

# HOMOSEXUALITY IN ORTHODOX JUDAISM

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel

## THE CLASSIC TORAH VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The Torah clearly states its views about the act of homosexuality. The act of homosexuality, i.e. two men having sexual relations, is prohibited ([SOURCE #1](#)). The act is twice called a “*Toaiva*-an abomination” and it is such a severe sin, that it merits the death penalty in a Jewish court system ([SOURCE #2](#)). If not for the fact that homosexuality is prevalent in Western Society today, there would be little controversy about this Torah sin. It is clearly forbidden and never condoned anywhere in the Torah.

The very context of the prohibition ([SOURCE #1](#)) shows the Torah view. It is couched between the prohibitions of child sacrifice (to an idol) and bestiality (sexual relations with an animal). In most countries today, these two acts are considered abhorrent and contrary to modern values. It is only because homosexuality is relatively widespread and condoned by many people, that it seems that the Torah is “out of step” with the real world. This is an important issue that has clear ramifications, and will be discussed below.

There is usually a fear by traditional Jews who are homosexuals to the “traditional” response to homosexuality. There are some traditional parents who might sit Shiva upon hearing that their child is a homosexual. This seems to reflect the classic Torah reaction. And yet, after the initial shock, many traditional parents often take a more sympathetic attitude toward homosexual children. How this reaction is possible by Halachik Jews, given the Torahs’s straightforward attitude, will be amplified below.

## THE CONTEXT AND REASONS FOR THE TORAH VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The Torah calls homosexuality a *Toaiva*-abomination. What does it mean? Usually, the Rabbis do not explain the meaning of Torah words. And the meaning of abomination seems reasonably clear -- it is abhorrent to God. But in this case, the Talmud does offer a specific explanation. Based on a play on the Hebrew words, the Talmud ([SOURCE #3](#)) says that in the act of homosexuality, the person is “straying.” What does this mean?

The commentaries on the Talmud say that by abandoning heterosexual sexual relations, the person is straying from one of his prime goals in life -- to procreate and populate the earth (Genesis 1:28). We will amplify this theme below, but this explanation does not seem to be the “abhorrence” that the word “*TOAIVA*” implies in the simple meaning. Thus, the classic explanation of why homosexuality is prohibited in the Torah is because of “straying,” i.e. failure to populate the earth. The Chinuch ([SOURCE #4](#)) explains that any “wasting of seed” on homosexual relations is preventing procreation and inhabiting the earth, the prime directive of man. This “prime directive” is echoed by Isaiah ([SOURCE #5](#)) in describing the purpose of Creation -- “to be inhabited.”

This explanation does not point to the “unholiness” of the homosexual relationship, but, rather, the violation of man’s purpose on earth. We may be able to understand the Torah view of

homosexuality better if we compare it to other sins in the Torah that are also called *Toaiva*-abomination. There are numerous other references to deeds that are described as *Toaiva*-abomination. By examining each one, we may be able to ascertain what they all have in common.

Desiring and taking idols of the nations that the Jews conquer is considered a *Toaiva*-abomination ([SOURCE #6](#)). Eating non-kosher foods is also called a *Toaiva*-abomination ([SOURCE #6](#)). There is a general statement that ALL the customs of the Canaanite nations are considered to be *Toaiva*-abomination ([SOURCE #6](#)). Then there is a general warning not to learn or copy the *Toaiva*-abominations of all the Canaanite nations. This is followed by some examples (noted above), including child sacrifice to their gods, using a seer or “magician” to contact the dead or predict the future. Then God says that it is BECAUSE these nations did all these acts of *Toaiva*-abomination that God is letting the Jewish people inherit the land ([SOURCE #6](#)).

What do all these acts have in common? They are pagan customs of the societies whose values are antithetical to Judaism. God emphatically warns the Jewish people not to learn these customs or follow these values. Based on this, homosexuality, also called *Toaiva*-abomination, can be understood to be a societal value and sin that is alien to Judaism and Jewish values, and should not be “learned” from the societies where the Jews have lived or have conquered.

