



NOAM ZION: SANCTIFIED SEX - THE JEWISH DEBATE ON MARITAL INTIMACY

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Joshua Holo: Welcome to the College Commons Podcast: passionate perspectives from Judaism's leading thinkers, brought to you by HUC Connect, the Hebrew Union College's online platform for continuing education. I'm Joshua Holo, dean of HUC's Skirball Campus, and your host.

Welcome to this episode of the College Commons Podcast, where we will have the pleasure of a conversation with Noam Zion. Noam Zion is Emeritus Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, where he has taught since 1978. His most popular publications celebrate the Jewish holidays including, *A Different Night: The Family Participation Haggadah*; *A Different Light: The Big Book of Hanukkah*; and *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home*. In 2021, the Jewish Publication Society published *Sanctified Sex: The Two-Thousand-Year Jewish Debate on Marital Intimacy*, which brings the topic to life over the span of millennia with explanations, counterintuitive and eye-opening examples, quotes and stories. And it will be the topic of our discussion today. So without further ado, Noam Zion, thank you for joining us.

Noam Zion: It's a pleasure to be here. Shalom le'kulam.

JH: Most Jews today, as I understand and experienced it here in America at least, tend to understand Judaism to be a relatively progressive religion, either accurately or inaccurately, for example. We often speak of the afterlife in very abstract terms, if at all, as if to say, we Jews don't go in for that overly literal punishment-minded carrot and stick approach to heaven and hell. And the implication is that we Jews, we're too sophisticated for all of that. And by the same token, I think that most Jews imagine Judaism itself to be relatively liberal about sexuality. And you and I will complicate the picture together in our conversation, I look forward to it, but because Judaism's

conservative side may actually be less familiar and even counterintuitive to many of our listeners, I'd like to ask you to start by sharing with us the foundations of Judaism's more restrictive, worried or downright Puritan approach to sex and sexuality.

NZ: Obviously, the classic Catholic position has been a negative one, an ascetic one, allowing for people to get married if they couldn't help it, but actually preferring a higher spiritual level in which we would conquer our desires. And in that sense, Judaism appears to be, of course, much more liberal, if liberal means a concern for fulfilling your physiological and social and emotional needs through a close relationship with a partner. However, Rabbinic Judaism, which came to grow and to develop at 2000 years ago during the period of Greek and Roman influence, the same period that Christianity is growing up in, also took an attitude that says, We have to achieve a higher spiritual level. And spirituality, by which they meant, male spirituality, involves first and foremost to master your own desires, especially your sexual desires.

NZ: So even while you're commanded to have intercourse with your wife on a regular basis, and I'm using language which is gendered because that was their whole approach, they wanted the higher level Jews, meaning the rabbis, not necessarily the hoi polloi, but the rabbis, they said, You should always be trying to overcome your sexuality, achieve spirituality, even though at the same time you do have to have procreative intercourse. But certainly, you shouldn't be trying to satisfy your own desire because once you aim at your own desire, desires will gradually overcome you. That's certainly an important part of Judaism, and it's shared with the most important philosophical positions at the same time among the Greeks, who also thought that rationality is the highest level, that what makes us human beings is to transcend those things we share with animals, of which of course, sex and food are central ones. Therefore, there was a constant emphasis on fasting and also on decreasing as much as possible, your physiological involvement with procreation.

JH: Lay out for us, if you would, some of the core foundational expressions of raw sensuality in our tradition.

NZ: You know what, allow me to tell one story to strengthen the ascetic position and then I'll contrast it with the most important story in the Talmud, which goes the opposite way. In the Talmudic discussion around the year 200 CE, right after the temple is destroyed, Rabbi Eliezer, who's one of the most important rabbis and a very conservative rabbi, he is known for having beautiful children. And so some other students of Torah came and met his wife one day and said, "What beautiful children you have." And she says, "Yes, I do. They're wonderful." "Could you give us some advice,

eugenics advice, that helps to produce the most beautiful children?" "Well," she said, "my husband Rabbi Eliezer has a very unique method. He always approaches me when he wants to have intercourse for procreation in the middle of the night. So he'll wake me up in the middle of the night, and then he will have sex with me and I once asked him, Why is it necessary to do that?"

