

GLBT Living Talmud



Religious Action Center
of Reform Judaism

But while “abhorrence” may be a proper reaction toward many of the forbidden sexual unions (*arayot*), it does not apply to the case of homosexuality, for the issues cited in the sources as rationales for the prohibition fail to strike us as convincing on moral grounds. This is especially true in that we, unlike our ancestors, are aware of the possibility of committed, stable, monogamous, and loving relationships between members of the same gender. This structure of human life, which parallels the institution of heterosexual marriage, does not produce moral evil; it neither abuses nor betrays the innocent. Nor can we seriously contend that it threatens the family unit and the bringing of children into the world. In a social climate of increasing tolerance, homosexual people are correspondingly more likely to resist entry into heterosexual marriage for the sake of appearance and propriety. An acceptance of homosexuality does not, therefore, augur the breakdown of a household that is less and less likely to exist in the first place. In addition, when homosexual couples are able to bring children into their lives by means of adoption and artificial insemination, it is not true that engaging in homosexual behavior inevitably means the abandonment of that Jewish ideal.

CCAR’s Responsa Committee’s t’shuva on gay and lesbian marriage

The Jewish values and principles which I regard as eternal, transcendent and divinely ordained do not condemn homosexuality. The Judaism I cherish and affirm teaches love of humanity, respect for the spark of divinity in every person and the human right to live with dignity. The God I worship endorses loving, responsible and committed human relationships, regardless of the sex of the persons involved. — Rabbi Janet Marder

Judaism unequivocally proscribes homosexual practices, but does not blame individuals for being afflicted with pathological homosexual preferences. What is frowned upon by the *halakhah* [Jewish law] is the indulgence in homosexual acts – not the experience of sexual preferences. On the contrary, individuals with homosexual preferences are encouraged by the *halakhah* to practice self-control and to restrain whatever urges cannot be legitimately satisfied. (Rabbi Walter Wurzburger)

I for one, cannot believe that the God who created us all produced a certain percentage of us to have sexual drives that cannot be legally expressed under any circumstances. That is simply mind-boggling – and, frankly, un-Jewish (Rabbi Elliot Dorf)

“Gay and lesbian children are the children of God just as heterosexual children are ...”
—Rabbi Eric Yoffie

And God created man in God’s own image, in the image of God (b’tselem elohim), God created him; male and female, God created them. Genesis 1:27

Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence.—
Leviticus 18:22

Traditional Halachic sources are either about use of homosexual force, pagan worship, or casual, inconsequential, sex. The sources are not about committed loving relationships. . . . Traditional sources [which were not about committed loving relationships] do not need to be applied. We need to be especially sensitive to the effect of social exclusion and oppression. Just as God does not deal despotically with creation, so too we must not deal despotically with deep-seated and un-changeable drives. Homosexuality is to be considered a halakhically-acceptable sexual orientation, provided that this sexuality is expressed within the context of a mutually-exclusive committed adult relationship.’ (Rabbi Bradley Artson)

If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an abhorrent thing; they shall be put to death—their blood guilt is upon them.— Leviticus 20:13)

If you are not gay, it is still your issue, because if we are to lose this battle, who will be there to defend your rights? If the government is allowed to take freedoms away from a certain group of people, then how much longer will it be until they come for you? --Margaret Cho

"I really look forward to looking back on this aspect of our convention [the marriage debate] with some degree of embarrassment for how antiquated it was, where we even have to stand up here and mention that we have some friend who's gay," he said. "Guess what folks? Everybody has a friend, a brother, a family member who's gay. ... You're entitled to every goddamned right that every other American is." --Ben Affleck

A sick person is fed (on Yom Kippur) at the word of experts. R. Jannai said: If the patient says, ‘I need [food],’ while the physician says: ‘He does not need it,’ we hearken to the patient. What is the reason? “The heart knows its own bitterness” (Proverbs 14:10). - Talmud, Yoma 83a

"Regardless of context, discrimination against any person arising from apathy, insensitivity, ignorance, fear, or hatred is inconsistent with this fundamental belief. We oppose discrimination against all individuals, including gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, for the stamp of the divine is present in each and every one of us." - Rabbi David Saperstein

Rabbi Judah said two bachelors are not permitted to sleep beneath the same blanket. But the sages permit it ... They said to Rabbi Judah: Israel is not suspected of homosexuality. (Kiddushin 82a)

"I WANT PEOPLE TO GET DOWN TO THE TRUTH. WHAT IS IT THAT BOTHERS YOU ABOUT IT? WHY ARE YOU SO CONCERNED ABOUT IT? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE MARRYING SOMEONE WHO'S GAY. WHY DO YOU CARE WHO MARRIES WHO?" -WHOOPIE GOLDBERG