



جمعية العلماء ومدرسي الدين الاسلامي سنغافورة
Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam (Singapura)
Singapore Islamic Scholars & Religious Teachers Association

Religious Guidance

Same-Sex Attraction from the Islamic Perspective



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جمعية العلماء ومدرسي الإسلام في سنغافورة
Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam (Singapura)
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Content

Summary	4
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Religious Guidance

1.0 Introduction	7
2.0 Background	7
3.0 Terms and Scope of Discussion	7
4.0 Examining the Meaning of Identity, Love and Happiness from the Islamic Perspective.....	12
4.1 The Question of Identity - Who Am I?	13
4.2 What is the Meaning of Love in Islam?	17
4.3 What is the meaning of happiness in Islam?	20
4.4 Conclusion.....	23
5.0 Sexuality between the Modern and Islamic Perspective	25
5.1 Sexuality in the Modern Discourse	25
5.1.1 Evolving Concept of Sexuality.....	27
5.1.2 Sexuality as an Identity	27
5.1.3 The Sexual Revolution in Brief	28
5.1.4 Hypersexualisation	29
5.2 Sexuality from the Islamic Perspective	30

5.2.1	Islam Recognises Human Sexual Needs	31
5.2.2	Understanding the Relationship of Sexuality and Marriage from the Lens of Maqasid Shariah (Objectives of Shariah)	33
5.3	Homosexuality in the Modern Discourse	37
5.4	Islam and Homosexuality	39
5.5	Conclusion.....	45
6.0	Advice for the Muslim Community in Responding to Same-Sex Attraction and LGBTQ-related Matters.....	48
6.1	Individuals Experiencing Same-sex Attraction are Prone to Mental Health Issues	48
6.2	Approaching and Responding to LGBTQ and Same-Sex Attraction Discourse through the Lens of Wasatiyah	49
6.3	Conclusion.....	63
7.0	Advice for Muslims Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction	65
7.1	Strengthening Our Faith as Muslims	65
7.1.1	Consider it as a test from Allah s.w.t.....	67
7.1.2	Not avoiding religion.....	69
7.1.3	Seeking good and pious companionship	72
7.1.4	Seek help from a professional or qualified support group.....	73

7.1.5	Attending classes on Islamic knowledge.....	74
7.2	Managing Expectations: Acknowledging Differences and Moving Forward as a Community.....	74
7.3	Conclusion.....	75
The Quranic Text and Context: Analysing Quranic Interpretation on Homosexual Acts (Same-Sex Acts)		76
1.0	Interacting with Text	77
2.0	Analysing Quranic Interpretation on Homosexual Act (Same-sex act)	78
2.1	Thematic Analysis of the Story of Prophet Lut a.s.	79
2.2	Kugle Referencing Ibn Hazm to Support His Thematic Analysis.....	80
2.2.1	A Thematic Analysis but a Different Finding from Kugle's.	83
2.2.2	Kugle's Claim that the term Fahishah refers to rape and assault, not based on love and desire	91
2.2.3	An Analysis of the Term Fahishah, but a Different Finding from Kugle	92
2.3	Summary	95
3.0	Conclusion.....	97

Summary



Our understanding on the concept of identity, love and happiness is deeply rooted in the principles of Syariah and Faith, instead of social expectations and trends.



Sexual acts between same gender is prohibited in Islam. The desire however if not acted upon, is not punishable. Desires should be managed so it does not govern one's actions.



Muslim community should apply the principles of Wasatiyah in addressing and responding to the issue.



Muslims experiencing same-sex attraction or identify themselves as LGBTQ are advised to **strengthen their faith as Muslims and manage expectations** towards the religious institutions and the Muslim community.



As we are presented with diverse opinions in religious matters, **Muslims should be responsible learners and receivers.**

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Issues related to sexuality and gender including same-sex attraction (SSA) and LGBTQ identities have been thoroughly discussed, debated and advocated over the past few decades, causing worrying implications, concerns and confusions among Singaporeans, especially the Muslim community.

As an organisation that provides religious leadership, Pergas developed a religious guidance to offer a framework for understanding and addressing issues related to homosexuality or LGBTQ – particularly, attraction towards people of the same gender or same-sex attraction (SSA) – within the context of religious teachings and values.

This religious guidance offers guidelines in the hope that they will provide guidance and support for the asatizah, individuals, families and communities.

2.0 Background

A study titled 'Religion, Morality and Conservatism in Singapore', published by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) on 2 May 2019, revealed a significant shift in the way the public in Singapore perceives homosexuality. The study found that while Singaporeans generally maintain conservative values, there is an increasing openness towards LGBTQ discourse. It also highlighted a higher level of acceptance, especially among young individuals, related to same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage. This shifting trend suggests that Singapore is influenced by global developments. As a result, it is crucial for us to acknowledge and address this trend by providing guidance for our community.

To further understand and analyse findings from the study, Pergas has conducted extensive research and a series of discussions as part of its 4-year strategic plan (2021-2024). In the initial stage, Dr Mathew Matthews¹ was invited to explain and discuss the study in a roundtable discussion with asatizah, academics and professionals. In the subsequent stage, Pergas organised two Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions involving activists who work closely with Muslims who feel they belong to the LGBTQ

¹ Dr Mathew Matthews is Head of IPS Social Lab, a centre for social indicator research and a Principal Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies.

community, and Muslims who identify themselves as LGBTQ individuals. These sessions sought to examine the views, challenges as well as expectations of the activists and Muslims who identify as members of the LGBTQ community. Pergas then addressed this matter at the Mukhtar Ulama 2021 (MU2021) where asatizah, academics, social workers and professionals exchanged views and put forth proposals on how to approach the LGBTQ discourse.

With the data collected through the FGDs and a series of extensive research and analysis, as well as the key findings and recommendations of MU2021, Pergas developed this religious guidance.

3.0 Terms and Scope of Discussion

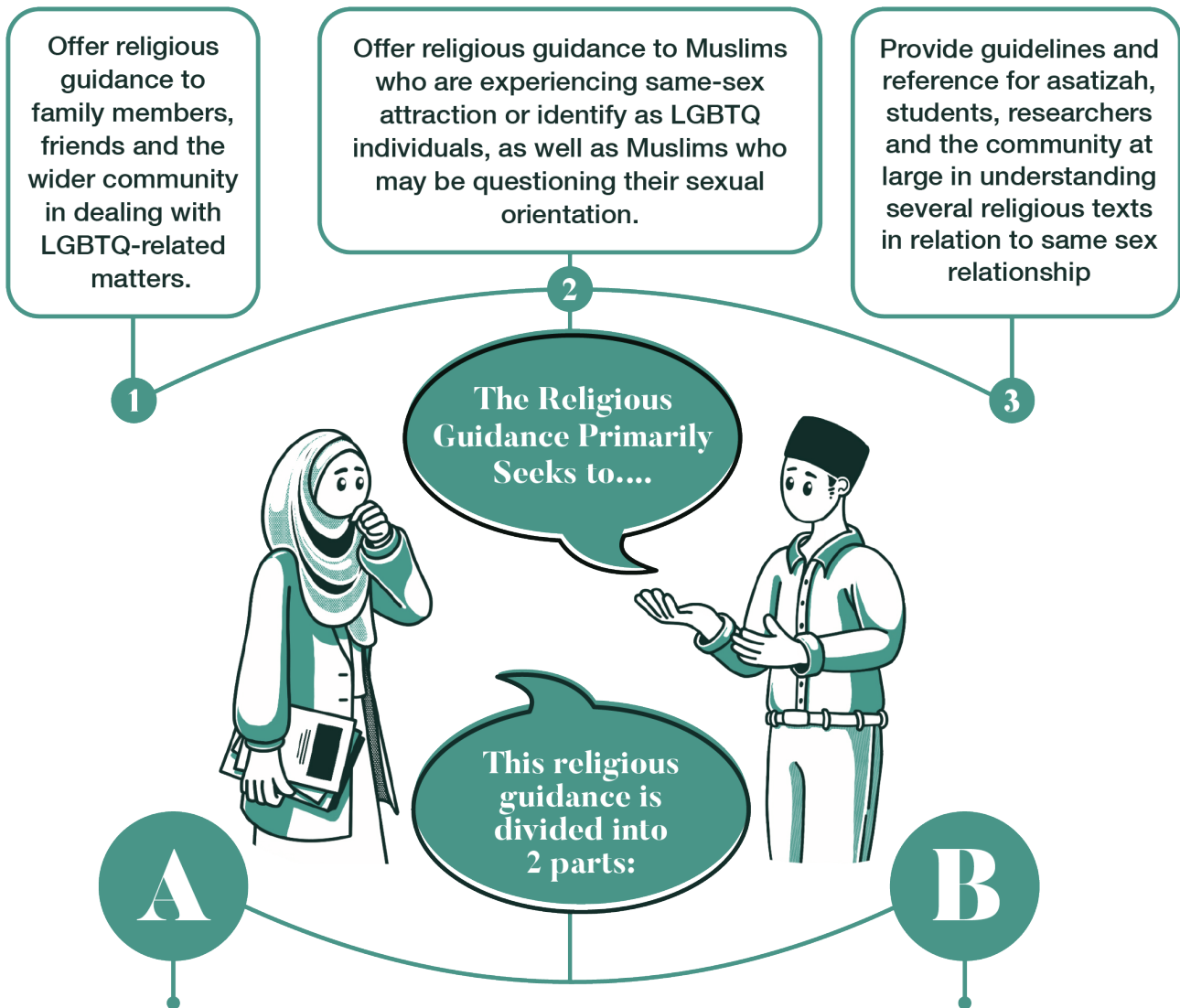
It is important to distinguish between the terms homosexuality, LGBTQ and same-sex attraction. Homosexuality can refer to romantic attraction towards people of the same gender, same-sex sexual behaviour, and/or a person's identity. The term LGBTQ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning individuals who may identify with any combination of these labels. It has grown and expanded over the years to include intersex, asexual and gender-nonconforming individuals. This term encompasses a wide range of identities and experiences related to sexual orientation and gender identity. However, it should be noted that not everyone experiencing same-sex attraction engages in same-sex practices or identifies themselves with these attractions.

Thus, for the purposes of this guidance, the term "same-sex attraction" or SSA is predominantly used. This is done to specifically address individuals who experience attraction towards people of the same gender without necessarily engaging in same-sex practices or identifying themselves within the LGBTQ spectrum. It differentiates these individuals from those who identify themselves as part of the LGBTQ community. However, the term homosexuality and LGBTQ will still be used in this guidance when necessary to discuss and contextualize relevant concepts and issues.

It is also important to clarify that while this guidance touches on homosexuality in general, its primary focus is on examining same-sex attraction. The study may not cover

all experiences related to same-sex attraction or homosexuality, and it may not delve into topics such as gender transition or other diverse aspects of the LGBTQ spectrum.

Within the defined scope, this study aims to offer valuable perspectives and contribute to the broader discourse surrounding same-sex attraction within the Islamic framework.



Part A focuses on the following key aspects:

- a Explaining the **concept of identity, love and happiness** from the **Islamic perspective**.
- b **Comparing the modern perspective on sexuality and homosexuality** with the **Islamic perspective**.
- c Providing **guidance to the Muslim community in responding** to issues pertaining to **same-sex attraction and LGBTQ matters**.
- d Offering **advice to Muslims experiencing same-sex attraction** or those **who identify as LGBTQ individuals**.

Part B of the religious guidance will present:

Analysis on the interpretation of the **Quranic story of Prophet Lut a.s. and his people**, which is often cited and discussed in relation to the LGBTQ discourse.

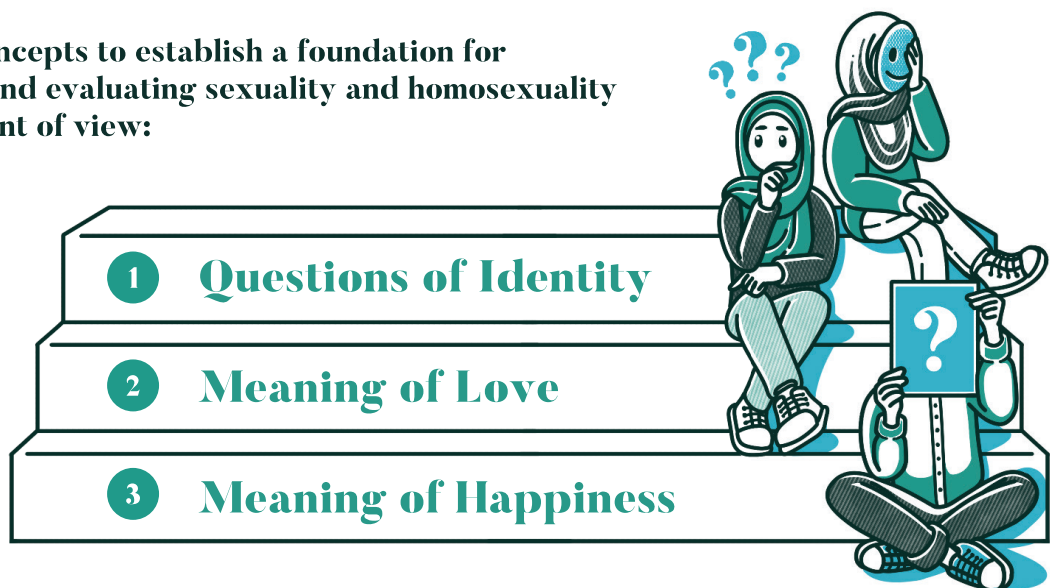
Examining the Meaning of Identity, Love and Happiness from the Islamic Perspective

4.0 Examining the Meaning of Identity, Love and Happiness from the Islamic Perspective

In examining the complexities surrounding sexuality and homosexuality within the context of Islam, it is essential to first establish an understanding regarding fundamental concepts such as identity, love and happiness in Islam. These concepts hold significant importance, not only in individual lives but also in shaping perceptions and experiences of sexuality. From an Islamic perspective, identity, love and happiness are intertwined with the purpose of creation, as well as the spiritual and moral dimensions of our lives as human beings.

This section will explore the meaning of identity, love and happiness within the Islamic worldview. By delving into these fundamental concepts, this guidance aims to establish a strong foundation for understanding and evaluating sexuality and homosexuality from the Islamic point of view. This will shed light on how these concepts influence the understanding and interpretation of homosexuality and same-sex attraction within the framework of Islamic teachings.

Fundamental concepts to establish a foundation for understanding and evaluating sexuality and homosexuality from Islamic point of view:



4.1 The Question of Identity - Who Am I?

A. A Human

Identity is an important aspect of human life not only as an individual, but also through the lenses of race, culture, community, religion and country.

The question of “who am I?”, in particular, is an important question that is closely related to a person’s identity. We can surely find various answers to this question of identity. However, as a Muslim, it is important for us to ensure that the answer is in line with Islamic law, its teachings and worldview.