The other Torah, Talmudic and Midrashic references to homosexuality also elucidate the overall Torah view towards homosexuality. Although not expressed explicitly in the Torah, the Rabbis ([SOURCE #7](#)) understood that, according to Rav, Potiphar bought the Hebrew Joseph specifically for homosexual purposes. This is significant, as it implies that homosexuality was prevalent in Egypt at that time. Thus, when the Torah later on commands ([SOURCE #8](#)) not to imitate the ways of the Egyptians (and Canaanites), this could also include the common practice of homosexuality that was found in these societies. One of the explanations of the cause of the Flood and God’s dissatisfaction with the world ([SOURCE #9](#)) is the widespread homosexual activity at that time. Each species “corrupted its way,” i.e. had improper sexual relationships. Man regularly engaged in bestiality (sexual relations with an animal) and homosexuality. It was for this reason that God destroyed the world. When Noah got drunk and Cham, his grandson, entered his grandfather’s tent, according to one Talmudic opinion ([SOURCE #10](#)), Cham forced Noah to engage in a homosexual act. And this is why Cham was cursed as a result. In the society of Sodom, the Torah clearly says ([SOURCE #11](#)) that the townspeople demanded that the strangers be given to them for homosexual purposes (the verb “knowing” in the Torah is frequently associated with the sexual act - - see Genesis 4:1). This was apparently common practice in that society, and hence the origin of the term sodomy. This is one of the main reasons that the city was destroyed very soon thereafter.

All of these Torah examples have one thing in common: homosexual activity is common in these foreign societies and is abhorred by God, and all of these societies were eventually destroyed. Thus, once again, shows that Jews may not engage in such activity, and imitate the mores of these foreign societies.

The practical Halacha will also reflect this Torah view, but will also shed light on a number of interesting debates regarding homosexuality. There has been much controversy about the nature of homosexuality -- if it is a totally inborn and genetic phenomenon, or if it is a learned or societal behavior, or even a combination of both. Many doctors and scientists claim that homosexuality is inborn and not a learned behavior, and the AMA seems to reflect this view in how it classifies homosexual behavior. However, based on some recent studies and the fact that some homosexuals have “learned” to become heterosexuals, some experts argue that homosexuality is a learned behavior that is dependent on one’s environment. The fact that the rate of homosexual activity goes

up drastically in all male populations or societies (such as prisons or all male dormitories) also seems to indicate that homosexuality is, at least in part, a societal or learned behavior.

Based on the sources above and the normative Halacha (to be discussed below), the Torah seems to view homosexuality as a societal or behavioral phenomenon, and not inborn. Therefore, the Torah commands Jews to stay away from the practices of those societies where homosexuality is common practice. All “foreign” aspects of those societies are “abhorred” by God and Judaism. In those societies where homosexual activity was common (i.e. Noah, Sodom, Egypt), God destroyed those societies. The Halacha in practice (long after the stories in the Torah) also reflects this view.

Although very far apart in the way the modern world views these two acts, the Mishna ([SOURCE #12](#)) couples the sexual acts of homosexuality and bestiality. One minority view is that we are worried that a man may commit both, and thus a man is prohibited from being alone with an animal or another man. This is similar to the prohibition for a man to be alone with a woman, for the same fear that an illicit sexual relationship may develop (Maimonides, *Hilchot Issurei Biah* 22:1). However, the majority opinion in that Mishna ([SOURCE #12](#)) is that Jews are not suspected of bestiality and homosexual behavior, and therefore, they can remain alone with an animal or another man. This shows that homosexuality was NOT prevalent in the Jewish community in Talmudic times (This is not a “cover up” by the Rabbis, for if these acts indeed were found in the community, the Rabbis would not hesitate to forbid men from being alone). In addition, we find almost no Responsa discussing the issue of homosexuality. While Jews were not hesitant to discuss and ask Halachik questions about many other illicit and “abhorrent” behaviors and sins, homosexuality was not one of them. This also points to the historic fact that this type of activity was not found in the Jewish community of post Talmudic times.

