CHAPTER-3

HOMOSEXUALITY AND RELIGION

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Religion plays an important role in shaping one’s ideology, beliefs, customs, traditions and to some extent overall outlook of a person, community, as well as a country. The world is full of religious & cultural diversity. Our beliefs, pride & prejudices are also governed to some extent, by religion apart from other factors such as social, economical & political reasoning. Religion lays down the rules for morality. Morality lays down rule of sexuality & civility. Civility & sexuality further classifies behavior as normative & non-normative.

Homosexuality is considered as non-normative behavior & the genesis for this belief is that all major religion of the world is against homosexuality.

*This chapter is written with an aim to have an insight into various religions only with the purpose to introspect & discover their stand on homosexuality.*

3.1 HOMOSEXUALITY & HINDUISM

3.1.1 INTRODUCTION- HINDUISM AS A RELIGION

Hinduism is the oldest & third largest religion of the world, after Christianity & Islam. It comprises of several and varied systems of philosophy, belief, and rituals. Hinduism originated around the Indus Valley near the River Indus in modern day Pakistan. Most Hindus believe in a Supreme God, whose qualities and forms are represented by the multitude of deities which emanate from him. Hindus believe that
existence is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by Karma. Hindus believe that the soul passes through a cycle of successive lives and its next incarnation is always dependent on how the previous life was lived. The main Hindu texts are the Vedas and their supplements (books based on the Vedas). Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning 'knowledge'. These scriptures do not mention the word 'Hindu' but many scriptures discuss dharma, which can be rendered as 'code of conduct', 'law', or 'duty'. Unlike most other religions, Hinduism has no single founder, contains multiple scriptures which are considered as source of Law, such as Dharamshastras, Dharmasutras, Vedas, etc but has no common agreed set of teachings.

3.1.2 HOMOSEXUALITY AND HINDUISM

Homosexuality has not been explicitly mentioned in the religious texts central to Hinduism, the largest religion in India. Our Dharamshastras & Dharmasutras have no express rules or teachings on homosexuality. Though Vedas have interpreted several issues in a peculiar way. Rig-Veda, one of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism says ‘Vikruti Evam Prakriti’ (what seems un-natural is also natural), which some scholars believe recognizes the cyclical constancy of homosexual/transsexual dimensions of human life, like all forms of universal diversities.

3.1.3 HINDU RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES

It is interesting to observe that The Hindu God Shiva is often represented as Ardhanarishvara, with a dual male and female nature. One of the Evidence is a sculpture from the Elephanta Caves near Mumbai. (as shown in picture)

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The minimizing of differences between male and female figures finds its culmination in the Ardhanareshwar (half man, half woman) form of the great god Shiva who is portrayed with the secondary sexual characteristics of both sexes. The Ardhanareshwar is the cultural ideal which makes a Hindu invoke a deity not on its own but as a couple.

In the Hindu narrative tradition, stories of gods and mortals changing gender occur. Sometimes they also engage in sexual activities as different reincarnated genders. Homosexual and transgender Hindus commonly identify with and worship the various Hindu deities connected with gender diversity such as Ardhanarishvara (the hermaphrodite form of Shiva); Aravan (a hero whom Krishna married after becoming a woman); Ayyappa (a god born from the union of Shiva and Mohini, a female incarnation of Vishnu); Bahuchara-devi (a goddess connected with trans-sexuality and eunuchism); Bhagavati-devi (a Hindu goddess associated with cross dressing); Bhagiratha Maharaja (an Indian king born of two female parents); Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (an incarnation of Radha and Krishna combined); Chandi-Chamunda (twin warrior goddesses); Gadadhara (an incarnation of Radha in male form); Gangamma-devi (a goddess connected with cross dressing and disguises); Harihara

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81 Kakkar, Sudhir. "We invoke a deity not on its own but as a couple", Pg.11, Hindustan times, 13 March, 2011.
(Shiva and Vishnu combined); Kartikeya; Vallabhavardhana, Yellamma-devi and countless others.\(^82\)

3.1.3.1 MAHABHARATA

In the Mahabharata, as the result of a curse given to him, The Arjuna compelled to honor the God and takes a "vow of eunuchism," that is, to live as the third sex for a year: "O lord of the Earth, I will declare myself as one of the "neuter" sex. O monarch, it is, indeed difficult to hide the marks of the bowstring on my arms. I will, however, cover both my cicatrized arms with bangles. Wearing brilliant rings on my ears and conch-bangles on my wrists and causing a braid to hang down from my head, I shall, O king, appear as one of the third sex, Vrihannala by name."\(^83\)

Another important character, Shikhandi, was born female, but raised as a boy. Shikhandi's father, King Drupada, had begged the god Mahadeva (Shiva) to give him a son, to which Mahadeva replied: "Thou shalt have a child who will be a female and male. Desist, O king, it will not be otherwise." Thus as a result of blessing by Mahadeva a son was born to King Drupada. When Sikhandi comes of age and marries, Shikhandi’s wife soon came to know that Sikhandi was a woman like herself, refusing him. Fleeing from the unnamed wife's enraged father, Sikhandi encounters a male Yaksha (nature spirit) in the forest, and they agree to swap sexes. Now in a male body, Sikhandi proves to his father-in-law that he is truly male, after the latter sends "a number of young ladies of great beauty" to Sikhandi to test him. They report back that he is "a powerful person of the masculine sex," and Sikhandi becomes a skilled and famous warrior, playing a pivotal role in the war.\(^84\)

3.1.3.2 RAMAYANA

In some versions of the Krittivasa Ramayana, the most popular Bengali text on the pastimes of Lord Ramachandra (an incarnation of Vishnu), there is an interesting narrative of two queens that conceived a child together. When the famous king of the

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\(^83\) Ibid.

\(^84\) Ibid.
Sun Dynasty, Maharaja Dilipa, died, the demi-gods become concerned that he did not have a son to continue his line. Lord Shiva therefore appeared before the king's two widowed queens and commanded them, "You two make love together and by my blessings you will bear a beautiful son." The two wives, with great affection for each other, executed Shiva's order until one of them conceived a child. Unfortunately, however, the child was born boneless, but by the blessings of a sage, Astavakra, the child was restored to full health and continued the dynasty. Astavakra accordingly named the child ‘Bhagiratha’ – he who was born from two vulvas. Bhagiratha later became a king and is credited with bringing the Ganges River down to earth through his austerities.

3.1.3.3 VEDAS

The Vedas, which form the foundation of Hinduism for many, do not refer explicitly to homosexuality, but Rig Veda says ‘Vikruti Evam Prakriti’ (perversity/diversity is what nature is all about, or, what seems un-natural is also natural), which some scholars believe recognizes the cyclical constancy of homosexual/transsexual dimensions of human life, like all forms of universal diversities. People of a third gender (tritiya-prakriti), not fully men or women, are mentioned here and there throughout Hindu texts such as the Puranas but are not specifically defined. In general they are portrayed as effeminate men, often cowardly, and with no desire for women. Modern readers often draw parallels between these and modern stereotypes of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender sexual identities.