The term *insān* is essentially understood as living beings who are rational, intelligent, thinking and who have been given the ability to speak and understand speech.² *Insān* are new creatures created by Allah s.w.t. that are different from the creatures that existed before Prophet Adam a.s.³ *Insān* consists of body and soul.⁴

Among the uniqueness of man is the four faculties found in the human body, namely the *Ruh*, the *Aql*, the *Nafs* and the *Qalb*.⁵ These are not four separate entities. They refer to only one entity which is the human soul, but it has different names due to its specific functions, as well as its constantly changing state and activities, such as:

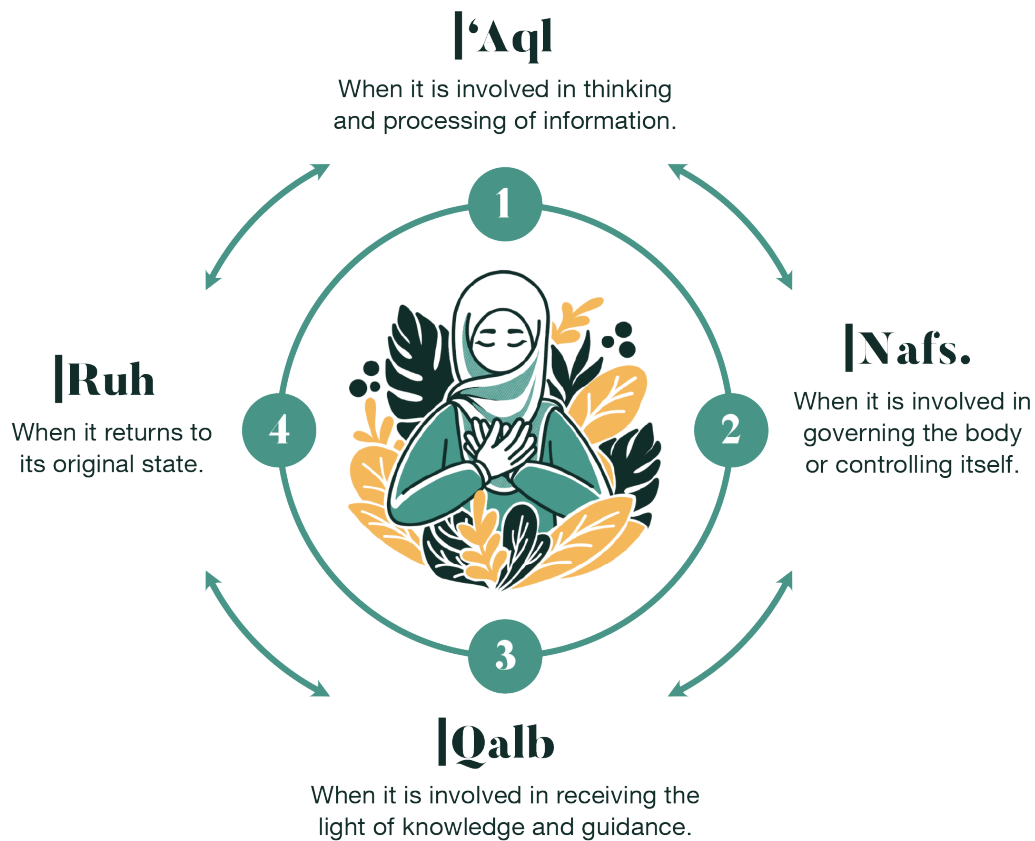
- When it is involved in thinking and processing of information, it is called ‘aql’
- When it is involved in governing the body or controlling itself, it is called ‘nafs’
- When it is involved in receiving the light of knowledge and guidance, it is called ‘qalb’
- When it returns to its original state, it is called ‘ruh’

2 Also mentioned as al-Insan Hayawan Naṭīq (الإنسان حيوان ناطق) in books of ‘Ilm Mantiq (Sciences of Logic).

3 Surah al-Mu’minūn, verse 12- 14.

4 Surah al-Hijr, verse 28-29.

5 Abu Hāmid al-Ghazali, Kitāb ‘Ajā’ib al-Qalb in Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn, 10 vols. (Jeddah: Dar al-Minhaj, 2011), 5: 13.



This is the permanent and unchanging form of human identity. *Insān* and the faculties created by Allah s.w.t. are to remember and worship Allah s.w.t.⁶

This also means that it is not age, sexuality, wealth, status or physical appearance that defines a person (*insān*). The human identity is imperfect by merely looking at the physical form alone; it is also necessary to take into account the aspect of the *rūh*, its spiritual and metaphysical dimensions, as well as the human reality related to the hereafter.

In addition, rationality, which refers to the human mind, is what distinguishes humans from plants and animals. Compared to other creatures, humans can attain the highest forms of knowledge possible, including knowledge about God. If he ignores his rational soul, he will fall to the lowest levels of the animals. However, if he controls himself and strives to fight

⁶ Surah Adh-Dhāriyāt, verse 56.

his animalistic and *bashariyyah* tendencies (base tendencies), he will be able to attain the noblest *insāniyyah* level, and form an Islamic soul that is not only visible in the physical and external appearance of a person, but also more importantly, manifests in the aspects of piety, intelligence and character.

The 'Aql, on the other hand, cannot see the truth by itself without *shara'* – the light of knowledge and guidance from the Quran and Sunnah and examples of the Prophet s.a.w. It is important for an *insān* to know this as it affects their behaviour and actions, whether good or bad.

B. The Natural Disposition

In discussing about the natural disposition, we will generally relate it to a hadith where the Prophet s.a.w. said:⁷

مَا مِنْ مَوْلُودٍ إِلَّا يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ

Meaning: No child is born except upon the true nature (Islam). It is (subsequently) his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian.

Based on this evidence, it can be understood that humans are created by Allah s.w.t. upon the *fiṭrah*.⁸ It is therefore important for humans to really understand the meaning and concept of *fiṭrah*. Does this *fiṭrah* (true nature) refer to an individual's natural instincts or his/her experiences? Is this true nature is something that changes or remains constant?

An individual's *fiṭrah* essentially believes in Allah s.w.t. as it is related to the soul's covenant with God,⁹ as mentioned in the Quran. Allah s.w.t. says:

⁷ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Janāiz, Bāb Izā Aslama al-Ṣobiyyu famāta hal yuṣollā 'alaihi wa hal yu'riḍu 'alā al-Ṣobiyyi al-Islām, Hadith no. 1359.

⁸ *Fiṭrah* comes from the Arabic language and has the same root as the word *iftār* and 'eidul fitri. It carries various meanings including to open, create, something new, original and sacred. *Iftār* not only means breaking the fast as it is often understood, but it also means returning to the original (natural) pre-disposition which requires one to eat and drink. 'Eid al-Fitr means a return to nature, that is, a return to a state of purity like that of a newborn baby whereby after fasting and engaging in worship throughout the month of Ramadan, they hope that their prayers and deeds will be accepted, and their sins and mistakes be forgiven, just like a newborn baby. Abī al-Fadl Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzūr al-Ifriqī al-Misrī, Lisān al- 'Arab, vol. 15. (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1994), 5: 55.

⁹ Sani Badron, "Ibn al-'Arabi on Fundamental Religious Notions: Natural Disposition (*Fiṭrah*), Divine Law (*Syar*), True Faith (*Īmān*) and Disbelief (*Kufr*)", in al-Shajarah, Jilid 4, No. 1 (1999), 93 – 121.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

Al-'Araf 7:172

Meaning: And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. (Allah asked) 'Am I not your Lord?' They replied, 'Yes, you are! We testify.' (He cautioned) "You have no right to say on Judgement Day, 'We were not aware of this.'"

This verse explains the Original Covenant, or man's testimony to the divinity and oneness of Allah s.w.t. when they (in the form of *rūh*) said that Allah s.w.t. is their Lord in full awareness. This incident took place in the spirit realm before *insān's* (man's) existence in this world. It is this *fiṭrah* that also forms an individual's identity and makes him aware of the inseparable true nature of his identity from the hereafter. It reminds him of his duty to always obey the command of Allah s.w.t. in accordance with Islam as the religion of *fiṭrah*.¹⁰

All the laws of Allah s.w.t. such as monotheism, forms of worship, and good moral conduct have been set by Allah s.w.t.

Allah s.w.t. has also planted in each individual's soul, through the laws of the *Sharīah*, the inclination that attracts them to constantly lean towards Him, until it grows in their hearts love for God, religion and truth. However, if this *fiṭrah* is not properly protected, it will be susceptible to external influences which would eventually destroy it and lead a person's soul away from its original *fiṭrah* (true nature), when in fact, an individual's soul has a religious instinct which inclines towards the true religion, *al-hanīfiyyah*, the religion of monotheism - Islam.

All the laws of Allah s.w.t. such as monotheism, forms of worship, and good moral conduct have been set by Allah s.w.t.



¹⁰ Surah Ar-Rūm, verse 30.

Therefore, it is important for a Muslim to understand the true meaning and concept of *fiṭrah*. *Fiṭrah* not only refers to an individual's natural physical form as created by Allah s.w.t., but more importantly, it is the state of the spirit and soul which had been created in a state of purity, conscious of its Creator, and is always aware of its responsibility to glorify Allah s.w.t. and obey His commands. A person can return to the *fiṭrah* through constantly purifying himself through worship, seeking religious knowledge, and so on.

It is important for human beings to realise that their original identity, which remains intact and does not change in any situation wherever they are, should be in accordance with their *fiṭrah* which is related to mankind's covenant and testimony about the divinity and glory of Allah.



Fitrah not only refers to an individual's natural physical form as created by Allah s.w.t., but more importantly, it is the state of the spirit and soul which had been created in a state of purity, conscious of its Creator, and is always aware of its responsibility to glorify Allah s.w.t. and obey His commands.

4.2 What is the Meaning of Love in Islam?

Islam requires Muslims to always respect, love and show affection to each other. Among the famous hadiths that discuss love is a hadith from Anas bin Malik r.a. that the Prophet s.a.w. said:¹¹

¹¹ Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, Bāb al-Dalīl 'ala anna min Khīṣāl al-Imān an Yuhibba li akhīhi al-Muslim ma Yuhibbu linafsihi min al-Khair, Hadith 45a.

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

Meaning: None of you will have faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.

However, what is meant by this love? How can we ensure that the feeling of love and affection is based on Islamic *Sharīah*?¹² Therefore, it is important for Muslims to understand the true nature of love because it will also determine good moral values in accordance with the teachings of Islam which will ultimately lead the individual to true happiness.

Based on the hadith related to love mentioned above, it is clear that the relationship between love and faith is closely related.¹³ However, love among the creation should have a higher purpose; to lead towards love for Allah s.w.t. because Allah s.w.t. is the most deserving of a human's love and because it is He who bestowed such love to mankind. Following that love, there must come proof and sacrifice. A human being proves their love towards Allah s.w.t. through worshipping Him and following all His commandments wholeheartedly and voluntarily because true love, in itself, brings man towards obedience. This is also in tandem with the saying of the Prophet s.a.w. who narrates the saying of Allah s.w.t. in a *Hadith Qudsī*:¹⁴

مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ
مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ
كُنْتُ سَمْعُهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرُهُ الَّذِي يَبْصُرُ بِهِ وَيَدُهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ
الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لأُعْطِيَنَّهُ وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لأُعِيذَنَّهُ

12 Islamic *Sharīah* is not just a law. According to Kamal Hassan, it is a comprehensive code of moral norms and ethical conduct as well as a body of divinely ordained religious law. It combines Aqidah, Fiqh and Akhlak demonstrated through adab. *Sharīah* is different from fiqh. *Sharīah* is the divine law and values ordained by Allah s.w.t. while fiqh is the human process of interpreting the *Sharīah*.

13 According to Imam al-Ghazali in his book *Ihyā' 'Ulūmuddin*, love (mahabbah) is the result of knowledge or getting to know something. Getting to know something brings about feelings of love which would lead to an ease of affairs, enjoyment and happiness.

14 Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Riqāq*, Bāb al-Tawādū', Hadith 6502.

Meaning: “Whosoever shows enmity to a wali of Mine (a pious Mukmin who follows the commandments of Allah s.w.t.), then I have declared war against him. And My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved to Me than the religious duties I have obligated upon him. And My servant continues to draw near to me with nawafil (supererogatory) deeds until I Love him. When I Love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him; and were he to seek refuge with Me, I would surely grant him refuge.”

This shows that Islam does not prevent its followers from showing love or affection towards others. The expressions of love are not superficial; driven by lust or desire. Rather, it is love that brings one closer to the Messenger of Allah and to Allah s.w.t. In addition to obedience, which is an important factor in earning Allah’s love, this love requires sacrifice, effort (*mujāhadah*), patience, sincerity, trust (*tawakkal*) and acceptance. This is especially so in the contemporary context, which may lead one to confusion with regard to the feelings of love they experience. Therefore, turn back to Allah s.w.t., as He is the source of all love, and continue to seek guidance from Him.

Islam does not prevent its followers from showing love or affection towards others. The expressions of love are not superficial; driven by lust or desire. Rather, it is love that brings one closer to the Messenger of Allah and to Allah s.w.t



In contrast to love from perspectives other than Islam, love according to Islam is not complete if it is based only on love in the form of friendship or desire, or a form of love that makes someone forget or not care about themselves.¹⁵ True love has a higher and noble purpose that leads to enjoyment, pleasure and happiness in the hereafter. The reality and meaning of this happiness will be explained in the next chapter.

4.3 What is the meaning of happiness in Islam?

There are several verses in the Quran that refer to the meaning of 'happiness', such as in *Surah al-Hud*, verse 105:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلِّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾

Al-Hud 11:105

Meaning: "On the day when it comes, no soul will speak except with His permission; then some of them will be wretched, and some of them will be happy."

Happiness here does not refer to something that is physical or material, but rather true happiness is that which leads a person towards a higher goal and purpose, helping him achieve inner peace and tranquility when worshipping and carrying out all of Allah's commands.¹⁶ Similarly, when a person abstains from Allah s.w.t.'s prohibitions, it is done willingly as a result of their awareness to devote themselves and also from their steadfast and firm belief within themselves. It drives a person to constantly remember Allah s.w.t. and recognise Him, thereby bringing them closer to Him."

¹⁵ Love in the form of friendship (philia), desire (eros), or a form of love that forgets and does not care about oneself (agape) is one of the types of love according to the thought of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.

¹⁶ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (First impression Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995; this impression Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2014), p. 94.



True happiness is that which leads a person towards a higher goal and purpose, helping him achieve inner peace and tranquility when worshipping and carrying out all of Allah's commands.

On the other hand, the opposite of happiness, namely unhappiness or suffering, is not when we are tested with pain or loss. Rather, it refers to the state of those whose souls have strayed far from their true purpose and have become oblivious due to the material world. The consequences for unhappy people are also mentioned in the Quran in the same chapter of the following verse:

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

Al-Hud 11:106

Meaning: As for those who are unhappy or suffering, their place is in hell, where they will cry out and sigh.

As for the condition of happy people, it is mentioned:

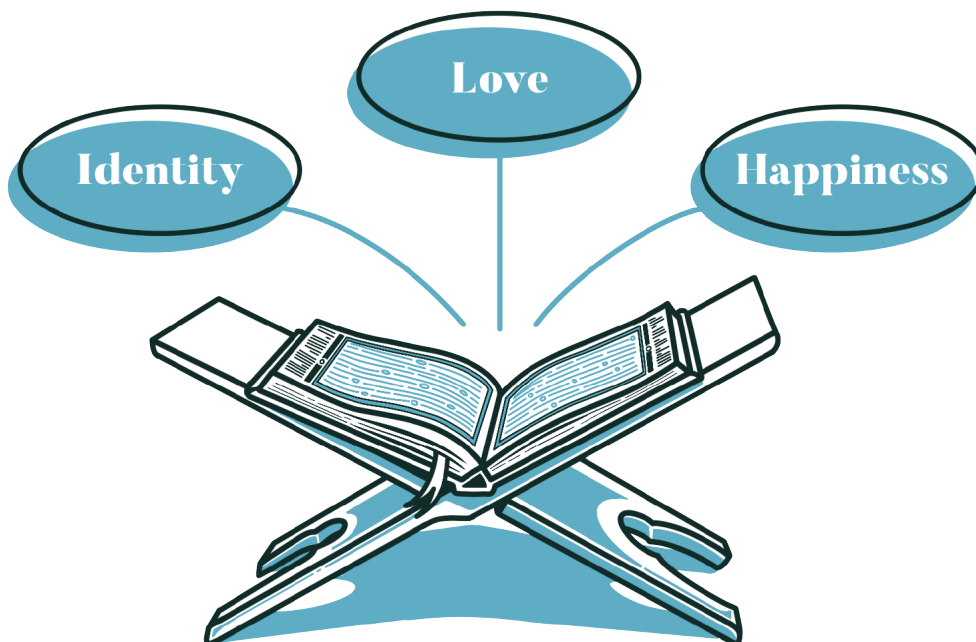
﴿وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرٌ مَجْذُودٍ﴾ ﴿١٠٨﴾

Al-Hud 11:108

Meaning: As for those who are happy, their place is in paradise, where they will remain as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless your Lord wills otherwise; as an uninterrupted gift.