Maimonides ([SOURCE #13](#)), who lived in the 12th century, also ruled like the majority opinion in the Talmud, i.e. that Jewish males were not suspected of homosexual behavior (or bestiality). He does add, however, that those Jews who DO refrain from being alone with a man or an animal are to be praised. Thus, in Spain and in Egypt of the 12th century, homosexual activity was still not found among the Jews. However, this seems to have changed in the time of Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of the Shulchan Aruch ([SOURCE #14](#)). He first quotes the Rambam word for word, but then adds that in “these” (his) times that there is great licentiousness, two men should not be alone together (or sleep in the same bed). We see from these two important concepts. First, that in the 16th century in Israel, there WAS homosexual activity among Jews. Second, the Halacha recognizes that homosexuality is a function of individual societies, and it responds to this societal change in Jewish law.

However, two centuries later, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, Rabbi Sirkis writes ([SOURCE #15](#)) that he does not understand these words of the Shulchan Aruch, because he cannot find any homosexual activity in his community. He thus does not agree with (or apply) this Halacha to his community, and permits two males to be alone together. Today, given the widespread homosexual activity in general society and also (no doubt) in the Jewish community in Western countries, perhaps the Halacha would revert to the time of the Shulchan Aruch and it would be prohibited for two men to be alone or share the same bed.

## **THE TORAH VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALS**

Judaism separates between the desire to sin and the sin itself. In every realm of life, Judaism recognizes that Jews, as normal human beings, have desires to commit sins. The premise of the concept of the inner battle between the good inclination and bad inclination is based on man's normal desire to sin. It is only because of the great desire, which is normal that the Torah prohibits every Jewish man from being alone with a woman (Yichud). Similarly, because the Torah recognizes the normal desire among men to have sexual activity (in certain societies) the Halacha prohibits them to be together (in those societies). But the Torah says repeatedly (Numbers 15:39, for example) not to ACT and not to follow those desires. While the desires are normal and not prohibited, ACTING UPON THOSE DESIRES violates Jewish principles and Jewish law.

Thus, while it is normal for a heterosexual married man to desire a beautiful married woman who is not his wife, ACTING upon this desire violates the seventh of the Ten Commandments. Similarly, while the Torah may understand the homosexual desire, acting upon it is forbidden. Therefore, the Midrash specifically says ([SOURCE #16](#)) that a Jew should NOT say "I have no desire for that which is forbidden (pork or even another man)," but a Jew SHOULD say "what can I do, since God has commanded me not to act upon these desires." EVERY society, even secular society demands that sexual desires be held in check and regulates man's acting upon his sexual desires. Judaism does so as well, and thus prohibits man to act on his homosexual desire.

## **JUDAISM ABHORS THE SIN BUT NOT THE SINNER**

The first Lubavicher Rebbe writes ([SOURCE #17](#)) that we can hate the sin, but also must continue to love the sinner. This is consistent with the normative Jewish view. Thus, while we may abhor the sin of homosexuality, we must continue to love the homosexual, not matter what his behavior and sin (see Leviticus 19:18). We do not and cannot reject people as Jews and as individuals because of a particular sin. Those who violate the Shabbat, for example, (also guilty of death in the Torah) are not thrown out of the Jewish community or denied the ability to pray in the synagogue. Similarly, homosexuals who have sinned with acts of homosexuality may not be thrown out of the Jewish community or shunned.

Since EVERYONE has committed some sin (Ecclesiastics 7:20), we would have to throw out everyone from a synagogue if we threw out all sinners (everyone gossips occasionally, a grave sin, or "slips" in practice). And since we do not judge which is a more and which is a less severe sin (Avot 2:1), all Jews are permitted to remain in the community, as long as they want to be Jews and part of the community. This idea is expressed in the Talmud ([SOURCE #18](#)) when it says that a Jew remains a Jew, even after he sins.