3.1.3.4 MANU SMRITI

The Manusmriti, which lists the oldest codes of conduct that were proposed to be followed by a Hindu, does include mention of homosexual practices, but only as something to be regulated. Though homosexuality was considered a part of sexual practices, it was not always well accepted. There were punishments prescribed for homosexual behaviour. For instance, the verse referring to sexual relations between an older woman and a virgin (woman) reads “A woman who pollutes a damsel (virgin)

85 Ibid.
shall instantly have (her head) shaved or two fingers cut off, and be made to ride (through the town) on a donkey”, suggesting a severe punishment. However, the verse referring to sexual relations between two virgins suggests a relatively milder punishment, “...a damsel who pollutes (another) damsel must be fined two hundred (panas), pay the double of her (nuptial) fee, and receive ten (lashes with a) rod”. These provisions, quoted out of context, seem homophobic, but in fact they are concerned not with the gender of the partners but with the loss of virginity that rendered a young woman unworthy of marriage. For instance, the punishment for a forced sex act between a man and a woman states “...if any man through insolence forcibly contaminates a maiden, two of his fingers shall be instantly cut off, and he shall pay a fine of six hundred (panas)”, which seems more severe in comparison to the punishment prescribed for the same act between two virgins. Sex between non-virgin women incurred a very small fine, while homosexual intercourse between men was sought to be censured by a prescription of a bath with one's clothes on, and a penance of "eating the five products of the cow and keeping a one-night fast"- the penance being a replacement of the traditional concept of homosexual intercourse resulting in a loss of caste. The discrepancy in treatment may have been due to the text's non-equal views on males and females, considering that the Manusmriti is the same scripture that has stated that the status of woman in the society is even lower than that of a man’s land, his cattle and other possessions.

For Brahmans and twice-born men, "causing an injury to a priest, smelling wine or things that are not to be smelled, crookedness, and sexual union with a man are traditionally said to cause loss of caste." In the same chapter, the atonement for twice-born men is a ritual bath: "A twice-born man who has intercourse with a male, or with a female in a cart drawn by oxen, in water, or in the day-time, shall bathe,

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86 ‘Manusmriti’, chapter 8, verse 370.
87 ‘Manusmriti’, chapter 8, verse 369.
88 ‘Manusmriti’, chapter 8, verse 367.
89 Vanita Ruth & Saleem Kidwai., ‘Same sex Love in India: Readings from literature and History’ pp.25 (2001)
90 ‘Manu smriti’, chapter 11, verse 68.
Here again, it can be noticed that the proscriptions are specifically for Brahmans and twice-born males; there is no mention in the Manu Smriti of punishment for homosexual behavior between males of the other classes.

The majority of sexual matters dealt with by the law books are heterosexual in nature, and the punishments prescribed for heterosexual transgressions are often more severe. For example, "A man who is not a Brahman ought to suffer death for adultery (samgrahana)"

The Manu Smriti also notes the biological origins of a third gender: "A male child is produced by a greater quantity of male seed, a female child by the prevalence of the female; if both are equal, a third-sex child [napumsaka] or boy and girl twins are produced; if either are weak or deficient in quantity, a failure of conception results." 92

3.1.3.5 NARADA SMRITI

The Narada Smriti, written around 400 CE, forbids the marriage of homosexual men (mukhebhaga – men who perform oral sex on other men) to women: "These four [irsyaka, sevyaka, vataretas, and mukhebhaga] are to be completely rejected as unqualified for marriage, even for a woman who has been raped." 93

3.1.3.6 KAMA SUTRA

The Kama Sutra is an ancient text dealing with Kama or desire (of all kinds) particularly sexual desires, which in Hindu thought is one of the four normative and spiritual goals of life. The Kama Sutra is the earliest extant and most important work in the Kama Shastra tradition of Sanskrit literature. It was compiled by the philosopher Vatsyana around the 4th century, from earlier texts, and describes homosexual practices in several places, as well as a range of sex/gender 'types'.

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91 'Manu smriti', chapter 11, verse 175.
92 'Manu smriti', chapter 3, verse 49.
93 'Narada smriti', chapter 1, (NS 1.12.15)
The author describes techniques by which masculine and feminine types of the third sex (tritiya-prakriti), as well as women, perform fellatio. The Second Part, Ninth Chapter of Kama Sutra specifically describes two kinds of men that we would recognize today as masculine- and feminine-type homosexuals but which are mentioned in older, Victorian British translations as simply ‘eunuchs’. The chapter describes their appearances – feminine types dressed up as women whereas masculine types maintained muscular physiques and grew small beards, moustaches, etc. – and their various professions as masseurs, barbers and prostitutes are all described. Such homosexual men were also known to marry. According to the Kama Sutra, there are also third-sex citizens, sometimes greatly attached to one another and with complete faith in one another, who get married together. (KS 2.9.36). In the ‘Jayamangala’ of Yashodhara, an important twelfth-century commentary on the Kama Sutra, it is also stated: "Citizens with this kind of homosexual inclination, who renounce women and can do without them willingly because they love one another, get married together, bound by a deep and trusting friendship."

After describing fellatio as performed between men of the third sex, the Sutra then mentions the practice as an act between men and women, where in the homosexuals acts are scorn, especially for Brahmans. The Kama Sutra also refers to Svairini, who are independent or liberated women, the one who refuses a husband and has relations in her own home or in other houses. In a famous commentary on the Kama Sutra from the 12th century, Jayamangala explains: "A woman known for her independence, with no sexual bars, and acting as she wishes, is called Svairini. She makes love with her own kind. She strokes her partner at the point of union, which she kisses."

3.1.3.7 VIEWS OF HINDU WRITERS ON MYTHOLOGY

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95 Burton, Richard., ‘The Kamasutra of Auparishataka”(Translation) chapter Nine (1883)
97 Burton, Richard., ‘The Kamasutra of Vatsayana’ (Translation) Part 2, ch.08. (1883)
98 Ibid.
Historians Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, in their pioneering book, *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, for the first time compiled extracts from Indian texts, from ancient to modern times, including many Hindu texts, translated from 15 Indian languages. In their accompanying analytical essays, they also demonstrated that Hindu texts have discussed and debated same-sex desire from the earliest times, in tones ranging from critical to non-judgmental to playful and celebratory.

Historian Devdutt Pattanaik summarizes the place of homosexuality in Hindu literature as follows: "homosexuality was not part of the mainstream in Hinduism; its existence was acknowledged but not approved." Other Historians also assert that homosexuality was not approved for Brahmans or the twice-born but accepted among other castes.

