

Why Judaism Rejected Homosexuality

JUDAISM'S SEXUAL REVOLUTION

Dennis Prager

WHEN JUDAISM DEMANDED that all sexual activity be channeled into marriage, it changed the world. The Torah's prohibition of non-marital sex quite simply made the creation of Western civilization possible. Societies that did not place boundaries around sexuality were stymied in their development. The subsequent dominance of the Western world can largely be attributed to the sexual revolution initiated by Judaism and later carried forward by Christianity.

This revolution consisted of forcing the sexual genie into the marital bottle. It ensured that sex no longer dominated society, heightened male-female love and sexuality (and thereby almost alone created the possibility of love and eroticism within marriage), and began the arduous task of elevating the status of women.

It is probably impossible for us, who live thousands of years after Judaism began this process, to perceive the extent to which undisciplined sex can dominate man's life and the life of society. Throughout the ancient world, and up to the recent past in many parts of the world, sexuality infused virtually all of society.

Human sexuality, especially male sexuality, is polymorphous, or utterly wild (far more so than animal sexuality). Men have had sex with women and with men; with little girls and young boys; with a single partner and in large groups; with total strangers and immediate family members; and with a variety of domesticated animals. They have achieved orgasm with inanimate objects such as leather, shoes, and other pieces of clothing; through urinating and defecating on each other (interested readers can see a photograph of the former at select art museums exhibiting the works of the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe); by dressing in women's garments; by watching

DENNIS PRAGER, founder and president of the Micah Center for Ethical Monotheism, writes and publishes *Ultimates Issues*, a quarterly journal (10573 West Pico Boulevard, Suite 167, Los Angeles, California 90064) from which this essay is adapted.

other human beings being tortured; by fondling children of either sex; by listening to a woman's disembodied voice (e.g., "phone sex"); and, of course, by looking at pictures of bodies or parts of bodies. There is little, animate or inanimate, that has not excited some men to orgasm. Of course, not all of these practices have been condoned by societies—parent-child incest and seducing another's man's wife have rarely been countenanced—but many have, and all illustrate what the unchanneled, or in Freudian terms, the "un-sublimated," sex drive can lead to.

De-sexualizing God and Religion

Among the consequences of the unchanneled sex drive is the sexualization of everything—including religion. Unless the sex drive is appropriately harnessed (not squelched—which leads to its own destructive consequences), higher religion could not have developed. Thus, the first thing Judaism did was to de-sexualize God: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" by his will, not through any sexual behavior. This was an utterly radical break with all other religions, and it alone changed human history. The gods of virtually all civilizations engaged in sexual relations. In the Near East, the Babylonian god Ishtar seduced a man, Gilgamesh, the Babylonian hero. In Egyptian religion, the god Osiris had sexual relations with his sister, the goddess Isis, and she conceived the god Horus. In Canaan, El, the chief god, had sex with Asherah. In Hindu belief, the god Krishna was sexually active, having had many wives and pursuing Radha; the god Samba, son of Krishna, seduced mortal women and men. In Greek beliefs, Zeus married Hera, chased women, abducted the beautiful young male, Ganymede, and masturbated at other times; Poseidon married Amphitrite, pursued Demeter, and raped Tantalus. In Rome, the gods sexually pursued both men and women.

Given the sexual activity of the gods, it is not surpris-

ing that the religions themselves were replete with all forms of sexual activity. In the ancient Near East and elsewhere, virgins were deflowered by priests prior to engaging in relations with their husbands, and sacred or ritual prostitution was almost universal. Psychiatrist and sexual historian Norman Sussman describes the situation thus: "Male and female prostitutes, serving temporarily or permanently and performing heterosexual, homosexual, oral-genital, bestial, and other forms of sexual activities, dispense their favors in behalf of the temple." Throughout the ancient Near East, from very early times, anal intercourse formed a part of goddess worship. In ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan, annual ceremonial intercourse took place between the king and a priestess. Women prostitutes had intercourse with male worshippers in the sanctuaries and temples of ancient Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Corinth, Carthage, Sicily, Egypt, Libya, West Africa, and ancient and modern India. In ancient Israel itself, there were repeated attempts to re-introduce temple prostitution, resulting in repeated Jewish wars against cultic sex. The Bible records that the Judean king Asa "put away the *qdeshim* [temple male prostitutes] out of the land"; that his successor, Jehosaphat "put away out of the land . . . the remnant of the *qdeshim* that remained in the days of his father Asa"; and that later, King Josiah, in his religious reforms, "broke down the houses of the *qdeshim*." In India until this century, certain Hindu cults have required intercourse between monks and nuns, and wives would have intercourse with priests who represent the god. Until it was made illegal in 1948, when India gained independence, Hindu temples in many parts of India had both women

