

# The JEWISH Spin on Current Events

## HOMOSEXUALS IN JUDAISM

*What does Judaism say about homosexuals?*

### c OVERVIEW d

1. WHAT DOES THE TORAH SAY ABOUT HAVING HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS?
2. DOES A HOMOSEXUAL 'MARRIAGE' FULFILL THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE?
3. DOES THE SAME RULE APPLY TO FEMALE HOMOSEXUALS?
4. ARE SAME-SEX 'MARRIAGES' LEGALLY BINDING IN TORAH LAW?
5. HOW SHOULD HOMOSEXUALS BE TREATED?

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**c SOURCES d****1. What does the Torah say about having homosexual relationships?****c 1A d**

LEVITICUS 18:22

You shall not lie with a man as one lies with a woman, it is an abomination.

**2. Does a homosexual 'marriage' fulfill the purpose of marriage?****c 2A d**

GENESIS 2:24

...a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

**c 2B d**

TALMUD, SANHEDRIN 58A

“And he shall cling”; but not with a male. “To his wife”; but not to the wife of his fellow. “And they shall become one flesh”; [man is permitted to have relations with] those who become one flesh with him. A domesticated animal and a wild animal are thus excluded because they do not become one flesh [with a man].

**c 2C d**

GENESIS 1:27-28

And G-d created Man in His image, in the image of G-d He created him; male and female he created them. G-d blessed them and G-d said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it...”.

**c 2D d**

GENESIS 2:18

Hashem G-d said, “It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him.”

**c 2E d**

TALMUD BAVLI, YEVAMOS 62B

R' Tanchum said in the name of R' Chani'lai: Any man who does not have a wife lives without happiness, without blessing and without goodness.

**c 2F d**

TALMUD BAVLI, KIDDUSHIN 70A

Rabbah bar Rav Adda said in the name of Rav: Whoever marries a woman for the sake of money will have children who are unworthy.

**3. Does the same rule apply to female homosexuals?****c 3A d**

TALMUD, SHABBOS 64A-B

The father of Shmuel did not let them [i.e., his daughters] sleep next to one another... Let us say that this supports Rav Huna. For Rav Huna said: Women who rub one another [i.e., engage in lesbian relations] are disqualified to marry a Kohen.

No! He held so that they would not become accustomed to lying against the body of another [thereby become desirous of lying with a man].

**c 3B d**

TALMUD, YEVAMOS 76A

Rava said: The law does not accord either with... or with the father [Rav Huna]... which Rav Huna said: Women who rub one with the other are disqualified to the priesthood. And even according to R' Elazar, who says that an unmarried man who cohabits with an unmarried woman without intent for marriage renders her a *zonah*, that applies only when she had relations with a man. But [if she had relations] with a woman, is mere lewdness.

**c 3C d**

LEVITICUS 18:3

Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled; and do not perform the practice of the land of Canaan to which I bring you, and do not follow their traditions.

**c 3D d**

MAIMONIDES, LAWS OF FORBIDDEN RELATIONS, 21:8

It is forbidden for women to engage in lesbian activity, as this is the practice of Egypt, which we were warned against: "Like the practice of the land of Egypt . . . you shall not do" (Leviticus 18:3). The Sages said [in the midrash of Sifra Aharei Mot 8:8–9], "What did they do? A man married a man, and a woman married a woman, and a woman married two men."

Even though this practice is forbidden, one is not lashed [as for a Torah prohibition] on account of it, since there is no specific prohibition against it, and there is no real

intercourse. Therefore, [one who does this] is not forbidden to the priesthood because of harlotry, and a woman is not prohibited to her husband by this, since it is not harlotry.

But it is appropriate to administer to them lashings of rebellion [i.e., those given for violation of rabbinic prohibitions], since they did something forbidden. And a man should be strict with his wife in this matter, and should prevent women known to do this from coming to her or from her going to them.

#### 4. Are same-sex 'marriages' legally binding in Torah law?

c 4A d

MAIMONIDES, LAWS OF MARRIAGE, 4:12

One who marries a woman prohibited (under penalty of *kares*), he did nothing, for *kiddushin* does not take effect with an *ervah*...

c 4B d

TALMUD BAVLI, KIDDUSHIN 46B

It was stated: If a man betrothed his sister, Rav Said: The money must be returned; but Shmuel said: The money is a gift.

#### 5. How should homosexuals be treated?

c 5A d

TANYA, CHAPTER 32

As for the Talmudic statement to the effect that one who sees his friend sinning should hate him and should tell his teacher to hate him also, this applies to a companion in Torah and precepts, having already applied to him the injunction, "You should rebuke your friend," meaning "Him who is with you in Torah and Mitzvos," and who nevertheless, has not repented of his sin, as stated in Sefer Charedim.

But as for the person who is not one's colleague and is not on intimate terms with him, Hillel the Elder said, "Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the creatures and drawing them near to the Torah." This means that even in the case of those who are removed from G-d's Torah and His service, and are therefore classified simply as "creatures," one must attract them with strong cords of love...

Even with regard to those who are close to him, and whom he has rebuked, yet they have not repented of their sins, when he is enjoined to hate them, there still remains the duty to love them also, and both are right: hatred, because of the wickedness in them; and love on account of the aspect of the hidden good in them, which is the Divine spark in them, which animates their divine soul.

*What does Judaism say about homosexuals?*

He should also awaken pity in his heart for [the divine soul], for she is held captive, as it were, in the evil of the *sitra achra* that triumphs over her in wicked people. Compassion destroys hatred and awakens love...