NZ: He said, "Because if it's in the early part of the evening, I may hear noises outside and then my mind may wander, and I may end up thinking about another woman. But in the middle of the night, when it's completely silent, I don't have those adulterous thoughts." Now, what's even more unusual about Rabbi Eliezer, as his wife explained to everyone very proudly, is that when he has sex, his attitude is, I'm only having sex as if I was forced by a demon to have intercourse, and I'm gonna do it as quickly as possible, and I'm going to do it with uncovering as little of my clothing as possible and as little of my wife's clothing as possible so it will be minimum, if you will, raw sensuality at all. So it's quick, it's short, it's without physical contact, and the whole goal is to have me thinking only about the act on the mitzvah of procreation.

NZ: Rabbi Eliezer's position by the Middle Ages, it became the dominant halakhic position held by, for example, Yosef Caro, who is the editor in the 16th century in Zfat of the Shulchan Aruch, and that became a dominant view throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period and into today, among ultra-Orthodox Jews, especially Hasidism, like the Ger Hasidism in Israel. I can give you more examples of their position if you'd like, or we can switch, and we can take a look at the opposite tradition that also begins at the Talmud around the same time.

JH: We'll move into the opposite tradition, but before, I just like to remind our listeners that the Shulchan Aruch is sort of the compendium of Jewish law that reigns in orthodoxy to this day from the 16th century.

NZ: Now, you probably know that the Talmud is not a law book. Unlike the Shulchan Aruch, which means the Set Table, which is designed to tell you, This is what you do and this is what you don't do, and to do it as briefly as possible. You don't go in depth and see arguments and disagreements in the Shulchan Aruch. It's called Shulchan Aruch, meaning Set Table 'cause it's already got an instant answer. But in fact, the Talmud doesn't give us very much halakhic advice. It doesn't literally tell us this is what you do and this is what you don't do, but it brings the debates and the arguments, and then later on each individual rabbi in his context will have to decide what his priorities are.

NZ: So then it's not so surprising to see that opposite the story of Rabbi Eliezer is another famous story, which is really the inspiration for my writing the book. There was a student, Kahana was his name, he went under his Rabbi's bed unannounced as an example, if you will, of sexual espionage or if you will, rabbinic voyeurism as he hides under the rabbi's bed. The rabbit gets into bed with his wife, and it describes the rabbi as chatting and jesting, or it might be translated, playing and laughing or engaging in foreplay, gratifying his needs. In the middle of that, he can't see it, he can only hear it, Kahana, his student says, "It seems as if the mouth of Abba my teacher has never before tasted that dish." In other words, you're acting not like an adult who's been married for many years and already a little bit bored by this event of sexuality, you're not acting as a great scholar who looks down on these animal necessities.

NZ: And he's saying, "Why are you getting excited?" His teacher's response was, "Kahana! Is that you there? Get out! It's not the way of the world. That's not proper manners for you to be under the bed. What about my privacy?" And Kahana answered him and said, "This too," meaning intercourse, "and the art of lovemaking, is Torah. And to learn, I must." In other words, this story was placed in the Talmud because part of what it means to be a spiritual person and to be an ethical person is determined in your private activity. The things you learn about, how do you behave in the bathroom, the proper behavior when you're making love, those questions of how you control your body and your desires are what can make you more humane; in fact, more spiritual, or they can reduce you to the level of the vulgar and the animalistic and the rabbis in this case were definitely aristocrats, they were elitists, in which they wanted to set a much higher standard.

NZ: Now, what's unusual in this story is that Kahana is not just interested in learning about his rabbi's practice. He's critical of his rabbi's practice. He thinks it's shameful. The rabbi is trying to protect his privacy and the privacy of his wife, and his student is saying, "No, I came to learn, but actually, now that I've heard the way you're behaving, I don't think you're a worthy model for me as a student." That became the basis of the whole alternative tradition that said that every man in relationship to his wife, again, the directives are toward the husband must woo his wife. Every time you make love, you must woo your wife, court her again, gain her consent, arouse her desire, and make sure that you are satisfying her sexual needs at the same time as you're satisfying your own needs.

NZ: In other words, nothing in the story of Rav is about procreation. There are views in Judaism that say the only thing that's important about sexuality is procreation. However, Rav is not that model and Rav's categories became the central position of Maimonides

in the Middle Ages and of many other scholars who are opposed to the views of Yosef Caro as far as that went. And so that's where this big debate begins between the more restrictive and the more positive, making it a central mitzvah to become the best lover you can.