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and boy prostitutes. In the fourteenth century, the Chinese found homosexual Tibetan religious rites practiced at the court of a Mongol emperor. In Sri Lanka through this century, Buddhist worship of the goddess Pattini has involved priests dressed as women, and the consort of the goddess is symbolically castrated.

Judaism placed controls on sexual activity. It could no longer dominate religion and social life. It was to be sanctified—which in Hebrew means "separated"—from the world and placed in the home, in the bed of husband and wife. Judaism's restricting of sexual behavior was one of

the essential elements that enabled society to progress. Along with ethical monotheism, the revolution begun by the Torah when it declared war on the sexual practices of the world wrought the most far-reaching changes in history.

Inventing Homosexuality

- The revolutionary nature of Judaism's prohibiting all forms of non-marital sex was nowhere more radical, more challenging to the prevailing assumptions of mankind, than with regard to homosexuality. Indeed, Judaism may be said to have invented the notion of homosexuality, for in the ancient world sexuality was not divided between heterosexuality and homosexuality. That division was the Bible's doing. Before the Bible, the world divided sexuality between penetrator (active partner) and penetrated (passive partner).

As Martha Nussbaum, professor of philosophy at Brown University, recently wrote, the ancients were no more concerned with people's gender preference than people today are with others' eating preferences:

Ancient categories of sexual experience differed considerably from our own. . . . The central distinction in sexual morality was the distinction between active and passive roles. *The gender of the object . . . is not in itself morally problematic.* Boys and women are very often treated interchangeably as objects of [male] desire. What is socially important is to penetrate rather than to be penetrated. Sex is understood fundamentally not as interaction, but as a doing of something to someone. . . . [Emphasis added.]

Judaism changed all this. It rendered the "gender of the object" very "morally problematic"; it declared that *no one* is "interchangeable" sexually. And as a result, it ensured that sex would in fact be "fundamentally interaction" and not simply "a doing of something to someone."

To appreciate the extent of the revolution wrought by Judaism's prohibiting homosexuality and demanding that all sexual interaction be male-female, it is first necessary to appreciate just how universally accepted, valued, and practiced homosexuality has been throughout the world.

The one continuous exception was Jewish civilization—and a thousand years later, Christian civilization. Other than the Jews, "none of the archaic civilizations prohibited homosexuality per se," Dr. David E. Greenberg notes. It was Judaism alone that about 3,000 years ago declared homosexuality wrong. And it said so in the most powerful and unambiguous language it could: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is an abomination." "And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed an abomination." It is Judaism's sexual morality, not homosexuality, that historically has been deviant.

Greenberg, whose *The Construction of Homosexuality* is the most thorough historical study of homosexuality ever written, summarizes the ubiquitous nature of homo-

sexuality in these words: "With only a few exceptions, male homosexuality was not stigmatized or repressed so long as it conformed to norms regarding gender and the relative ages and statuses of the partners. . . . The major exceptions to this acceptance seem to have arisen in two circumstances." Both of these circumstances were Jewish.

