

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

The Kama Sutra is an ancient Hindu text often associated with sexuality and relationships, and it can be used to support the idea that religious believers should accept same-sex relationships. It emphasises mutual respect, consent, and pleasure for both partners, teaching that intimacy is about shared joy and equality. While much of the text explores heterosexual relationships, it also acknowledges same-sex intimacy. Crucially, it does not condemn it, but treats it as part of the wider spectrum of human love and desire. This shows that Hindu tradition has historically recognised different forms of sexuality. The Kama Sutra therefore offers an important perspective on sexuality that links directly to the debate about whether religious believers should support same-sex relationships. By stressing mutual respect, consent, and shared emotional connection, the text suggests that what matters in a relationship is how partners treat each other, not their gender. This means same-sex relationships can be seen as equally valid expressions of love.

This challenges the view, held by some religious traditions, that same-sex relationships are unnatural or immoral. From a Hindu perspective, the Kama Sutra demonstrates that sexual diversity is part of human experience, and that all relationships should be based on care, compassion, and mutual fulfilment.

However, not all Hindus interpret the text in this inclusive way. In some contexts, LGBTQ+ people have faced discrimination, showing that social attitudes do not always reflect the openness of scripture. Despite this, many modern Hindus argue that supporting same-sex relationships fits both with Hindu traditions and with compassion.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

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Islamic attitudes towards the claim that “Religious believers should always support same sex relationships” differ across communities and interpretations of scripture.

In traditional Islam, same sex relationships are not supported. The Qur’an includes accounts of the people of Lot in Surah 7 and Surah 26, which are often interpreted as condemning homosexual acts. Many Muslims also point to hadith which emphasise that sexual activity is permitted only within heterosexual marriage. For this reason, most Muslim scholars and leaders teach that marriage is between a man and a woman and that same sex relationships are not acceptable.

However, other Muslims argue that these texts are open to interpretation.

They suggest that the Qur’anic story of Lot is primarily about issues of violence, exploitation and abuse rather than consensual same sex love. They also emphasise that the Qur’an teaches justice, mercy and dignity for all human beings. From this perspective, supporting same sex relationships is seen as compatible with Islamic values of compassion and fairness.

In many Muslim communities, there is an ongoing tension between traditional interpretations of Sharia and the experiences of LGBTQ+ Muslims who seek acceptance within the ummah. Progressive Muslim groups have begun to support same sex relationships openly, arguing that Islam must respond to modern understandings of equality.

Overall, while most Muslims reject same sex relationships, some argue that Islam’s deeper principles of justice and mercy can allow support for them.

[Emilia Johnson, Board Member of the National Centre of Religious Education for Wales, 2025]

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Buddhism approaches sexuality through the principle of reducing suffering and the Five Precepts. The third precept advises Buddhists to avoid “sexual misconduct,” but this is not defined by gender or sexual orientation. Instead, it focuses on avoiding harm, exploitation, and lack of consent. This means many Buddhists see same-sex relationships as morally acceptable if they are based on love, faithfulness, and respect.

In Theravāda Buddhism, common in countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka, traditional interpretations often reflect local cultural norms, which have historically been less accepting of LGBTQ+ relationships. However, these restrictions are usually cultural rather than scriptural, since the Pali Canon does not explicitly condemn same-sex relationships. Lay Buddhists are encouraged to live ethically, and same-sex couples can do this if their relationships are compassionate and non-harmful.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially in East Asia, the emphasis on *karuṇā* (compassion) and *upāya* (skillful means) provides support for more inclusive interpretations. Many Mahāyāna teachers argue that same-sex relationships can embody *metta* (loving-kindness) and help individuals progress on the path by reducing selfish desire and building compassion.

In modern Western Buddhism, many communities openly affirm LGBTQ+ identities, linking this to Buddhist values of equality and non-attachment. Overall, Buddhism suggests that what matters is intention and compassion, meaning same-sex relationships can be fully valid within Buddhist ethics.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

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Jewish attitudes towards the claim that “Religious believers should always support same sex relationships” vary widely across different branches of Judaism.

In traditional Judaism, same sex relationships are generally not supported. The Torah includes verses such as Leviticus 18:22, which describes same sex relations between men as forbidden. Orthodox Judaism therefore teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman and that family life should be based on this model. Many Orthodox Jews believe that supporting same sex relationships would go against halakhah, which they see as binding divine law.