JH: So the sensuality is compelling in the story, as well as the more conservative view, also takes place under the auspices of marriage, which is unsurprisingly, I think, the authorized acceptable opportunity for sensuality in Judaism, as presumably in many or most religious traditions. How does our tradition, the Jewish tradition, refract, complicate, enrich sensuality and sexuality through the lens of marriage?

NZ: The truth is that that is a debate, it was a very big debate in North America among Conservative, Reform, Jewish Renewal, Modern Orthodox rabbis, beginning, and especially in the 1960s. Although, Eugene Borowitz was already involved in that discussion earlier in the 1950s, it came with the American sexual revolution. When Eugene Borowitz writes about that, he's actually writing for Hillel, and he's writing to college students in the late '50s, and he's trying to deal with what he sees as the sexual revolution in which people felt that there was no guilt involved in sexuality, you didn't have to make any kind of a commitment. But in the '50s, it's not an ideal, it's just a reality of a lot of promiscuity and a lot of sexual experimentation. But in 1960s, especially in 1968, and certainly after the pill became very available, it turned into an ideal. It became an ideal that you should serve your own sexual needs, you should be natural, that anything that was restricting your sexuality or any of your desires including your desires for drugs or for food or whatever they might be, the concern was, this is bourgeois conventions.

NZ: And bourgeois conventions were a continuation of whether it was a conservative Christian or a conservative Jewish kind of ethos. And they said, "No, that's wrong. We should be able to make love with anybody we want, and it doesn't have to be love, it doesn't have to be tied to relationship, it certainly doesn't have to be tied to commitment." And that became a major voice within the 1960s, and it's at that time that we can see a whole series of Northern American rabbis' responses. Why don't we start with Eugene Borowitz himself, a Reform rabbi, a person who believes in the autonomy of each individual, clearly a progressive, very critical of the conservative nature of Halakha across the board. He says, "It's not enough to reject what Judaism's conservative views on sexuality is, we also have to be critical of Western attitudes, which are too libertarian for his taste."

NZ: He says, "Too often, our civilization is amoral about sex. Not infrequently, it teaches shamelessness and the abolition of all guilt. It considers immediate pleasure of the highest goal by glorifying genitalia and exploiting our repressions. Contemporary society has largely stripped sexuality of its mysterious power to expose us to transcendence." Or a similar view from Art Green, who was ordained as a conservative rabbi, was one of the founders of the Boston Havurah in 1968, who writes the article on sexuality for the Jewish Catalog, which was then one of the Jewish best sellers of that period, and he writes, "We Jews should stand opposed to the current moves toward demystification of sexuality, which seek to define coupling as a purely biological function."

NZ: Now, what Art Green and Eugene Borowitz and all the rabbis across the board said, "We believe that lovemaking is the very core of what makes us human. In fact, it's the very core of spirituality." And therefore they were interested in going back to Kabbalist models in which sexuality, the coming together of the male and female in God, and the male and female within sexual union in the mundane world were the highest forms of spirituality. They still hadn't begun to talk about relationships, which were gay relationships, but they could easily move to that as well, and say also any form of love relationship is really the height of spirituality, that's where we have religious kavvanah. Co-founder of the Havurah, Reb Zalman, who was himself originally a Chabad rabbi, one of the first Chabad rabbis to go off to college campuses, later, he abandons Chabad orthodoxy, he becomes the founder of the Jewish Renewal Movement, and he argued, as he said, "Sacred sex is the experience of ecstasy. It's the real sexual revolution."

NZ: Sacred sexuality is about love, not merely the positive feeling between intimates, but an overwhelming reverence for all embodied life on whatever level of existence. Sacred sexuality is about the re-enchantment of our lives. It's about embracing the imponderable mystery of existence." And for that reason, he was very opposed to turning sexuality into just another physiological need, that as long as you find a partner who consents as an adult, why shouldn't two consenting adults be able to have sex, get a lot of pleasure out of it, without love, without commitment, without anything beyond that.

NZ: And that's what they were opposed to, they wanted greater sanctity for the sexual experience, and therefore not Art Green and Reb Zalman, but across the board, the rabbinical committees, both of the Reform movement and the Conservative movement, took the position that they discouraged non-marital sex. Not only premarital sex, but even sex of a couple that's living together is not really sacred. They said sanctity only begins when people marry. Why is that? Not because the law says that, but because sanctity for them is commitment. When you put the ring on the finger of your spouse

and you say, "I hereby make you my only spouse." In other words, the commitment to monogamy was very important to them as well. It's that moment of commitment that allows people to trust one another, to open up to one another, to do what they thought was the ideal to achieve an I-Thou relationship in which you're not using the other for your physical needs. That's what they demanded.

