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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d  
20th of Iyar, 5722  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr.

### Greeting and Blessing:

I am in receipt of your letter of May 13, in which you discuss the problem of m. You are quite right that it is a matter to be handled delicately, but, surprisingly, you do not mention that it is not to be treated by the same approach in all cases.

A further point to bear in mind is this. If, as you suggest, it should be explained to the person that it is "natural," or as some suggest that it should even be encouraged, then eventually all restraint will be removed, and the boy will indulge in it freely, with spiritual and physical consequences well known to you. And judging by the majority of cases, such an approach would encourage overindulgence even from the "medical" point of view.

There is yet another consideration. When the person is told of the seriousness of the matter, there is at least the redeeming feature of having told him the truth. Therefore, <sup>even</sup> if it may have a temporary undesired effect, ~~one~~ is at least certain in not having misled him, while when he is told that it is "natural" and he need not take it to heart, etc., it is not the truth, and he will sooner or later discover that he had been deceived or lulled, and the excuse that it ~~was~~ intended for his benefit may or may not satisfy him.

All this is without reference to the <sup>first and</sup> essential aspect of the situation, namely, the point of view of the Torah and Shulchan Aruch, which is most stringent about it, as the Rosh Yeshiva has no doubt explained to you.

From my knowledge of such cases, the majority of boys, and a majority by far, overcome this problem when they know its seriousness and are guided accordingly. This is why they do not come to the doctor's attention, while where restraint is removed it often becomes a medical problem.

I believe I mentioned in a previous letter that, knowing your family and background, I hope that in addition to the healing that you bring to your patients in their physical needs you also help them spiritually, for in Jewish life the physical and the spiritual are very intimately bound up together.

With blessing *M. Schneerson*