

Why we must make a commitment

VIEWPOINT

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IN *Parsha Achrei*, in Verses 6 to 20, forbidden relationships between males and females are listed. Verse 21 relates to presenting children to Molech, who was an idol in Caanan. Sforno explains that Molech is more contemptible than other forms of idol worship because he brings his children to a foreign idol, although he brings sacrifices to God's Temple at the same time. "It demonstrated people's readiness to debase future generations to satisfy their own passions."

In Verse 22, it says you shall not lie with a man as with a woman. The commentator explains that it is an abomination because the sexual activity described previously was normal, although not permitted. Homosexuality, however, is not natural and is therefore an abomination. But if no-one would want to do it, there would be no reason for the prohibition. It is because there are people who give in to passions and lusts that there is a prohibition against it. Every time someone has the urge to break the rule and doesn't, he has done the right thing. Every time he gives in to that urge, he has done the wrong thing.

The Portion continues to say that if Jews do any of these deeds, they will be expelled from Israel, just as inhabitants were expelled because they contaminated the land through their actions. These actions were prohibited both for Jews and non-Jews. If we wish to retain the Land of Israel, our actions have to match that desire. If



we don't, we will lose the land, just as we lost it twice before. We can already see it happening as we give up parts of the land to the Palestinians. And they are asking for Jerusalem next!

The problem with the debate in the *Australian Jewish News* has been that no-one has articulated what the real problem is. The problem is not whether we do or don't support homosexuals. Naturally, as Jews, we don't. By the same token, we don't support discrimination against any group based on sexuality (or religion or race or colour). But we do not condone their actions either. Because Jews have been discriminated against for so long, we naturally do not like to see discrimination against any group *per se*.

This is why the NSW Board of Jewish Deputies

is against discrimination against Aborigines — but it would be better for it to occupy itself with the future of Jews, rather than of all other oppressed peoples.

We have to face the fact that there are homosexuals. But we should not be proud that there are members of the Jewish community who break the rules, or who are jeopardising the future generations of our people by not following what was given to us as an eternal heritage.

It is not enough to pay lip-service to the continuity of the community and Israel. Where are the funds to let every Jewish child in Sydney have a Jewish education, so that we can make up our own minds in an informed manner? Where are the funds for education of the Jewish child who doesn't live in Sydney?

Where are the funds to let every Jewish child in Sydney have a Jewish education, so that at least we can make up our own minds in an informed manner?

Most Jewish educational institutes are wallowing in debt. But there is plenty of money in the community for it to be overcome. To achieve that, we have to make a commitment to live as Jews are obliged to, not how they would like to live, by throwing off those concepts and ideas which have kept Jewry alive for 3300 years, despite those who tried to eradicate us.

To be Jewish means keeping as many of the

laws as well as one can. It's not a case of choosing which one I like and will keep and which I don't like and will not keep. It's a package. And if you don't keep it, the important thing is to make a commitment that you will try to keep as many laws as are applicable to you and which are within your capabilities. And that includes the laws relating to diet (kashrut), Sabbath and Yom Tov, and all the other laws like praying and being good. If you don't know the rules, go to your rabbi and he will advise you. No one is perfect; the important thing is to try your best. What we will be judged on will be based on what we achieve relative to our capabilities, not on the results. Thus, everyone has an equal chance.

To the letter-writer who pointed out that 75 percent of the members of the community are at Orthodox congregations and 25 percent at Reform, but that many in Orthodox congregations don't keep the commandments — he was right. But at least those who are with Orthodox congregations, even if they don't keep everything, know where their truth is.

Unless there is a change of heart, the odds are that our descendants will not lead Jewish lives. And we will achieve by our own hands that which our enemies throughout the ages attempted — the elimination of Jews. Don't think it can't happen. According to Rashi, four out of every five Jews living in Egypt before the Exodus stayed there and died in the plague of darkness. Those who wish to live by the precepts given to us on Mount Sinai over 3300 years ago will try to continue living by those precepts. Not because they are old, but because they are eternal. And they will exist well after the current trends and fads have passed into oblivion.

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