

Shayla: Do you believe that Romans 1:27 teaches that AIDS is the penalty for homosexuality?

Midrash:

Allow me to clarify two issues right away. First, Adonists (people who believe the fear of the Lord should be central to their lives) love sex. Sex is great! In fact it was Adonai's first (and in the minds of many – best) command to humanity.

- Genesis 1:27-28a HCSB So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth..."

In the media, moral people and advocates of morality are often portrayed as prudish fanatics who want to deprive others of enjoyment. In reality, they are sensible people who want to enjoy the good life and avoid the physical and spiritual harm caused by immorality.

- Proverbs 5:18-20 HCSB Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving doe, a graceful fawn--let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever. 20 Why, my son, would you be infatuated with a forbidden woman or embrace the breast of a stranger?
- Ecclesiastes 9:9 HCSB Enjoy life with the wife you love all the days of your fleeting life, which has been given to you under the sun, all your fleeting days. For that is your portion in life and in your struggle under the sun.

Second, I do not believe that AIDS is *THE* penalty for homosexuality. I believe it is *A* potential consequence among many. Homosexual activity is clearly a "high risk" activity. The Scriptures are not the only source declaring this.

The largest and most detailed study to date, *Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*, showed that the proportion of men reporting large numbers of partners is much higher for homosexuals than for heterosexuals. Of those men who had had sexual partners within the previous five years, 24% of homosexuals had had 10 or more partners compared with 5% of heterosexuals.¹

Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles also found that less than 4% of British men have ever had same-sex genital contact in their life.² Yet, a total of 66.0% of all male HIV infections in the UK were acquired through homosexual intercourse.³ In comparison, heterosexual intercourse made up only 20.2% of male infections and almost all of these (87.4%) were acquired through exposure abroad or through sexual contact with someone who had been infected outside Europe.⁴

Men who have *ever* engaged in any homosexual sex are banned for life from giving blood, even if it was 'safer sex' with a condom.⁵ This is because the risk of HIV infection from anal intercourse is extremely high: for men it is at least 2,700 times the risk from vaginal intercourse.⁶

The condom company Durex said in October 2000: "Anal intercourse is a high risk activity because of the potential for infection from STDs including HIV transmission. Currently there are no specific standards for the manufacture of condoms for anal sex. Current medical advice is therefore to avoid anal sex."⁷

In a 10-year study directed and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, scientists found that the biggest predictor of HIV infection for both male and female injecting drug users (IDUs) is high-risk sexual behavior, not sharing needles used to inject drugs. High-risk

¹ Johnson A M, Wadsworth J, Wellings, K et al *Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*, Blackwell, 1994, page 213.

² Wellings, K et al, *Sexual Behaviour in Britain*, Penguin, 1994, pages 209, 188 (with Table 5.4), 217

³ *Communicable Disease Report Weekly*, 15 (8), February 2005, Health Protection Agency, Table 1

⁴ *Communicable Disease Report Weekly*, 15 (8), February 2005, Health Protection Agency, Table 2

⁵ *Why We Ask Gay Men Not To Give Blood*, UK Blood Transfusion Services, See

<http://www.transfusionguidelines.org.uk/index.asp?Publication=DL&Section=12&pageid=391> as at 10 March 2005

⁶ Stewart, G, 'Scientific Surveillance and the Control of Aids: A Call for Open Debate', *Health Care Analysis*, 2, 1994, pages 279-286

⁷ http://www.durex.com/scientific/faqs/faq_4.html as at 26 April 2001

homosexual activity was the most important factor in HIV transmission for men; high-risk heterosexual activity was most significant for women.⁸

In 1997 a pro-gay study in Canada was published in the International Journal of Epidemiology (IJE).⁹ While the medical consensus is that smoking knocks from two to 10 years off an individual's life expectancy, the IJE study found that homosexual conduct shortens the lifespan of "gays" by an astounding "8 to 20 years" - more than twice that of smoking.

"Under even the most liberal assumptions," concluded the study, "gay and bisexual men in this urban centre are now experiencing a life expectancy similar to that experienced by all men in Canada in the year 1871. ... Life expectancy at age 20 years for gay and bisexual men is 8 to 20 years less than for all men."

The risks associated with homosexual conduct are so drastic, in fact, that U.S. health regulations prohibit men who have sex with men (MSM) and women who have had sex with MSM, from even donating blood.

Consider that, according to the Food and Drug Administration, MSM, "have an HIV prevalence 60 times higher than the general population, 800 times higher than first time blood donors and 8,000 times higher than repeat blood donors."

Adults and children who engage in homosexual conduct, especially males, are also susceptible, at an astronomical rate, to nearly all other forms of sexually transmitted disease (STD). For example, the Hepatitis B virus is about five to six times more prevalent among "gays," and Hepatitis C is twice as common.

But perhaps most shocking are today's syphilis rates among homosexual men and adolescents. A recent study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that although homosexuals comprise only a fraction of the population (one to two percent), they account for an epidemic 64 percent of all syphilis cases.

So let's set aside any misconceptions that homosexual activity is inherently safe. However, is AIDS its only penalty? Not by a long shot. However, if we were to appeal to Romans 1:27 in order to support the claim that we know with certainty that HIV/AIDS is God's specific, special judgment upon homosexuality, then what was the meaning of that verse before 1980? Paul's statement was not future tense.

We need to keep in mind that disease is not always indicative of Yahweh's judgment.

- John 9:1-3 HCSB As He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples questioned Him: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him.

If HIV/AIDS is a direct judgment against homosexuality, then logically diabetes is God's direct judgment against intemperance in eating, skin cancer is God's direct judgment against sunbathing, and athlete's foot is God's direct judgment against poor personal hygiene.