With that, it is hereby clear that the true and utmost happiness is that which is in the hereafter.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is important to balance the 'aql based on the *Sharīah* and correct knowledge because it will result in correct and appropriate actions and provide guidance for making good and wise decisions. One of the reasons for intellectual inability to understand or see this reality is its tendency towards bodily (*badaniyyah*) or animalistic (*hayawaniyyah*) desires. Tendency towards material and physical aspects of the body will prevent a person from seeing the true reality and essence that cannot be seen with the naked eye. Therefore, it is important for a person to ensure that the physical aspect of their body does not become an obstacle, and strive to control themselves, subdue the ego and desire within themselves, and constantly self-reflect and improve themselves in order to achieve true happiness and become a better Muslim.



4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, our understanding of the concept of identity, love and happiness is not arbitrary. Rather, it is deeply rooted in the principles of *Sharīah* and faith (*aqidah*).

In Islam, humans are created with a profound connection to Allah s.w.t., bearing witness to the oneness of Allah s.w.t. and committing to obey His commandments. With this commitment, we uphold our moral values and conduct as prescribed by Allah s.w.t. and his Prophet Muhammad s.a.w.

It also means that the way we construct our understanding of identity, love and happiness must be tied to our submission to the divine will of Allah s.w.t. instead of being influenced by societal expectations and trends.

By comprehending these foundational concepts, we can gain a deeper understanding of sexuality, homosexuality and same-sex attraction from the Islamic perspective. It highlights the importance of aligning one's desires and actions with the teachings of Islam, as well as striving for righteousness.



The way we construct our understanding of identity, love and happiness must be tied to our submission to the divine will of Allah s.w.t. instead of being influenced by societal expectations and trends.

Sexuality between the Modern and Islamic Perspective

5.0 Sexuality between the Modern and Islamic Perspective

Sexuality is often tied to the concepts of desire and attraction. Yet, the nature of desire in itself is very complex and can mean different things to different people. Various types of research have been conducted to understand the nature of sexuality and whether it is a choice. The focus of this religious guidance, however, is to shed light on how sexuality is increasingly becoming an important aspect of one's identity in modern discourse, and how this vastly differs from the concept of sex and sexuality from the Islamic perspective. This is essential in order to understand the impact it has on our younger generation who are increasingly exposed to such discourses.

This section aims to uncover the concept of sexuality from the lenses of Islam as well as the modern discourse and make a comparison between the two whilst taking into account the impact of the sexual revolution and hypersexualisation. This will be followed by a comparison of the concept of homosexuality between the Islamic perspective and the modern discourse.

5.1 Sexuality in the Modern Discourse

This section attempts to understand the modern discourse on sexuality and how it has evolved. This is important as through it, we will be able to discover how the modern discourse on sexuality affects the understanding of LGBTQ-related matters and their discourse.

5.1.1 Evolving Concept of Sexuality

The evolving definition of sexuality gives one an overview of how the concept has grown to be more complex as the years pass. Sexuality was not constituted as a personal identity until the nineteenth century. This is based on the Foucauldian paradigm which has been the driving force behind much research in early modern sexuality¹⁷. Unlike sex, sexuality

¹⁷ This paradigm was devised by renowned French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault, who placed an emphasis on how sexuality is constructed historically, socially, and discursively. Foucault maintained that ideas of sexuality as an essential and stable personal identity arose relatively recently in human history through evaluating power dynamics, knowledge systems, and cultural practices. Numerous research examining the evolution of sexual norms, the establishment of sexual categories, and the control of sexuality within various historical contexts have been influenced by this viewpoint.

is a social and cultural product that encompasses more than just desires. It has since become increasingly, and arguably, an important aspect of one's being.

In 1989, Oxford English Dictionary defined sexuality as “the identity in relation to the gender in which (one) is typically attracted (to)”.¹⁸ In 2004, the term was defined by the National Guidelines Task Force of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) as being “a natural part of human being; (it) is multifaceted, having biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical, and cultural dimensions.”¹⁹ In 2014, the World Association for Sexual Health's (WAS) Declaration of Sexual Rights referred to it as:

Sexuality was not constituted as a personal identity until the nineteenth century.

“A central aspect of being human throughout life, encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles, and relationships. While sexuality can include all these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.”²⁰

It is apparent from the changing definitions that sexuality no longer only encompasses attractions and desires, but now forms an integral part of a person that influences their relationship with different aspects of their lives including family, culture, and religion. It carries weight in determining how, and whether they fit in these different aspects or otherwise. This is especially true for those experiencing non-normative sexuality.

¹⁸ Will Stockton, “Discourse: Discourse and the History of Sexuality,” in *Clinical Encounters in Sexuality: Psychoanalytic Practice and Queer Theory*, ed. Noreen Giffney and Eve Watson, (Punctum Books, 2017), 171–94.

¹⁹ George Turner, “The Circles of Sexuality: Promoting a Strengths-based Model Within Social Work that Provides a Holistic Framework for Client Sexual Well-being” in *Rooted in Strengths: Celebrating the Strengths Perspective in Social Work*, ed. M. Mohr-Carney and A. Mendenhall, (University of Kansas Library, 2020), 305–325.

²⁰ “Declaration of sexual rights,” World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) Accessed June 13, 2023, <https://worldsexualhealth.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Declaration-of-Sexual-Rights-2014-plain-text.pdf>

5.1.2 Sexuality as an Identity

Sexuality in the contemporary context is also often used synonymously with the term 'sexual orientation'. This creates sexual identity by endowing individuals with a unique sexual nature and a personal essence that is defined (at least in part) specifically related to sexuality. Human beings are seen as unique in their sexuality, and they feel a sense of belonging to various types of beings due to their sexuality.²¹ The evolution of sexuality signals that what used to be a discourse laden with shame and guilt has now taken a new discourse in the modern setting that seemingly helps a person to understand who they are.

This, according to Foucault, was the unintended impact of sexual repression that eventually led to its intense scrutiny. The way sex and sexuality were being seen changed drastically. In the past, someone who participated in same-sex activity was considered to have committed the sin of sodomy. Yet in the present, it does not only form a part of who he is, but there is also the societal temptation to categorise him according to his sexual orientation be it as a homosexual or otherwise. As Foucault puts it, 'the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species'.²²

Though not ideal, especially within the realms of religion, religious authorities and society, in general, we must understand the implications of this modern phenomenon and the impact that it has on the younger generation. Sexuality has become largely intertwined with how some individuals view and understand themselves and with whom they have affiliations. This has led to some of them resorting to unfavourable actions, such as reinterpreting the religion to fit their identities or even denouncing the religion completely. Therefore, this issue can no longer be dismissed. Rather, it calls for a head-on yet empathetic approach on how we can navigate this challenge without compromising our religious beliefs and values.

As Foucault puts it, 'the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species'.

²¹ David Halperin, "Is there a History of Sexuality?" *History and Theory* 28, No. 3 (Oct 1989): 257-274.

²² Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, (New York: Random House, 1980) vol 1, 42-44.

To fully understand the notions and nuances of sexuality, it would be useful to uncover the impact of the sexual revolution and hypersexualisation in today's society. This will provide us with a better understanding of how sexuality is largely perceived and the part it plays in influencing the younger generations.

5.1.3 The Sexual Revolution in Brief

The term "sexual revolution" describes a specific period in the 1960s and 1970s when attitudes and mores around sexual activity shifted in favour of greater tolerance and liberalism in the United States.²³ There was also an increased politicisation of sexuality mainly stemming from the belief that sex was being repressed by bourgeois capitalist society. Freudian Marxists such as Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, and Wilhelm Reich, were among those who argued that sexual liberation would transform the social order.²⁴

The sexual revolution arguably brought about a myriad of changes that continue to impact society till today and is largely believed to be the starting point where sexual activities were no longer something that had to be kept private or secret. Censorship of erotic materials started to diminish, and, with the exception of "hardcore pornography", almost everything else was allowed. Abortion pills were progressively made available not only to married women. These were unthinkable merely years before when sex was largely implied but almost never explicitly mentioned.

More importantly, sexual morality became a matter of individual interpretation and love is no longer a prerequisite for sex or sexual intimacy. Rather, one's "open-mindedness" becomes an important sexual ethic that is measured through how willing a person is to engage in sexual activities with others. Procreation was no longer the main purpose of sex, instead, it was something to be enjoyed much like good food.²⁵

²³ This shift in the late 1960s is also referred to as the "Second Sexual Revolution", whereas the first one happened in the 1920s.

²⁴ Veronique Mottier, *Sexuality: A very short introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 41.

²⁵ Jack Hitt, "The second sexual revolution," *The New York Times*. February 20, 2000, Accessed on October 9, 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/20/magazine/the-second-sexual-revolution.html>

The sexual revolution arguably brought about a myriad of changes that continue to impact society till today and is largely believed to be the starting point where sexual activities were no longer something that had to be kept private or secret.

As Ervin Drake aptly described it in 1963:

"Pleasure is increasingly considered an almost constitutional right rather than a privilege, in which self-denial is increasingly seen as foolishness rather than virtue."²⁶

This cultural shift in sexual morality began to be accepted by the average people, regardless of age and political views and is apparent even until today. This largely differs from the Islamic concept of sex which seeks to protect the integrity of families and their lineages. This caused friction between liberal values and of religious ideals and the two were seen as incompatible and opposing forces.

With the shift in sexual morality, the discourses that surround it were no longer limited to something private. Sex began to be studied by various groups and fields to further understand how it impacts humans in almost every aspect of their being be it physically, spiritually, and psychologically.

5.1.4 Hypersexualisation

Hypersexualisation is omnipresent in today's society. It refers to 'giving an increasingly important place to sexuality in society, by multiplying references to it in the public spaces.'²⁷ This leads to young people having the tendency to value their self-worth based on their sexuality and physical appearance, which can be largely attributed to their repeated exposure to oversexualised imagery and content in the media. In other words, they

²⁶ "Morals: The second sexual revolution," Time, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/printout/0,8816,875692,00.html>

²⁷ Definition proposed by Larousse dictionary. Available at: <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/hypersexualisation/188139>.

are valued based on their sexual appeal, without other characteristics being taken into consideration.

Hypersexualisation affects women, especially young girls, more than men. The former French Senator Chantal Jouanno defines hypersexualisation of girls as the “sexualisation of their expressions, postures or dress codes, which are considered too precocious”.²⁸ It is not to be mistaken for having an active sex life but rather, the attitude and beliefs that are adopted in relation to sexuality and self-worth.

It is also found to perpetuate patriarchal norms such as women being the object of male desires and fantasies.²⁹ It accentuates gender inequalities and has been found to contribute to violence against women. It is especially alarming how it is affecting children at a very young age who are also seen as trying to emulate the beauty standards that have been set by society.

Ultimately, hypersexualisation presents the idea that one’s sexuality should be at the forefront of one’s self-worth and how one is valued, hence, inflating the notion that sexuality is part of one’s identity. This differs greatly from the Islamic perspective that keeps the two separate. This creates disparity between the two discourses, so much so that any rejection of sexual behaviours by the religion, is seen as a rejection of the individual and their values. This further complicates any efforts to mediate the differences and understanding between the two.

5.2 Sexuality from the Islamic Perspective

Islam is a comprehensive religion, which is not confined to belief, morality and worship but is also very holistic that it includes guidelines regarding a person’s sexuality. Islam does not deny or neglect aspects of a person’s sexuality. In fact, Islam provides a way and a guide for a person to express his sexuality safely and in the best way.

²⁸ “The dangers of the hypersexualisation of young girls: A stolen childhood,” Grow Think Tank, accessed November 22, 2022, from <https://www.growthinktank.org/en/the-dangers-of-the-hypersexualisation-of-young-girls-a-stolen-childhood/>

²⁹ “The hypersexualization of queer women in the media,” Excalibur, accessed November 22, 2022, from <https://www.excal.on.ca/opinion/op-ed/2020/03/05/the-hypersexualization-of-queer-women-in-the-media/>

This section seeks to examine the concept of sexuality through the lens of Islam by looking at Quranic verses, Prophetic hadith, and how it is preserved through Maqāṣid Sharī'ah.

5.2.1 Islam Recognises Human Sexual Needs

Allah s.w.t. created men to live by His commands, prosper, and establish a nation of people to preserve the earth. This goal cannot be achieved unless humans prevail; they cultivate the land, harvest its bounty, raise families in peace, help one another while still encouraging healthy competition, serve Allah s.w.t. and their fellow citizens, and accomplish countless other goals that necessitate their working together to build a nation and to be a good servant of Allah s.w.t. To accomplish these goals, Allah s.w.t. created humans with a set of inclinations and motivations to ensure their survival and prosperity as individuals, communities, and inhabitants of the earth.

Islam recognises sexuality as an innate part of human nature and in no way tries to deny or suppress it. No texts in Islam can be found to equate sex or sexuality with inherent evil or sin. Rather, the Prophet s.a.w. taught his companions who came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet s.a.w. asking how the Prophet s.a.w. worshipped (Allah):³⁰

فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَاتَبَهُمْ تَقَالُوهَا فَقَالُوا وَآيِنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ. قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أُصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا. وَقَالَ آخَرُ أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ. وَقَالَ آخَرُ أَنَا أَعْتَزِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا. فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَا أَحْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَّقَاكُمْ لَهُ لِكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي .

Meaning: When they were informed about that, they considered their worship insufficient and said, "Where are we from the Prophet s.a.w. as his past and future sins have been forgiven." Then one of them said, "I will offer the prayer throughout the night forever." The other said, "I will fast throughout the year and will not break my fast." The third said,

³⁰ Al-Bukhari, Kitāb al-Nikāh, Bāb al-Targhīb fī al-Nikāh, Hadis no. 5063.

"I will keep away from the women and will not marry forever." Allah's Messenger s.a.w. came to them and said, "Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I do sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion, is not from me (not one of my followers)."

This hadith highlights that Islam is not a religion of extremes. Islam affirms sexual desire and makes it permissible to be expressed through marriage between a man and a woman. Through marriage, pleasure is fulfilled and sexual relation contributes to the continuation of humankind and the upbringing of a family unit. Sexual acts within a marriage hence become sacred and a form of ibadah (worship), as through it life exists and human's sexual desire is fulfilled.

Sexual relation in Islam is in fact allowed and encouraged. However, sexual desire is also regulated by the boundaries of *Sharīah*. In a hadith, the Prophet s.a.w. explains that fulfilling a spouse's sexual pleasure is an act of charity and will be rewarded.³¹

أَوَلَيْسَ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مَا تَصَدَّقُونَ إِنَّ بِكُلِّ تَسْبِيحَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَكْبِيرَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَحْمِيدَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَكُلِّ تَهْلِيلَةٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَأَمْرٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ صَدَقَةٌ وَنَهْيٌ عَنِ مُنْكَرٍ صَدَقَةٌ وَفِي بُضْعٍ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةٌ " . قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيَأْتِي أَحَدُنَا شَهْوَتُهُ وَيَكُونُ لَهُ فِيهَا أَجْرٌ قَالَ " أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ وَضَعَهَا فِي حَرَامٍ أَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ فِيهَا وَزْرٌ فَكَذَلِكَ إِذَا وَضَعَهَا فِي الْحَلَالِ كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرٌ

Meaning: Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can (also) do sadaqa? In every declaration of the glorification of Allah (i. e. saying SubhanAllah) there is a Sadaqa, and every Takbir (i. e. saying Allah-O-Akbar) is a sadaqa, and every praise of His (saying al-Hamdu Lillah) is a Sadaqa and every declaration that He is One (La illha ill-Allah) is a sadaqa, and enjoining of good is a sadaqa, and forbidding of that which is evil is a Sadaqa, and in man's sexual intercourse with his wife there is a Sadaqa. They (the Companions) said: Messenger of Allah, is there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us? He said:

³¹ Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Zakat, Bab Bayan Anna Isma al-Sadaqah Yaqa'u 'ala Kulli Nau'in min al-Ma'ruf, Hadith no. 1006.

Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he will have a reward”.

5.2.2 Understanding the Relationship of Sexuality and Marriage from the Lens of Maqasid Sharīah (Objectives of Sharīah)

Marriage in Islam comes in the form of a contract (an agreement between a man and a woman, and these parties can place conditions as part of their agreement), and it deals with the primal matters of reproduction, child-rearing, and the most fundamental of all human relationships. Hence, in *Sharīah*, the presumption of permissibility in contracts appears alongside another crucial principle, shared by all schools of law:

الأصل في الأبضاع التحريم³²

Meaning: The presumption for sexual access is prohibition.

This means only sexual relationships explicitly permitted by the Quran and Sunnah are allowed, and in this case, sexual relation within a marriage contract between a man and a woman.

The Muslim jurists mainly specify 5 main higher objectives of *Sharīah* (Maqasid *Sharīah*).³³ The first objective for which God created His creations is the preservation of religion, followed by the preservation of the soul which is the vessel of one's life, and followed by the preservation of the mind which is an integral part of the soul, and followed by the preservation of lineage, and finally the preservation of property or wealth. The objectives of *Sharīah*, or Maqasid *Sharīah*, are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. They form a holistic framework that promotes the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.

³² Muhammad Sidqi in his book *Kitab al-Wajīz fī Idāh Qawāid al-Fiqh al-Kullīah* explains that the term al'abda' means al-furuj (a woman's private part). It is a metaphor that refers to women and sexual relation. This means, Islam prohibits all sexual relations by default and allows it only through a marriage contract and bondwomen. This principle was derived from surah al-Mu'minūn verses 5-6. In these verses, Allah s.w.t. has allowed sexual relationship only with wives and bondwomen (slaves).

³³ It refers to the purposes behind the Islamic rulings. In general, scholars such as Ibn 'Ashur and Al-Ghazali explain that the *Sharīah* seeks to fulfil goodness and safeguard humanity.

Sexuality Between the Modern Discourse and the Islamic Perspective

Modern Discourse

The sexual revolution in **1960s and 1970s** saw a significant shift of attitudes toward sexuality. The discourse **shifted** from one of shame and guilt to a discourse characterized by openness and liberalism. This led to **changes in censorship, reproductive rights and understanding of sexual morality**.

Hypersexualisation contributed to the **evolution of the discourse** where **sexuality is emphasized in public spaces and media** leading to the younger generation valuing their worth based on their sexuality and physical appearances.

Concept of sexuality has **evolved** from sexual desire and orientation to **constituting a core aspect of individual identity**.

Islamic Perspective

- Islam recognizes **sexual desire** as an **innate part of human nature**.
- It is to be **regulated** by the **boundaries of Shariah**.
- It is made **permissible to be expressed** through **legal marriage between a man and a woman**.
- In Islam, **marriage aims to:**
 - **Preserve and protect lineage and honour**.
 - Allow for the **fulfilment** of one's **sexual desire**.
 - Provide **comfort, harmony and emotional fulfilment**.



Marriage in Islam serves to achieve one of the Maqasid *Sharīah* i.e. preserving and protecting lineage and honour. According to al-Ghazali, procreation or reproduction of human is the prime cause of which marriage is instituted.³⁴ Marriage is the foundation of any society upon which families are built and children brought into the world. It is therefore the essential component in building and maintaining lineage. This is reflected in the words of Allah s.w.t.:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾

Al-Nisa' 4:1

Meaning: O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.

Sexual relations within a marriage also serves to protect one's honor as it gives due recognition and acknowledgement of one's descendant. This may seem trivial and obvious, but it has potential implications in the areas of marriage, adoption, inheritance and for those wishing to accept Islam. The aim is to keep the family line unambiguously defined and honored, thus anything which can disrupt this is discouraged or prohibited.

Apart from this primary Maqasid *Sharīah* (preserving and protecting lineage), marriage also fulfils other secondary Maqasid *Sharīah*. Firstly, it secures the need and well-being of humans, i.e. it allows for the fulfilment of one's sexual desire. In Islam, a marriage entails shared sexual pleasure between a husband and wife. The Hadith of Jabir³⁵ for

³⁴ Abu Hamid Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2005).

³⁵ Jabir b. Abdillah reported that once he was on an expedition with the Prophet s.a.w., and when they were close to the city of Madinah, he sped on his mount. The Prophet s.a.w. asked him why he was in such a hurry to return home. Jabir replied, "I am recently married!" The Prophet s.a.w. asked, "To an older lady or a younger one?" [the Arabic could also read: "To a widow or a virgin?"], to which he replied, "A widow." The Prophet s.a.w. said, "But why didn't you marry a younger girl, so that you could play with her, and she could play with you, and you could make her laugh, and she could make you laugh?" He said, "O Messenger of Allah! My father died a martyr at Uhud, leaving behind daughters, so I did not wish to marry a young girl like them, but rather an older one who could take care of them and look after them." The Prophet s.a.w. replied, "You have made the correct

instance, shows that it is one of the primary goals of a marriage that each party finds satisfaction in the other. This fulfilment according to al-Ghazali, is the second advantage of marriage. It results in the protection against the devil, repelling the excessive temptation of lust, lowering the gaze and guarding one's private part (chastity).³⁶ The Prophet s.a.w. mentions:³⁷

يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَحْصَنُ
لِلْفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ

Meaning: O young men! Those among you who can support a wife should marry, for it restrains the eyes from casting (evil glances) and preserves one from immorality; but those who cannot should devote themselves to fasting, for it is a means of controlling sexual desire.

Secondly, marriage provides comfort, harmony, and emotional fulfilment for the soul. It promotes love, tranquillity and mercy between a husband and wife, which contributes to a healthy society. Allah s.w.t. mentions:

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ
مَوَدَّةَ وَرَحْمَةٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

Al-Rum 30:21

Meaning: And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.

If we reflect upon Al-Maraghi's interpretation of this verse, we would find that he explained it as follows: "Among His signs indicating the inevitable resurrection: that He created for

choice." Jabir continues, "So when we were about to enter the city, the Prophet s.a.w. said to me, 'Slow down, and enter at night, so that she who has not combed may comb her hair, and she who has not shaved may shave her private area.' Then he said to me, 'When you enter upon her, then be wise and gentle.'" Hadith reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim, with various wordings, in their two Sahihs.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Muslim, Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Nikah, Bab Istihbab al-Nikah Liman Taqat Nafsuhi Ilaihi Wawajada Mu'na Washtighal Man 'Ajaza 'an al-Muani bi al-Saum, Hadith no. 1440a.

you spouses of your kind, so that you may become tranquil with them, and He placed between you affection and mercy, so that domestic life may perpetuate in the most perfect order”; meaning that the purpose of marriage is to achieve tranquility and love between the spouses, so the verse indicates to us - as Dr. Ragheb Al-Sarjani explained in his book *Ethics in Islamic Civilization* - that there are three pillars by which marital happiness is achieved: affection, mercy, and tranquility. Islam also aims at “the attainment of psychological tranquility for the individual through marriage”. As a result, it is clear to us that Islam encourages families to work towards and maintain this tranquility, the affection and mercy that contributes to a greater good and, in this case, the crucial stability and security of the family unit.

5.3 Homosexuality in the Modern Discourse

Without denying that same sex practices occurred in the past, the emergence of modern homosexual identity did not occur in the sexological discourse until the nineteenth century.³⁸ The modern concept of homosexuality may not only refer to one’s sexual inclination or practices, but may also refer to a specific identity or a particular type of person. The term homosexuality which emerged in the modern discourse of sexuality marks a shift from understanding same sex inclination and practices as specific attraction and acts to identifying individuals based on their sexual orientation and practices. The emergence of the term homosexuality thus created a new social identity.

The term “homosexuality” was first used in 1869 by Karl Maria Kertbeny who did so in the midst of political debates for the unification of Germany.³⁹ For a period of time, homosexuality was seen as a perversion that stemmed from mental instability that needed to be treated. For instance, it was classified as a mental disorder in The American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) from 1952 to 1973.⁴⁰

38 Will Stockton, “Discourse: Discourse and the History of Sexuality,” in *Clinical Encounters in Sexuality: Psychoanalytic Practice and Queer Theory*, ed. Noreen Giffney and Eve Watson, (Punctum Books: 2017), 171–94.

39 Robert Beachy, “The German Invention of Homosexuality,” *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 4 (2010): 801–38. <https://doi.org/10.1086/656077>.

40 Will Stockton, “Discourse: Discourse and the History of Sexuality,” in *Clinical Encounters in Sexuality: Psychoanalytic Practice and Queer Theory*, ed. Noreen Giffney and Eve Watson, (Punctum Books: 2017), 171–94.

Numerous efforts to cure homosexuality were carried out in various parts of the world before it was largely accepted that it was not an ailment.

This has drastically changed over the years. Inclusivity, or rather gay-friendliness, is fast becoming a distinct marker of modernity and progress.⁴¹ Nations and corporations are seen trying to outdo each other with their inclusivity policies. Likewise, the non-acceptance of non-heterosexual relations is seen as a sign of backwardness and cultural inferiority. Communities that do not accept non-normative sexualities are generally considered homophobic.

The term homosexuality itself, however, can be hard to define as it can mean different things to different people. Some may refer to it as feelings of attraction, while others may refer to it as fantasies, behaviour, or any combination of these. Recent research often includes at least one of these three categories in their classification of “homosexuality”:

- sexual behaviour;
- sexual fantasies;
- and, self-identification.

Inclusion in a community defined by sexual orientation sometimes appears as a fourth category.⁴²

The sociologist Edward O. Laumann in his book pointed out that “homosexuality is fundamentally a multidimensional phenomenon that has manifold meanings and interpretations, depending on context and purpose.”⁴³ His view is further supported by psychologist Lisa M. Diamond who aptly concludes that “there is currently no scientific or popular consensus on the exact constellation of experiences that definitively ‘qualify’ an individual as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.”⁴⁴

41 Sanjam Ahluwalia, “Abortion and Gay Marriage: Sexual Modernity and Its Dissonance in Contemporary World,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 50, no. 50 (2015): 27–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44002956>.

42 Lawrence S. Mayer and Paul R. McHugh, “Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences,” *The New Atlantis*, no. 50 (2016): 10–143. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43893424>.

43 Timothy E. Cook, “The Empirical Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Politics: Assessing the First Wave of Research,” *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 3 (1999): 679–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585582>.

44 Lawrence S. Mayer and Paul R. McHugh, “Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences,” *The New Atlantis*, no. 50 (2016): 10–143. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43893424>.

It is on this basis that the terms homosexuality may be replaced with other terms such as non-heterosexual individuals, gender minorities, and non-normative sexuality throughout this religious guidance. These terms are often used to refer to a broader spectrum of people who experience the same-sex attraction without limiting it to homosexuals. It is also essential to note that some individuals may identify as homosexuals but may not necessarily engage in homosexual acts.

5.4 Islam and Homosexuality

The term 'homosexuality' in Arabic is not available in either the Quran or the Hadith. However, the Quran and Hadith discuss same-sex sexual relationships. This refers to terms such as 'acts of the people of Lut a.s.' which are used to describe acts of sodomy or anal penetration between men or (between) man and woman.⁴⁵

In general, same-sex relationships are discussed in the Quran through the story of Prophet Lut a.s. and his people. Among the clear ones are the words of Allah s.w.t.:

إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

Al-'Araf 7:80-81

Meaning: And [We had sent] Lut when he said to his people, 'Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desires instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.'

This verse clearly shows that some men from among the people of Lut a.s. approached men or had sexual relations with men on the basis of lust. From this verse, we learn that the act is forbidden and goes beyond the limit of sexual relations that have been prescribed by Allah s.w.t. The act is described as a despicable act, and they are considered musrifūn or have transgressed the limits set by Allah s.w.t. Further discussion on the people of Lut a.s. will be provided in the second part of this religious guidance.

⁴⁵ From the story of Prophet Lut a.s. and his people, Islamic scholars derived the term liwāt to refer to the act of sodomy which were done by the people of Lut a.s.

This verse forms the basis for the prohibition of same-sex sexual relations. As for the desire, feeling, tendency and a sense of attraction towards the same-sex, is not accountable in Islam if the person do not act upon it.

The Quran mentions lust as a part of human (nature). Allah s.w.t. mentions:

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ
وَالْأَفْصَصِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَمِ وَالْخَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ
حُسْنُ الْمَعَادِ ﴿١٤﴾

Ali-'Imran 3:14

Meaning: Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return.

Apart from sexual lust, the Quran explains that humans have desire towards various things such as children, wealth and status and various other pleasures of life. Desire does not necessarily mean something negative. In fact, according to al-Ghazali, man needs lust to motivate him to do something and fulfil his needs.⁴⁶ For example, hunger and the desire to eat motivates man to fulfil the needs of his stomach and body. Tiredness encourages man to meet the body's need to rest. However, lust or the desire for things that have been forbidden in religion such as the urge to steal, a strong desire to commit immorality is not considered sinful as long as we do not act upon it. Rasullullah s.a.w. said:⁴⁷

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِأُمَّتِي عَمَّا وَسَّوَسْتُ أَوْ حَدَّثْتُ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ بِهِ أَوْ تَكَلَّمْ

Meaning: Indeed, Allah forgives my people for what is whispered to them or what enters their minds, as long as they do not act upon it or speak of it (referring to immorality of speech).

⁴⁶ Abu Hamid Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2005).

⁴⁷ Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman wa al-Nuzur, Bab Iza Hanitha Nasiyan fi al-Iman, Hadith 6664.

The Discourse of Homosexuality

Term **homosexuality** can mean **different things** to different people.

It may mean one or all of the following:

Sexual behavior

Self-identification

Sexual desire

Differentiates between the **act** and the **desire**.

The **act** is **prohibited** while the **desire** needs to be **managed**.

Modern Discourse

Islamic Perspective



To understand this matter further, we should know that intentions and desires have several levels:

The first level: If the intention and desire only hovers, crosses, or ticks in the heart, but it is not acted upon, then it is not considered a sin.

The second level: When the intention and desire for evil or prohibited matters is accompanied by the determination to do it. If a person does not do it and leaves it for the sake of Allah s.w.t., it will be recorded as a good deed. Rasullullah s.a.w. said:⁴⁸

وَمَنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً فَإِنْ هُوَ هَمَّ بِهَا
فَعَمَلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً

Meaning: If he intended to perform an evil deed but did not do it, then Allah writes it down with Himself as a complete good deed. And then if he intended it (that is the evil deed) and then performed it, then Allah writes it down as one evil deed.

The third level: When the intention and the desire to commit a crime or something forbidden is accompanied by determination, but it cannot be performed because of a hindrance. In this case, a person is considered to have sinned.

Based on this, a Muslim is responsible for controlling and managing his emotions. As much as possible, he needs to control himself from following the desires which are forbidden in Islam. Allah s.w.t. said:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ

Al-Nazi'at 79:40

Meaning: But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from (unlawful) inclination.

⁴⁸ Al-Bukhari, Kitāb al-Riqāq, Bab Man Hamma Bi Hasanatin aw Sayyiatin, Hadith 6491.

Levels of Intentions & desires

1

Level One

If the intention and desire only hovers, crosses, or ticks in the heart, but it is not acted upon, then it is not considered a sin.

2

Level Two

When the intention and desire for evil or prohibited matters is accompanied by the determination to do it. If a person does not do it and leaves it for the sake of Allah s.w.t., it will be recorded as a good deed.

3

Level Three

When the intention and the desire to commit a crime or something forbidden is accompanied by determination, but it cannot be performed because of a hindrance. In this case, a person is considered to have sinned.

Lifestyle
Vending
Machine

Affordable snacks
& drinks to fill in
your intentions
and desires!



It is not an easy task. Muslims experiencing same sex attraction may be tempted to act upon the desire. A person's urges however do not define them; rather, the essence of our religion is to regulate our urges and bring our actions into compliance with the *Sharīah*.

