

Religious Views on Homosexuality: Comparison Chart

The following chart compares the views of major religions past and present on homosexual orientation and homosexual relations.

Note that there is no column on how homosexuals ought to be treated - this is because the world religions are almost unanimous in encouraging acceptance, love, equal treatment, and support for gays and lesbians regardless of their views on homosexuality. Many also stress that even if homosexuality is regarded as a sin or negative act, it should not be singled out as though it is worse than other sins.

Religion	Views of Homosexual Orientation	View of Homosexual Acts	Quotes
Ancient Greeks	No conception of "homosexuality" versus "heterosexuality." Same-sex desires not categorized separately from other sexual desires.	Not generally condemned and often idealized and romanticized. But the social status of the partners and the playing of the passive role were important considerations.	"The noble lover of beauty engages in love wherever he sees excellence and splendid natural endowment without regard for any difference in physiological detail." -Plutarch, <i>Dialogue on Love</i> 146
Ancient Romans	No conception of "homosexuality" versus "heterosexuality." Homosexual desires were irrelevant; only the acts were regulated.	Similar to Greece under the Republic, but more negative under the Empire, in which male prostitution and pederasty were illegal and passive partners in adult relationships lost many civil rights.	
Buddhism	Varies: Unnatural (Dalai Lama), a karmic punishment (SE Asian countries), an alternative. Not generally condemned in itself.	Unlawful for monks, who must be celibate regardless of orientation. For other Buddhists, "sexual misconduct" is prohibited under the Third Precept, which depends on the circumstances and the results.	"Where there is mutual consent, where adultery is not involved and where the sexual act is an expression of love, respect, loyalty and warmth, it would not be breaking the third Precept." -BuddhaNet
Christianity	Not generally considered sinful in itself, though some see it as a purposeful perversion. Some accept it as a natural alternative, while others regard it as a non-chosen disorder akin to alcoholism.	Traditionally considered sinful. Many Christians and denominations continue to uphold this belief, while others have reconsidered it or in the process of doing so.	"Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." - Romans 1:27
Hinduism	Not generally condemned in itself. Some ancient texts and temples depict it as one of many sexual inclinations, while Vedanta discourages homosexual desires as lustful and/or distracting.	Condemned by most Hindu cultures, though not often for religious reasons. The teachings of Vedanta, which emphasize liberation from the material world to the spiritual, allow only heterosexual sex, within marriage and for purposes of procreation.	"...in all things connected with love, everybody should act according to the custom of his country and his own inclination." <i>Kama Sutra</i> IX "O son of Kunti, the pleasures that are born out of sensory contacts are sources of pain. They certainly are transient, having a beginning and an end. The intelligent man is wise enough not to indulge in them." (<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> 5.22)

Islam	Not generally condemned.	Sinful and punishable under Islamic law.	"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." -Qur'an 7:80-81
Jehovah's Witnesses	Not necessarily sinful.	Sinful. Those with homosexual inclinations must abstain from all homosexual behavior.	"Christians do not make homosexuals, or anyone else, the target of ill will, ridicule, or harassment. True Christians view their fellow humans as potential disciples of Christ, treating them in a respectful and dignified manner." - <i>Awake!</i> Dec. 8, 1997 .
Judaism	<i>Orthodox:</i> Condemned as rebellion against God. <i>Conservative:</i> Neither condemned nor affirmed. <i>Reform:</i> Generally accepted as alternative.	<i>Orthodox:</i> Strongly condemned. <i>Conservative:</i> Violation of Jewish law, disqualifies from Jewish marriage and religious leadership. <i>Reform:</i> Approved in context of committed relationship; civil marriage supported, but generally not religious marriage.	"A man shall not lie with another man as with a woman; it is an abomination." -Leviticus 18:22
Mormonism	Called "same-gender attraction." Less serious than homosexual acts, but should be resisted.	Considered a serious sin. Heterosexual marriage is required for entry into the most desirable forms of afterlife.	"We all seem to have susceptibilities to one disorder or another, but whatever our susceptibilities, we have the will and the power to control our thoughts and our actions." - Dallin H. Oaks
New Age	Accepted as alternative.	Accepted within bounds of general ethics.	
Sikhism	Generally considered a manifestation of Lust, one of the "Five Thieves" or vices. A minority consider it an acceptable alternative.	Generally condemned in light of its association with Lust and the value of family life. But a minority believe the Sikh value of universal equality supports acceptance of homosexual relations.	"Sikhism is a very tolerant religion and seeks to find the truth rather than adhere rigidly to rules. Homosexuality is not specifically banned in any of the writings of the Gurus, but they do stress that God has intended people to live as man and wife, or to be celibate, with no deviation from this design." - Ethnicity Online
Wicca	Accepted as alternative.	Accepted within bounds of general ethics.	"All acts of Love and Pleasure are Her rituals." - <i>The Charge of the Goddess</i>