In his book, *Tritiya Prakriti: People of the Third Sex*, Vaishnava monk Amara Das Wilhelm demonstrates how ancient expressions of Hinduism accommodated homosexual and transgender persons much more positively than we see in India today. It was claimed by the historians in their research that ‘Early Vedic teachings stressed responsible family life and asceticism but also tolerated different types of sexualities within general society.’

3.1.3.8 OTHERS

There are other ancient Hindu/Sanskrit texts that refer to homosexuality. The *Sushruta Samhita*, for example, a highly-respected Hindu medical text dating back to at least 600 B.C., mentions two different types of homosexual men (*kumbhika* – men who take the passive role in anal sex; and *Asekya* – men who devour the semen of other men) as well as transgender (*sandha* – men with the qualities, behavior and speech of

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women).\textsuperscript{102} It also states that men who behave like women, or women who behave like men, are determined as such at the time of their conception in the womb.\textsuperscript{103} The Sushrta Samhita also mentions the possibility of two women uniting and becoming pregnant as a result of the mingling of their sexual fluids. It states that the child born of such a union will be "boneless." Such a birth is indeed described in the Krittivasa Ramayana of South India.

Other texts list the various types of men who are impotent with women (known in Sanskrit as \textit{sandha, kliba, napumsaka}, and \textit{panda}). The ‘\textit{Sabda kalpadruma}’ Sanskrit dictionary, for instance, lists twenty types, as does the \textit{Kamatantra} and \textit{Smriti-Ratnavali} of \textit{Vacaspati} (14th century). The Narada Smriti similarly lists fourteen different types. Included among the lists are transgender (\textit{sandha}), the intersexed (\textit{nisarga}), and three different types of homosexual men (\textit{mukhebhaga, kumbhika and asekya}). Such texts demonstrate that third-sex terms like sandha and napumsaka actually refer to many different types of "men who are impotent with women," and that simplistic definitions such as ‘\textit{eunuch}’ or ‘\textit{neuter}’ may not always be accurate and in some cases totally incorrect. In his article Homosexuality and Hinduism, Arvind Sharma expresses his doubt over the common English translation of words like kiblah into "eunuch" as follows: "The limited practice of castration in India raises another point significant for the rest of the discussion, namely, whether rendering a word such as "kliba" as "eunuch" regularly is correct.\textsuperscript{104}

\textbf{3.1.4 CONCLUSION}

From the briefed study of the available literature on Hindu mythology, it can be concluded that sexual diversity among humans, in varied forms of homosexuality is acknowledged in many Hindu religious texts and documents, but not at all approved or


sanctioned by them. The Hindus as of now in India in majority are against the homosexual practices and highly condemn them on various grounds such as being immoral, against religious teachings, god’s will etc. Even the Hindu Political leaders who belong to National party such as (BJP) also cleared their opposite stand on homosexuality claiming it to be against Indian morality and Hindu culture. Thus, from the majority’s perspective in India, homosexuality is adversely related to Hinduism.

3.2 HOMOSEXUALITY & ISLAM

3.2.1 ISLAM AS A RELIGION- AN INTRODUCTION

Islam is a monotheistic & Abrahamic Religion articulated by the Qur’an, a book considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God’s and by the teachings & normative example (called the Sunnah & composed of Hadith) of Mohammad, considered by them to be the last prophet of God. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim.

Muslim believes that god is one and the purpose of existence is to worship God. Muslim also believes that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed before many times throughout the world, including notably through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses & Jesus, whom they consider prophets.

The Islamic holy book Qur’an is considered to be the unaltered final revelation of God’s will. LGBT topics and Islam are influenced by both the cultural-legal history of the nations with a large Muslim population, along with how specific passage in the Qur’an and statements attributed to the prophet Mohammed are interpreted at large by various people.

105 BJP President Rajnath Singh cleared Party’s stand on Homosexuality after the Supreme Court of India overturned the Delhi high court judgment which has legalized consensual private sexual acts of adult homosexuals. He said “we support section 377 because we believe that homosexuality is an unnatural act and the court does not have to legalize or illegalize such a thing”, (pg. no.10, Hindustan times, Delhi (15th December, 2013)
Islamic shariat law is extracted from both the Qur’an and the Hadith. Islamic jurisprudence is expansions of the laws contained in Qur’an and the hadith by Islamic jurist.

In the care of homosexuality the thought or opinion differs between mainline school of Islamic jurisprudence, though the common consensus is that homosexuality is worthy of severe punishment. The Muslim population at large around the globe is against homosexuality, as it is against the religious teachings of Islam.

3.2.2 HOMOSEXUALITY AND QUR’AN

The Qur’an cites the story of people of Lot (also known as the people of Sodom & Gomorrah), destroyed by the wrath of Allah because they engaged in ‘lustful’ carnal acts between men.

The Qur’an contains seven references to ‘the people of Lut’, the biblical term, meaning of which is the residents of Sodom & Gomorrah, and their destruction by Allah is associated explicitly with their sexual practices.106

The following passages are taken from the Abdullah Yusuf All translation of the Qur’an.

'We also sent Lut: He said to his people: Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women; ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds. And his people gave no answer but this: they said, "Drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and purer."' (Qur’an 7:80-82)

"Of all the creatures in the world, will ye approach males, and leave those whom Allah has created for you to be your mates? Nay, ye are a people transgressing (all limits)! They said: "If thou desist not, 0 Lut! Thou wilt assuredly be cast out!" He said: "I do detest your doings:" "0 my Lord! Deliver me and my family from such things as they do!" So we delivered him and his family, - all except an old woman who lingered

behind. But the rest we destroyed utterly. We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not)! Verily in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe. And verily thy Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an 26:165-175)

"Would ye really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, ye are a people (grossly) ignorant! But his people gave no other answer but this: They said, "Drive out the followers of Lut from your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!" But we saved him and his family, except his wife; her We destined to be of those who lagged behind. And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): and evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but heeded not)!" (Qur’an 27:55-58)

"And (remember) Lut: behold, he said to his people: "Ye do commit lewdness, such as no people in Creation (ever) committed before you. Do ye indeed approach men, and cut off the highway? - and practice wickedness (even) in your councils?" But his people gave no answer but this: they said: "Bring us the Wrath of Allah if thou tellest the truth." (Qur’an, 29:28-29)

"If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, Take the evidence of four (Reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some (other) way. If two men among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both. If they repent and amend, leave them alone; for Allah is Oft-returning, most Merciful." (Qur’an 4:15-16)

Thus, the sins of the people of Lut became proverbial, and the Arabic words used for homosexual behavior (Liwat) and for a person who performs such acts (luti) both derive from its name. There is however, only one paragraph or passage in the Qur’an which can be interpreted as prescribing a legal position towards homosexual behavior.

