- I can't use the internet.
- I can't understand what an android is. My brain has such a strong impression of the old meaning of android ( a synthetic human made of artificial tissues, as in the novel "Do Androids dream of Electric Sheep, by Philip Dick, made into a hit movie "Blade Runner," that it simply refuses to absorb the other meaning. I have a similar problem with the smart vacuum cleaner I Robot.)

- I can't 'read' those little squares that look like---
  - a) An Affikoman designed by the pop artist Roy Lichtenstein
  - b) A chessboard sat on by an elephant
  - c) A Rorschach test for a psychotic robot
  - d) A floor tile located underneath a spider web, full of spider poo droppings from the spider on the ceiling which the homeowner refused to take down because 'spiders are our friends.'



APP-LY EVER AFTER:

Some of you, beset by other traumatic phenomena of the modern era, (the technozoic) may not yet know that these *things* are for. I'll tell you: These strange objects, were once only seen in automobile industry. Quietly, insidiously, they have taken over our world like an invasive species, pushing out the less resilient native bar codes. Why have they come? They are apparently there to offer us 'applications.' (in Hebrew e applee-KAT-siot). These are self contained, smug programs, which you can download (ie. Put in) to your little smart phone to extend its power and usefulness. For example, if you hear an old sweet song and are climbing the walls trying to find out who sings it, there is an application: Just point the instrument at the music and Walla! Up comes the answer. If you want to davven mincha (ie: pray the afternoon prayer) or its Muslim equivalent, just download the relevant prayer "app, " as they are so quaintly called, by a generation that sees pronouncing a word over 3 syllables as a major undertaking. (Android does not guarantee that your prayers will be answered.)

Looking for a vacation spot? A flight? A menu? Do you need a cell phone that sounds like the water flowing? Your mamma calling you? The tricorder from Star Trek?. Language lessons, alternative lives, tracking your friends and enemies—the end is listless. (No point elaborating any more; just google 'weird apps,' 'useful apps.' anything like that and have a good time.) I know a guy who wanted to get in to Hebrew U; they told him to fill out an application, so he sent them this link:

<http://mashable.com/2013/10/29/weird-apps/> "Chart your daily bowel movements."

Needless to say, the more apps we have the more we are aware of what we still need. I am waiting for them to bring out the in-house navigation system. This is how it works: Imagine you are running off to work and you can't find your wallet. You select this app, which we will call the D-Mentor, and punch in your current location and what you are looking for:

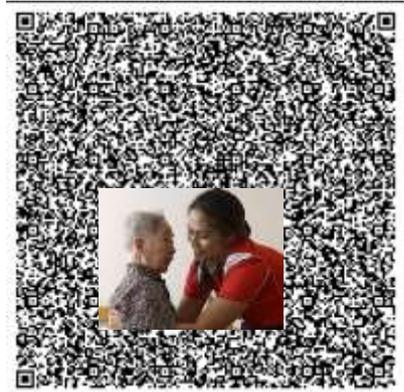
PARENTS' BATHROOM..... WALLET.

A very patient voice says:

**You are in the large bathroom. Prepare for exit. Lower the seat! Face the door. Walk out. Turn right. Walk down the hall. (4 seconds go by). Turn left to avoid that pile of laundry. You are now in the kitchen. Turn right. Stop. Face the fridge . Open the door. Take out the glass bowl with leftover salad. Don't get any on your hands. You are now looking at your wallet. Take it out. Put it in your pocket or purse. Do **not** put it back in the fridge. Return the salad bowl to its place. Do **NOT** reach for the ice cream.**

This application, App-tly called GBPS –Geriatric Bumbling Prevention Service monitors the frequency of requests it receives. Once you hit over 20 of these senior moments per morning,

It's time for another GPS app: Guiding Phillipeneet Service. **Download an app to find you the suitable Philippine assistant.** This is the ideal solution to deal with all those technical skills which you knew yesterday but just can't remember today, a condition known to the medical profession as Appsheimers.



Barry Silverberg  
April/Pesach 2015