By contrast, Reform and Liberal Judaism emphasise inclusion, justice and equality. They argue that the principle of b'tzelem Elohim, that all humans are created in the image of God, means that everyone deserves dignity and love regardless of sexuality. Reform Judaism often supports same sex marriage and welcomes LGBTQ+ couples fully into synagogue life. Some rabbis in these traditions officiate at same sex weddings, interpreting Jewish law in ways that reflect modern values of equality.

Masorti Judaism tends to adopt a middle position, upholding halakhah but encouraging compassion, pastoral support and full participation of LGBTQ+ Jews in community life, even where traditional teachings about marriage remain.

Overall, Jewish attitudes range from rejecting same sex relationships based on Torah and halakhah to affirming them as consistent with Jewish values of justice, dignity and love.

[Rachel Healand-Sloan, Operations Manager at the National Centre of Religious Education for Wales 2025]

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In Sikhism, teachings about sexuality are rooted in the Guru Granth Sahib and the example of the Gurus, which emphasise equality, dignity, and devotion to God. Sikh ethics focus on living truthfully, showing compassion, and avoiding lust (kam), one of the five vices. The Sikh marriage ceremony (Anand Karaj) is traditionally defined as a union between a man and a woman, and the official position of many Sikh institutions is that same-sex marriages should not be performed in gurdwaras.

This raises questions about whether religious believers should support same-sex relationships. On one hand, some Sikhs argue that since the Gurus did not explicitly mention homosexuality, Sikh teaching supports only heterosexual marriage. The Rehat Maryada (Sikh code of conduct) reflects this view, reinforcing the idea that marriage is between a man and a woman.

On the other hand, Sikh principles of equality and justice can be used to support LGBTQ+ inclusion. The Gurus rejected discrimination based on caste, gender, or social status, and modern Sikh activists argue this should also apply to sexuality. They point out that true Sikh living involves compassion (daya), humility (nimrata), and respect for all, which means accepting same-sex relationships as valid expressions of love and commitment.

Today, Sikh communities are divided: some hold firmly to tradition, while others, especially in Western contexts, advocate for inclusivity as consistent with the Sikh message of equality before God.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, [2025]

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The Church in Wales, part of the Anglican Communion, has increasingly developed an inclusive approach to same-sex relationships, which can be linked to the debate about whether religious believers should always support them. In 2021, the Church voted to allow special blessings for same-sex couples, showing recognition of LGBTQ+ relationships as expressions of love and commitment. Although this falls short of full same-sex marriage within the Church, it marks a significant step towards greater equality. The teaching reflects Christian values of compassion, dignity, and justice, suggesting that all relationships based on love and faithfulness can be honoured before God. This challenges traditional Christian views, which often point to biblical texts such as Leviticus 18:22 or Romans 1:26–27, historically used to argue that same-sex relationships are sinful. The Church in Wales interprets scripture more broadly, stressing Jesus' command to love one another (John 13:34) as central to Christian ethics. From this perspective, same-sex relationships can reflect Christian virtues of love, care, and fidelity, and therefore deserve support.

However, not all Christians agree with this inclusive approach. Some argue that marriage is God-given for a man and a woman, pointing to Genesis 2:24. Others welcome the Church in Wales' stance as a sign of compassion and progress. Overall, the Church in Wales balances tradition with inclusivity, showing that Christian believers can support same-sex relationships as consistent with faith and love.

[Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Philosophy and Religion Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

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The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament between a man and a woman, ordered towards unity and the procreation of children. Because of this, it does not allow same-sex marriage or sexual relationships, which it views as contrary to natural law. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2357–2359) states that homosexual acts are “intrinsically disordered,” but it also emphasises that people with same-sex attraction must be treated with “respect, compassion, and sensitivity.”

This position creates tension when considering whether religious believers should support same-sex relationships. On one hand, the Church is clear that sexual intimacy should only take place within heterosexual marriage, so it does not recognise same-sex intimacy as morally acceptable. Catholics may therefore argue that supporting same-sex relationships goes against Church teaching and biblical texts such as Genesis 2:24 (“a man shall be united to his wife”).

On the other hand, Catholic teaching stresses the dignity of every human being, since all are created in the image of God (imago Dei). Pope Francis has encouraged Catholics to welcome LGBTQ+ people into the Church community, saying, “Who am I to judge?” when speaking about gay people who seek God.

While this does not change doctrine, it highlights the importance of compassion and inclusion.

Overall, the Catholic Church distinguishes between same-sex attraction, which is not sinful, and sexual acts, which are. This means Catholic believers may support LGBTQ+ dignity but not same-sex marriage.

[Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Philosophy and Religion Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

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