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108 Qur’a’an 4:15-16 “If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until death do
3.2.3 HOMOSEXUALITY AND HADITH

Many Islamic jurists have referred to the collection of *hadith* (saying or actions of Prophet Mohammed) and *Seerah* (accounts of his life) for homosexual punishment.\(^{109}\)

*Ibn-al-jawazi*, a Muslim jurist claims that Mohammed has cussed sodomites in several hadith and recommends the death penalty for both the active & the passive partners in same-sex acts.\(^{110}\)

*Sunan-al-tirmidhi*, again reports Mohammed as having prescribed the death penalty for both the active and the passive partners. “Whoever you find committing the sin of the people of Lut (Lot), kill them both, one who does it and the one to whom it is done.”\(^{111}\)

The overall moral or theological principle is that who performs such actions (*luti*) challenges the harmony of God’s creation & is therefore a revolt against God.”\(^{112}\)

3.2.4 SCHOLAR’S AND SCHOLARSTIC VIEW ON HOMOSEXUALITY

In case of homosexuality the thought or opinion differs between the Islamic schools of jurisprudence, though common consensus is that homosexuality is worthy of severe punishment.

In Hanafi School of thought, the homosexuality is first punished through harsh beatings, and if he/she repeats the act, the death penalty is to be applied.

As for the Shafei School of thought, the homosexual receives the same punishment as adultery (if he/she is married) or fornication (if not married). This means that, if the

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\(^{111}\) Homosexuality & Lesbians: Sexual perversions, Fatwa on homosexuality from Islamonline.net

\(^{112}\) Wayne Danes, Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, New York, 1990
homosexual is married, he/she is stoned to death, while if single he/she is whipped 100 times.

Some scholars based on Qura’an and various hadith hold the opinion that the homosexuality be thrown from a high building or stoned to death as punishment for their ‘crimes’, but others scholars maintain that they should be imprisoned until death.

Eminent scholars of Islam such as Sheikh-ul-Islam, Imam Shafi and Imam Malik amongst other ruled that Islam disallowed homosexuality & ordained capital punishment for a person guilty of it.

Many scholars of Shariat or Islamic law interpret homosexuality as a punishable offence as well as a sin. There is no specific punishment prescribed, however this is left to the discretion of the local authorities on Islam.

It is also not reported that Prophet Mohammed has punished somebody for committing homosexuality; there is no authentic hadith reported from the prophet prescribing a punishment for the homosexuals, hadith scholars such as Abu Bukhari & others have impugned them.

Raphael Patai in his book the ‘Arabs mind’ has argued that among some Arabs and Turks homosexuality can be justified as an expression of power. The active homosexual act is considered as an assertion of one’s aggressive masculine superiority, while the acceptance of the role of the passive homosexual is considered extremely degrading & shameful because it casts the man or youth into a submissive feminine role.

3.2.5 GENERAL MUSLIM’S VIEW ON HOMOSEXUALITY

113 “So when our punishments came upon the people of Lut, we turned the city upside down & showered them with stones of baked clay, one after another”: Qura’an 11:82
114 Fatwa Bank : Death fall as punishment for homosexuality – Islam online,(retrieved: July 22, 2011)
116 ‘Threat to behead homosexuals: Shariah or Politics?’ By Mohammed El-Muctar-ElShingiti, Islamonline.net
Majority of Muslims around the globe are against practicing homosexuality and consider it as a sin as well as a crime. *The Saudi Ministry of Education text books for Islamic studies quoted in its 2007-2008 academic year series in centre of Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute:*

“Homosexuality is one of the most disgusting sins & greatest crimes. It is a vile perversion that goes against sound nature, and is one of the most corrupting & hideous sins. The punishment for homosexuality is death. Both the active & passive participants are to be killed whether or not they have previously had sexual intercourse in the context of a legal marriage. Some of the companions of the prophet stated that (the perpetrator) is to be burned with fire. It has also been said that he should be stoned, or thrown from a high place.”

On the contrary, only a minority of Muslims holds liberal viewpoint. A lesbian writer *Irshad Mangi* and academic author *Scott Kugle* argue that Islam does not condemn homosexuality.117

Author *Scott Kugle*, South Asian scholar *Ruth Vanita* & Muslim scholar & writer *Saleem Kidwai* has contended that ancient Islam has a rich history of homoerotic literature.118 It is found during research on homoerotic Islamic literature that chaste love of men for youth are reflected in the romantic love literature of poet such as *Abu Nowas* & many others.

In Islamic teachings, however, while homosexual desire and love might be accommodated, same-sex intercourse is prohibited as a violation of the natural boundaries set by Allah.

**3.2.6 LGBT MOVEMENT WITHIN ISLAM**

With the advance of modern liberal cross cultures in the world, especially in less religious countries a lot of LGBT activism is happening within Islam, as tolerance & acceptance is comparatively on rise day by day. Many NGO’s are working for the

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118 “Queer India” Gay historians, Ruth Vanita & Saleem Kidwai
advancement of rights of Gay Muslims. The Al-Fatiha foundation is one such organization which advances the cause of LGBT Muslims. It was founded in 1998 by Faisal Alam, a Pakistani American and is registered as a non-profit organization in the United States. These foundations accepts & consider homosexuality as natural either regarding Quranic verses as obsolete in the context of modern society, and states that Qura’an speaks out against homosexual lust & is silent on homosexual love.

In addition, a social support group for LGBT Muslims people (IMAAAN) is operational in United Kingdom. This group is founded by gay Pakistani activist for upliftment & advancement of rights of gay Muslims.

3.2.7 PRESENT LEGAL STATUS IN MODERN ISLAMIC NATIONS & IN INDIA

Homosexual relationship acts or behavior are currently forbidden in approximately 36 Islamic countries including Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Djibouti, Egypt, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan etc. with punishments including anything from a fine up to life imprisonment. Ten of those countries out of the thirty six impose the death penalty for homosexuals. They are Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and some states in Malaysia.

In case of India, native Muslims also have a clear and adverse stand on homosexuality. The common Muslim of India is against practicing homosexuality, as they believe that it is against commandment of Allah. Muslim experts such as kazis, maulvis etc. have a number of times released Fatwa (Muslim jurist’s order) disapproving and declaring

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homosexuality against Islam. Even the Muslim political leaders have also condemned homosexuality on public platform, calling it a mental disease.

On the other side of the coin, most international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch condemn laws that make homosexual relations between consenting adults a crime. Since 1994, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has also revealed that such laws violate the right to privacy guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights & the International covenant on civil & political rights.

However, most Muslim Nations (except Turkey) insist that such laws are necessary to preserve Islamic morality & culture. It’s ironical to observe that while homosexuals along with Human Rights activist are demanding same-sex marriages to be recognized in the west and are busy condemning anti gay activists around the globe, the ignored homosexuals of the Islamic east are left fighting for even the most basic of human rights, and in many cases, their lives too.