Similar to other sexual deviation such as premarital and extramarital sex, Islam recognises the desire and also the dangers it might lead if not regulated and managed. Hence Islam has prohibited all avenues leading to it. Islam does not allow acts, speech and attire that might stimulate sexual deviation. This means a believer should observe modesty in speech, act and clothing. There is also virtue in restraining from partaking in other activities such as watching pornography, masturbating, inserting objects into the vagina or anus to achieve sexual gratification, or engaging in physical intimacy with the same gender, such as hugging, should it be filled with desires. These actions are also considered haram and efforts must be made to reduce the frequency of engaging in these activities, if one is engaged in such, and eventually work towards avoiding them.

The unanimous agreement of the jurists also forbids the deliberate attempt to appear as, or deliberately behaving in a manner opposite to one's birth gender. One of the reasons for the prohibition of cross-dressing is that it may eventually lead to same sex action. This falls under the concept of *sadd al-zarai'*, where one must put a stop to actions that may eventually lead to even greater harm.

*Islam has prohibited all avenues leading to it.
Islam does not allow acts, speech and attire that
might stimulate sexual deviation.*



In essence, the urge and attraction may not disappear, but it is the responsibility of a Muslim to control the urge, refrain from acting upon it and avoid avenues that may lead to acting on the desire.

Muslims who face same-sex tendencies should not despair from Allah's mercy. Rather, they should continue trying even though they may sometimes fail. Managing lust and desire is a lifelong journey and process. Allah s.w.t. looks at every effort we make and every hardship we face to attain His pleasure and blessings.

The urge and attraction may not disappear, but it is the responsibility of a Muslim to control the urge, refrain from acting upon it and avoid avenues that may lead to acting on the desire.

5.5 Conclusion

In summary, there are significant differences between the modern discourse and the Islamic perspective in viewing sexuality and homosexuality.

The sexual revolution and hypersexualisation in the modern time have influenced the understanding and discourse of sexuality. Non-procreative sex or sex for the purpose of pleasure only, seen through a utilitarian lens that is devoid of ethical considerations, has since become more popular and seen as a norm. This also means all forms of sexual acts to fulfil the pleasure - either sexual acts outside of marriage or sexual acts between the same sex – have gained more attention and become normalised.

This is different from the Islamic perspective which views sexuality as innate and sacred. Islam prescribed lawful marriage between a man and a woman as a channel for the sexual desire created in both man and woman. Through marriage, the sexual relation between the married couple is considered as an ibadah (act of worship) and sacred, as it allows both to fulfil their pleasure as well as to procreate.

While the modern discourse views sex, marriage and procreation as separate from one

another, Islam places meaningful purposes to each of these acts which are tied to one another.

This is also where modern discourse and Islam differ from one another with regard to sexual identity. The modern concept of sexual identity is heavily influenced by societal norms, beliefs and values. Society plays a central role in shaping the modern understanding of sexuality and constructing categories of sexual identity. Meanwhile in Islam, the understanding of sexuality and a Muslim's identity are primarily based upon the commandments of Allah s.w.t. and the teachings of the Prophet s.a.w. The Quran for example indicates that Islam does not recognise sexual acts between the same gender. The behaviour is morally wrong (faḥishah) and prohibited in Islam. The desire, however - if not acted upon - is not punishable. It should instead be managed such that it does not govern one's action.

Advice for the Muslim Community in Responding to Same-Sex Attraction and LGBTQ-related Matters

6.0 Advice for the Muslim Community in Responding to Same-Sex Attraction and LGBTQ-related Matters

Understanding the Islamic perspective on homosexuality is key in enabling Muslims to respond and approach the matter better. This section aims to provide some factors that should also be taken into account when dealing with such matters without trivialising the struggles of those who experience same-sex attraction. The concept of Wasatīyah will also be introduced as a middle point that will enable us to respond kindly, yet firmly, without compromising our religious stances.

6.1 Individuals Experiencing Same-sex Attraction are Prone to Mental Health Issues

Despite their disagreements on several issues concerning non-heterosexual individuals, researchers generally concur that non-heterosexual subpopulations are more vulnerable to a variety of mental health issues compared to the general population.⁴⁹ According to a 2008 study by psychiatry professor Michael King and colleagues, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people had a 2.47 times greater lifetime risk of attempting suicide than heterosexual people, were twice as likely to experience depression over the course of a year, and were roughly 1.5 times more likely to experience anxiety disorders. Non-heterosexual men had a disproportionately 4.28 times higher risk of suicide attempts over the course of their lifetimes compared to non-heterosexual men and women combined. Other studies have also found that one of the strongest predictors of suicide and suicide attempt is sexual orientation.⁵⁰

What is alarming is how consistent these findings are especially on the increased risk of suicide, indicating a need to understand how best we can prevent such incidents from occurring. The social stress model posits that the increased risk of poor mental health outcomes amongst the sexual minority is caused by discrimination and stigmatization.⁵¹

⁴⁹ King, Michael, et al, "A Systematic Review of Mental Disorder, Suicide, and Deliberate Self Harm in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People," BMC Psychiatry, (18 Aug. 2008). doi: 10.1186/1471-244X-8-70

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Lawrence S. Mayer and Paul R. McHugh, "Sexuality and Gender: Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences," The New Atlantis, no. 50 (2016): 76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43893424>

Therefore, reducing these stresses could help improve their mental health problems.

One of the significant stressors that they are faced with, apart from prejudice, is stigma.⁵² Though more research is needed to draw a conclusive causal relationship between poor mental health and stigma amongst the non-heterosexual subpopulation, stigma has been shown to have the ability to affect a person's mental well-being even in the absence of its actual execution.

In the context of religion, the stigma that surrounds the non-heterosexual subpopulation is often that they are not worthy of being good Muslims as they are sinners. This alone can be crippling and hinder a person from trying to integrate with the Muslim community and discourage them from continuing to improve themselves as Muslims. When this stigma is shared and reinforced within the members of the community, it can eventually become the basis for excluding them or treating them differently.

To overcome this issue would then require a multi-pronged approach that would involve not just healthcare professionals but also policymakers, researchers, and society as a whole.

6.2 Approaching and Responding to LGBTQ and Same-Sex Attraction Discourse through the Lens of Wasaṭiyah

In responding to matters related to same-sex attraction and LGBTQ in general, the Muslim community should avoid two extremes:

a) total rejection such as rejecting them as a family member, shunning them from Islam and acts of worship;

or,

b) total acceptance, such as supporting the notion that such sexual behaviour is not harām or supporting LGBTQ as a lifestyle.

Instead, we should apply the Islamic principles of Wasaṭiyah and exemplify the divine

⁵² Ibid, 79.

appointment of the Muslim Ummah as the Ummah Wasaṭ as ordained by Allah s.w.t.:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ
شَهِيدًا

Al-Baqarah 2:143

Meaning: And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger s.a.w. will be a witness over you.

In responding to issues related to same-sex attraction and LGBTQ in general, the Muslim community **should avoid two extremes:**

Total Acceptance

Such as supporting the notion that such sexual behaviour is not harām or supporting LGBTQ as a lifestyle.

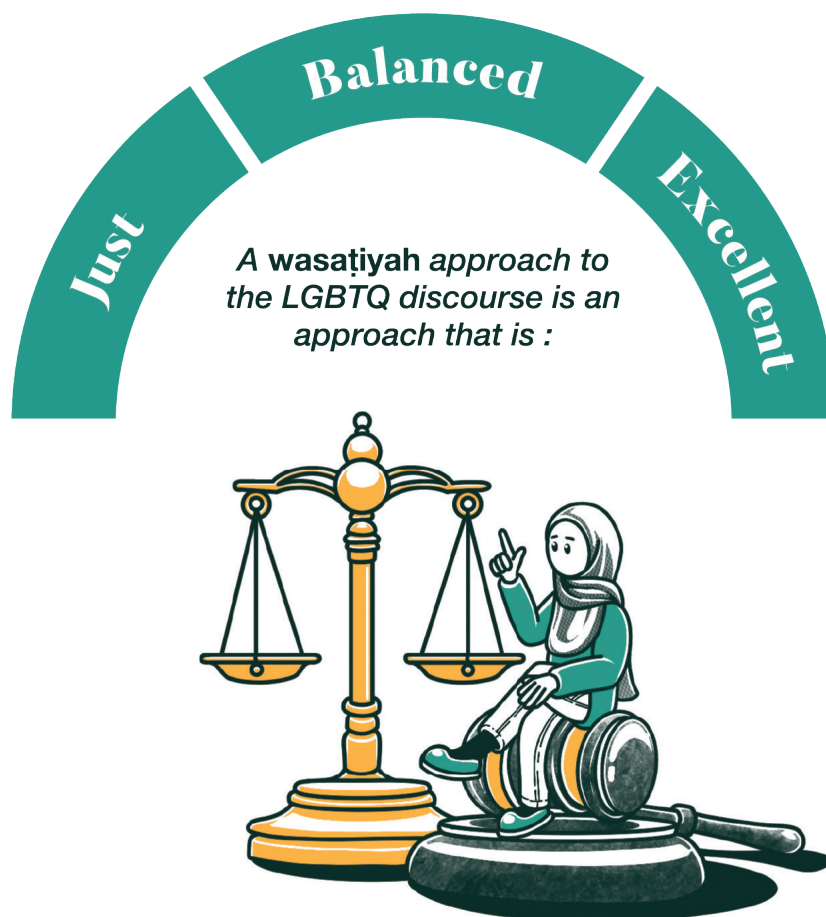


Total Rejection

Such as rejecting them as a family member, shunning them from Islam and acts of worship.

Instead, we should apply the **Islamic principles of Wasaṭiyah** and exemplify the divine appointment of the Muslim Ummah as the Ummah Wasaṭ.

This means, the Muslim community as the Ummah Wasat should practice moderation but not at the expense of the religion, nor to be lax in performing religious duties. Kamal Hassan frames it as “the assumption of a middle position in between two forbidden extremes often defined by Muslim scholars as the modes of excessiveness (ifrāt) and laxity (tafrīt).” Hence, in our attempt to maintain our religious, moral and ethical responsibilities, as well as to express our care and concern, and to support others to be better Muslims, the Muslim community should be the most just, most balanced and the most excellent.



It is, therefore, essential that we take into account the perspectives of Muslims who struggle with same-sex attractions to understand what are some of the measures that we can take in order to be more empathetic. Even if we disagree on the fundamentals and on how to tackle the matters of sexuality, we should not undermine the seriousness of their struggles and the impact it may have on their faith, physical health and mental health. Furthermore, Islam has always taught us to be compassionate, especially with our own struggling brothers and sisters.

It is also important to note that to be compassionate in our responses does not require us to compromise our beliefs. What is not permissible in Islam can never be made permissible, and this cannot be negotiated. In a narration, Rasulullah s.a.w. said:⁵³

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ ذَبَحَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ آوَى مُحْدِثًا وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ لَعَنَ وَالِدَيْهِ
وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ غَيَّرَ الْمَنَارَ

Meaning: Allah cursed him who sacrificed for anyone besides Allah, and cursed him who accommodated an innovator, and Allah cursed him who cursed his parents and Allah cursed him who changed the boundary lines (of the land possessed by him).

Based on the above hadith, Muslims cannot support something that is prohibited. However, this does not mean we should leave our Muslim brothers and sisters to struggle on their own in order to find their place in the religion. Hence below are some of the principles – based on the framework of Wasatīyah – that the Muslim community should be mindful of in their response to the discourse:

⁵³ Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Aḍāḥā, Bāb Taḥrīm al-dzabḥi lī Ghairillāh Ta'āla wa La'ni Fā'ilīhi, Hadith no. 1978b.

Principles in Responding to the Discourse:



- 1 *Maintaining ties is a religious obligation.*
- 2 *Islam teaches us to distinguish between actions and individuals.*
- 3 *Muslims should not contribute to or support anything that may lead to a forbidden act.*
- 4 *Adopting wisdom, compassion and kindness.*

1. Maintaining ties is a religious obligation.

Muslims must be aware that a family unit is a sacred institution. Allah s.w.t. gave many examples for us to ponder upon in the Quran that relate closely to the family unit. Cutting family ties or shunning off relatives is sinful in Islam. Rasulullah s.a.w. reminded us:⁵⁴

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعٌ

Meaning: The one who cuts off blood ties will not enter Paradise.

The act of not acknowledging or chasing a child out of the house is an example of severing blood ties. Practices like these are not the practices of the prophets a.s. Rasulullah s.a.w. for example never severed ties with his uncle Abu Talib until he passed away.

Prophet Ya'qub a.s. still loved his children who used to mistreat their younger brother Prophet Yusuf a.s. and, in fact, tried to kill him. An example of the love of Prophet Ya'qub a.s. as a father is recorded in Surah Yusuf when he instructed them to be careful when

⁵⁴ Muslim, Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah wa al-Adab, Bab Bir al-Wālidain wa Annahumā Ahaqqu Bihi, Hadith no. 2548b.

they entered the palace gates during their visit to Egypt.⁵⁵

The scholars stated that it took Nabi Ya'qub a.s. about thirty years before his children repented and returned to Allah s.w.t. Having a close relationship with them is fundamental in keeping the door to return and repent open. Therefore, we should keep our faith and never despair, just like how the Prophet s.a.w. was towards his people.

A family is not always perfect but that should not hinder a Muslim from being kind and just. Our family members may transgress, struggle or act on matters in a manner we do not agree with. Even then, Muslims are still required to maintain good family ties while making clear our disapproval of the sinful acts. In fact, Muslims are taught to maintain family ties even towards parents of other faiths. It was recorded that Asmaa Bint Abi Bakr r.a. came to Prophet s.a.w. and asked:⁵⁶

قَدِمْتُ أُمِّي وَهِيَ مُشْرِكَةٌ فِي عَهْدِ قُرَيْشٍ وَمُدَّتْهُمْ إِذْ عَاهَدُوا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَعَ أَبِيهَا فَاسْتَفْتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ إِنَّ أُمِّي قَدِمَتْ وَهِيَ رَاغِبَةٌ أَفَأَصِلُهَا قَالَ نَعَمْ صِلِي أُمَّكَ

Meaning: My mother who was a Mushrikah (pagan, disbeliever), came with her father during the period of peace pact between the Muslims and the Quraish infidels. I went to seek the advice of the Prophet s.a.w. saying, "My mother has arrived and she is hoping (for my favor)." The Prophet s.a.w. said, "Yes, be good to your mother."

2. Islam teaches us to distinguish between actions and individuals.

Loving family or friends who do wrong does not mean that we condone their wrongdoings. Loving and condoning are two separate actions.

Certainly, as Muslims we do not agree with sexual relationships between the same gender, and we need to clearly state our position. This is what the Prophet s.a.w. meant in the following hadith:⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Surah Yusuf 12:68.

⁵⁶ Bukhari, Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Adab, Bāb Ṣīlah al-Mar'ah Ummahā wa Lahā Zaujūn, Hadith no. 5979.

⁵⁷ Muslim, Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Imān, Bāb Bayān Kauni al-Nahyi 'an al-Munkar, min al-Imān wa Anna al-Imān Yazīdu wa Yanqusu wa Anna al-Amr bi al-Ma'rūf wa al-Nahyi 'an al-Munkar Wājibāni, Hadith no. 49a.

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ
وَذَلِكَ أضعفُ الإيمانِ

Meaning: Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith.



A family is not always perfect but that should not hinder a Muslim from being kind and just. Our family members may transgress, struggle or act on matters in a manner we do not agree with. Even then, Muslims are still required to maintain good family ties while making clear our disapproval of the sinful acts.

We need to reject evil according to our ability and if we have attempted other means such as offering advice and reminders, then, the weakest of faith according to the scholars here is to feel hatred in the heart for all immoral behaviour. That, however, does not mean that we cannot love them as a child or brother in Islam. Ultimately, they are a member of our family and our brother in Islam.