NZ: That debate is a very interesting one because it says it's not just a question, Am I for sex or against sex? The issue is how do I balance between a desire for raising the desires of sexuality, which we know, the Me Too movement just reminds us, Jerry Epstein, all these terribly evil people, that sexual desire can lead to terrible exploitation and corruption on one side. On the other side, we have to worry about that we want sensuality to be celebrated. We want the art of loving to be celebrated. And to find the balance between the two was the struggle among North American rabbis right up until today.

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JH: The College Commons Podcast is proud to be part of HUC Connect, the Hebrew Union Colleges online platform for continuing education. HUC Connect features four programs, webinars, live conversations with social and cultural influencers, on topics of civil society, arts and culture, religion, and redefining allyship. Community Connect, offering ready-made lesson plans for synagogue and community learning. Masterclasses, live sessions of Judaica with HUC faculty, exclusively for our alumni. And of course, the College Commons Podcast, in-depth conversations with Judaism's leading thinkers. For more information about HUC Connect and all it has to offer, visit huc.edu/hucconnect. And now, back to our program.

JH: In responding to your examples, which are really fascinating, it's hard, at least for me on first blush, not to come to the conclusion that they simply took a modernized circuitous route back to the tradition, because the tradition itself already recognizes the mystical and legitimately spiritualized power of sex and the values intimated in the examples you gave from the ancient world. So except for the fact that the modern rabbis you cited happen to be dealing with modern conditions to which they respond, the fact that they end up at the conservative position seems to tell me that they're simply reiterating the tradition, is that unfair?

NZ: Oh yes, totally. Totally unfair for two reasons. Number one is that in the traditional position, not only is sexuality meant to be within marriage, but it means there's no room for dating, there's no room for kissing, there's no room for holding hands, there's no

room for gender integration. It's a point of view that's extremely restrictive and has become ever more restricted in the ultra-Orthodox world. And so they're not in any way saying that, I believe, that we need that kind of segregation, and they're not saying that there's no room for physical intimacy.

NZ: They're simply saying we have to save the highest form of sexual intimacy for the highest form of mutual commitment, and their emphasis is on mutual commitment very strongly, and that that's the highest form of spirituality, because in the Middle Ages, even with the position we heard from Rav, even though Halakha, like Maimonides', which was a liberal position, so to speak, that says we do have to have sexual pleasure, and we do have to woo our wives, he said, "That's true for anybody who can't control their desires, but anybody who wants to be part of the rabbinic elite, anybody who wants higher spirituality has to find a way to minimize intercourse as much as possible, to minimize the time they spend in foreplay and in interaction. And if they can find a wife who's willing to say, I'm happy to minimize sexuality, if you can find a wife like Rabbi Eliezer has," says Maimonides, "who consents, and she has to consent, to having minimal sexual contact, that's the greatest ideal."

NZ: In other words, the modern rabbis are rabbis who are taking the position that the highest form of spirituality involves sexuality, not that spirituality of the male, 'cause they're only concerned about the male in the traditional world, involves transcending and minimizing sexuality. So those are two enormous differences. Plus, both the Conservative and the Reform rabbis, who are at least the law committees of the Reform and the Conservative Movement, they were taking a position that said that if you do have pre-marital sex, it's not evil, it's not unethical, it's perfectly ethical if there's consent, and love, and concern, and respect, and dignity. We're not saying it's immoral, they're simply asking people to have a higher level of commitment, which they call sanctity, kiddushin, which is the technical term for Jewish marriage, and they wanted people to see their love lives as having a series of higher and higher stages in which the highest stage will have the formal reflection of a marriage with a ring, with a huppa, and most important for them, not the rituals, but the commitment, "I am there for you completely," and then you can have an I-thou relationship. That's very different than the traditionalists.

JH: I think today, American Jews often tout the traditions validation of women's sexuality, at least in terms of the tradition being a product of its time, be it ancient or medieval, for example. By contrast, what aspects of the tradition go in the opposite direction and require us to confront or revise these aspects of the tradition for the sake of women and by extension for all people?