3.2.8 CONCLUSION

To conclude, Muslim Nations will find it hard to absorb, accept & tolerate homosexuality in their cultural & religious world. Muslim countries are at forefront when it comes to punishing homosexuals, due to their fanaticism, cultural and religious foundations etc. A far as India, is concerned, Muslims in India too have adverse reactions when accepting homosexuality in Indian legal and social system.

3.3 HOMOSEXUALITY & SIKHISM

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

121 The school of Islamic Studies ‘ Darul Islam at Deoband, Muzaffarnagar, UP, has released several Fatwa (Islamic Verdict) condemning homosexuality and issuing directions for all Muslims to discard and stay away such sexual practices as it is against the tenets of Islam.

122 Ghulam Nabi Azad the then Health Minister during UPA government in 2011 gave a controversial statement that Homosexuality is Unnatural and is a Major carrier of AIDS risking the life of MSM People. The statement was given at the national conventions of Zila Parishad on HIV/AIDS at Delhi in the presence of then PM Dr. Manmohan Singh & UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi. (Pg. no.05, Hindustan Times, Delhi, 05 July, 2011)
Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded during the 15th century in the Punjab Region of Indian sub-continent by Guru Nanak and continued to progress through the ten successive Sikh Gurus. (The eleventh and the last Guru being the Holy Scripture Guru Granth Sahib.) The Guru Granth Sahib is a collection of the Sikh Gurus writing that was compiled by the 5th Sikh Guru. It is the fifth largest organized religion in the world, with approximately 30 million adherents.

### 3.3.2 SEXUALITY WITHIN SIKH RELIGION

Sexuality seems to be something which is a part of the natural human state. However, excessive or uncontrolled sexual activity is referred to within Sikh Dharma as ‘Lust’ or ‘Kaam’, and ‘kaam’ within the Sikh context is deemed to be one of the five thieves of human body.

Thus, ‘Kaam’ is considered to be a destructive force and such it is to be overcome. Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Guru, has referred to ‘Kaam’ within the Guru Granth Sahib (at P. 1358):

“O Kaam!, you lead mortals to hell, you make them wonder through many reincarnations. You cheat the mind and pervade the three worlds. You destroy meditation, penance and virtue. You give fleeting pleasure, you make mortals weak, and you affect both the highest and the lowest of people.”

### 3.3.3 HOMOSEXUALITY & SIKHISM

Sikhism as one of the derivation of Hindu Religion holds similar view on homosexuality. Like Hinduism Sikhism has no specific teaching on homosexuality. The Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth SahibJi does not explicitly mention homosexuality; however marriage life is encouraged time & again in holy scripture of Sikhs. The holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib details what behavior is expected of all Sikhs. It is seemingly silent on the subject of homosexuality, while it frequently encourages married life.
The Sikh holy book Guru Granth Sahib does not mention homosexuality. The holy book focuses on what behavior is expected of all Sikhs. Views on homosexuality tend not to be a primary concern in Sikh teachings, as the universal goal of a Sikh is to have no hate or animosity to any person, regardless of race, caste, color, creed, gender or sexuality.

3.3.4 MODERN SIKHISM AND CONFLICTING VIEWS

The modern, open & liberal attitude towards homosexuality has made a dent in the traditional vessel of Sikhism. Today, Sikhs around the globe have divergent views on homosexuality. Majority of the Sikhs still believes in the conservative mindset regarding homosexuality. Pre-marital relationships & extra-marital relationship, both within same-sex or opposite sex does not hold any standing among Sikhs.

As far as same-sex marriage is concerned, marriage in Sikhism is seen as a union of souls. In Sikhism, the soul is seen as genderless, and the outward appearance of human beings (man, woman) is a temporary state. Still the majority of the Sikhs believe that since marriage between two same sexes is not mentioned. It is therefore not right. In 2005 Giani Joginder Singh Vedant of the Akal Takht (the temporal Sikh authority) has condemned homosexuality during a visit to Canada, reminding Sikh Canadian MPs, their religious duty to oppose same-sex marriage.123

In a report published in March 2005, Vedanti said: “The basic duty of Sikh MPs in Canada should be to support laws that stop the kind of practice homosexuality preaches, because there are thousands of Sikhs living in Canada, & to ensure that Sikhs do not fall prey to this practice.” However the representatives of the World Sikh Organization testify before the Senate of Canada in favor of the civil marriage act which legalized same-sex marriage in Canada.124

3.3.5 LGBT ACTIVISM AMONG SIKH & HOMOSEXUALITY IN INDIA

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Since 2009 (post Delhi High Court Judgment decriminalizing consensual homosexuality in India), India’s religious leaders has passed numerous resolutions against homosexuality in India. Majority of the Sikhs in India would actually be quite conservative in their views on homosexuality.

Jathedar Akal Takht (highest Sikh temporal seat), Gyani Gurbachan Singh has strongly disapproved the gay marriage as legalized by Delhi High Court. Gyani Gurbachan Singh has made assertions in favor of his argument that:

“In Sikh tenets & customs gay marriage has no room in Sikh Community and this is against the culture and ethics of Sikh Community”. He further elaborated that: “Sikh Communities would not tolerant gay marriages in Sikhs families and it would never be allowed to be solemnized in any of the Sikh Gurudwara (Sikh Shrine) all over the world.”

In tune with the religious verdict given by Gyani Gurbachan Singh the reality is that most Gurudwara in current time would be reluctant to conduct a same-sex marriage.

3.3.6 SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND SIKHISM

Marriage among Sikh is highly recommended & appreciated. Sikh Dharma teaches that all individuals should strive to live the life of a house holder or ‘Grasthi Jeevan’. Guru Nanak believed that celibacy was rejection of society and the world. Thus it was rejected within Sikh life-style, whereas a monogamous relationship within marriage is considered the ideal.

The Sikh marriage ceremony comprises of a hymn known as ‘Laavan’. It is important & interesting to know that the four verses of ‘Laavan’ are non-gender specific. The only references made to gender are of two human souls of the people entering as the bride and the groom. Though the use of gender within the ‘Laavan’ is metaphorical, and this is the reason why same-sex marriage advocates refer to this fact as favoring the LGBT activism within Sikh Community.

LGBT people claims that though Guru Granth Sahib does not mention homosexuality, but the ten Gurus were aware of homosexuality at the time that Guru Granth Sahib was compiled as there were a number of openly gay saints during the sixteenth & seventeenth century in the Indian sub-continent. One openly gay saint is Sarmad, who was a follower of Mian Mir, the Muslim Pir who is believed to have laid down the foundation stone of the ‘Harmandir Sahib’ (Golden Temple), the most important of Sikh Gurudwara, in 1588.127

LGBT argues that if ten living Gurus believed homosexuality to be sinful, then they would have addressed the subject within the Guru Granth Sahib, and the fact that it has been ignored suggests that the Gurus considered it to be inconsequential because the primary function of Dharma is to unite the individual soul which is genderless and the supreme soul which is also genderless. Thus the conclusion brought by the supporters of homosexuality ruler that since Laavan is non-gender specific, same-sex marriage is possible within Sikh Dharma.