The prophets a.s. exemplified the principle of loving without condoning sinful actions. The wife and son of Prophet Nuh a.s. rejected the call to tauhid and perished with the disbelievers. The same happened to Prophet Lut a.s. whose wife rejected his faith. Yet both prophets did not divorce their wives and Prophet Nuh a.s. loved his child until the last minute of his life. The father of Prophet Ibrahim a.s. did not believe in Allah yet

Loving family or friends who do wrong does not mean that we condone their wrongdoings. Loving and condoning are two separate actions.



Prophet Ibrahim a.s. talked to his father respectfully. The prophets faced challenges from non-believing family members and their people, yet their love, care and concern for these people never wavered. The prophets continued praying for them.

We should not feel that we need to show violence, hatred, or harshness to convey a message to the masses, or to express our beliefs. We would not be accountable for the things beyond our control, as hidāyah (guidance) comes from Allah s.w.t. and only Him. Allah s.w.t. mentions:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Al-Qasas 28:56

Meaning: Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided.

Thus, distinguishing between the acts and individuals means that Muslims do not accept and support same-sex acts and LGBTQ as a lifestyle. Muslims, however, should not exclude Muslims who are experiencing same-sex attraction or identify as LGBTQ from the Muslim community as a whole and that in matters that we do not clash, we find ways to bring the community together in pursuit of success.

3. Muslims should not contribute to or support anything that may lead to a forbidden act.

Islam clearly states that sexual relationships between same genders are prohibited. Furthermore, anything that leads to the manifestation of such, its normalcy, the spreading of its actions and legitimising it can also be considered prohibited. In Islam, even permissible actions can fall into the category of harām if they lead to evil or prohibited acts. This concept of ruling is known as Sadd al-Dzarā'i (سد الذرائع) which refers to blocking the means and ways that may lead to something harām. It refers to the prohibition of actions or practices that may lead to forbidden or harmful outcomes, even if the actions in themselves are permissible or not explicitly prohibited.

Scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence have provided different categorisations of Sadd al-Dzarā'i. Al-Qarāfī for example classified Sadd al-Dzarā'i into three categories. One of it is acts that are prohibited by ijmā' (consensus).⁵⁸ This refers to acts which ijmā' 'ulamā' (national consensus) agreed should be prevented and prohibited. An example is the prohibition of actions that may lead to zinā or fornication. Allah s.w.t. mentions:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّيْنَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

Al-Isra' 17:32

Meaning: And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way.

In this verse, Allah s.w.t. emphasises the severe consequences of engaging in fornication by forbidding any actions that may lead to it. This includes relationships outside of marriage or condoning such relationships.

This also means that, while we are allowed and encouraged to demonstrate and express care, it is important to understand and consider how our actions might be perceived. Displaying love and concern does not equate to legalising and validating what is prohibited. We must be cautious that our words and actions do not encourage, motivate

⁵⁸ Abī al-'Abbās Ahmad Bin Idrīs al-Sonhajī al-Qarāfī, Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwā' al-Furūq, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah).

or inspire others to embrace LGBTQ lifestyle or give the impression that it is accepted or that we are advocating for its normalisation. This applies to both the wider community and individuals experiencing same-sex attraction or identify as LGBTQ.



Displaying love and concern does not equate to legalising and validating what is prohibited.

Hence, while expressing our care and concern, it is important for our community not to promote or condone the normalisation of LGBTQ lifestyle or any LGBTQ sexual relationships and we should not provide reassurance that homosexual acts are permissible in Islam. For example, we are to treat individuals with kindness and exhibit good character unconditionally. However, when asked to participate or contribute to their campaign to support the legalisation of same-sex marriage (e.g. signing petitions, doing rallies etc), we should politely decline.

While expressing our care and concern, it is important for our community not to promote or condone the normalisation of LGBTQ lifestyle or any LGBTQ sexual relationships and we should not provide reassurance that homosexual acts are permissible in Islam.



4. Adopting wisdom, compassion and kindness

The approach of showing care and love must be complimented with constant respectful engagement. This should be done with gentleness, justice, knowledge and wisdom. Sufyan Ath-Thawri mentioned:

لَا يَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا يَنْهَى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ فِيهِ خِصَالُ ثَلَاثِ رَفِيقٍ
بِمَا يَأْمُرُ رَفِيقٌ بِمَا يَنْهَى عَدْلٌ بِمَا يَأْمُرُ عَدْلٌ بِمَا يَنْهَى عَالِمٌ بِمَا يَأْمُرُ عَالِمٌ بِمَا يَنْهَى

Meaning: No one may enjoin good or forbid evil except for one who has three qualities - gentleness in what he enjoins and forbids; justice in what he enjoins and forbids; and, knowledge of what he enjoins and forbids.



It is important for Muslims to empower themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills in dealing with the issue of same-sex attraction or LGBTQ. We should devote more time towards attaining a strong grasp of religious principles as well as deepening our understanding of the concept of sexuality, while also taking into consideration the context around us.

Muslims should also be mindful of their words and actions. We should state and express our disagreement and disapproval without degrading, dehumanising or insulting anyone. Allah s.w.t. mentions:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ
بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

Al-Hujurat 49:11

Meaning: O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

In the time of the Prophet s.a.w., there was a man named Abdullah who was nicknamed Donkey, and he would make the Prophet laugh. The Prophet lashed him for drinking wine, and one day the man was brought again and the Prophet ordered him to be lashed. Another man among the people said, "O Allah, curse him! How many times has he been brought?" The Prophet said, "Do not curse him. By Allah, I know that he loves Allah and His Messenger."⁵⁹

This also means Muslims should not discriminate or disown Muslims identifying themselves as LGBTQ or struggling with same-sex attraction. The act of driving family members away from home and disowning them as your child will further distance them from us and hinder any efforts to bring them back on the right path. Similarly, the attitude of a friend who breaks a friendship also does not help. The best action is to be with them and love them as they are no matter how severe their mistakes are.

Being compassionate and non-discriminatory includes empathising with our Muslim brothers and sisters struggling with same sex attraction or even those who self-identify as LGBTQ and supporting them in their journey as Muslims. We should encourage them should they aspire to be faithful Muslims or strive to perform acts of worship and goodness. Muslim should realise that judgement belongs to Allah s.w.t. solely and ultimate guidance comes from Allah s.w.t. only. It is Allah s.w.t. who determine whether the worship of a sinner is accepted or otherwise. This power belongs to Him only. In fact, Allah s.w.t. has made it clear that the door of repentance is always open for everyone and that what differentiates an individual from another is only his righteousness. We are in no position to exclude anyone from Allah s.w.t.'s mercy and forgiveness.

⁵⁹ Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Hudūd, Bāb Mā Yukrahu Min La'ni Shāribi al-Khamri Wa Innahu Laisa Bikharijin Min al-Millah, Hadith no. 6780.

Rasulullah s.a.w. too has been exemplary through his interactions with others. He s.a.w., made everyone feel special and included. He even ensured the way he spoke was on par with the level of understanding of each individual. During his dakwah, the Prophet s.a.w. did not frighten away people with harsh words or unjust treatment. Even his arch enemies had nothing bad to testify against him. This can be seen when Rasullullah s.a.w. preached in Taif and was mistreated by the people of Taif. Rasulullah s.a.w. went to Taif with Zaid Bin Harithah to ask its residents to embrace Islam. However, their arrival was met with hatred and anger from the people of Taif. Rasulullah s.a.w. was stoned and scolded incessantly. Badly wounded, the Prophet s.a.w. and Zaid had to stop and return to Mecca.

This incident was reported by Aisha r.a. She asked the Prophet s.a.w., "Have you encountered a harder day than the battle of Uhud?" The Prophet s.a.w. said, "I have met your people as they are, and the worst of it was the day of 'Aqabah as I had an audience with Ibn 'Abd Yalil ibn 'Abd Kulal. He did not respond as I had hoped, so I departed with grief upon my face. I could not recover until I reached Qarn al-Tha'alib. Then I raised my head to behold a cloud shading me. I looked again to behold the Angel Gabriel within it, calling out to me, 'Verily, Allah has heard what your people said to you and their response. He has sent the Angel of the Mountains for you to command as you wish regarding them.' The Angel of the Mountains called out to greet me with peace, then he said, 'O Muhammad, speak as you wish. I will crush them under two mountains if that is your desire.' I said, 'No, rather I hope Allah will bring out from their progeny those who would worship Allah alone without associating any partners with Him.'"

Without a doubt, at that time the Messenger of Allah felt hurt and sad because his efforts to invite people to the truth were met with insults and stone-throwing. Even so, Rasulullah s.a.w. did not allow his emotions to control him and did not wish to retaliate against them. Instead, Rasulullah s.a.w. looked forward. Rasulullah s.a.w. showed us that no matter what happens, we have to analyse the outcomes of our actions on that moment and the future.



Examples of Condoning and Promoting

Providing assurance or suggesting that same-sex relationship is permitted

Supporting legalising same-sex marriage.

Examples of Expressing Care and Love Without Condoning the Wrong Actions

Maintaining family ties.

Providing listening ears to their challenges.

Supporting their journey as Muslims.

While declining the request to support normalizing LGBTQ lifestyle.

condoning?
caring?

6.3 Conclusion

Muslims should adopt the Islamic principles of Wasaṭiyyah which aims for justice, balance and excellence in our attempt to respond to same-sex attraction or LGBTQ related matters. We should avoid excessiveness and laxity (Lā Ifrāt Wa Lā Tifrīt). There are two extremes in this case. Firstly, total acceptance refers to accepting the actions and supporting non-normative sexual lifestyles. Secondly, total rejection which refers to cutting family ties with a member of the family experiencing same-sex attraction or those who feel they belong to the LGBTQ community, or other dehumanising actions. Thus to avoid these two extremes, the Muslim community should strengthen their understanding of Islamic principles (such as those mentioned above) or, at the very least, refer to qualified asatizah for guidance and credible advice.

Advice for Muslims Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction

7.0 Advice for Muslims Experiencing Same-Sex Attraction

Attraction towards people of the same gender can be a challenging experience for Muslims. Muslims grappling with this challenge may find themselves in a complex and emotionally stressing situation. Some may even begin to feel unworthy of God's love, thus leading them to wonder if it is right for them to remain Muslims or continue practicing Islam in their daily lives.

This section offers two advices for Muslims experiencing same sex attraction by highlighting the following:

1. **Strengthening our faith as Muslims**
2. **Managing expectations towards religious institutions and religious communities**

7.1 Strengthening Our Faith as Muslims

Muslims experiencing same sex attraction may be tempted to act upon the desire. The urge and attraction may not disappear but it is the responsibility of a Muslim to control the urge, not act upon it and avoid from avenues that may lead to acting on the desire. These may include unruly thoughts, the content they read and watch, as well as their surroundings. Strengthening our imān (faith) and remaining close to Islam is one of the ways that will help Muslims manage it better.

For Muslims, imān is very important as it draws the line between a believer and a disbeliever. Hadith Jibril explains clearly the meaning of faith or imān for a Muslim:⁶⁰

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَارِزًا يَوْمًا لِلنَّاسِ فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَبِلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ "

⁶⁰ Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, Bab Soal Jibril al-Nabi s.a.w. 'an al-Imān wa al-Islām wa al-Ihsān wa 'ilm sā'ah, hadith 50.

Meaning: It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that one day while the Prophet s.a.w. was sitting in the company of some people, (the angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Messenger s.a.w. replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in.'

The hadith explains the meaning of imān and the core of it is believing in Allah s.w.t. By believing, it means a Muslim is committed to Allah s.w.t. and His commands and implementing them through the teachings and examples of the Prophet s.a.w. Hence, a Muslim's heart, words and actions are committed to following the true commands of Allah and teachings of the Prophet s.a.w. in every aspects of life.

With imān, a Muslim will find peace and security, while the void of iman will lead to fear, grieve and anxiety. Allah s.w.t. mentioned:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

Al-Baqarah 2:277

Meaning: Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakah will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

Strengthening Iman during Challenges:



- 1 Considering it a test from Allah s.w.t.
- 2 Not avoiding religion.
- 3 Seeking good companionship.
- 4 Seeking help from a professional or qualified support group.
- 5 Attending classes on Islamic Knowledge.

The following is some advice to consider in our efforts to strengthen our imān while facing challenges:

7.1.1 Consider it as a test from Allah s.w.t.

The tendencies one faces and the heart's desire may be difficult to resist. This is exacerbated when one feels different from others. Our imān may begin to waver. Feelings of despair may seep in, and we will have questions such as, "Why me?"; "Why do I have to face this even when I believe in Allah?".

Nevertheless, consider this as a form of test from our Most Loving Creator - Allah s.w.t. He s.w.t. mentions:

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Al-'Ankabut 29:2-3

Meaning: Do people think that they will be left to say "We believe" and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars.

Every human being, as long as they live, will face challenges and tests, and these differ from one person to the other. No one is exempted, including the Prophets. However, we should realise that the bigger the challenge we face, the bigger the reward for us if we patiently face the test and put in the effort to find the solution. Trials do not mean that Allah s.w.t. does not love us. Our Prophet s.a.w. said:⁶¹

عِظَمُ الْجَزَاءِ مَعَ عِظَمِ الْبَلَاءِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا ابْتَلَاهُمْ فَمَنْ رَضِيَ فَلَهُ الرِّضَا وَمَنْ سَخِطَ فَلَهُ السُّخْطُ

⁶¹ Ibn Majah, Kitāb al-Fitan, Bāb al-Ṣabr 'ala al-Balā', Hadith 4031.

Meaning: The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allah loves a people He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath.

Hence, trials are signs of Allah's love for His servants. In fact, many prophets, saints and the pious were tested by Allah s.w.t. The prophets a.s. who were given severe trials were called Ulu al-'Azmi, for they did not despair in facing challenges. On the contrary, the prophets persevered in worship, adhered firmly to Islam and believed in the help of Allah s.w.t. in facing such challenges.

A natural response from us would be, "But we are not Prophets." True, they have existed before us to exemplify the best traits and character, in hopes of inspiring us to hold on in spite of our challenging circumstances and to not turn our backs against faith. He tests us, because He loves us.

Some may find this irrelevant – how can an urge and desire be a test? If this is a test, then one must remain celibate and isn't this contradicting the divine justice?

Islam emphasises the importance of self-control when it comes to desires and inclinations. This can be found in many of its teachings and practices, including the fast we perform in Ramadan. It is aimed at developing self-restraint.

Islam recognises that human have desires and inclinations. It also emphasises the need to channel desires within the boundaries set by Allah s.w.t. This is not limited to sexual desire, but extends to all aspects of life. For example, anger is a natural emotion. However, there are limitations as to how we should express our anger. The energy behind that anger may drive a person to work harder towards achieving their goals instead of lashing out at loved ones. Islam also forbids us to consume harmful substances such as alcohol and drugs. There are healthier ways to find peace and comfort that will take your mind off stressful matters. Such desires must, therefore, be managed.

Struggling with the nafs is a daily battle for everyone. There are many temptations in life. In fact, temptations are created to test our faith. As Muslims, we work on managing and resisting temptations that (could) lead to sinful thoughts and conduct, while striving for righteousness, piety and fulfillment of our obligation towards Allah s.w.t. This act of

self-control develops a high level of moral consciousness, strengthens our spiritual connection with Allah s.w.t. and helps us attain taqwā (piety and God consciousness) and personal growth.

This, certainly, comes with its own set of challenges, particularly in a world where there is widespread exposure to content that promotes and normalises behaviours (which are) outside the boundaries of Islamic teachings.

It is, therefore, crucial for Muslims experiencing same sex attraction to strengthen their faith and practice the religion to the best of their ability.

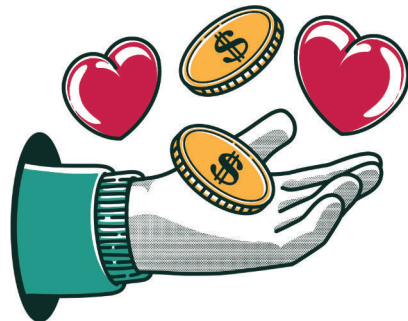
7.1.2 Not avoiding religion

A believer should emulate the Ulū al-'Azmi, prophets, saints and the pious in facing tests. It is a sign of Allah's love towards his servant when he is given the opportunity to strengthen his relationship with Allah s.w.t., get closer to and rely on Him. In fact,

a believer should remember to seek Allah s.w.t. in every situation and circumstance. A believer should remain faithful and worship Allah s.w.t. in good and bad times.