Bible Truth

The Hebrew Bible, in particular the Torah (The Five Books of Moses), has done more to civilize the world than any other book or idea in history. It is the Hebrew Bible that gave humanity such ideas as a universal, moral, loving God; ethical obligations to this God; the need for history to move forward to moral and spiritual redemption; the belief that history has meaning; and the notion that human freedom and social justice are the divinely desired states for all people. It gave the world the Ten Commandments, ethical monotheism, and the concept of holiness (the goal of raising human beings from the animal-like to the God-like). Therefore, when this Bible makes strong moral proclamations, I listen with great respect. And regarding male homosexuality—female homosexuality is not mentioned—this Bible speaks in such clear and direct language that one does not have to be a religious fundamentalist in order to be influenced by its views. All that is necessary is to consider oneself a serious Jew or Christian.

Jews or Christians who take the Bible's views on homosexuality seriously are not obligated to prove that they are not fundamentalists or literalists, let alone bigots (though, of course, people have used the Bible to defend bigotry). Rather, those who claim homosexuality is compatible with Judaism or Christianity bear the burden of proof to reconcile this view with their Bible. Given the unambiguous nature of the biblical attitude toward homosexuality, however, such a reconciliation is not possible. All that is possible is to declare: "I am aware that the Bible condemns homosexuality, and I consider the Bible wrong." That would be an intellectually honest approach. But this approach leads to another problem. If one chooses which of the Bible's moral injunctions to take seriously (and the Bible states its prohibition of homosexuality not only as a law, but as a value—"it is an abomination"), of what moral use is the Bible?

Advocates of the religious acceptance of homosexuality respond that while the Bible is morally advanced in some areas, it is morally regressive in others. Its condemnation of homosexuality is one example, and the Torah's permitting slavery is another. Far from being immoral, however, the Torah's prohibition of homosexuality was a major part of its liberation (1) of the human being from the bonds of unrestrained sexuality and (2) of women from being peripheral to men's lives. As for slavery, while the Bible declares homosexuality wrong, it never declares slavery good.

Those who advocate religious acceptance of homosexuality also argue that the Bible prescribes the death penalty for a multitude of sins, including such seemingly inconsequential acts as gathering wood on the Sabbath. Thus,

Asked what is the single greatest revelation I have derived from my study of homosexuality, I always respond, "That there had to have been divine revelation to produce the Torah." The Torah was simply too different from the rest of the world, too against man's nature, to have been solely man-made.

the fact that the Torah declares homosexuality a capital offense may mean that homosexuality is no more grave an offense than some violation of the Sabbath. And since we no longer condemn people who violate the Sabbath, why continue to condemn people who engage in homosexual acts?

The answer is that we do not derive our approach toward homosexuality from the fact that the Torah made it a capital offense. We learn it from the fact that the Bible makes a moral statement about homosexuality. It makes no statement about gathering wood on the Sabbath. The Torah uses its strongest term of censure—"abomination"—to describe homosexuality. It is the Bible's moral evaluation of homosexuality that distinguishes homosexuality from other offenses, capital or otherwise. As Professor Greenberg, who betrays no inclination toward religious belief, writes, "When the word *toevah* ("abomination") does appear in the Hebrew Bible, it is sometimes applied to idolatry, cult prostitution, magic, or divination, and is sometimes used more generally. *It always conveys great repugnance*" (emphasis added). Moreover, the Bible lists homosexuality together with child sacrifice among the "abominations" practiced by the peoples living in the land about to be conquered by the Jews. The two are certainly not morally equatable, but they both characterized a morally primitive world that Judaism set out to destroy. They both characterized a way of life opposite to the one that God demanded of Jews (and even of non-Jews—homosexuality is among the sexual offenses that constitute one of the "seven laws of the children of Noah" that Judaism holds all people must observe). Finally, the Bible adds a unique threat to the Jews if they engage in homosexuality and the other offenses of the Canaanites: "You will be vomited out of the land" just as the non-Jews who practice these things were vomited out of the land. Again, as Greenberg notes, this threat "suggests that the offenses were considered serious indeed."

Choose Life

Judaism cannot make peace with homosexuality because homosexuality denies many of Judaism's most fundamental principles. It denies life, it denies God's expressed desire that men and women cohabit, and it denies the root structure that Judaism wishes for all mankind, the family.