There are some Jewish homosexuals who desire to "be with their own" and form "gay congregations" and communities exclusively for Jewish homosexuals. Is this permitted in Judaism? This is NOT the Jewish way. Each Jewish community should be made up of a diversity of Jews. The Hebrew word for community, צבור, is an acronym for three groups - צדיקים, בינונים, רשעים - righteous, "middle of the roaders" and sinners. Thus, every Jewish community is made up of diverse people of all moralities. This is also the symbolic concept of holding the Four Species together on Sukkot (each specie representing a different moral kind of Jew) and the words recited immediately prior to *Kol Nidrei* on Yom Kippur. The Mishna ([SOURCE #19](#)) specifically says not to separate from the general Jewish community.

## **CONTEMPORARY VIEWS (WITHIN HALACHA) ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALS**

The views of the three scholars below also reflect the ideas and concepts discussed above. Rabbi Shmuel Boteach has lectured to many non-Jewish and gay audiences and has also written about this subject at length. Rabbi Boteach agrees with all the concepts stated above (and some ideas expressed above were taken from his writings). He also states that homosexuality cannot be a deviance, since by definition sexual deviance is an oxymoron. Since sex is instinctive, an instinct cannot be deviant. God expressed a preference for heterosexuality and mandated that only this type of sexual activity is permitted for human beings. Since the Torah has defined Western morality (and has preserved it for thousands of years), its viewpoint needs to be taken seriously.

Rabbi Aaron Feldman from Baltimore, a noted Rabbi in the Charedi camp, has recently come under some criticism for his views on this subject. Rabbi Feldman said that non-practicing homosexuals have an important role to contribute in Jewish life. He also said that a Jew is judged by his actions and not his orientation. Only actions are prohibited, not proclivities. Controlling behavior, though difficult, is what the Torah asks. Judaism looks negatively at homosexual activity, but not at the homosexual nature.

Dennis Prager has also written and spoken extensively on the Jewish view of homosexuality. Prager writes that Judaism does not look down on homosexual love. That is natural. Only homosexual intercourse is prohibited. In Judaism, Jews are simply sexual, and not classified by their sexual preference. The Torah has done more to civilize the world than any other book in history. If the Torah, then, makes a proclamation (against homosexuality), it should be taken seriously by the world. In this area, the Torah is not ambiguous as it is in many other areas, and modern values cannot be reconciled with the Torah, as it can in many other areas. Although it prohibits *Melacha*-creative activity on Shabbat, the Torah does not make a moral statement about the Shabbat and its violation. But in regard to homosexuality, the Torah says it is a *Toaiva*-abomination, and thus expresses great repugnance. This is unambiguous.

# Homosexuality In Orthodox Judaism

- LEVITICUS 18:21- 23** And you shall not any of your seed pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the Lord. You shall not lie with men, as with women; it is abomination. Neither shall you lie with any beast to defile yourself with it; nor shall any women stand before a beast to lie down to it; it is perversion.
- LEVITICUS 20:13** If a man also lies with men, as he lies with a women, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them
- NEDARIM 51A** Thus says Divine Law, *To'evah* (is a contraction for) *to'ch attah bah-* you are straying with this (act by abounding relations with a woman)
- CHINUCH, MITZVAH 209** At the root of the precept lies the reason that the Eternal Lord blessed is He, desires the settlement of the world He created. Therefore, He commanded us that human seed should not be destroyed by carnal relations with males. For this is indeed destruction, since there can be no fruitful benefit of offspring from it, nor the fulfillment of the religious duty of conjugal rights (due one's wife)...
- ISAIAH 45:18** For thus says the Lord who created the heavens; God himself who formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord; and there is no one else.
- (#1) ומזרעך לא תתן להעביר למלך ולא תחלל את שם אלהיך אני ידוד: ואת זכר לא תשכב משכבי אשה תועבה הוא: ובכל בהמה לא תתן שכבתך לטמאה בה ואשה לא תעמד לפני בהמה לרבעה תבל הוא:
- (#2) ואיש אשר ישכב את זכר משכבי אשה תועבה עשו שניהם מות יומתו דמיהם בם:
- (#3) הכי אמר רחמנא: תועבה - תועה אתה בה.
- (#4) משרשי המצוה, לפי שהשם ברוך הוא חפץ ביישוב עולמו אשר ברא. ולכן ציוה לבל ישחיתו זרעם במשכבי הזכרים, כי הוא באמת השחתה שאין בדבר תועלת פרי ולא מצות עונה
- (#5) כי כה אמר ידוד בורא השמים הוא האלהים יצר הארץ ועשה הוא כוננה לא תהו בראה לשבת יצרה אני ידוד ואין עוד:

