

Islam's Clear Stance on Homosexuality

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Allāh and His Prophet ﷺ have clearly prohibited homosexuality.

It is a major sin.

The one who commits it is a *fāsiq* (transgressor).

The one who denies its prohibition becomes a *kāfir* (disbeliever).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Response to the Government's Proposed Initiative-Homosexuality: The Islamic Perspective

We are living in an era where people are rapidly pursuing their desires, by all means possible, even at the expense of core moral values which are vital in developing a wholesome and flourishing society. Actions which were considered to be evil, filthy and immoral, like homosexuality, are becoming 'normalised' and gaining acceptance in the name of 'so-called' human rights, freedom and advancement. The issue of 'LGBTQ Rights' has become an object of discussion in many parts of the world to the extent that some countries are recognising and/or legalizing same-sex unions and marriages. With the recent announcement by the Government of Barbados of its plan to recognise civil unions of same-sex couples and hosting a referendum to legalise same-sex marriages, it is apparent that unfortunately, we are also about to face the very same issue here, in Barbados.

We, the Muslim community, also form part of the wider Barbadian society and as a result, we also face the effects of the government's decisions. Therefore, this intended initiative of theirs should be a cause of great alarm and concern for us. As Muslims, how should we respond to this proposal? Are we going to accept and support it? Or Are we going to oppose it or simply ignore it? This is a very serious issue which needs to be addressed with due importance and must not be disregarded. Therefore, in this article, we aim to highlight the Islamic perspective on homosexuality as well as the serious implications the legalisation and acceptance of such an immoral act can have on our society.

Who Determines Morality?

Firstly, we must understand that essence of Islamic belief/faith lies in the submission to the decree of Allāh; to

accept what Allāh has commanded and prohibited even if our intellects fail to perceive its wisdom. Thus, to educate ourselves and form our judgement on the issue under discussion; 'whether the acceptance of homosexuality is morally correct or not,' we cannot turn to the liberalistic views of the 'human right' platforms and governmental constitutions. Rather, we believe that Allāh is the one who determines what is morally right or wrong and what is a human right. As Maulānā Khalid Dhorat beautifully mentions in his article, 'Looking for Manure in the Rose Garden-Homosexuality in Islam', "The Constitution of Allāh prohibits it, even though the constitution of many secular countries legalise it."

Homosexuality: The Islamic Perspective

The Australian National Imams Council in their public statement entitled, "Islam's Clear Position on Homosexuality", mentions that, "From the Islamic standpoint, homosexuality is a forbidden action; a major sin and anyone who partakes in it is considered a disobedient servant to Allāh that will acquire His displeasure and disapproval. This is clearly stated in the three main sources of the *Shari'ah*: The Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and [*Ijma'*] the consensus of all scholars, which extends from the time of the Prophet ﷺ till today."

Homosexuality: In Light of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*

The following *Qur'anic* verses from *Surah A'raf* are from amongst those verses which highlight the prohibition and despicable nature of homosexuality:

And [remember] when Lūt said to his people, "Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? (7:80) Indeed, you approach (have sex with) men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people." (7:81)

In the Arabic language the word ‘approach’ is used for sexual intercourse. [*Tafsīr Rūḥul Ma‘ānī*] The Prophet ﷺ also used this word when he said, “Allāh will not look (with mercy) at a man who approaches (have sex with) a man or a woman in the anus.” [Tirmidhī] Therefore, this is an explicit statement in the Noble *Qur’an* regarding the prohibition of anal penetration.

Ḥafīdh Ibn Kathīr explains the verse in his *tafsīr* (commentary) ‘*Tafsīrul Qur’ānīl ‘Adhīm*’, “They did actions that none of the Children of Adam or any creature did before them; that action is having sexual intercourse with males instead of females.” He further explains that the act of fulfilling their desires with men instead of women (whom Allāh created for them) was an act of *isrāf* (transgressing the limits of Allāh) and *jahl* (ignorance) as they placed an action out of its rightful place.

Imām Qurtubī explains in his *tafsīr*, ‘*Al-Jāmi‘ Al-Aḥkāmul Qur’ānī*’, that Allāh’s statement “Do you commit such immorality” refers to intercourse with males. He also mentions that despite a difference amongst the scholars regarding its punishment, there is consensus that this act is *ḥarām* (forbidden).”

The *tafsīr* (commentary) of these verses mentioned by *Muftī* Muhammad Shafī Usmani in “*Ma‘āriful Qur’ān*” is very enlightening. He mentions that the city, Sodom, that Lūt (عليه السلام) was sent to was very fertile with abundant fruits and grains. He further states, “Man’s habit is as Allāh says in the Qur’an: “Nay! [But] indeed, man transgresses, because he sees himself self-sufficient.” (96:6). Allāh also opened the doors of His blessings upon these people. However, as is man’s normal habit, they became intoxicated/took pride in wealth and power and they reached the farthest end of luxury and lust. Due to this, they stood deprived of the most essential human sense of honour, dignity and modesty, and lost in that process, the very ability to distinguish between the good and the bad. Consequently, they got themselves involved in acts of unnatural indecencies. These are abominable acts, apart from being *ḥarām* (prohibited) and sinful, acts which cause hatred and distaste in the mind of everyone born with sound and decent taste.”