If one can speak of Judaism's essence, it is contained in the Torah statement, "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse, and you shall choose life." Judaism affirms whatever enhances life, and it opposes or separates whatever represents death. Thus, a Jewish priest (*cohen*) is to concern himself only with life. Perhaps alone among world religions, Judaism forbade its priests to come into contact with the dead. To cite some other examples, meat (death) is separated from milk (life); menstruation (death) is separated from sexual intercourse (life); carnivorous animals (death) are separated from vegetarian, kosher, animals (life). This is probably why the Torah juxtaposes child sacrifice with male homosexuality. Though they are not morally analogous, both represent death: one deprives children of life, the other prevents their having life. This parallelism is present in the Talmud: "He who does not engage in propagation of the race is as though he had shed blood."

GOD'S FIRST DECLARATION about man (the human being generally, and the male specifically) is, "It is not good for man to be alone." Now, presumably, in order to solve the problem of man's aloneness, God could have made another man, or even a community of men. But instead God solved man's aloneness by creating one other person, a woman—not a man, not a few women, not a community of men and women. Man's solitude was not a function of his not being with other people; it was a function of his being without a woman. Of course, Judaism also holds that women need men. But both the Torah statement and Jewish law have been more adamant about men marrying than about women marrying. Judaism is worried about what happens to men and to society when men do not channel their passions into marriage. In this regard, the Torah and Judaism were highly prescient: the overwhelming majority of violent crimes are committed by unmarried men. Thus, male celibacy, a sacred state in many religions, is a sin in Judaism. In order to become fully human, male and female must join. In the words of Genesis, "God created the human . . . male and female He created them." The union of male and female is not merely some lovely ideal; it is the essence of the Jewish outlook on becoming human. To deny it is tantamount to denying a primary purpose of life.

Few Jews need to be informed of the centrality of family to Jewish life. Throughout their history, one of the

Jews' most distinguishing characteristics has been their commitment to family life. To Judaism, the family—not the nation, and not the individual—is to be the fundamental unit, the building block of society. Thus, when God blesses Abraham, He says, "Through you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

The Enemy of Women

Yet another reason for Judaism's opposition to homosexuality is homosexuality's negative effect on women.

One of the most remarkable aspects of contemporary society's acceptance of homosexuality is the lack of outcry from and on behalf of women. I say "outcry" because there is certainly much quiet crying by women over this issue, as heard in the frequent lament from single women that so many single men are gay. But the major reason for anyone concerned with women's equality to be concerned with homosexuality is the direct correlation between the prevalence of male homosexuality and the relegation of women to a low social role. The improvement of the condition of women has only occurred in Western civilization, the civilization least tolerant of homosexuality.

In societies where men sought out men for love and sex, women were relegated to society's periphery. Thus, for example, ancient Greece, which elevated homosexuality to an ideal, was characterized by "a misogynistic attitude," in Norman Sussman's words. Homosexuality in ancient Greece, he writes, "was closely linked to an idealized concept of the man as the focus of intellectual and physical activities. . . . The woman was seen as serving but two roles. As a wife, she ran the home. As a courtesan, she satisfied male sexual desires." Classicist Eva Keuls describes Athens at its height of philosophical and artistic greatness as "a society dominated by men who sequester their wives and daughters, denigrate the female role in reproduction, erect monuments to the male genitalia, have sex with the sons of their peers. . . ."

In medieval France, when men stressed male-male love, it "implied a corresponding lack of interest in women. In the *Song of Roland*, a French mini-epic given its final form in the late eleventh or twelfth century, women appear only as shadowy, marginal figures: 'The deepest signs of affection in the poem, as well as in similar ones, appear in the love of man for man. . . .'" The women of Arab society, wherein male homosexuality has been widespread, remain in a notably low state in the modern world. This may be a coincidence, but common sense suggests a linkage. So, too, in traditional Chinese culture, the low state of women has been linked to widespread homosexuality. As a French physician reported from China in the nineteenth century, "Chinese women were such docile, homebound dullards that the men, like those of ancient Greece, sought courtesans and boys."