NZ: As long as you say, as the traditional world has said, that the spirituality is chiefly the goal of the man, because spirituality for the rabbis involves studying Torah, and Torah is an intellectual activity, a rational activity that pre-supposes that you've mastered your desires so that you can achieve these higher spiritual rational levels. Since the position of the rabbis was, and is among the ultra-Orthodox to today, that women are not involved in studying Torah, then women do not have access to that spirituality. That's not what they're for. That's not what they're capable of, for the most part. In fact, the greatest revolution in the Orthodox world over the last 100 years has been the gradual education of women, religious, Orthodox women in Judaism. It began 100 years ago when they began to see in the ultra-Orthodox world in Eastern Europe... This is [Hebrew], he began to see that since women were not going to yeshiva, the women in the same ultra-Orthodox families ended up going to study Russian literature and culture, and the women as they became more Western in their taste, how could they ever then marry the ultra-Orthodox who've only studied in the yeshiva? And so the [Hebrew] said, "You know what, I'm gonna allow you to open up girls schools for the study of Judaism."

NZ: That was the new part. It wasn't that the young women would go and study Russian culture, that wasn't the problem, the problem is, are they allowed to study Judaism? And he said, "Yes," not because that's ideal, it would be much better if they didn't do that, but in our era, they're gonna have to do it. And today, more and more of the ultra-Orthodox are studying a great deal of Judaism, though almost never Talmud. That's considered the special area. In the modern Orthodox world, in Israel in particular, and more and more in the United States as well, the modern Orthodox, the women are going to study Talmud at the same level as the men and demanding that they have a status in terms of expressing their opinions about Jewish law which is equal to men. It's only over the last really 20 years that's been going on, but it's going in a very, very fast rate. And what's going to happen is that modern orthodoxy is going to change because of that. How it changes? I don't know. But it's going to change, because now you have more and more couples where the man and the woman in a traditional heterosexual marriage in the modern Orthodox world in Israel and in America are both highly educated Talmudists.

NZ: When that happens, you can't deny the woman her spiritual needs or her spiritual abilities. That's part of the great transformation that's happening today. Even though on the sexual issues, there's been tremendous conservatism and continues to be enormous conservatism, obviously in the ultra-Orthodox and in the modern Orthodox world, it's changing very briefly, but in all kinds of other areas, beginning with Talmud, Torah, there's where the changes are. And those changes will have an enormous effect in, I think, a relatively short period of time.

JH: You've taught about these topics for a long time and have a mastery of a very long tradition, and a lot of bibliography. What, in the course of writing this book, surprised you?

NZ: What surprised me most is at the beginning, I agreed with Art Green, who said that the modern Jews, contemporary Jews, looking for Jewish tradition for enrichment, the two areas that they shouldn't look to Jewish tradition for is having to do with gender issues, gender justice, and the issue of sexuality. In that area, he thought Judaism had nothing to offer whatsoever, except perhaps from Kabbalist imagery, but certainly not from the realm of the Halakha. And that's what I also thought when I approached this area, but I discovered that in 1950, 1948-1950, there was an enormous debate that went on in Israel within the ultra-Orthodox world, between the Hasidic group called Ger Hasidism, which is the biggest group of Hasidim in Israel, against the leader of the most ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist, anti-modern, anti-feminist liberation rabbi, who was called The Hazon Ish, and the surprise was what they were arguing about was intimacy within marriage. In other words, one of the interesting ways that Judaism develops, and I haven't realized it fully, it develops from debate. The most extreme turn to the right will also lead to a turn to the left at the same time, and in the process of the debate between the two poles, you begin to develop all kinds of new elements within Judaism.

NZ: I'll give you one concrete example. In 1948, the new Gerrer rabbi decided that the best way of putting his community, which had been decimated, more than 50% of them had been destroyed in the Shoah, they'd all immigrants to the... Many immigrants to the land of Israel, he was gonna bring them together by giving them a new spiritual challenge. I would call it Outward-bound Judaism. Instead of making Judaism easier to deal with these poor people who are refugees, he's gonna make Judaism into an elite, into a Marine Corp, in which you're gonna demand everybody become super sacred. And sanctity, which in the Hasidic world had been a sanctity mainly of the rabbis, of the leadership, who denied themselves sexual interaction with their spouses in a radical way, and [Hebrew] said, "No, we are going to create this in every single Hasidic marriage. We're not looking for the easy way, we're looking for the hard way."