If we consider the state of the world we live in today, with the unprecedented advancements in science, technology and other fields and with endless access to resources at our disposal along with the materialistic lifestyles we have adopted, man has begun to feel independent and that he is in control of his affairs to the extent that “mankind arrogantly thinks that he can over-write the Law of the

Throne with his pen.” (Maulānā Khalid Dhorat). Consequently, the world today, has lost its decency and morality as is evident by the widespread practice of alcoholism, adultery, homosexuality amongst other heinous sins just like how the people of Lūt (عليه السلام) lost their morality.

He further states in his *tafsīr*, that the word which described their act was ‘*al-fāḥishah*’- ‘the shameful act’ and that the word *fāḥishah* is also used to refer to the act of adultery. However, in this verse, it is mentioned with the definite article (i.e. ‘the’) which indicates that is as though this unnatural, evil act is the combination of all indecencies and an even greater sin than adultery.

In another verse, Allāh speaks about how He saved Lūt from the ‘town’ which committed ‘filthy acts’ and whose people were ‘evil’. Allāh has also branded them as ‘open sinners’ and an ‘ignorant nation’. Conversely, the filthy people called the Muslims ‘those who intend to be pure’.

Ponder over the following verse and see how angry Allāh becomes with a people who commit this sin that He destroyed their entire towns with the most horrendous punishment meted out to any nation. Allāh says, “Then when Our decree came to pass, We turned them [towns of Sodom] upside down and rained upon them hardened stones of clay, one after another, (82) (which were) marked from your Lord. And Allāh’s punishment is not far from the wrongdoers. (83)” The stones were marked with each sinner’s name and the stones were directly from Allāh and not of this world, say the *mufasssīrūn* (commentators). Do note Allāh’s threat in the end of the verse. May Allāh protect us and our island. This also shows that it is not only a personal sin, rather it affects the entire society.

There are also several narrations from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ), which show the prohibition and the severity of the act of homosexuality, one of which was mentioned above.

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Cursed is the one who does the action of the people of Lūt.” He ﷺ repeated it thrice. [Aḥmad]

Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “What I fear most for my ‘*Ummah* (Nation) is the action of the People of Lūt.” [Tirmidhī] Let us not be the generation where this abomination takes root.

There are many other *aḥādīth* on this issue with severe warnings and judgements which we have omitted for the sake of brevity.

It is mentioned in the Encyclopedia of *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) on all four *madhabs* named ‘*Mawsū‘ah Fiqhīyah*’ that, “All the fuqaha agree that homosexuality is *harām* (forbidden) and it is the worst type of immorality.”

Therefore, from the *Qur’ānic* verses, and *Sunnah*, along with the consensus of the scholars (*Ijmā‘*) it is clear that the people of Lūt (عليه السلام) were engaging in homosexuality and that it is an abominable and prohibited act. The fourth source of *Shar‘ī* Law, *Qiyās* (analogy/sound reasoning) based on the three primary sources, also proves its prohibition. Allāh has categorically prohibited intercourse in menses due to the harm and filth (*adhā*) associated with it. “And they ask you about menstruation. Say, ‘It is *adhā*, so keep away from wives during menstruation.’” (2:222) Similarly, there is harm and filth (*adhā*) associated with anal penetration, causing it to be prohibited.

Homosexuality: Against Nature

Muftī Usmani’s commentary of the verses of *Sūrah A‘rāf* as well as Ibn Kathīr’s, alluded to the fact that the action of the people of Lūt (عليه السلام), i.e. homosexuality, is one that goes against the *fitriah* (the natural disposition of man). *Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind*’s General Secretary, Maulānā Madani, also mentions that “In the religious texts, homosexuality has been described as one that goes against the laws of nature.” This sentiment is not something that can be denied or rejected. Rather, this view is also supported from a biological and sociological perspective.

The Biological Perspective

In the book, ‘Why Homosexuality is Prohibited in Islam’ by Abu Zaynab Abd ar-Rahman al-Qawwim, it is mentioned that, “It is a self-evident and undeniable fact that the default biological, physiological design in humans is sexual conduct between males and females. This is rooted in biology and is tied to the continuation and survival of humanity. Sexual attraction and conduct between males and females is therefore the normal, natural, default sexual behaviour by design. The two halves of the human body, male and female are designed to combine together in pairs in all levels: physical, emotional, psychological and sexual. This is a statement of fact just as saying ‘a lock and key combine together to provide a single mechanism’ is to make a statement of a fact.” Thus, it is evident that homosexuality goes against the natural design and function of the body as “the male and female reproductive organs work together harmoniously to produce new humans -a clear indication that this natural design favours heterosexual rather than homosexual unions.”