So we are not saying that HIV/AIDS or any of these other diseases are necessarily God's direct and miraculous judgment, but they are the consequences brought about by the intersection of our action (or inaction) and the universe as Hashem created it.

Let's consider some of the principle verses used to derive the conclusion that homosexual behavior (whether monogamous or not) is inherently risky.

- Romans 1:24 HCSB Therefore God delivered them over in the cravings of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves.
- Romans 1:27 HCSB The males in the same way also left natural sexual intercourse with females and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty for their perversion.
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 HCSB Flee from sexual immorality! "Every sin a person can commit is outside the body," but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.

⁸ http://www.nida.nih.gov/NIDA_notes/NNvol17N2/HighRisk.html

⁹ <http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/26/3/657.pdf>

- Proverbs 5:22-23 HCSB A wicked man's iniquities entrap him; he is entangled in the ropes of his own sin. 23 He will die because there is no instruction, and be lost because of his great stupidity.

Notice how there is a direct, physical consequence to the stupidity of immorality? A wicked person's iniquities can result in death! Paul described sexual sin in 1 Corinthians 6 as uniquely dangerous to one's own body. He discussed the damage that we cause when he gives ourselves physically to that which is unholy.

The simple fact of the matter is if two young people remain chaste until marriage and remain faithful to one another after marriage, they do not have to worry about contracting AIDS or any other venereal (sexually transmitted) disease. This is why Paul said,

- Hebrews 13:4 HCSB Marriage must be respected by all, and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge immoral people and adulterers.

The AIDS epidemic is caused by fornicators and adulterers. I'm not saying that all people who *have* AIDS are immoral. A moral husband or wife could have been given AIDS by an immoral marriage partner. Children can contract aids before birth from a mother who is either immoral, or was given the virus by someone who was immoral. A moral person can contract AIDS by means of injection or transfusion. But ultimately, in every case, the disease comes from someone, somewhere, "somewhen" who was immoral.

Newton's Law "every action has an equal and opposite reaction" applies to more than motion. If we are humble, God draws near. If we are proud, God resists us. As Paul told the Galatians:

- Galatians 6:7 HCSB Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap,

Or as the Teacher in Proverbs put it somewhat more prosaically,

- Proverbs 30:33 HCSB For the churning of milk produces butter, and twisting a nose draws blood, and stirring up anger produces strife.

We teach that every decision has consequences and that every human is responsible for his or her decisions. For example, on one hand I have malaria, a disease I contracted while living in Africa. Had I not been in Africa where the mosquitoes carry this terrible disease, my chances of having contracted malaria would have been much smaller.

On the other hand I have arthritis derived from several decades of slamming my hands and feet into things they're not designed to be slammed into. I knew the potential consequences of fighting in mixed martial arts but I chose to participate in that "high risk" activity anyway. Now I have to endure the consequences of that decision.

You can live anyway you want to live and choose to believe that no authority, God or otherwise, has the right to place their moral constructs on you. You can feel that the Ten Commandments no longer apply and treat them blithely as "10 suggestions".

Want to sleep around or live together outside of marriage? Go ahead. Want to have an orgy? Go ahead. Want to legalize abortion, prostitution or gambling? Go ahead. After all, you can indulge your wildest fantasies once you begin making the rules, once you make yourself your own god.

But make no mistake. Every decision has consequences. Either accept God's whole view or reject God's whole view! At least have the integrity to openly admit what you're doing. Don't try to give your resistance to the Bible's view of homosexuality the patina of soul searching theological debate. And let's not have any more of this nonsense that there are no potential physical consequences. Be an adult. Own your prerogative as a free-will moral agent. Choose your moral path and then accept its results.

Sexuality is an amazingly powerful force and if not kept within certain boundaries will injure us. As usual, Lucifer sows seeds of confusion and causes many to consider themselves enlightened and above the ancient parochial rules. But far from being enlightened and free, their minds are darkened and they are living under God's judgment because He told them the truth and they chose their own path deliberately.

Following is a short word study on Romans 1:27b

- Romans 1:27 HCSB The males in the same way also left natural sexual intercourse with females and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty for their perversion.

“and” (in Greek “*kaí*”) ties the action with its unavoidable punishment.

“received” (Strong’s #618; *apolambano*) means to receive one’s due, the salary appropriate to the service or the judgment due the crime. It is in the present tense. This indicates that those who commit this sin continually receive in full what is their due. This ties in to the “sowing and reaping” principle we saw above.¹⁰ As usual, Satan offers pleasure, satisfaction or self-fulfillment as an incentive but requires us to set aside God’s safety checks. Those who fall for this age-old sin soon discover the self-destructive nature of their decision. These penalties are the consequences of violating nature’s order and the penalty of rebellion.

“appropriate” (Strong’s #1163; *dei* from *deo* which means to bind or tie two things together). This connotes that something is necessary or inevitable. If you jump out of an airplane you must inevitably land. Whether that landing is survivable depends again on choices but “this” always leads inevitably to “that”. Homosexual behavior must bring an appropriate penalty.

“penalty” (Strong’s #489; *antimisthia* from *anti* which means “in return” and *misthos* which means “reward”). A just recompense whether blessed or calamitous. Based on what one deserves. Reciprocity (in this context) at its worst.

“perversion” (Strong’s #4106; *plane*) The word means “to wander out of the right way.” It gives the image of someone wandering or straying, stumbling about in darkness and confusion. It is also used to indicate a deviation from a standard measurement.

¹⁰ Galatians 6:7-8; cp Proverbs 22:8; Jeremiah 12:13; Hosea 8:7; 10:13; Romans 6:13; 8:13