PSYCHOLOGIST VERSUS JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

Contributed by Tzvi Fishman
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There are psychologists, doctors, educators, rabbis, parents, and the like, who believe that it is dangerous to present the issue of Jewish Sexuality, and subjects like masturbation, in an open manner, like the example of JewishSexuality.com, which presents to a wide readership, many of the harsh and esoteric teachings that the Sages of Israel have written on the subject. Here is an email dialogue we recently had with a psychologist who wrote to us in great concern about this matter:

PSYCHOLOGIST WRITES:

R. Fishman – stop destroying people’s lives!

Dear R. Fishman,

Your website writes regarding someone that masturbates regularly: "his strength wanes, his eyesight becomes dim, a foul odor emanates from his mouth and armpits, the hair of his head becomes bald, and his teeth fall out. " (http://www.jewishsexuality.com/my-psychologist-says).

I find it repulsive and utterly disgusting that you post harmful nonsense to try and scare people.

How on earth can you justify such evil? Your website is destroying people lives.

I am a frum psychologist and your site was brought to my attention by one of my patients.

If this and other nonsense is not removed I will have to warn people and institutions about your site.

Regards Dr X

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM REPLIES

Dear Dr. X

The quote you cite was written by the Rambam, who in addition to being a great Torah Sage,

respected by all, was a respected physician whose writings on good health

appeared several hundred years before all of the popular bestsellers of

today.

Many other great Rabbis emphasize the severity of spilling semen in vain.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that it is the most severe transgression in the

Torah, and not some "nonsense" as you write.

These same great Rabbis have repeatedly written that this transgression is

one of the major causes for the problems people encounter, both individually

and on a national level. While psychology deals with one part of life, there

are many hidden spiritual layers that affect our lives as well. For

instance, anxiety, neurosis, depression, etc are just some of the things a

person brings upon himself through sexual transgression.

While the realization of the severity of sexual transgression can be quite

powerful, the articles on the Jewish Sexuality website stress that there is a remedy to masturbation, and the articles posted encourage the reader to undergo a process of tshuva (repentance) via simcha (joy) without falling into depression.

I would be happy if you alert people and institutions about the site. One of

our major problems is that this knowledge is not shared as it should be. Additionally,

I would be happy to speak with your patient if he would like further

clarification. The site has helped hundreds of people overcome

sexual addictions and find their way to a happier healthier life.

Respectfully,

Tzvi Fishman, JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

PSYCHOLOGIST

Can you please answer a simply question, how many people do you know who's teeth have fallen out because they masturbate regularly?

If you don't know anyone then you are posting sheker (falsehood) on your site, a big aviera (sin), and you can't hide behind the Rambam, yes he was a great sage, and yes he was a great doctor, but he was living a very very long time ago - no one, no matter how "frum," relies on any rishon (early halachic authority) for medical issues.

You write "For instance, anxiety, neurosis, depression, etc are just some of the things a

person brings upon himself through sexual transgression."

Actually in my experience it is the religious guilt regarding sexuality that causes turmoil rather than the sexuality itself.

Please try and open up your heart and try to understand my concerns, I beg you!

I am attaching a very good work from a frum (Orthodox) writer - please at least read the part about R. Zadok on masturbation."

Thanks

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

Yes, I know many people who have false teeth and dentures. I also am perfectly comfortable with the Rambam's explanation that it is due to sexual transgression.

As far as your theory: 'Actually in my experience it is the religious guilt regarding sexuality that causes turmoil rather than the sexuality itself," Freud said the same thing. Not only did his teeth fall out, he developed cancer of the mouth, G-d forbid, had to undergo some 30 painful operations, and finally asked his doctor to administer a lethal dose of morphine to put him out of his pain.

Nothing positive will come out of letting people think that masturbation and other sexual transgression is a small matter. In his book, “Orot HaTshuva,” Rabbi Kook explains that the sufferings of anxiety and depression that many people feel (what you call religious guilt) are the sufferings of the soul which is afflicted with sin, cutting the person off from G-d and alienating him from the harmony of existence.

