

January 22 2010

The JCCV's Executive Director, Geoffrey Zygiel, defends "the Jewish Bible's" compassion in a letter to The Age (Jan 4 2010) by quoting several verses from said document.

Look closer to home

MICHAEL King describes Tony Abbott's suggestion that asylum seeker boats should be turned back as "very Old Testament" (Letters, 2/1). King's insinuation that the Jewish Bible's teachings lack compassion is wrong. He ignores such commandments as "You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" and "[I]f a stranger comes into your midst ... you shall not do him wrong ... you shall love him as yourself".

These passages explicitly acknowledge the obligations to aid the helpless. If Australia's treatment of asylum seekers doesn't meet these standards, King should look closer to home for the reasons.

Geoffrey Zygiel, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Caulfield

One only has to look at the track record of the use of this "compassionate" document, "the Jewish Bible"(*), to see that not only does it lack compassion, but it is entirely responsible for some of the most incompassionate behaviour ever seen by humanity.

Take for example "the Jewish Bible's" compassionate treatment of homosexual men. "The Jewish Bible" orders death by stoning in the literal interpretation, and in the supremacist Orthodox context that the Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) currently positions itself, it just lets gay men kill themselves because it is completely intolerant of homosexual expression, which has been comprehensively proven to cause suicidal behaviour.

This document, "the Jewish Bible", lacks compassion in so many areas it's a surprise to me that any intelligent individual could possibly think otherwise. I find "the Jewish Bible" to be one of the most hateful documents to have ever been given an iota of credibility. To claim it is compassionate is really quite laughable.

I think Mr Geoffrey Zygiel and his organisation should be the ones looking closer to home.

Michael Barnett.
Coordinator,
Aleph Melbourne.

* NB: There are more accepting and compassionate interpretations of "the Jewish Bible" than the one Geoffrey Zygiel refers to, such as the interpretation that the Progressive Jewish community subscribe to. However the President of the JCCV currently refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Progressive Jewish community as a valid Jewish perspective.