While traditional Judaism is not as egalitarian as many

late-twentieth-century Jews would like, it was Judaism—very much through its insistence on marriage and family and its rejection of infidelity and homosexuality—that initiated the process of elevating the status of women. While other cultures were writing homoerotic poetry, the Jews wrote the *Song of Songs*, one of the most beautiful poems depicting male-female sensual love ever written.

A FINAL REASON for opposition to homosexuality is the homosexual “lifestyle.” While it is possible for male homosexuals to live lives of fidelity comparable to those of heterosexual males, it is usually not the case. While the typical lesbian has had fewer than ten lovers, the typical male homosexual in America has had over 500. In general, neither homosexuals nor heterosexuals confront the fact that it is this male homosexual lifestyle, more than the specific homosexual act, that disturbs most people. This is probably why less attention is paid to female homosexuality. When male sexuality is not controlled, the consequences are considerably more destructive than when female sexuality is not controlled. Men rape. Women do not. Men, not women, engage in fetishes. Men are more frequently consumed by their sex drive, and wander from sex partner to sex partner. Men, not women, are sexually sadistic. The indiscriminate sex that characterizes much of male homosexual life represents the antithesis of Judaism’s goal of elevating human life from the animal-like to the God-like.

The Jewish Sexual Ideal

Judaism has a sexual ideal—marital sex. All other forms of sexual behavior, though not equally wrong, deviate from that ideal. The further they deviate, the stronger Judaism’s antipathy to that behavior. Thus, there are varying degrees of sexual wrongs. There is, one could say, a continuum of wrong which goes from premarital sex, to celibacy, to adultery, and on to homosexuality, incest, and bestiality. We can better understand why Judaism rejects homosexuality if we first understand its attitudes toward these other unacceptable practices. For example, normative Judaism forcefully rejects the claim that never marrying is an equally valid lifestyle to marriage. Judaism states that a life without marrying is a less holy, less complete, and a less Jewish life. Thus, only a married man was allowed to be a high priest, and only a man who had children could sit as a judge on the Jewish supreme court, the Sanhedrin. To put it in modern terms, while an unmarried rabbi can be the spiritual leader of a congregation, he would be dismissed by almost any congregation if he publicly argued that remaining single were as Jewishly valid a way of life as marriage. Despite all this, no Jew could argue that single Jews must be ostracized from Jewish communal life. Single Jews are to be

loved and included in Jewish family, social, and religious life.

These attitudes toward not marrying should help clarify Judaism’s attitude toward homosexuality. First, homosexuality contradicts the Jewish ideal. Second, it cannot be held to be equally valid. Third, those publicly committed to it may not serve as public Jewish role models. But fourth, homosexuals must be included in Jewish communal life and loved as fellow human beings and as Jews. Still, we cannot open the Jewish door to non-marital sex. For once one argues that any non-marital form of sexual behavior is the moral equal of marital sex, the door is opened to all other forms of sexual expression. If consensual homosexual activity is valid, why not consensual incest between adults? Why is sex between an adult brother and sister more objectionable than sex between two adult men? If a couple agrees, why not allow consensual adultery? Once non-marital sex is validated, how can we draw any line? Why shouldn’t gay liberation be followed by incest liberation?

Accepting homosexuality as the social, moral, or religious equivalent of heterosexuality would constitute the first modern assault on the extremely hard-won, millennia-old battle for a family-based, sexually monogamous society. While it is labeled as “progress,” the acceptance of homosexuality would not be new at all.

Again, Judaism’s sexual ideals, especially its opposition to homosexuality, rendered Jews different from the earliest times to the present. As early as the second century BCE, Jewish writers were noting the vast differences between Jewish sexual and family life and that of their non-Jewish neighbors. In the *Syballine Oracles*, written by an Egyptian Jew probably between 163 and 45 BCE, the author compared Jews to the other nations: The Jews “are mindful of holy wedlock, and they do not engage in impious intercourse with male children, as do Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Romans, specious Greece and many nations of others, Persians and Galatians and all Asia.” And in our times, sex historian Arno Karlen wrote that according to the sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, “Homosexuality was phenomenally rare among Orthodox Jews.”