In the case of masturbation, Kabbalists explain this torment as deriving from destructive spiritual forces (kelipot) caused by the sin, which attach themselves to a person and plague him like a radioactive cloud. This is explained at the beginning of the "Tefilla Zaka" which we say on Erev Yom Kippur, printed in many machsorim (prayerbooks for Yom Kippur).

The answer to this psychological angst is tshuva. Rabbi Kook writes:

“Great and exalted is the pleasure of tshuva. The searing flame of pain cause by sin purifies the will and refines the character of a person to an exalted, sparkling purity until the great joy of the life of tshuva is opened for him. Tshuva raises the person higher and higher through its stages of bitterness, pleasantness, grieving, and joy. Nothing purges and purifies a person, and raises him to the stature of being truly a man, like the profound process of tshuva.” (Orot HaTshuva, 13:11. See also, “The Art of Tshuva,” Ch. 7)

Respectfully,

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

PSYCHOLOGIST

I also know lots of people with false teeth and there is no difference in the rate of false teeth people regardless of how frum and holy they are. I know very great people with false teeth, (strangely they are all old, sound a bit fishy?)

You will argue that teeth falling out is also caused by other medical conditions, but surely there should be billions of younger people with no teeth? Let's be honest.

According to your theory there should be significantly less people with false teeth amongst frum Jews, especially since

you write "The site has helped hundreds of people overcome

sexual addictions."

Unfortunate this is not the case regarding teeth loss.

You can't argue that other peoples teeth are falling out because other people masturbate, the Rambam clearly states "Medical authorities have stated that for each one who dies of other maladies, a thousand are the victims of sexual excess." Thus the Rambam is referring to medical problems not spiritual things.

Interestingly the Rambam brings in "medical authorities." I wonder what he would say if he was alive today, where medical authorities have advanced and have much more knowledge.

(And by the way is the Rambam not referring to sexual relations, rather that masturbation?)

You write "Nothing positive will come out of letting people think that masturbation and other sexual transgression is a small matter"

Actually I know of people (all religious people) that were drowning in pornography to such an extent that they started watching child pornography and they were able to get out the mud, by starting to accept themselves as sexual beings, and learning to distinguish between positive sexual outlets (masturbation being one of them) and destructive sexual activity.

Please read the part of the document I sent you regarding Rav Zadok Hakohain on masturbation.

Thanks

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

Until you conduct a thorough research study into the differing rates of teeth falling out in different populations, I will stick with the Rambam. However, I don't think that's the main point. If your patient is obsessed with fear that his teeth will fall out, you can promise him in my name that if he properly brushes his teeth every day, uses dental floss and regularly visits his dentist, his teeth won't fall out before the age of 70. But if he continues to masturbate or spill semen in vain through other sexual transgressions, including improper relations with his wife, then, unfortunately, his troubles will not go away.

Regarding your claim that the Rambam is referring to medical problems not spiritual things.

in saying, "Medical authorities have stated that for each one who dies of other maladies, a thousand are the victims of sexual excess," first, all things in life has a spiritual root. Problems in life, whether they be medical, or struggles with livelihood, or family troubles, are influenced by a wide gamut of factors, but they all have a spiritual root. Doctors treat physical symptoms, psychiatrists treat mental or chemical imbalances, psychologists explore childhood patterns of behavior, while great Rabbis look at the spiritual root behind all things.

In any event, the Rambam makes clear that the far majority of fatal maladies are caused by sexual excess, which would include masturbation, other sexual transgression (like Niddah violations of the laws of family purity, homosexuality, adultery, pre-marital sex, sex with non-Jews, etc), as well as being like a rooster with one's wife.

If I read your email correctly, you consider masturbation a "positive sexual outlet." I don't know how a "frum" person can say this. It is clearly against the halacha.