(#6)

**DEUTERONOMY 7:25-26**

The engraved images of their Gods shall you burn with fire; you shall not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it to you, lest you be soared there; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. Neither shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you become accursed like it; but you shall utterly detest it, and loathe it; for it is a cursed thing...

פסילי אלהיהם תשרפון באש לא תחמד כסף וזהב עליהם ולקחת לך פו תנקש בו כי תועבת דנד אלהיך הוא: ולא תביא תועבה אל ביתך והיית חרם כמהו שקץ תשקצנו ותעב תתעבנו כי חרם הוא:

**DEUTERONOMY 14:3**

You shall not eat any abominable thing.

לא תאכל כל תועבה:

**LEVITICUS 18:27**

For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;

כי את כל התועבות האל עשו אנשי הארץ אשר לפניכם ותטמא הארץ:

**DEUTERONOMY 18:9-12**

When you come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or a soothsayer, or an onchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a medium or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.

כי אתה בא אל הארץ אשר ינד אלהיך נתן לך לא תלמד לעשות כתועבות הגוים ההם: לא ימצא בך מעביר בנו ובתו באש קסם קסמים מעונן ומנחש ומכשף: וחבר חבר ושאל אוב וידעני ודרש אל המתים: כי תועבת דנד כל עשה אלה ובגלל התועבות האלה ינד אלהיך מוריש אותם מפניך:

(#7)

**SOTAH 13B**

“And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh’s bought him” (Genesis 39:1). Rab said: He bought him for himself; but Gabriel came and castrated him, and then Gabriel came and mutilated him [pera’].

ויקנה פוטיפר סריס פרעה - אמר רב: שקנאו לעצמו. (בא גבריאל וסירסו) בא גבריאל ופירע

(#8)

**LEVITICUS 18:3**

After the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, shall you not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, shall you not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.

כמעשה ארץ מצרים אשר ישבתם בה לא תעשו וכמעשה ארץ כנען אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לא תעשו ובחקתייהם לא תלכו:

(#9)

**GENESIS 6:12-13**

And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, the end of all flesh

וירא אלהים את הארץ והנה נשחיתה כי השחית כל בשר את דרכו על הארץ: ויאמר אלהים לנח קח כל בשר בא

has come before me....

לפני...

**GENESIS 9:22 &  
SANHEDRIN 70A**

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

[With respect to the verse] Rab and Shmuel [differ,] one maintaining that he castrated him, whilst the other says that he had homosexual relations with him.

(#10)  
וַיֵּרָא חָם אָבִי כְנָעַן אֶת עֶרְוַת אָבִיו וַיַּגֵּד לְשְׁנֵי אֶחָיו בַּחוּץ:

רב ושמואל, חד אמר: סרסו, וחד אמר: רבעו

**GENESIS 19:5**

And he called him Lot, and said to him, Where are the men who came into you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.

(#11)  
וַיִּקְרָאוּ אֵל לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה הוֹצֵאם אֵלֵינוּ וַנְדַעָה אֹתָם:

**KIDDUSHIN 82A**

Mishna:... Rabbi Judah said: An unmarried man must not tend cattle, nor may two unmarried men sleep together under the same cover. But the Sages permitted it. Gemara: What is the reason? ...Said they to R. Judah, Israel are not suspected of either pederasty or bestiality.

(#12)  
מתני'... ר' יהודה אומר: לא ירעה רווק בהמה, ולא יישנו שני רווקין בטלית אחת, וחכמים מתירים.  
גמ'. מאי טעמא? ... אמרו לו לר' יהודה: לא נחשדו ישראל על משכב זכור ולא על הבהמה

**MAIMONIDES,  
HILCHOT  
ISSUREI BIAH  
22:2**

Jews are not suspected of a man lying with a man or bestiality. Therefore, there is no prohibition (for man and another man or an animal) to be alone together. However, he who does separates himself from another man or animal is praiseworthy.