3.3.7 CONCLUSION

To conclude, Sikhism as one of the derivation of Hinduism is still in majority against homosexuality. It is noteworthy to quote here that no Sikh LGBT leaders has been found or heard advocating for LGBT Rights. During my more than three years of research period, I have never encountered any Sikh LGBT activist in India. Rather Sikh Community jointly has taken an unwelcoming stand against legalization of homosexuality in India.

3.4 HOMOSEXUALITY & BUDDHISM

3.4.1 BUDDHISM- AN INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a religion that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, who is commonly known

127 www.sarbat.net (Retrieved on 22 July 2014)
as Buddha, meaning the ‘awakened one’. According to Buddhist traditions, the Buddha lived and taught in the eastern part of the Indian sub-continent sometimes between the 6th and 4th centuries. He is recognized by Buddhist as an awakened or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings to end their suffering through the elimination of ignorance and craving by way of understanding and seeing of dependent origination, with the sublime state of *Nirvana*.

Buddhism as a religion has 3 main branches:

- **Thervada**, The oldest form of Buddhism that emphasizes the monastic life.
- **Mahayana** Buddhism, a later form that includes pure land, Zen, Nichiren, and other sects.
- **Vajrayana**, a unique form that arose in India and Tibet and is led by the Dalai Lama.

### 3.4.2 HOMOSEXUALITY & BUDDHISM

Homosexuality is the tendency to sexually attract to persons of the same sex rather than opposite gender. According to ancient Indian understanding, homosexuals were thought of simply as being the ‘third nature’ (*tritiya Prakriti*), rather prevented, deviant or sick.

The relationship between Buddhism & sexual orientation varies by tradition & teacher. According to some scholars, early Buddhism appears to have placed no special stigma on homosexual relations, since the subject was not mentioned.\(^\text{128}\)

### 3.4.3 LAY FOLLOWERS, MONASTIC PRACTICES & HOMOSEXUALITY

In the early sutras of Buddhism, “accepted or unaccepted human sexual conduct” for lay persons is not specifically mentioned. Among various forms of Buddhism,

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Theravada Buddhism which majority prevails in South East Asia is the most important one as it focuses on the original teachings of Buddha.

In such (Theravada) Buddhism, there are two main ways of life, the life of the monk & the life of lay person (ordinary person, with a job, a family, a home, etc.)

Buddhist Monks are expected to live the life of celibacy, meaning abstinence from any type of sex. It is interesting to note here that there is no explicit rule prohibiting those with a homosexual orientation from monastic life.\(^\text{129}\) For monastic’s, the Vinaya Code (code of monastic discipline) bans all sexual activity in its pure physiological term.

**Among Buddhists there is a wide diversity of opinion about homosexuality. But the core Buddhism teaches that sensual enjoyment and desire in general, and sexual pleasure in particulars, are hindrances to enlightenment & inferior in pleasure.**

Within the earliest monastic texts such as the Vinaya (4\(^\text{th}\) Century BC), male monks are explicitly forbidden from having sexual relations with any of the four genders: male, female, ubhatovyanjanaka\(^\text{130}\) and paaka.\(^\text{131}\)

In the Vinaya, it is written that ubhatovyanjanaka should not be ordained on account of the possibility that they would entice a fellow monk or nun into having sex.\(^\text{132}\)

The Buddha’s proscriptions against certain types of people joining the monastic sangha (ordained community) are often understood to reflect his concern with holding the public image of the sangha as virtuous. This is one of the reasons behind exclusion of females as monks.

### 3.4.4 HOMOSEXUALITY IN VAJRAYANA/ TIBETAN BUDDHISM

\(^{129}\) A. L. Desillva “Homosexuality & Theravada Buddhism” Buddha Net.com

\(^{130}\) The word ‘Ubhatovyanjanaka’, means people who have both male and female characteristics is such as, hermaphrodites.

\(^{131}\) ‘Paaka’ means person who are referred as socially stigmatized class of promiscuous, passive homosexuals, prostitutes or persons having physical or psychological abnormalities.


Gampopa (12th Century), one of the main early masters of the Kagyo School of Tibetan Buddhism, followed the Indian Buddhist tradition, starting with 3rd century. Himayana texts of Vasubandhu, that oral & anal sex, whether with a man or a woman, are violations of the third precept regarding inappropriate sexual behavior.

The current Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyasto, follows the traditional Tibetan Buddhist assertion that inappropriate sexual behavior includes lesbian & gay sex, and indeed any sex other than penis-vagina intercourse with one’s own monogamous partner, including oral sex, anal sex and masturbation.\textsuperscript{133}

However in his 1996 Book Beyond Dogma he states:

“A sexual act is deemed proper when the couples use the organ intended for sexual intercourse and nothing else. Homosexuality, whether it is between men or between women is not improper in itself, what is improper is the use of organs already defined as inappropriate for sexual contact.”

It is interesting to note here that Dalai Lama has repeatedly “voiced his support for the full recognition of human rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation.\textsuperscript{134}

In a 1997 interview, the Dalai Lama was asked about his stand on homosexuality. He did not offer any strong answer wither way, but noted that all monks are expected to refrain from sex.\textsuperscript{135} Originally Buddha’s proscription against certain types of people becoming monks and joining the monastic sangha (ordained community) are often understood to reflect his concern with upholding the public image of the sangha as virtuous. Thus, sexually active people, especially those with unusual sexual tastes and people of third gender – along with criminals and disabled people run the risk of bringing the order into disrepute. This is the reason why all monks are strictly instructed to refrain from all types of sexual indulgence.

\textsuperscript{133} Don Lattin, Chronicle Religion center, “Dalai Lama speaks on gay sex” Tuesday, June 11, 1997 San Francisco Chronicle.