As for Rav Zadok, I have not been able to open the pdf file you sent and have sent it to a friend to convert it to Word, but whatever Rav Zadok writes, he would never say that masturbation is a permitted activity.

Respectfully

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

PSYCHOLOGIST

You wonder how I can be "frum" if I consider masturbation to be a positive form of sexuality.

I was referring to it being positive on a physical and psychologically level, not necessarily spiritually. Yet I wonder how you can consider R Zadock Hakohain to be "frum" as he goes much further than me, he finds the spiritual benefits in masturbation and terms it "le-hotsi yakar mi-zolel."

Rav Zadok clearly and repeatedly says that masturbation is against halacha but that did not stop him from being able to see even the spiritual good contained in it.

R. Fishman, you have to stop looking at things in black and white.

Let me tell you that personally, I don't masturbate. Firstly because it is simply against halacha. Even if it is d’rabonon (a Rabbinic prohibition) we cannot simply get rid of d’rabonon laws.

Secondly I keep my sexual energy for my wife.

However I know the terrible struggle that people, especially single people that have no sexual outlet, for some of them it is simply not possible to not masturbate.

You write "Until you conduct a thorough research study into the differing rates of teeth falling out in different populations, I will stick with the Rambam."

Its not about what you will stick with, it’s about what you are putting out to the world as the word of G-d. Its about keeping kids up at night in paralyzing fear, it’s about people becoming suicidal.

YOU are the one making the claim. YOU must do the research, can I ask you a question how often do you blood-let? How often do you eat fruit? The Rambam recommended blood-letting and did not recommend eating fruit. Please understand that I'm not being disrespectful to the Rambam, it was the time that he lived in, if he were around today he

would be the greatest doctor.

Do you not think you should have researched your medical claims before posting things which can be very harmful?

People are not games that you can play around with, every human whether they masturbate or not. Whether they want to stop masturbating or not has infinite value and Hashem loves them more then they love themselves, and I know that Rav Kook would agree.

Please try to open your heart to what I'm saying, I beg you.

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

Shalom

I appreciate your concern. We are aware of the dangers of telling the truth, and of the dangers of not telling the truth. While there are Rabbis who say that these matters shouldn't be publicized, there are others who feel that they should, especially in our age of permissiveness and computer porn. In the meantime, I omitted the phrases of the Rambam regarding teeth falling out, etc., which you find so disturbing, but since we have received a great deal of positive feedback about the website, we cannot change its overall message.

Incidentally, in contrast to what you maintain, the respected halachic authority, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who was not a Kabbalist, writes that the transgression of spilling semen in vain is not a Rabbinic prohibition, but a clear prohibition from the Torah (See “Igrot Moshe, Even HaEzer, Responsa 14).

I had an opportunity, along with a Rabbi of the Mercaz Harav Kook Yeshiva, to look at the thesis paper you sent me which was written to meet the requirements for a doctor of philosophy. He felt the thesis paper was "Shabbtai Tzvi"-like in content, in its distortion of Rabbi Zadok and the teachings of our Sages to justify and find value in evil, in order to support the agenda of the author. While one can understand and sympathize with the plight of young unmarried people, in face of all of the sexual stimulation around them, solutions for their sexual frustrations must be found, not by justifying an indulgence in transgression, G-d forbid, but within the context of the halacha - first and foremost by educating them to the great value of marriage, and to the concrete steps which a person can take to strengthen himself in his battle with the yetzer (evil inclination), as we outline on our website. With all due respect to the author of the dissertation thesis, we still listen to the guidance of our Sages, as interpreted by Torah scholars, and not to aspiring PHD's.

Yours truly

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

PSYCHOLOGIST

I am going to ask you a question and I'm relying on your honesty to answer it. Did you and the rabbi from Merkaz Harav actually bother to look up the censored parts of Rav Zadok before accusing her of writing "Shabbtai Tzvi like works?