(#13)  
לא נחשדו ישראל על משכב זכור ועל הבהמה, לפיכך אין אסור להתייחד עמהן, ואם נתרחק אפילו מייחוד זכור ובהמה הרי זה משובח

**SHULCHAN  
ARUCH, EVEN  
HA-EZER 24:1**

Jews are not suspected of a man lying with a man or bestiality. Therefore, there is no prohibition (for man and another man or an animal) to be alone together. However, he who does separate himself from another man or animal is praiseworthy. And great Sages of Israel would separate themselves from an animal in order that they should not be alone with it. And in these generations when licentiousness is prevalent, two men a man should not be alone with another man.

(#14)  
לא נחשדו ישראל על משכב  
זכר ועל הבהמה, לפיכך אין  
איסור להתייחד עמהן, ואם  
נתרחק אפילו מיחוד זכר  
ובהמה, הרי זה משובח.  
וגדולי החכמים היו מרחיקין  
הבהמה, כדי שלא יתייחדו  
עמה. ובדורות הללו שרבו  
הפריצים, יש להתרחק  
מלהתייחד עם הזכר.

**BAYIT  
CHADASH ON  
TUR, EVEN HA-  
EZER 24**

The Shulchan Aruch wrote: "And in these generations when licentiousness is prevalent, two men a man should not be alone with another man." And he wrote this according to his country and generation. And it seems that this is the law. However, since this promiscuity is not prevalent in our country, there is no need (for a man) to separate himself (from another man). However, a person who chooses to separate himself is certainly praiseworthy.

(#15)  
כתב בשולחן ערוך ובדורות  
הללו שרבו הפריצים יש  
להתרחק מלהתייחד עם  
הזכר. וכתב כן לפי מדינתו  
ודורותיו ומשמע דיש  
להתרחק מדינא קאמר. אבל  
במדינתנו דלא נשמע שפרצו  
בעבירה זו, אין צריך להרחק  
אלא דמכל מקום מי שנתרחק  
הרי זה משובח

**MIDRASH  
YALKUT  
SHIMONI  
VAYIKRA 20**

A person should not say "I do not desire pig meat, I don't desire that thing (that is forbidden)." Rather (he should say) "I do desire (it), but what can I do? My Father in Heaven commanded me (not to partake in it).

(#16)  
לא יאמר אדם אי אפשי בבשר  
חזיר אי אפשי בדבר פלוני  
אלא אפשי ומה אעשה שאבי  
שבשמים גזר עלי

**TANYA,  
CHAPTER 32**

But someone who is not in his contemporary (in keeping the commandments) and not close to him, for this person Hillel the Elder said “Be like the student of Aaron, who loved peace, loved all people and brought them closer to Torah.” That is to say (that this is our task for) those people who are distant from God’s Torah.... For there is a Mitzvah to hate them (those who sin) but also a Mitzvah to love them, and both (emotions) are correct. Hatred for the evil that is within them, and love for the good what is buried within them, that is the spark of God.

(#17)  
... אבל מי שאינו חבירו ואינו מקורב אצלו הנה ע"ז אמר הלל הזקן הוי מתלמידיו של אהרן אוהב שלום וכו' אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה. לומר שאף הרחוקים מתורת ה' ועבודתו... שמצוה לשנאותם מצוה לאהבם ג"כ ושתייהן הן אמת שנאה מצד הרע שבהם ואהבה מצד בחי' הטוב הגנוז שבהם שהוא ניצוץ אלקות שבתוכם

**SANHEDRIN 44A**

Even though [a Jew] has sinned, they are still [called] 'Israel' [a Jew].

(#18)  
אמר רבי אבא בר זבדא : אף על פי שחטא- ישראל הוא

**PIRKE AVOT 2:4**

Hillel said: Do not separate yourself from the community.

(#19)  
הלל אומר אל תפרוש מן הצבור