Moral and Psychological Questions

To all the arguments offered against homosexuality, the most frequent response is: But homosexuals have no choice. To many people this claim is so emotionally powerful that no further reflection seems necessary. How can we oppose actions that people have not chosen? The question is much more instructive when posed in a more specific way: Is homosexuality biologically programmed from birth, or is it socially and psychologically induced? There is clearly no one answer that accounts for all homosexuals. What can be said for certain is that some homosexuals were started along that path in early childhood, and that most homosexuals, having had sex with

both sexes, have chosen homosexuality along with or in preference to heterosexuality.

We can say "chosen" because the vast majority of gay men have had intercourse with women. As a four-year study of 128 gay men by a UCLA professor of psychology revealed, "More than 92 percent of the gay men had dated a woman at some time, two-thirds had sexual intercourse with a woman." As of now, the one theory we can rule out is that homosexuals are biologically programmed to be homosexual. Despite an understandably great desire on the part of many to prove it (and my own inclination to believe it), there is simply no evidence that homosexuality is biologically determined. Of course, one could argue homosexuality is biologically determined, but that society, if it suppresses it enough, causes most homosexuals to suppress their homosexuality. Yet, if this argument is true, if society can successfully repress homosexual inclinations, it can lead to either of two conclusions—that society should do so for its own sake, or that society should not do so for the individual's sake. Once again we come back to the question of values. Or one could argue that people are naturally (i.e., biologically) bisexual (and given the data I have seen on human sexuality, this may well be true). Ironically, however, if this is true, the argument that homosexuality is chosen is strengthened, not weakened. For if we all have bisexual tendencies, and most of us successfully suppress our homosexual impulses, then obviously homosexuality is frequently both surmountable and chosen. And once again we are brought back to our original question of what sexual ideal society ought to foster—heterosexual marital or homosexual sex.

I conclude:

1. Homosexuality may be biologically induced (though no evidence of this exists), but is certainly psychologically ingrained (perhaps indelibly) at a very early age in some cases. Presumably, these individuals always have had sexual desires only for their own sex. Historically speaking, they appear to constitute a minority among homosexuals.

2. In many cases, homosexuality appears not to be indelibly ingrained. These individuals have gravitated toward homosexuality from heterosexual experiences, or have always been bisexual, or live in a society that encourages homosexuality. As Greenberg, who is very sympathetic to gay liberation, writes, "Biologists who view most traits as inherited, and psychologists who think sexual preferences are largely determined in early childhood, may pay little attention to the finding that many gay people have had extensive heterosexual experience."

3. Therefore, the evidence overwhelmingly leads to this conclusion: By and large, it is society, not the individual, that chooses whether homosexuality will be widely practiced. A society's values, much more than individuals' tendencies, determine the extent of homosexuality in that society. Thus, we can have great sympathy for the exclusively homosexual individual while strongly opposing so-

cial acceptance of homosexuality. In this way we retain both our hearts and our values.

Is Homosexuality an Illness?

Society, in short, can consider homosexuality right or wrong whether or not it is chosen. Society can also consider homosexuality normal or ill whether or not it is chosen.

Though the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, did not think that in and of itself homosexuality meant that a person was sick, according to his standards of psychosexual development, he considered homosexuality to be an arrested development. But until 1973, psychiatry did consider homosexuality an illness. To cite one of countless examples, Dr. Leo Rangell, a psychoanalyst, wrote that he had "never seen a male homosexual who did not also turn out to have a phobia of the vagina."

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from its official listing of mental illnesses, its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders*. Gay activists have used this as a major weapon in their battle for societal acceptance of homosexuality. But, for many reasons, the APA decision has not resolved the question of whether homosexuality is an illness, and the question may well be unresolvable.

Given the mixed moral and judgmental record of psychiatry, especially since the 1960s, all one may conclude from the APA's decision to remove homosexuality from its list of illnesses is that while it may have been right, organized psychiatry has given us little reason to trust its judgment on politically charged issues. For these reasons, the fact that the American Psychiatric Association no longer labels homosexuality an illness should not persuade anyone that it is not. Given the subjective nature of the term "mental illness," given the power of gay activists, and given the political views of the APA leadership (as opposed to most of its members), the association's vote means nothing to many observers.