I am sure you aware that moitzy sheimrah (saying bad things about people) is very serious.

The censored copies are not so common, I looked at them when I was last in the USA. I am sure they are available in Israel for you to look at.

But if you have looked them up, I would appreciate it if you could argue about the actual subject matter, it is easy for someone to say things like "this great Rabbi told me that it is heretical."

I could just as easily say "a lot of great rabbis told me that religious Zionism is heretical (and many Rabbis past and present actually do, and they would consider it much worse than masturbation. And by the way I say Hallel on Yom Haatzmaut [Israel Independence Day].)

A side point the person who wrote that thesis paper is well respected as someone who takes Torah very seriously

I look forward to your reply

Thanks

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

We didn't "study" the thesis paper or see the censored writings that you mention, but if you send me an exact source (book, chapter, page) then we will, blee nader, try to have a look.

Instead of talking abstractly about the issue, what exactly do you and your thesis writer propose regarding masturbation? Beyond compassion and helping a person wean himself away from it, what do you advocate?

PSYCHOLOGIST

You write, "We didn't "study" the thesis paper or see the censored writings that you mention."

Well I hope you are humble enough to realize that perhaps you might have an agenda. Please, don't take it the wrong way, the only reason why I point this out is because people, especially teenagers, take your website very seriously. I'm not sure why, but when something is said on any good looking website kids, tend to take it as the eternal truth. Ironically this is one of the dangers of the internet. Do you believe that you are qualified for this? I hope you realize that innocent lives are in your hands.

I daven (pray) every day that sweet and pure kinderlach (children) will not read some of the material on your site and start thinking that they are murderers because they masturbate.

You ask, “What exactly do you and your thesis writer propose regarding masturbation?"

Firstly he is not my thesis writer, its sounds like you write that in a condescending way, I may be wrong but that's what I pick up.

Secondly, I wish all you did was have "compassion in helping a person wean himself away from it."

The more important question is what I propose not to do. Making people take kabbalistic sources literally is a no no. Besides from the terrible psychological effects this can have, it also turns people away from Hashem. I remember reading Rav Kook regarding atheists that have a lot of truth because they reject the false god that is presented to them as Hashem.

It is not enough for you to say that you inform people that they can do tshuva. To even suggest that they are murderers is a serious problem.

If you don't mind, I want to ask you a few questions.

Why would Hashem create the world?

Why did he give us the Torah?

Why do we have commandments?

What is the point of it all?

Does Hashem need our deeds?

Can we really harm Hashem?

Does Hashem love us more then we love ourselves?

I don't believe that Hashem is a dictator cv, I don't believe that Hashem wants us to suffer.

I believe Hashem loves us more then we love ourselves. I don't believe Hashem loves us less if we masturbate, I don't believe Hashem loves us less if we don't even want to stop masturbating.

What do I actually suggest?

1) If someone is able overcome masturbation with whatever method they feel comfortable with that's what they must do.

2) For a lot of people, they can only do this by gradually cutting down.

3) A lot of people need to view their masturbation in a positive light while they are weaning off.

4) For a lot of people, mostly single, they simple cannot completely stop masturbating and it cannot be one of their goals. Now what do you suggest for someone like that? I will tell you what I propose. I propose that whatever they can do they do. I propose that they can still keep the rest of the Torah, I propose that Hashem's love for them is not effected by their masturbation. I propose that they cannot be held accountable for things that are simply above them.

Another thing you seem to be forgetting about is that besides practical things attitude is very important when it comes to sexuality.

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Firstly, the transgression of masturbation is not Kabbalah. As you know, one of the basic books which 13 years olds receive at their bar mitzvah is the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. Any 13 year old can open to the chapter on spilling semen in vain and read:

"It is forbidden to discharge semen in vain. This is a graver sin than any other mentioned in the Torah. Those who practice masturbation and cause the issuing of semen in vain, not only do they commit a grave sin, but they are under a ban, concerning whom it is said (Isaiah 1:15) 'Your hands are full of blood,' and it is equivalent to killing a person...."

