

Doctor's orders

Posted by Benoni - 07 Feb 2021 05:43

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Can someone please explain to me why usually when it comes to halacha, we will follow the general consensus of modern medicine and science, but when it comes to zera levatala, we do not heed this? Most modern doctors nowadays agree that masturbation for men lowers prostate cancer and reduces stress. It also can help men to sleep better. In fact many of them actually recommend masturbation for young men who are not currently sexually active because they still need the release. If this is the modern medical concensus, why do we not follow this?

Just curious

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Re: Doctor's orders

Posted by YeshivaGuy - 11 Feb 2021 21:10

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[starting wrote on 11 Feb 2021 20:50:](#)

Just thinking, it maybe affected by the fact that masturbation is ?????????? ???????, meaning that it is connected to one of the 3 cardinal sins for which one would have to give up their lives to avoid sinning

There is such an opinion, though not agreed on universally.

R' Moshe Weinberger has 8 shiurim going through this sugya, with all the rishonim/achronim etc, including giving pshat (From R' Tzadoks Sefer Takanus Hashavim) in the Zohar which says there's no teshuva.

Its very thorough and very worthwhile.

Its part of his Chaburas Yosef Hatzadik series, it's Shiurim #100-107

[www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/960491](http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/960491)

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Re: Doctor's orders  
Posted by concernedjew21 - 11 Feb 2021 21:46

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There is a very basic flaw in the logic here.

Halacha is never overridden by a doctor's opinion. It is part of the halachic apparatus itself that pikuach nefesh supercedes almost all Torah commandments. Where doctors come in is in determining what a patients needs are, what is necessary for their survival and what might be life threatening for them.

Additionally, the only time this ever makes sense is to create individual exceptions. For example, the very fact that the Torah commands us to fast on Yom Kippur means that the Torah does not see fasting on Yom Kippur as detrimental to health or thinks the health detriment is worth it. If a doctor were to say that fasting, in general, is dangerous, the result would then be to scrap the entire mitzvah, in such cases halacha will always presume the Torah is right, the doctor is wrong, and move on. A doctor may, however, say that for THIS individual fasting will be life threatening. In that case the Torah exempts that individual from fasting.

Applied to your example, if the Torah prohibits masturbating, it is either because it has no positive effect on our health, or the Torah is ready to forego that positive effect because of other negative effects it has. Anything doctors believe to the contrary is irrelevant.

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Re: Doctor's orders  
Posted by Benoni - 11 Feb 2021 22:45

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Concernedjew21, thank you this makes sense.

the only other example I could think of is kinda the opposite where poskim have prohibited smoking even tho it was historically mutar (see R' Moshe Feinstein) also based on the principle of keeping up with current medical consensus.

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Re: Doctor's orders  
Posted by concernedjew21 - 11 Feb 2021 22:54

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You're welcome.

Smoking is different as well. Smoking was just a pleasurable activity that the Torah doesn't command or prohibit. When medicine revealed that smoking is very harmful to one's health, many poskim felt that it was enough to say it is assur, because of the always existing Torah mandate to protect one's health.

If the Torah had commanded "Though shalt wrap tobacco in paper and smoke it 10 times a day", no normative posek would even fathom not keeping that commandment because it is seen as dangerous by the prevailing science.

Science has a definite role *within* the Halachic system, but in a head on clash, the eternal word of God prevails, always, whether we understand it or not.

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Re: Doctor's orders  
Posted by Benoni - 12 Feb 2021 00:44

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I see. Thank you for explaining this to me. I'm trying to learn more ab medicine in Halacha so this was very helpful.

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Re: Doctor's orders  
Posted by starting - 18 Feb 2021 07:16

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[https://guardyoureyes.com/articles/tips-suggestions/item/the-benefits-of-sperm-retention?category\\_id=21](https://guardyoureyes.com/articles/tips-suggestions/item/the-benefits-of-sperm-retention?category_id=21)

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