The Sociological Perspective

Abu Zaynab also states, “In cohesion with this natural design of the human body, Islam encourages marriage between a biological male and a biological female which gives rise to a natural family of a biological father and a biological mother.” That being said, it is important to note that the family is one of the major social institutions which are the fundamental building blocks of society and perform several functions to preserve social stability and growth. One of the primary functions of the family as a social institution as mentioned by sociologists, is to reproduce in order to ensure the sustainability and continuation of society. Therefore, it is evident that homosexuality contradicts and cannot fulfil this function of the family and thus, it fragments the natural build-up of this social institution which is crucial for the sustainability and positive development of a society. This sentiment is also corroborated by Abu Zaynab where he mentions, “The family institution-a core value of all civilizations and nations-is systematically being dismantled and destroyed in these countries through the promotion of artificial values.”

Crossroads Between Islamic Teachings and Western Liberal Views

From the above, it can be deduced that homosexuality is an abominable, sinful and despicable act in the sight of Allāh and also an act that does not coincide with human nature and the sustainability of a society. However, Muslims living in this modern era are, as stated by Zameelur Rahman, “At crossroads between accepting the beautiful and pristine orthodox teachings of Islam and succumbing to the pressure of accepting western liberal ‘values’ ... all people, religious or otherwise, are pressured (covertly and overtly) into accepting western liberal norms, by means of the media, and through other channels (legal, political, etc.). The standard of morality is therefore shifted to these so-called ‘enlightened values’ and not what our revealed source call us towards. Islam is a religion that is conducive to sound human nature that has not been contaminated by corrupt external influences.”

Impact of Acceptance of Homosexuality

Consequently, we must not be persuaded into believing the rhetoric of “human right platforms” which promote the acceptance and normalisation of homosexuality in the name of human rights and freedom. As Maulānā Madani mentioned: “A process which affects the growth of a society cannot be termed right by calling it freedom.” Thus, we must oppose homosexuality vehemently and consider it to be a sin. This is not an issue to be taken lightly as the

acceptance of this unnatural and despicable act of homosexuality will not only severely affect Barbadian society in general, but will also have a direct negative impact on our Muslim community, our values; our *Imān* and that of our children.

We cannot allow ourselves to have a laid-back approach by deceiving ourselves that it may not materialise or, that even if it does then it will not affect our Muslim community. The adverse effects of such proposals and initiatives are evident. If we look at the situation of other countries which have legalised and recognised same-sex marriages, its consequences are evident. For instance, take the UK as an example where as of September 2020 it has become compulsory to teach about sexual orientation and gender identity in schools (including **faith-based** schools). This was mentioned on Cambridge News in an article titled, “LGBTQ+ Sex Education will be compulsory from September 2020-this is what it will mean for your kids,” “Kids will learn about consent, relationships, contraceptives, porn[ography], LGBTQ+ rights and the internet and all schools including faith schools will have to comply.” Do we want this to be our condition in the coming years? Do we want our future generations to grow up thinking homosexuality to be acceptable and normal? (May Allāh Protect Us)

Our Responsibility

In order to curb the imposing threat that this proposed initiative poses on us and the protection of our future generation’s *Imān* (belief), Islamic values and morals we have to fulfil our responsibility as Muslims to display our opposition in every manner possible. We live in a democratic country which affords us the right to speak our beliefs without fear of repercussion.

The Messenger of Allāh, ﷺ said, “Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he is unable to do so, then with his tongue (i.e. speak out against it). If he is unable to do so, then with his heart (i.e. hate it), and that is the weakest level of faith.” [Muslim]

We must not remain silent. Rather, we must let our voices be heard. We must make every effort to unite as a Muslim community, along with the wider Christian society in Barbados, to engage in dialogue with the government on our disagreement and disapproval of this initiative of theirs.

As Allāh *Ta’ālā* states in the Noble *Qur’ān*: “Help one another in virtue, righteousness and piety but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is severe in punishment.” (5:2)

Our responsibility as Muslims in Barbados:

It is only through the blessings of Allāh that here in Barbados we have many gems amongst our brothers and sisters who can contribute to the wider society and bring about change and goodness in the world. The following are somethings which we as a community can do with regard to this situation:

- 1) Reaffirm our religious belief in the prohibition of LGBTQ+, and not let any thought of worldly, political or economic gains tempt us to change our stance.
- 2) Those who are suffering from these illicit urges, should consider this a test from Allāh like any other test of sinful urges, and know that the doors of repentance are open.
- 3) Perform at least two *rak’ats* of *ṣalātut tawbah* and *ḥājab* and Ask Allāh to forgive us for our shortcomings and beg Him to save us from this *fitnah* which uproots all morality and decency and destroys society.
- 4) We, as the Muslim community should issue a public statement regarding our stance, in opposition to the proposed bill on LGBTQ+ so that, in the least, we can use it as an excuse on the Day of Reckoning.
- 5) Each individual eligible to vote, should vote against this Bill. Every vote counts.
- 6) We should also encourage our work colleagues, customers and neighbours to vote against this bill.

May Allāh safe-guard our *Imān* (belief) and protect us from all forms of sins, *fitnah* (trials) and immorality. (*Amin*)

And Allāh *Ta’ālā* Knows Best.

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