This is a straight quote. Should we ban the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch lest someone read it?

In recommending my pamphlet on the subject of the dangers of Internet surfing, masturbation, and Shmirat HaBrit, "The Mouse Made Me Do It!" which is posted on the jewishsexuality.com website, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim in Jerusalem, writes:

ÙÙéè ÛÕ×Õ éÜ ÔèÑ æÑÙ äÙéÞß âÜ áäèÕ "ÔâÛÑè äÙêÔ ÐÕêÙ", ÔÞÑÐè ÑØÕÑ ØâÝ ÕÓâê, ÑÐÕäß ÑèÕè, âÞÕç, ÕÔÒÙÕ

éÜÕÞÔ ÐÑÙàè

Rav Aviner is not a Kabbalist, yet he states: "Certainly this book will bring a blessing to every man and woman, boy and girl, teenage boy and girl, and also to every Rabbi and teacher." There are several other letters of recommendation from respected mainstream Rabbis at the beginning of the booklet. While other Rabbis have a more guarded approach to the subject, many believe that in our time, we have to make the dangers known.

Regarding your questions about Hashem and his rule in the world, there are many universally accepted Torah books on the subject, and I am sure you know the answers. In short, as the Ramchal explains in "Mesillat Yesharim," Hashem created the world for us to enjoy His blessings, and the prime place for this is in the World to Come. In the meantime, He has placed us in this world where we are in a constant battle between our good inclination and its opposite, and all of our doings are recorded and judged in a precise Divine system of reward and punishment. Certainly Hashem loves everyone with an infinite love, and precisely because of his love, He has created punishments in this world and the World To Come that allow a transgressor to be cleansed from his wrongdoings. This theme of reward and punishment is clearly repeated many times in the Torah, in the Prophets, the Psalms of King David, the Talmud, and all of the scholarly works of our Sages, whether Kabbalists or not. Pretending that Hashem looks the other way is not Judaism and ignores the clear words of our Torah and Jewish History. Judaism is a wonderful, joyful life experience, but it is serious business as well. Hashem is not Santa Claus.

While compassion and understanding is a part of any rehad program, and also a given in the withdrawal program that we suggest, your advocating viewing "masturbation in a positive light while they are weaning off" is perhaps more dangerous than anything I write. When a person feels remorse over his wrongdoings, repents, and sets out on a new positive Torah path, then transgression, in retrospect, can be seen as the springboard for a closer attachment to G-d, as when sins are transformed into merits through repentance out of love, but this is only in retrospect, not "I will sin and then repent."

Certainly everything in life is part of Hashem’s plan for ultimate good and Redemption, including national crises, exiles, wars, and even the Holocaust, and this is what Rav Zadok explains as he looks at the Big Picture. But from our point of view, we don’t say that our transgressions or the mass slaughter of our People are to be seen in a positive light because they ultimately draw us closer to the final Redemption. Yes, we were destined in Hashem’s master plan to descend to Mitzrayim, but the brothers were made to repent for their selling of Yosef, and their sin led to the murder of the Ten Holy Martyrs in the days of Rabbi Akiva. And yes, in building the pathway for Mashiach, King David was destined to wed Bat Sheva, but he was punished with the death of their first child, and stricken and bed-ridden for years with physical afflictions, because of the way in which he took her.

Also, your belief that people "cannot be held accountable for things that are simply above them" is not in line with Torah. People have free will. Hashem has given us the power and the tools to overcome our yetzer hara. It is our responsibility to choose good over evil. Even if a person were to commit a transgression by mistake, forgetfulness, or lack of knowledge, he still needs to express his remorse and repentance once he discovers his wrongdoing because he has

damaged the harmony of existence and G-d’s intent for the world.

PSYCHOLOGIST

You say, "This is a straight quote. Should we ban the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch lest someone read it?"