Members of the Muslim community who are attracted to the same sex are advised to deepen their relationship with Allah s.w.t. This can be done through seeking knowledge, and enhancing our practices that will result in better understanding and appreciation of why we exist in this temporal world.

Islam emphasises the importance of self-control when it comes to desires and inclinations. Islam recognises that human have desires and inclinations. It also emphasises the need to exercise self-control and to channel desires within the boundaries set by Allah s.w.t. This is not limited to sexual desire, but extends to all aspects of life. For example, anger is a natural emotion. However, there are limitations has to how we should express our anger. Islam also forbids us to consume harmful substances such as alcohol and drugs. Such desires must, therefore, be managed.



Muslims should continue to seek the mercy of Allah s.w.t. and ask Him to aid them in all of their affairs. A dua that can be practised on a regular basis is the following that was taught by Rasulullah s.a.w.:⁶²

اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

Meaning: Oh Allah, I hope for Your mercy. Do not leave me to myself even for the blinking of an eye (even for a moment). Correct all my affairs for me. There is none worthy of worship but You.

A Muslim may also practise the following dua in order to remain steadfast in doing good and staying away from forbidden actions:⁶³

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي وَتَرْحَمَنِي وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِتْنَةَ قَوْمٍ فَتَوَفَّنِي غَيْرَ مَفْتُونٍ وَأَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُقَرِّبُنِي إِلَى حُبِّكَ

Meaning: O Allah, I ask You to grant me the performance of good deeds, abandonment of bad ones, and love of the poor; and (I ask You) that You forgive me and have mercy upon me; and if You intend to try a people, cause me to die without being tested; and I ask You for Your love, and the love of those who love you, and the love of actions which draw me closer to Your love.

When a Muslim finds himself inclined to, or has done things forbidden by religion – such as same-sex sexual relations - it does not mean that it is not appropriate for him to continue to seek the pleasure of Allah s.w.t. Allah s.w.t. said:

قُلْ يَاعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Al-Zumar 39:53

⁶² Abu Daud, Mishkat al-Masabih, Kitab al-Da'awat, Bab al-Da'awat fi al-Awqaf, Hadith 2447.

⁶³ Al-Tirmidhi, Kitāb Tafsīr al-Quran 'an Rasulullah s.a.w., Bāb Wa Min Surah Ṣad, Hadith 3235.

Meaning: Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."



When a Muslim finds himself inclined to, or has done things forbidden by religion – such as same-sex sexual relations – it does not mean that it is not appropriate for him to continue to seek the pleasure of Allah s.w.t.

In a hadith, Rasulullah s.a.w. explained that the door of repentance is always open. Allah's mercy surpasses the magnitude of our sins. Regardless of our struggles, Allah is ever-forgiving as long as we are sincere and firmly resolved to abstain from sin. Rasulullah s.a.w. said:⁶⁴

إِنَّ عَبْدًا أَصَابَ ذَنْبًا ، وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ : أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا ، فَقَالَ : رَبِّ أَذْنَبْتُ ، وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ : أَصَبْتُ ، فَاعْفِرْ لِي ، فَقَالَ رَبُّهُ : أَعْلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ ، غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ، ثُمَّ مَكَثَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ، ثُمَّ أَصَابَ ذَنْبًا أَوْ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا ، فَقَالَ : رَبِّ ، أَذْنَبْتُ أَوْ أَصَبْتُ آخَرَ ، فَاعْفِرْهُ ، فَقَالَ : أَعْلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ ، غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ، ثُمَّ مَكَثَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ، ثُمَّ أَذْنَبَ ذَنْبًا ، وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ : أَصَابَ ذَنْبًا ، قَالَ : قَالَ رَبِّ ، أَصَبْتُ أَوْ قَالَ أَذْنَبْتُ آخَرَ : فَاعْفِرْهُ لِي ، فَقَالَ : أَعْلِمَ عَبْدِي أَنَّ لَهُ رَبًّا يَغْفِرُ الذَّنْبَ وَيَأْخُذُ بِهِ ، غَفَرْتُ لِعَبْدِي ثَلَاثًا ، فَلْيَعْمَلْ مَا شَاءَ

64 Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tauhīd, Bāb Qaul Allah Ta'ala "Yurīduna an Yubaddilu Kalamallah", Hadith 7507.

Meaning: If somebody commits a sin and then says, 'O my Lord! I have sinned, please forgive me!' and his Lord says, 'My slave has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for it, I therefore have forgiven my slave (his sins).' Then he remains without committing any sin for a while and then again commits another sin and says, 'O my Lord, I have committed another sin, please forgive me,' and Allah says, 'My slave has known that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for it, I therefore have forgiven my slave (his sin). Then he remains without committing any another sin for a while and then commits another sin (for the third time) and says, 'O my Lord, I have committed another sin, please forgive me,' and Allah says, 'My slave has known that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for it I therefore have forgiven My slave (his sin), he can do whatever he likes.

It is also worth to note of an authentic hadith (where) a woman who committed a major sin was forgiven for being kind to animals. Rasulullah s.a.w. said:⁶⁵

غُفِرَ لِمَرْأَةٍ مُؤْمِسَةٍ مَرَّتْ بِكَلْبٍ عَلَى رَأْسِ رَكْبٍ يَلْهَثُ قَالَ كَادَ يَقْتُلُهُ الْعَطَشُ
فَنَزَعَتْ حُفَّهَا فَأَوْثَقَتْهُ بِحِمَارِهَا فَزَرَعَتْ لَهُ مِنَ الْمَاءِ فُغْفِرَ لَهَا بِذَلِكَ

Meaning: A prostitute was forgiven by Allah because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave her because of that.

This hadith teaches us that Allah s.w.t. still looks at the good deeds done by His servant even if the servant committed other sinful acts. Indeed, there is no good deed that is too small in the sight of Allah s.w.t. and the mercy of Allah s.w.t. is very vast.

7.1.3 Seeking good and pious companionship

In strengthening imān and dealing with the struggles, one should carefully consider the company he or she keeps. It is advisable to get closer to people of piety and good character, and seek good companions and friends. Our values, thoughts and morals are

⁶⁵ Al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Bud'u al-Khalq, Bāb Izā Waqa'a al-Dzubāb fī Syarab Ahadikum Falyaghmishu Fainna Fi Ihda Janahaihi Dain Wa Fi al-Ukhra Syifa', Hadith 3321.

usually greatly influenced by the people we are close to. Rasulullah s.a.w. advised:⁶⁶

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْجَلِيسِ الصَّالِحِ وَجَلِيسِ السُّوءِ: كَحَامِلِ الْمِسْكِ، وَنَافِخِ الْكَبِيرِ، فَحَامِلُ الْمِسْكِ إِمَّا أَنْ يُخَذِّيكَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَبْتَاعَ مِنْهُ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْهُ رِيحًا طَيِّبَةً، وَنَافِخُ الْكَبِيرِ إِمَّا أَنْ يَحْرِقَ ثِيَابَكَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْهُ رِيحًا مُنْتَنَةً

Meaning: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, "The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of the musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of the musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell".

When meeting friends who face similar tests as you do, it may be helpful to consider bringing along a trusted and reliable friend who is aware of your challenges and will be comfortable in confronting you and advising you when you need advice. That trusted person may become your listening ear because he or she loves you for the sake of Allah s.w.t., and only wants goodness for you in this world and in the hereafter.

7.1.4 Seek help from a professional or qualified support group

Some individuals who experience same-sex attraction struggle with emotional, mental and spiritual challenges. It is certainly tough when this individual has to go through these challenges alone. It can invite feelings of isolation and worsen one's mental health.

Therefore, individuals who suffer from these tendencies are encouraged to seek professional help and support in order to reduce or manage emotional and mental stress. Through professional help, those facing these challenges can get qualified advice and guidance.

Pergas also provides an 'Asatizah Solace Care' – a safe space that offers emotional and spiritual support for those who are in need of guidance and support. This service can be accessed through Pergas mainline at 6346 9350 or email at info@pergas.org.sg

⁶⁶ Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Dzabaih wa al-Said, Bab al-Misk, Hadith 5534.

7.1.5 Attending classes on Islamic knowledge

Deepening one's basic knowledge in Islam such as aqidah, fiqh, history, morality and so on, as well as getting religious advice from qualified asatizah (ARS) can strengthen one's understanding of the religion. Through sound religious knowledge, one will be guided and find solutions and answers to life challenges. Allah s.w.t. has revealed that Islam is a complete religion – any issues can be solved by understanding the messages of Quran and teachings of the Prophet s.a.w.:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ
دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Al-Maidah 5:3

Meaning: This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

7.2 Managing Expectations: Acknowledging Differences and Moving Forward as a Community

Muslims who are experiencing same sex attraction or identify themselves as LGBTQ have faced and continue to face various challenges. In order to help themselves address these challenges, these individuals would certainly have expectations towards religious institutions and the Muslim community in Singapore.

And there are growing efforts in trying to provide the appropriate support where needed, and it will only get better in the future, insya Allah.

However, we also need to come to an acceptance that there will continue to be disagreements and differences in belief and understanding. These will not go away. But there are ways that we can still positively try to move forward together as a community amidst these differences.

We must acknowledge that there may be other opposing views on Islamic rulings on sexuality and homosexuality, and some of these differences are difficult to reconcile. This, however, should not create a division between us and we should strive to remain respectful of each other's beliefs so that it would allow us to flourish both individually and collectively as a community.

That said, we must also be sensitive to one another and avoid provocative actions. There should be no harassment or bullying towards those who are struggling with same-sex attraction. That is not the Islamic way. Likewise, Muslims who feel they belong to the LGBTQ community should also respect the religious beliefs of the larger Muslim community. For example, Muslim organisations in Singapore firmly adhere to the Islamic view and ruling that prohibits same-sex sexual relations, and that marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Such views need to be respected. It is not right for Muslims who identify as LGBTQ individuals to expect these views to change.

7.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important for Muslims experiencing same-sex attraction to recognise that their desire does not define them. Instead, one should strengthen imān (faith) and stay close to Islam in regulating desires.



We must acknowledge that there may be other opposing views on Islamic rulings on sexuality and homosexuality, and some of these differences are difficult to reconcile. This, however, should not create a division between us and we should strive to remain respectful of each other's beliefs.

The Quranic Text and Context: Analysing Quranic Interpretation on Homosexual Acts (Same-Sex Acts)

This part of the religious guidance will shift towards the topic of homosexuality within the context of the Quran. It takes a theological approach in analysing specific verses from the Quran that are frequently cited in discussions surrounding homosexuality. It will examine the revisionist Quranic interpretation on homosexuality.

1.0 Interacting with the Text

The technological advancement of today's world has made information more easily accessible. The digital revolution has granted individuals an abundance of choices when seeking information. This abundance of opinions and sources may also lead to a sense of confusion and overwhelm. It highlights the importance of developing critical thinking skills to make informed choices amidst this information overload.

In the Muslim's tradition, our primary source of acquiring knowledge is through the Quran and Sunnah of Rasulullah s.a.w. In interpreting these texts, there is a system that has been developed.

Interpreting the Quran is a complex and profound task. Its verses often carry multiple layers of meaning, and the context in which they were revealed. This complexity means that not everyone has the ability and knowledge to interpret the Quran. Rather, it is the role of the qualified and competent scholars who have undergone rigorous training and fulfilled specific pre-requisites to interpret the Quran. Some of the important pre-requisites include sincerity of purpose¹, ability to resist one's desire², to follow the methodology of first interpreting the Quran with another verse of the Quran, then hadith, followed by opinions of the companions and tābi'īn³, a strong grasp of the Arabic Language⁴, sound knowledge of other sciences such as sciences of the Quran, Islamic Theology, Jurisprudential Principles

1 Al-Suyūṭī, Al-Itqān fī al-'Ulūm al-Qurān, (Damascus: Muassasah al-Risālah Nāshirūn, 2008), 763-781. It also means to discover the meanings of the Quran to the best of our capacity and abilities.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

The Quran is revealed in the Arabic Language which is rich in vocabulary, synonyms and meanings. For example, the Quran used many words to describe fear. Hazara (حذر) means precaution, vigilance and wariness, khashyah (خشية) describes fear that arises from the feeling of amazement, ru'b (رعب) refers to fear and a terrified feeling that leads one to surrender or unable to run away.

(Uṣūl al-Fiqh), Sociology, Understanding of Socio-Historical Context.⁵

For those who do not meet the pre-requisites, the path to understanding the meanings of the Quran is through learning from these qualified and credible scholars. It also involves establishing the source of the knowledge, ensuring it is sound and reliable. The system and science of isnād in our tradition is an example which educates Muslims to be cautious and scrutinise the source of information and knowledge.

2.0 Analysing Quranic Interpretation on Homosexual Act (Same-sex act)

In the contemporary landscape of Quranic interpretation on same-sex act, there is a rise in the emergence of revisionist interpretation⁶ of the Quranic story of Prophet Lut a.s. While majority of the Muslim scholars rely on this story as a basis for the prohibition of same-sex act, the revisionist interpretations calls for “sexually-sensitive” and “queer-affirming” approach and interpretation of the Islamic texts. It claims to be progressive, non-bias and liberating.⁷ Some of the prominent authors are Scott Kugle who wrote an article entitled “Sexuality, Diversity, and Ethics in the Agenda of Progressive Muslims” and a book “Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Muslims”, Muhsin Hendricks⁸, Samar Habib⁹, and Stephen Hunt¹⁰.

Kugle for example, argues that a sexually-sensitive examination of the Quranic text

5 To understand the meaning and revelation context during the time of the Prophet s.a.w. and to also contextualize for the people today. Quraish Shihab gave an example of the word zarrah which was interpreted by the companions as habbah (seed) however with the advancement of science, the proper meaning would be atom as it is found that it is the smallest matter.

6 Revisionist interpretation refers to the movement that questions and challenges the narratives within the classical Islamic text. Kugle for example claims that the Quranic tafsir (interpretation) within the Muslim world is “rich but dense”. These interpretations according to Kugle is biased and patriarchal hence a need for a reinterpretation that is “sexuality-sensitive”, “attentive to homosexual experiences and accommodating to their presences among Muslims”. With that, revisionist interpretation of the Quran argues that a sexuality-sensitive reading of the Quran reveals that Quran do not prohibit same-sex relation based on love. It only condemns same-sex acts motivated by rebellion and violence or that intends to dishonor.

7 Liberates the Quran from prior interpretation that used scripture to justify various form of oppression. (Homo – Islamic liberation theology)

8 Among a notable article he wrote is entitled “Islamic Texts: A Source for Acceptance of Queer Individuals into Mainstream Muslim Society”.

9 Queer-friendly Islamic Hermeneutics.

10 Some of the books on sexuality he authors include “Religion and LGBTQ Sexualities”. He also wrote an article entitled “Masculinity, Homosexuality, and the Defence of Islam: A Case Study of Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s Media Fatwa”.

reveals a more nuanced understanding of homosexuality than the prevailing traditional interpretations. Similar to other revisionist writers, Kugle asserts that the Quran neither explicitly condemns nor prohibits same-sex acts. The story of Prophet Lut a.s. describe a sexual assault against the guests of Prophet Lut a.s., to assert dominance and power. Hence, the acts are only condemned and prohibited if they are violent, abusive and exploitative.

As part of the exercise to discern the credibility and reliability of such interpretation, this section analyses the revisionist interpretation, methodologies and sources, focusing on the interpretation offered by Kugle, as his interpretation has been referred to by many¹¹ in the context of sexually-sensitive Quranic interpretation on homosexuality.