\textsuperscript{134} Dalai Lama urges, “respect, compassion, and full human rights for all”, including gays, by Dennis Conkin’ Bay Area Reporter, June 19, 1997

\textsuperscript{135} “On Homosexuality and sex in General.”, Interview with Dalai Lama, World Tibet Network News. Aug 27, 1997
For lay people, Dalai Lama has commented that the purpose of sex in general is for procreation, so homosexual acts do seem a bit unnatural. He said that the sexual desire in themselves are natural, perhaps including homosexual desires, but one should not try to increase those deserves or indulge in them without self control.\footnote{Ibid.}

The Dalai Lama was more specific in a meeting with Buddhist leaders & human rights activists in San Francisco in 1997, where he commented that all forms of sex other than penile-vaginal sex are prohibited for Buddhists, whether between heterosexuals or homosexuals. At a press conference day before the meeting he said, “\textit{From a Buddhist point of view (gay sex) is generally considered sexual misconduct. But he did note that this rule is for Buddhists, and from society’s viewpoint, homosexual relationships can be “of mutual benefit, enjoyable, and harmless.”}\footnote{“A lesson on life & happiness.” Dalai Lama’s speech to Seattle Crowd, World Tibet Network, July 01, 1993}

According to office of Tibet spokesman during the visit to San Francisco in 1997, “\textit{His holiness opposes violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation. He urges respect, tolerance, compassion, and the full recognition of human rights for all.}\footnote{Dennis Conkin, “Dalai Lama urges respects, compassion, and full human rights for all, including gays.” Bay Area Reporter, San Francisco, June 19, 1997}”

3.4.5 HOMOSEXUALITY IN BUDDHIST COUNTRIES IN CURRENT GLOBAL SCENARIO

Modern Buddhism in western world is typically associated with a concern of social equality. When applying Buddhist philosophy to the question of homosexuality, western Buddhist often emphasize the importance of Buddha placed on tolerance, compassion, and seeking answers within oneself. As a result western Buddhism is often comparatively Gay friendly, as compared to eastern countries. (South Asian Countries)

None of the legal codes of traditional Buddhist countries criminalizes homosexuality \textit{per se}, as although there were penalties against homosexual rape and homosexual acts
with minors just as there were to offences committed by heterosexuals. *It is interesting
to note that Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan & South Korea have no law against
homosexuality between consenting adults, although all these countries are Buddhism
govern countries.* Perhaps, homosexuality is illegal in Burma & Sri Lanka mainly
because their legal codes were in past drawn up during the colonial period. Recently in
Sri Lanka, the penalty for homosexuality was increased in a response to the growing
problem of sex-tourism in the country.

### 3.4.6 LGBT ACTIVISM AND BUDDHISM

The LGBT Buddhist leaders like the *Dzogchen Ponpop Rin poche*, holder of the
*Karma Kagyu* and *Nyingma lineages*, in a 2008 talk delivered to LGBT practitioners
at the Shambhala Meditation Centre of New York. Stressed that for Vajrayana lay
practitioners, homosexuals relationships are no better or worse than heterosexual
relationships and that only unhealthy relationships in general are to be avoided.\(^{139}\)

The Shambhala Meditation Centre of New York hosts a weekly practice group, Queer
Dharma, specifically catering to the needs of the LGBTQ Buddhist Community.\(^{140}\)

According to another Buddhist scholars & artist, Mr. Danish Karma Kagyu Lama
Nydahl, Buddha saw homosexuality as circumstances making life more difficult, but
also explained the reason for homosexuality as an aversion against the opposite sex in
farmer life.\(^{141}\)

*Nydahl* says however sexual orientation is not really important to practice
Buddhism.\(^{142}\)

The US branch of Soka Gakkai International, a Japan based new religious movement
(*Japanese New Religion*) influenced by Nichiren Buddhism, announced in 1995 that

\(^{139}\) (2008) *Heart to Heart: A program for the LGBT Dharma Community (Motion Pictures)*, United
States.

\(^{140}\) Ibid.

\(^{141}\) Nyadhi Ole : “Buddha of Kaeligheden – Parforholdets Mulighedes” in *Buddha and Love – The

\(^{142}\) Ibid.
they would start holding wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples, and in 2001 established a conference for LGBT members and their supporters.

A Buddhist temple in Salt Lake City connected with Jodo Shinshu, another Japanese school of Buddhism, also holds religious rites for same-sex couples. In 2012, the Australian Branch of Buddhism voiced its support for same sex marriage in a hearing of the Australian Parliament that sought to gather views on whether to legalize same-sex marriage.

3.4.7 CONCLUSION

To conclude, Buddhism as a religion is neutralist in text & impliedly by philosophy of religion against sexual activities of homosexual nature. Proponents & Religious head of Buddhism also has voiced his belief of “tolerance, compassion & equal rights for all irrespective of sexual orientation, but still maintained his stand that any sexual act of physical indulgence against the order of nature must be condemned”.

Though, a paradigm shift & change in mindsets of Buddhist youth in favor of homosexuality is observed, but still LGBT activist have a long way to struggle for reaching desired destination.

3.5 HOMOSEXUALITY & CHRISTIANITY

3.5.1 CHRISTIANITY AS A RELIGION- AN INTRODUCTION

Christianity is an Abrahamic, monotheistic religion based on the life and oral teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in New Testament. Christianity is the world’s largest religion with approximately 2.2 billion adherents, known as Christians. Most Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God, fully divine and fully human and

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143 World Tribune, May 5,1995, P.5 (Soka Gakkai International’s Weekly Newspaper)
144 “Freedom & Diversity”, SAI-USA.
the savior of humanity was coming was prophesized in the old testament. Consequently, Christians refer to Jesus as ‘Christ’ or ‘Messiah’.

3.5.2 CHIRISTIAN VIEWS OVER HOMOSEXUALITY

Within Christianity there are a variety of views on the issues of sexual orientation & homosexuality. The various Christian denominations vary in their position, from condemning homosexual acts as sinful, though being divided on the issue, to seeing it as morally acceptance. Even within a denomination individuals & groups may hold different views. Further, not all members of a denomination necessarily support their church’s view on homosexuality.

3.5.3 HOMOSEXUALITY IN BIBLE

The mention of homosexuality in Bible is much debated post 20th & 21st century. This debate concerns proper interpretation of Bible & Levitical code the story of Sodom and Gomorrah and the various Pauline passages whether the verses mentioned condemn same-sexual relationships.

Christians worship their lord & their holy book Bible, which contain commandment, reflection & manifestation of god’s will (Jesus). For any clarification on issue which is unclear & ambiguous, Christian looks into the Bible & tries to seek understanding by interpreting the Bible in modern context as well. Bible undoubtedly forbids homosexual acts, & therefore for countries & culture which are denominated by Christianity it’s a complete wrong.

*If we logically deduce the reasoning regarding homosexuality as mentioned in the Bible it goes in following orders:*

1. *We are all obligated to do God’s will.*
2. *God’s will is expressed in the Bible.*
3. *The Bible forbids homosexual behaviour.*
4. *Therefore homosexual behavior is against God’s will, or is wrong.*

Now if, someone is going to resist the reasoning, he’s got to deny ethics that
2. God’s will is expressed in the Bible or else.

3. The Bible forbids homosexual behavior.

It is noteworthy to state here that God forbids homosexual behavior & not strictly homosexuality. Being homosexual is a state or an orientation; a person could engage in homosexual acts even if he has a heterosexual orientation. Now what the Bible condemns is homosexual actions or behavior not only homosexual orientation.