No, but their definitely needs to be an education system where kids are taught that it is not meant to be taken literally and that it is certainly not the gravest sin in the Torah

HaRav Moshe Monks writes, (ÑÐáäçÜèÙÔ éÜ êÕèÔ", ÙèÕéÜÙÝ, êéÜ"Ô âÞ' 103-104)

á× ÜÙ Þ×àÚ Ð×Ó... ÑÐ ÐÜÙ ×àÙÚ, ÕçÙæÕè éÕÜ×ß âèÕÚ äêÕ× ÜäàÙÕ, ÕçÕèÐ ÜäàÙ: "ÐáÕè ÜÔÕæÙÐ éÛÑê Öèâ ÜÑØÜ
ÞÜÐÕ, ÕÛÐÜÕ ÔÕèÒ Ðê Ôàäé" (çæÕé"â çà"Ð, Ð). ÕÐÕÞè Ô×àÙÚ: ÐàÙ èÕæ× ÞêÞÙÓ, ÕÐÙß ÜÙ ÛäèÔ, ÕÐÞéÙÚ ÜèæÕ×
éÞÕÐÜ). ÕâÛéÙÕ äê× ÜäàÙ Ô×àÙÚ ÔÜÛÕê ÜéÕß Ôèâ, ÕÐÜÔ ÓÑèÙÕ: "ÕÔÕÐ âÕß ÒÓÕÜ ÕÒÕèÝ ÜÔèÕÒ àäéÕê ÞÙéèÞ
Ü×àÙÛÚ: ÐàÙ ÔÞ×àÚ Ò"Û èÕæ×, ÛÙ ÒÝ ÐàÙ ÐÙààÙ ÞæÜÙ× ÜÔÙÞàâ ÞÓÙÑÕè ÜéÕß Ôèâ. éàÙàÕ ×ÕØÐÙÝ ×ØÐÙÝ ×ÞÕ
ÖÔ Þê×ÕÝ ÔÐÞÕæÙÕê Ô×èÙäÕê, ÕÔÛàáêÙ ÐÕêÕ Üê×ÕÝ ÛÜ Ô×ØÐÙÝ éÔÐÓÝ àÒÕâ ÑÔÝ. ÜÐ ÑÙØÜêÙ èÒé ÔÐéÞÔ. Ð

]Summary: the Rabbi explains how, in advising a student with a masturbation problem, he took the scariness out of the punishments associated with masturbation by comparing it to the prevalent sin of lashon hara (speaking badly about people), in order to defuse the high emotions involved and treat it like any other sin. A source is quoted of the Beit Shmuel on the Shulchan Aruch about masturbation being the most severe sin which disagrees and comments that if one is driven by his yetzer to have relations with a woman in Niddah, or a married woman, it is preferable to, thus demonstrating that there are sins worse than masturbation.]

Again, I don't think your website emphasizes that these sources (of the severity of masturbation and its repercussions) are not meant to be taken literally.

You say (in regard to seeing the positive side of transgression), "but this is only in retrospect, not ‘I will sin and then repent.’"

You seem to not understand what I mean, you looking at it the wrong way. I am talking about looking at the big picture. I used to know a very wise rabbi who used to say that life is like a marathon not a sprint. If you don't believe me that growing gradually is acceptable. Let me know and a will provide you sources.

You say, "Your belief that people ‘cannot be held accountable for things that are simply above them’ is not in line with Torah."

Well if you think Rav Dessler is not in line with Torah that's your business.

In his letters, Vol. 1, see ÞÛêÑ ÞÐÜÙÔÕ ×"Ð, 111-120 - àçÕÓê ÔÑ×ÙèÔ

Let me know what you think...

