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ברוקלין, נ. י.

B.H. 28th of Menachem Av, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dr.

Sholom uBrocho:

Thank you for your letter of Aug. 19th, which has just reached me, and in which you refer to the delicate matter which has been the subject of our recent correspondence.

With all due respect, I must disagree with your statement that there is a radical difference of attitude between the Jewish and medical-psychological points of view on this matter, in that the latter believe that there is no physical or psychological ill-effects. I doubt very much whether physicians and psychologists do in fact generally hold this view. As far as I know most medical authorities do not share this view. Indeed, it is impossible that there should not be physical, and even more so psychological consequences, for every normal person is bound to experience "uneasiness" and guilt at doing something which is not natural. etc

What is even more painfully surprising, in my opinion, is the fact that physicians and psychologists who are concerned with finding a way to help the adolescents in this problem, are approaching this problem from the wrong end. They should be the first to advocate early marriage, especially as there is already a marked tendency in this direction in the present day, except that, unfortunately, economic considerations prevent it from becoming more widespread. Therefore, one would expect the medical profession to use its influence with local and state authorities to offer economic assistance to would-be early marriage candidates on the same principle that economic help is given to the aged. To be sure, early marriage would not entirely solve the problem, since the age of puberty ~~is~~ begins earlier, yet to prevent even a few years of this problem would be a very great achievement in the mental health of many people. Therefore, instead of advocating an attitude as you describe, the M.D. and psychologists would be better advised to get to the root of the problem along the lines suggested above.

Needless to say, no single doctor can bring about a reorientation of view in the profession, and certainly the above observations are not intended as a personal reflection on you. However, I venture to suggest that the reason why doctors have not come out in favor of early marriage with appropriate "fanfare" is the reluctance to advocate an "old-fashioned" idea! Yet, as already mentioned, there is an unmistakable tendency in this direction, and it is no longer considered so old-fashioned after all.

To return to the method of treatment, I see no reference in your letter to the point I made, which is ^{also} essential: As between the two methods, namely, to make light of it or to consider it reprehensible, the latter corresponds to the truth and natural order, while the former is at variance with same. If the justification for the former is on the basis of selecting the lesser of two evils, then the truth should not be suppressed, at least. Thus, certain diseases may be ^{also} treated by inducing malaria on the principle of counteracting a greater evil by a lesser evil, but in that case no one will claim that malaria is no disease. Besides, this method is applied only where there is no other way.

As we are about to enter the month of Elul, when we will be saying twice daily "G-d is my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27), may G-d enlighten each and every one of us to utilize our capacities to the full in helping ourselves and others in every possible way.

With blessing,

M. Schwartz

If you will discuss the above with colleagues, I will be very interested to know their argumentation