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Gay Jews have 'higher souls' than gentiles, says deputy minister

Habayit Hayehudi's Rabbi Eli Ben Dahan says same-sex marriage is prohibited just as marriage between Jews and gentiles is.

By Haaretz | Dec. 29, 2013 | 7:14 PM | 35

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Participants walk near the Knesset during a gay pride parade in Jerusalem. Photo by Reuters

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The year of living dangerously? || In 2014, American Jewish leaders might lose control of the Israel debate

Washington's failure to clinch two-state deal would shift Palestinian focus to international groups and college campuses where organized Jewry holds little sway.

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Homosexual Jews have "higher souls" than gentiles, gay or straight, the deputy minister for religious services told the Israeli daily Maariv in an article published on Friday.

Even so, he would oppose any same-sex marriage bill, just as he would oppose marriage between a Jew and a gentile, said Rabbi Eli Ben Dahan, a member of the right-wing Habayit Hayehudi party.

Same-sex marriage is "unnatural," the rabbi politician added, saying that "it is natural that the world wants continuity through relations between a

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man and a woman."

Ben Dahan spoke out just as his his party and the Yesh Atid party reached a compromise, paving the way for passage of a preliminary bill in the Knesset [offering tax breaks for same-sex parents](#).

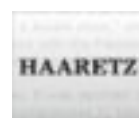
The written deal between the two coalition partners has been kept under wraps but it is expected the bill will be shelved and that equivalent tax credits will be implemented through Finance Ministry regulations rather than legislation.

Ben Dahan, who was absent from the Knesset vote, said he does not want to persecute gays, but that his opposition for the bill stems from his commitment to Israel's Jewish nature.

"I have to keep the state Jewish. Things to contradict the values, culture or tradition will not receive a stamp of approval," he said.

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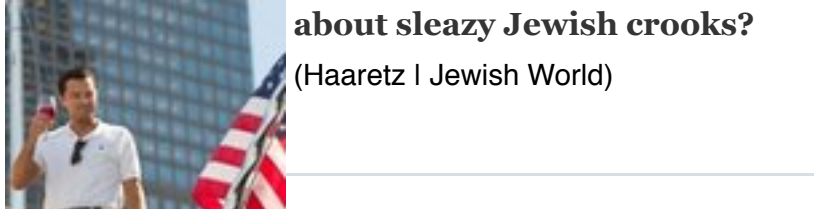
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