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

My point is that spilling semen in vain is a very severe transgression with very grave consequences. You can try to split hairs and say it's not the worst transgression but only the second or the third or fourth. The Beit Shmuel is coming from

the halachic viewpoint in a case of forbidden relations over which someone should be ready to be killed rather than commit the transgression, it is better to opt for masturbation as a lesser evil, but he is aware that masturbation is a severe transgression as well and adds that such a person should repent over his act of masturbation by fasting for 40 days in the summer or sit in the cold during the winter. It's like giving a person a choice if he wants to spend a thousand years in a 5000 degree oven or in a 4000 degree oven. (For your information, the Arizal considers masturbation even more damaging than forbidden relations.) As far as Rabbi Monks, he also knows that masturbation is a severe transgression. In giving the example of lashon hara, I don't think he would encourage people to see the positive side of continuing to speak lashon hara while they wean themselves from it.

To summarize, a person who masturbates should be alerted, with understanding and empathy, that he is committing a serious transgression; he should be taught about the damages it causes, be encouraged to repent, and be given tools that will help him escape from his yetzer with the assurance that G-d is loving and compassionate and helps those who seek to rectify their errant ways, giving the person the assurance that he can escape from his addiction just like thousands of others have succeeded before him.

PSYCHOLOGIST

I appreciate your time in having this correspondence.

But if you don't mind, I need you to clarify as you seem to be missing what I am saying.

Firstly, you are ignoring my very important point that one cannot be held accountable for things that are above one, as Rav Dessler explains. Please read [a certain article posted on the Internet] by a haredi rabbi and psychologist.

Secondly my point regarding Rabbi Monks is that even if he would not want people to view the positive, he emphasizes that masturbation is not really like murder, this is not emphasized on your site. And he also normalizes masturbation, in other words, masturbation is a normal human activity (as far as I have seen the only time your site slightly speaks along those lines is when someone writes to you that they are thinking of suicide, it is simply inadequate, and the fact that someone wrote to you with that question should show you the risk of your site).

Finally you asked for the sources of R Zadok. The author of the thesis provides the sources, TH is Tidkat HaTzadik, for example. R. Zadok gives consolation to those who mourn over their sin of masturbation, through arguing based on a passage in the Talmud (Yevamot 62a) that the Messiah won’t come until all the souls that need to be born are born, and masturbation creates

these souls thereby hastening the coming of the Messiah (TH 17; #45)."

If you are able to look the sources up, and you see that they are accurate, would you then regard R Zadok as a heretic?

JEWISH SEXUALITY.COM

I never said that Rav Zadok was a heretic, G-d forbid. I said that the conclusions which the thesis writer postulates in his name are like the false ideology of Shabatai Tzvi.

The "point that one cannot be held accountable for things that are above one" is above me - no pun intended. That’s the gist of the article written by the Haredi psychologist that you recommended I read, that upbringing, social pressures, and an oversized yetzer can be factors that cancel a person’s freedom of choice.

If so, Eichmann isn't responsible because that's what he learned in Nazi Germany, and it was all a part of Hashem's big plan anyway, so, therefore, his crimes were for the good. And the child molester had a difficult childhood so he can't be blamed and so let's allow him walk around free until he gets his act together, according to the “he isn’t responsible for his actions” theory.

And Yigal Amir shouldn't be in jail because he was brainwashed by the incitement of the period, and that's obviously what Hashem wanted because otherwise it wouldn't have happened.

When you take away responsibility, you might as well cancel Yom Kippur and everything else. If someone didn't know that masturbating is forbidden, he didn't know, OK, what can you do? But now that he knows, he has the responsibility and free will to stop. Yes, it may be tough, but there are tools to help him, tshuva is possible, there is a tikun (rectification), and he shouldn't fall into depression and despair, but on the contrary, be happy with the new hope he’s discovered, as the website emphasizes in dozens of places.

(Also, if someone wrote to the website for help, saying he was on the verge of suicide, it wasn’t because of the website – he felt that way previously and came to the website looking for help.)

