

Mipnei Darchay Shalom: For the Sake of the Ways of Peace Reflections on Social Issues and World Events

**A STORY IN SUPPORT OF EQUAL MARRIAGE FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS
LEGISLATURE May 2006**

Sitting at breakfast one Sunday morning not long ago, the newspaper spread out before me, I read with disbelief of the decision by Catholic Charities to end its adoption work, rather than place children with same sex parents. As the rabbi of a small synagogue in Jamaica Plain that welcomes all manner of families, I felt stung and sickened by the claim that such a placement would be immoral. Later that morning, I welcomed parents and children to the synagogue for a family education program. Among those who arrived were two men and their adopted four-year old Cambodian son. Filled with energy, the little boy raced inside, his joyful smile filling the room with light. Calling to his parents, to dad and to papa, the gleeful voice of this child announced with unassuming innocence, "we are family." Through these two simple words of parental address, the little boy exuded the inner security that comes with the knowledge of belonging to a loving family. How far he had traveled from an orphanage on the other side of the world. As I saw these two men reach out with loving hands to their son, my eyes filled with tears. I cried with pain and embarrassment for the insult hurled at them with that ugly word that still echoed in my head. It is hard to remain sad, though, among laughing children. I felt the rising of joy as I stood amid the simple reality of loving family that so clearly countered the calumny that I had read in the newspaper. In that moment, the painful echo dissipated as the word "immoral" was given flight upon gentle wings and sent back to those with whom it belonged.

Rabbi Victor Reinstein