It is important to mention here that there are six places in Bible – three in the old Testament & three in the new testament – where the issue of homosexuality is directly addressed.

In lectivius 18.22 it says that ‘it is an abomination for a man to lie with another man as with a woman’.

In lectivus 20.13 the death penalty is prescribed for such an act, along with for such other offences such as adultery, incest & bestiality.

Homosexual behavior in God’s eye is serious sin.

The third place where homosexual acts are mentioned in the old testament is the horrifying story in Genesis 19 of the attempted gang rape of Lot’s visitor by the men of Sodom, from which the word ‘Sodomy’ derives. God destroyed the city of Sodom because of their wickedness.

The new testament also forbids homosexual behavior. In I core, 6.9-10 Paul writes:

“Do you know that the one who will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulteress, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkard, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

The words in the list translated “men who practice homosexuality” refer in Greek literature to the passive and the active partners in male homosexual intercourse. The second of the two words “practice homosexuality” is also listed in 1 Tim. 1.10 along
with fornicators, slave traders, liars and murderers ‘contrary to the sound teaching of Gospel.’

The lengthiest treatment of homosexual activity comes in Roman 1.24.28. Here Paul talks about how people have turned away from the creator God and begun to worship instead false Gods of their own making. He says:

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their heart to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped & served the creature rather than the creator. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passion. For their women exchanged natural relations those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Given the old testament background to this passage as well what Paul says in 1 cor-6-9 to and 1 Tim. 1.10, it is clear that Paul is here forbidding all such acts. He sees this behavior as the evidence of a corrupted mind which has turned away from God and been abandoned by him to moral degeneracy.

To conclude the Bible is very straight and clear when it comes to homosexual behavior. It is contrary to God’s design and is sin.

3.5.4 CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION POSITION REGARDING HOMOSEXUALITY

Various Christian denominations vary in their position & standing on homosexuality. The Eastern Orthodox Churches, like the Catholic Church condemn only homosexual acts. All orthodox churches or jurisdictions, such as orthodox church of America, have taken the approach of welcoming people with “homosexual feelings and emotions”, while encouraging them to work towards, ‘overcoming its harmful

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effects in their lives’, and not allowing sacraments to the people who seek to justify homosexual activity.\footnote{Christianity and homosexuality/ Wikipedia.}

The Catholic Church views homosexuality as sinful as well as any other sexual act not related to procreation by couple joined under the sacrament of matrimony.\footnote{“Cathechism of the catholic church, para 2357 catholic church” Soborromeo.org}

Other Christian denominations do not view monogamous same-sex relationships as sinful or immoral, and may bless such unions and consider their marriage.

These include the united church of Canada, and the united church of Christ, all German Lutheran, all Swiss reformed churches, the protestant church in the Netherlands, the church of Denmark, the church of Sweden, the church of Iceland, and the church of Norway. The Evangelical Lutheran church of Finland also allows prayer for same-sex couples.\footnote{“Church of Finland allows prayer for same-sex couples (In Finnish)”. Mty 3. Fi. Retrieved, 2011-11-12} In particular, the Metropolitan community church was founded specifically to serve the Christian LGBT community. The Global Alliance of Affirming Apostolic Pentecostals (GAAAP), traces its root back to 1980, making it the oldest LGBT affirming Apostolic Pentecostal denomination in existence.

The church of Sweden conducts same-sex marriages, while the Evangelical Cotheran which in America opens the ministry of the church to gay pastors and other professional workers living in committed relationship.\footnote{“ELCA Assembly open Ministry to partner gay & lesbian Lutherans.: Evangelical Lutheran church in America- Retrieved 2009-11-22}

LGBT affirming denominations regard homosexuality as a natural occurrence. For example, in 1988 the united church of Canada, that country’s large protestant denominations, affirmed that, ‘all persons, regardless of their sexual orientation, who profess Jesus Christ and obedience to him, are welcome to be or become full members of the church’. In 2000, the church’s general assembly further affirmed that ‘human
sexual orientation, both heterosexual and homosexual is a gift from god and part of the marvelous diversity of creation.”

3.5.6 LGBT ACTIVISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Modern gay Christian leaders Justin R. Canon promote what he calls “Inclusive Orthodoxy”. He explains on his ministry website “Inclusive Orthodoxy is the belief that the church can and must be inclusive of LGBT individuals without sacrificing the gospel and the opposite teachings of the Christian faith.

With time & openness towards modern & liberal outlook even few Christian dominated countries have also legislated in favor of homosexuality. It is noteworthy to quote here that only in the countries where the Christian denominations like church have liberalized their stand on homosexuality. Such countries could legislate in favor of homosexuality. Otherwise, the Bible & the Roman Catholics at heart could not sync with the homosexuality.

Recently, Pope Francis on his return flight to Rome from the world youth day in Brazil, surprised accompanying journalist when he said “Gay People should not be marginalized, rather they should be integrated into society. When someone is Gay and seek the Lord, who am I to judge him?” As an obvious effect of it the status of homosexuality was recognized in conference of Bishops and priest, lead by Poe Francis in Vatican City in 2014. The catholic document (Relatio synod) released by officials of Vatican City contained the message that homosexuals should not be marginalized for the sake of Lord and Humanity.

3.6 CONCLUSION

152 “INCLUSIVE ORTHODOXY: GAY CHRISTIAN MINISTRY – Bible and Homosexuality?” Truth sets free. net. (Retrieved 2011-11-12)
A study of perspective from various religions has shown that all religions of the world are against homosexuality. All the countries which are governed by religious denominations or the society which is deep rooted in religious values will be more adamant & unacceptable of homosexuality. We Indians have religion running in our blood. We love, hate, sacrifice, devote, give our dill (heart) and can also kill in name of religion. In the past, logic was a second parameter for people of India to judge a thing. But its 21st century now, as India is on the way to become the youngest country of the world, our youth has the mindset, the will and the ability to break the age-old barriers and could test a thing on ground of logic and reasoning. Thank God! Media is also playing a vital role (not always) in awakening people and bringing them out of the vicious circle of superstitions & blind faith.

Thus, with due respect to all religions, I believe homosexuality is not a religious issue, it’s a personal issue connected with a human being, who has a fundamental right to life, liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness being granted by our constitution of India and must be respected and upheld in all situations. Thus, as intellectual people we must be able to visualize and solve issue in human rights perspective.

154 TV Show like Satyamev Jayate on Star Plus, latest movies like OMG! (Oh My God!) (released in 2012), & PK (released in 2014) have played a vital role in awakening the conscious of people and were successful in channelizing the spirit of people, especially young generation, who have started accepting unconventional things breaking the barrier of superstitions and blind faith. Especially, the second season of Satyamev Jayate (episode 3) was on alternate sexuality and has sensitively shown the intricacies involved with the pain and struggle of people who are homosexuals.