NZ: And he created a system with a [Hebrew], with a personal guide and supervisor for every single Gerrer couple, in which they would never use each other's first names, they would never talk together, certainly not in the bedroom, they would have intercourse only once a month or maybe twice a month, they would never walk on the street together, never go in an elevator together, a total extreme, and he called these the rules for greater sanctity. That was his position. Then surprisingly, the head of the Litvaks, the

Lithuanian, who are always arguing with the Hasidim, The Hazon Ish said, "You can't do that. I don't want you teaching my students, my yeshiva students, that they should minimize their contact with their wives. That's terrible." He said, "We have a commandment in the Torah that says... " And the commandment is in Deuteronomy, it says that if a man has just got married, then he's exempt from going to the army for a whole year because he has the mitzvah of making his wife happy.

NZ: And he says, "That's what we have. We have a mitzvah to make our wives happy. Now, we have to figure out what makes a wife happy." And he said, "I can't tell you what makes a wife happy in general, you're gonna have to talk to your wife to find out. And happiness is not just sexual satisfaction." He said, "Happiness is... " It may seem totally simplistic to us, but for him, it was a radical transformation. "Happiness is for people to make each other happy, to find favor in each other's eyes. It's not a matter of what happens in the bed. It's what happens in the total relationship." And therefore, he said, "Even though the Talmud says, Don't talk to your wife, talk to your wife as little as possible," he said, "We need, at least for the first year, and probably for the first 10 years to have conversations.

NZ: Tell your wife where you are going, ask what she's doing, have a conversation with them. Small talk is good talk," he's saying. This is a man who in the whole ultra-Orthodox world, talking can only be about Torah, and suddenly he's saying, talk about small talk. And further, he says, "I don't want you just to respect your wives or be polite, because you know what, when people are too respectful and too polite, they lack intimacy. You can have greater intimacy with more levity, with more light-headed-ness, with more of the joyful-ness and the chatter and the playfulness that we saw in the story of Rav," and that's what he was pushing. His students now have produced many, many books for the ultra-Orthodox yeshiva world of Litvaks, that are now the best sellers in all of the ultra-Orthodox bookstores in Israel where there are... There are hundreds of such books. And there, one of his students says, he says, "You know what, God wants you to understand that when you get married, you are only half a human being, you only become a full human being when you marry," which is based on the Torah itself, that said, "God created the human being, male and female, He created them." It's based on the rabbinic view that only when a man and a woman come together do they become a full human being. And he said, "Our job when we marry is to see the world through the eyes of the other gender and bring that other world and my world together."

NZ: Notice the conservative assumption is that men and women are different, Mars, Venus, the same stuff you can get in America, he's writing this much earlier, of course. Because they're so different, because they have different roles in life, they really don't

understand one another, but when they come to talk to one another, they create a whole picture that involves both a female and the masculine lens. So I'll end with a beautiful picture that I can't show you, of course, of my teacher, he was a very, very Orthodox, modern Zionist, but very Orthodox, with a very long beard and quite unusual because he was part of the settler movement living in the West Bank, but he also was very much involved in interfaith dialogue with the Imams who came from Hamas, that is from the most extreme of the Islamic Movement.

NZ: And so once a reporter came to interview him about how he combined his position on being a settler and his position on interfaith dialogue with the most extreme Muslims. And at the end of the interview, he said, "Could I have a photograph of you?" And he said, "Fine, but only if my wife is in the photograph." So his wife, Adasha, came out, the two of them, their heads near one another, and he told the photographer, "Please focus in the space between my wife's head and my head, because, as it says in the Talmud, when a man and a woman come together and have an intimate loving relationship, then God is between us." So please focus on the divineness that's achieved through our coming together.

JH: Well, that's a wonderful story, and there's a lot of surprises in the examples you gave and a lot of information and really wonderful insights into our complicated, rich and very long tradition. And so, Noam Zion, I wanna thank you for taking the time to talk to us about your new book, *Sanctified Sex: The Two-Thousand-Year Jewish Debate on Marital Intimacy*. It's been a real pleasure.

NZ: Thank you, Joshua.

JH: We hope you've enjoyed this episode of The College Commons Podcast. Available wherever you listen to your podcasts. And remember to check out HUC Connect, compelling conversations at the forefront of Jewish learning. For more information about HUC Connect and all it has to offer, visit huc.edu/huc.

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