IF SOCIAL PRESSURES forced psychiatrists in the past to label homosexuality an illness, how can we be certain that social pressures in our time have not forced them to label it normal? Are present-day psychiatrists less influenced by societal pressures than were their predecessors? I doubt it. So, putting aside psychiatry's ambivalence about homosexuality, let us pose the question in this way: "Assuming there is such a thing as normal, is it normal for a man to be incapable of making love to a woman (or vice versa)?"

Presumably, there are only three possible answers:

1. Most homosexuals *can* make love to a woman, but they find such an act repulsive or simply prefer making love to men.

2. Yes, it is normal.

3. No, it is not normal.

If the first response is offered, then we have to acknowledge that the homosexual has chosen his homosexuality. And we may then ask whether someone who chooses to love the same sex rather than the opposite sex has made this decision from a psychologically healthy basis. If the second response is offered, each of us is free to assess this answer for him or herself. I, for one, do not believe that a man's inability to make love to a woman can be labeled normal. While such a man may be a healthy and fine human being in every other area of life, and quite possibly more kind, industrious, and ethical than many heterosexuals, in this one area he cannot be called normal. And the reason for considering homosexuality abnormal is not its minority status. Even if the majority of men became incapable of making love to women, it would still not be normal. Men are designed to make love to women, and vice versa. The eye provides an appropriate analogy: If the majority of the population became blind, blindness would still be abnormal. The eye was designed to see. That is why I choose the third response—that homosexuality is unhealthy. This is said, however, with the understanding that in the psychological arena, "illness" can be a description of one's values rather than of objective science (which may simply not exist in this area).

Man and Woman He Made Them

To a world which divided human sexuality between penetrator and penetrated, Judaism said, "You are wrong—sexuality is to be divided between male and fe-



male." To a world which saw women as baby producers unworthy of romantic and sexual attention, Judaism said, "You are wrong—women must be the sole focus of men's erotic love." To a world which said that sensual feelings and physical beauty were life's supreme goods, Judaism said, "You are wrong—ethics and holiness are the supreme goods." A thousand years before Roman emperors kept naked boys, Jewish kings were commanded to write and keep a *sefer torah*, a book of the Torah.

In all my research on this subject, nothing moved me more than the Talmudic law that Jews were forbidden to sell slaves or sheep to non-Jews, lest the non-Jews engage in homosexuality and bestiality. That was the world in which rabbis wrote the Talmud, and in which, earlier, the Bible was written. Asked what is the single greatest revelation I have derived from all my researches, I always respond, "That there had to have been divine revelation to produce the Torah." The Torah was simply too different from the rest of the world, too against man's nature, to have been solely man-made.

The creation of Western civilization has been a terribly difficult and unique thing. It took a constant delaying of gratification, and a re-channeling of natural instincts; and these disciplines have not always been well received. There have been numerous attempts to undo Judæo-Christian civilization, not infrequently by Jews (through radical politics) and Christians (through anti-Semitism).

The bedrock of this civilization, and of Jewish life, has been the centrality and purity of family life. But the family is not a natural unit so much as it is a *value* that must be cultivated and protected. The Greeks assaulted the family in the name of beauty and Eros. The Marxists assaulted the family in the name of progress. And today, gay liberation assaults it in the name of compassion and equality. I understand why gays would do this. Life has been miserable for many of them. What I have not understood was why Jews or Christians would join the assault. I do now. They do not know what is at stake. At stake is our civilization.

IT IS VERY EASY to forget what Judaism has wrought and what Christians have created in the West. But those who loathe this civilization never forget. The radical Stanford University faculty and students who recently chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western civ has got to go," were referring to much more than their university's syllabus. And no one is chanting that song more forcefully than those who believe and advocate that sexual behavior doesn't play a role in building or eroding civilization. The acceptance of homosexuality as the equal of heterosexual marital love signifies the decline of Western civilization as surely as the rejection of homosexuality and other non-marital sex made the creation of this civilization possible. ✦