My feeling is that you are grasping for scraps of sources here and there, and twisting them, to try to support your approach. In my reading of the text you cite, I don't see where Rav Zadok says that masturbation is a positive factor in the coming of Mashiach, and I don't see where Rav Dessler says it's OK to masturbate, and the vast majority of our heavyweight Sages don’t disagree with the comparisons you find so disturbing in the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch.

Yes, someone could read the Shulchan Aruch, or the Gemara, or our website, and become depressed, but more often than not, they are relieved to discover that there is a tikun. On the other hand, when people who are left in darkness reach the gates of Heaven after their sojourn on Earth, and are barred from entering because they have a 100 mile long line of the tormented souls they created following after them, screaming to be redeemed, they will cry out at the gates, "Why didn't someone tell us the truth?!"

PSYCHOLOGIST

You are getting too worked up, and I assume that is why you are taking what I have been saying completely the wrong way and misrepresenting what I am actually saying.

You seem to think that I am denying free will, why else would you write "When you take away responsibility, you might as well cancel Yom Kippur and everything else."

Yom Kippur is very important because you can do tshuva for things that you really did have free will for. Let me give you an example. A young man I know used to go to prostitutes, after a long struggle he was able to stop that bad behavior, a few month later he fell and went to a prostitute but deep down he knew that he could have resisted. On Yom Kippur he did tshuva for this. A year later he was ready to stop watching porn, that was within his range of free will, so if he fell and watched porn he would do tshuva, but masturbation was still above him. As he strengthened himself even more, eventually he only masturbated once a week. If he masturbated more than that he would do tshuva.

With regard to Eichmann and other Nazi's, the scary thing is that these animals actually seemed to be quit sane. I don't see how one could say that they had no choice "because that's what he learned in Nazi Germany." Hashem gave us a deep sense of basic human morals, and the evils of murder is a basic truth ingrained in the human soul, that is what I believe, and I think it is the view of most of the sages.

Child molestation is complicated. I believe that most have free choice, but even if they are so deranged that they don't have choice, I don't see how you can say "let him walk around free until he gets his act together." They are not locked up as a punishment - they are locked up to protect children from them.

Have you found a library in Israel that has the unedited editions of R Tzadok’s works? I will try find out were one is for you, so then you can see it for yourself.

Most importantly, when did I ever say that "Rav Dessler says it's OK to masturbate"! You are putting words in my mouth, you are creating a straw man. Rav Dessler was taking generally for all commandments. Did you read that link regarding Rav Dessler?

"Rav Dessler illustrates this concept with the example of a person who is a long-time member of a gang heavily involved with crime. He may no longer have the bechira (free will) to actually stop being involved in criminal activity. He may currently be considered "compelled" to rob a bank. Yet, he may have the bechira not to shoot the bank guard. This, then, is his current nekudas habechira (point of free will)."

All you need to do is read his book, Mechtav Ma’Eliyahu.

I find your last point repulsive:

"On the other hand, when people who are left in darkness reach the gates of Heaven after their sojourn on Earth, and are barred from entering because they have a 100 mile long line of the tormented souls they created following after them, screaming to be redeemed, they will cry out at the gates, "Why didn't someone tell us the truth?!"

Do you seriously believe that someone who spends his entire life doing good, caring for others and doing mitzvos, but he happens to masturbate, because he has not heard of "the evils of masturbation", will have the door of shamayim (Heaven) closed on him when he dies? Is that it? Will his loving father really do that to him?

Sorry that is not Hashem - that is a pagan god.

If your son masturbated would you close the door on him?

Do you understand what I am saying? What and why do you find my words so unacceptable?

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Just as a good Jewish person, who does good deeds and cares for others, but never learned Torah, observed taharat hamishpachah (the laws of family purity), and kept Shabbat, will have to come back for another reincarnation (or many); so too a good Jewish person, who does good deeds, mitzvot, etc but masturbates because he never knew, will have to come back in a reincarnation (or many) until he rectifies the damage he did in the past. There are no free rides in Judaism. Hashem set down the rules, and it is our duty to follow His teachings.