The flow of the section will be as follows:

- 1) Analysing Kugle's thematic interpretation on the Story of Prophet Lut a.s.
- 2) Examining Kugle's claim that Quran does not explicitly condemns homosexuality

2.1 Thematic Analysis of the Story of Prophet Lut a.s.

There are various styles and approach in interpreting the Quran including tafsīr tahlīlī (analytical interpretation), ijmālī, muqāran (comparative interpretation) and maudhūī (thematic interpretation).¹² Tafsir maudhūī or a thematic interpretation does not consider the sequence of the verse. It involves the process of identifying and gathering verses of the Quran that revolve around a particular theme, regardless whether they are from the same sūrah (chapter) or different ones. These collected verses are analysed together to gain a deeper understanding of the theme explored.

11 Most if not all discussion on homosexuality from the Quranic perspective will quote and include Kugle's work. Most writings which are same sex affirming would cite Kugle's work as well. In the words of Mobeen Vaid, Kugle's writing is "the only sustained attempt to argue for its permissibility". Kugle also attempts to provide a theological justification seemingly rooted from the Islamic tradition.

12 Tafsir tahlīlī interprets the Quran according to the order of the verses. In this method, the mufasssir (commentators) will attempt to analyse the verse as comprehensively as possible by looking into various aspects such as semantics, asbāb al-nuzūl (reasons of revelation) and munāsabah al-āyat (wisdom of correlation between verses). Tafsir ijmālī also follows the order of the verse but explains the meaning of each verse briefly and in summary. Tafsir muqāran compares a verse or several verses with other verses in the Quran or hadith (prophetic traditions), opinions of the ṣahābah (companions) or tābi'īn or views of other mufasssir.

In reading and interpreting the story of Prophet Lut a.s., Kugle asserted the importance of thematic analysis. It should not be read on its own. Instead, the story should be interpreted while taking into context the story of other prophets mentioned in the Quran. Through a thematic analysis, he believes that the early verses of Prophet Lut a.s. stress the infidelity of his people. Kugle claims that the story did not obsess much about sexual details of their assault. It narrates the different ways the people attempted to reject the teachings of Prophet Lut a.s.

2.1.1 Kugle Referencing Ibn Hazm to Support His Thematic Analysis

To support and validate his arguments, Kugle has, in his writings, referenced Ibn Hazm,¹³ a classical scholar. He quoted Ibn Hazm from al-Muḥallā¹⁴ who mentioned that the people of Lut a.s. were not punished because of the *fāḥishah*, rather they were punished for their infidelity.

However, in the same book, Ibn Hazm highlighted the acts of people of Lut a.s. as a major sin, similar to zinā or fornication:¹⁵

فعل قوم لوط من الكبائر الفواحش المحرمة كلحم الخنزير والميتة والدم والخمر
والزنا وسائر المعاصي من أحله أو أحل شيئاً مما ذكرنا فهو كافر مشرك حلال
الدم والمال وإنما اختلف الناس في الواجب عليه

Meaning: The acts of the people of Lut are part of major sins prohibited obscenity, such as consumption of pork flesh, the meat of dead animals, blood, alcohol, fornication, and other disobediences to God. He who considers these acts lawful or considers one of the acts mentioned as lawful is a non-believer (his life has lost its sanctity) and there are various opinions on the punishment he deserves.

13 Abu Muhammad Ali Ibn Hazm is one of the well-known scholars of Andalus. He was a theologian, jurist and poet. He was trained in the Maliki school of thought and briefly adopted the Shafi'i school of thought before becoming a well-known scholar of the Zahiri school of thought – a literalist school of law.

14 The book al-Muḥallā or al-Muḥallā bi al-Āthar fī Syarh al-Mujallā bi al-Ikhtisar is a fundamental reference and literature for the Zahiri school of fiqh. In it, Ibn Hazm discusses questions of fiqh, citing views of other scholars and their evidence before providing his views.

15 Alī Ibn Hazm al-Andalusī, al-Īṣāl fī al-Muḥallā bi al-Āthār, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah), vol 12, 388.

To put it in context, Ibn Hazm is a jurist and he discusses the acts of people of Lut a.s. in al-Muḥallā from a legal or fiqh perspective. The discussion on the acts of people of Lut a.s. was included under forbidden acts that will incur ta'zīr (punishment or penalty), instead of hudūd (punishment under Islamic law). This means Ibn Hazm does not deny the sin of same-sex acts. In his opinion, the acts of people of Lut a.s. does not incur a maximum punishment such as zinā. He was refuting the views of other scholars who stated burning, throwing from highest spot of the town, stoning or execution as punishments for same-sex acts.

The same narrative is seen in other famous work of Ibn Hazm, Ṭauq al-Ḥamāmah¹⁶, where some studies attempted to claim that Ibn Hazm is tolerant of homosexuality due to the various accounts in the book about men attracted to the member of the same sex. This book may also give the impression that Ibn Hazm himself might be attracted to men. However, in one of the chapters of this book, Ibn Hazm wrote about Qubḥ al-Ma'āṣī or the vileness of sinning. In addressing about sins, he did not only write about sexual acts outside of marriage between a man and woman, he also described the acts of people of Lut a.s. as shanī' bashī' which means horrendously hideous.¹⁷ Ibn Hazm understood that desires and actions are two separate matters and desires towards the same sex should not be acted upon.¹⁸

Regardless whether they are punished for rejecting the guidance brought by Prophet Lut a.s. or any other immoralities, it does not negate that the sexual acts among people of Lut a.s. is condemned and prohibited.

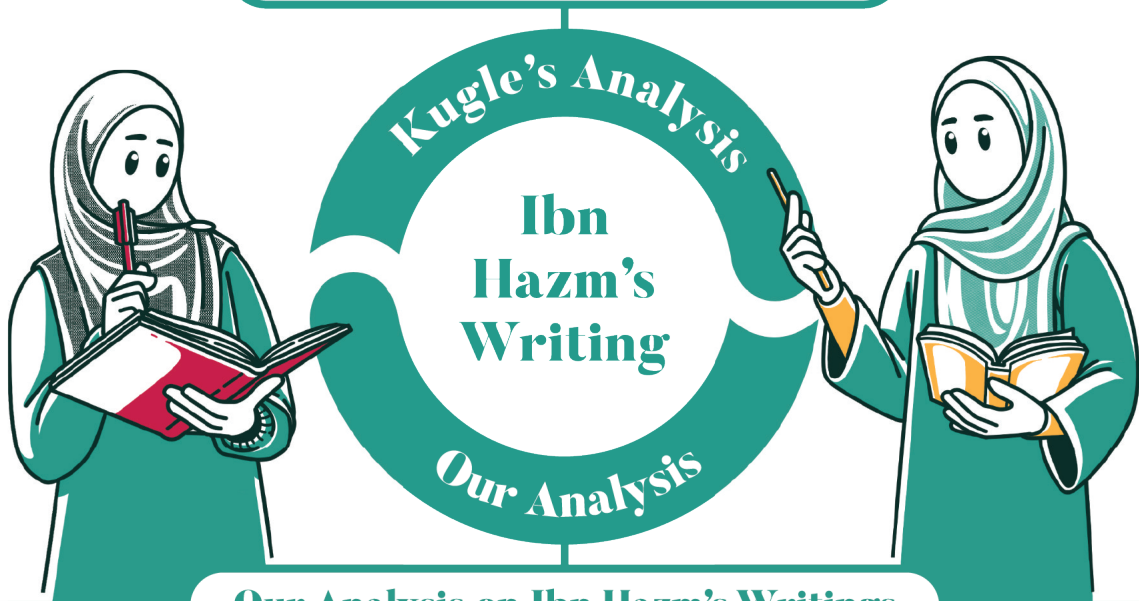
16 Ṭauq al-Ḥamāmah fī al-Ulfa wa al-Ullāf is another work of Ibn Hazm. This book discusses about love and lovers. In it Ibn Hazm presented story of love in high-quality prose, some of his experiences and others are stories of his contemporaries.

17 'Alī Ibn Hazm al-Andalusī, Ṭauq al-Ḥamāmah fī al-Ulfah wa al-Ullāf, (Maṭba'ah Hījāzī: 1950), 140.

18 Mobeen Vaid, "Can Islam Accommodate Homosexual Acts? Quranic Revisionism and the Case of Scott Kugle", American Journal of Islam and Society, 34 (3), 45-97.

Quoted from al-Muḥallā to assert that people of Prophet Lut a.s. were **punished due to their infidelity, not because of same-sex acts.**

Kugle Referencing Ibn Hazm



Our Analysis on Ibn Hazm's Writings

In al-Muḥallā, Ibn Hazm categorises same-sex act as **major sins**.

He approaches the discussion from a **fiqh perspective**. While he condemns the act, Ibn Hazm **disagrees with other scholars regarding its punishment, rejecting extreme measures.**

In Ṭauq al-Ḥamāmah, Ibn Hazm described same-sex act as **shanī' bashī'**.

2.1.2 A Thematic Analysis but a Different Finding from Kugle's

As mentioned before, Kugle pushed for thematic analysis. Through it, he argues that the story of Prophet Lut a.s. primarily focuses on infidelity and considers same-sex acts as “only one of a range of actions that constituted their infidelity”. However, a thematic analysis of the story of Prophet Lut a.s. reveals a significant difference in the story of Prophet Lut a.s. In comparison to the Qur’anic story of other prophets, there is an absence of the verse *اعبدوا الله ما لكم من الـه غيره* in the story of Prophet Lut a.s. This particular verse was present in the Quranic story of every prophet, but not in the story of Prophet Lut a.s. and his people.

According to Quraish Shihab, this does not mean that Prophet Lut a.s. did not call them to Tauḥīd or the oneness of God. However, it shows that another primary focus of the story is the message of morality. Together with rectification of faith,¹⁹ Prophet Lut a.s. was addressing the same sex behaviour among his people.²⁰ In contrast to other immoral and sinful acts committed by the people of Lut a.s., including plundering, it is discovered that the same sexual act between men was constantly referenced in the Quranic story of the people of Lut a.s. The Quran specifically mentioned *أَتَأْتُونَ الذُّكْرَانَ* and *أَبْنَيْكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ* (both of which refers to sexual acts between men) 4 times in the story. This was crucial to the immorality narrative.

Below is a table that summarizes and shows the difference in the mentioning of “calling to Tauḥīd”, immoralities through general terms such as *fāḥishah*, *khābā'ith* and *sayyi'āt*, same-sex act through the term *ta'tūn al-rijāl* or *ta'tūn al-dzukurān* and finally the mentioning of other immoralities.

¹⁹ Quran, Ash-Shu'ara' 26:161-163.

²⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Quran*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), j.4, 189.

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

1 Al-An'am 6:85-87

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☐ I'tyan al-zukran
- ☐ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

2 Al-'Araf 7:80-84

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ
مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ
﴿٨٠﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ
النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمَا
كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ
مِنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾
فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَهُ ۖ كَانَتْ مِنَ
الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا
فَآنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☒ I'tyan al-zukran
- ☒ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

3 Hud 11:74

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☐ I'tyan al-zukran
- ☐ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

4

Hud 11:77-83

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِئَاءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ
 بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾
 وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ
 كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَتَقَوْمُ
 هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا
 اللَّهَ وَلَا تَخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ
 رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا
 فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَتَعَلَّمُ مَا تُرِيدُ
 ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوَى إِلَيَّ
 رُكْنٌ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوا يَلُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ
 رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ
 بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ
 إِلَّا أَمْرَاتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ
 مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ
 ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰهَا سَافِلَهَا
 وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ
 مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٨٢﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَا هِيَ
 مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

☐ Calling to tauhid

☐ I'tyan al-zukran

☒ General term
 such as fahisyah,
 khabaith and sayyiat

☐ Other immorality

5

Al-Hijr 15:59-77

☐ Calling to tauhid

☐ I'tyan al-zukran

☐ General term
 such as fahisyah,
 khabaith and sayyiat

☐ Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

6 Al-Anbiya' 21:71

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☐ Ityan al-zukran
- ☐ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

7 Al-Anbiya' 21:74-75

وَلَوْ طَا ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ الْخَبِيثَ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَسَقِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☐ Ityan al-zukran
- ☒ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

8 Al-Hajj 22:43

- ☐ Calling to tauhid
- ☐ Ityan al-zukran
- ☐ General term such as fahisyah, khabaith and sayyiat
- ☐ Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

9

Ash-Shu'ara' 26:160-175

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ
 لَهُمْ أَخُوهُمْ لُوطُ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ إِنِّي لَكُمْ
 رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا
 ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ
 أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ أَتَأْتُونَ
 الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَتَذَرُونَ مَا
 خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ أَرْوَاحِكُمْ بَلْ
 أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عَادُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ قَالُوا لَيْنَ لَمْ تَنْتَهِ
 يَلُوطُ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ قَالَ
 إِنِّي لِعَمَلِكُمْ مِنَ الْقَالِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي
 وَأَهْلِي مِمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ
 أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ إِلَّا عَجُوزًا فِي الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾
 ثُمَّ دَمَرْنَا الْأَخْرِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ
 مَطَرًا فَسَاءً مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنَّ فِي
 ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٤﴾
 وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧٥﴾

☒ Calling to tauhid

☒ Ihtyan al-zukran

☐ General term
 such as fahisyah,
 khabaith and sayyiat

☐ Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

10

Al-Naml 27:54-58

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَيْتَكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ
الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ
قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوا آلَ لُوطٍ
مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ أَنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾
فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ۖ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَهُ ۖ قَدَّرْنَاهَا مِمَّنْ
الْغَايِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَسَاءَ
مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾



Calling to tauhid



Ityan al-zukran

General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat

Other immorality

11

Al-Ankabut 29:26



Calling to tauhid



Ityan al-zukran

General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat

Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

12

Al-'Ankabut 29:28-35

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ
 الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَيْنَكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ
 وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ
 الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
 قَالُوا أَتَيْنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ
 الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي عَلَى
 الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ
 هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
 قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ
 فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَهُوَ كَانَتْ
 مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا
 لُوطًا سِئَاءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالُوا
 لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنْجُوكَ وَأَهْلَكَ
 إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا
 مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَى أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ
 السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ
 تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

○ Calling to tauhid

● I'tyan al-zukran

● General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat

● Other immorality

Surah and Verse Related to Prophet Lut a.s. and his people

13 Al-Saffat 37:133-138

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Calling to tauhid | <input type="radio"/> Ityan al-zukran |
| <input type="radio"/> General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat | <input type="radio"/> Other immorality |

14 Sad 38:12-14

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Calling to tauhid | <input type="radio"/> Ityan al-zukran |
| <input type="radio"/> General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat | <input type="radio"/> Other immorality |

15 Qaf 50:12-13

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Calling to tauhid | <input type="radio"/> Ityan al-zukran |
| <input type="radio"/> General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat | <input type="radio"/> Other immorality |

15 Al-Qamar 54:33-39

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Calling to tauhid | <input type="radio"/> Ityan al-zukran |
| <input type="radio"/> General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat | <input type="radio"/> Other immorality |

16 Al-Tahrim 66:10

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Calling to tauhid | <input type="radio"/> Ityan al-zukran |
| <input type="radio"/> General term
such as fahisyah,
khabaith and sayyiat | <input type="radio"/> Other immorality |

2.2 Kugle's Claim that the term *Fāḥishah* refers to rape and assault, not based on love and desire

According to Kugle, homosexuality is a contemporary concept that emerged in the late 19th century. This concept does not only refer to sexual intercourse between two men but it can also mean feelings of romantic and sexual attraction to members of same sex and one's social identity. The Quran, however, as concluded by Kugle and revisionists alike, did not address homosexuality as a sexual orientation, sexual behaviour or sexual identity.

According to Kugle, the term *fāḥishah* that is mentioned in the story of Prophet Lut a.s., does not refer to (the) homosexuality understood today. Kugle interpreted the *fāḥishah* among the people of Prophet Lut a.s. as assault and rape. Kugle pointed out the deeper theme of the story of Prophet Lut a.s. which stresses the infidelity of his people. They rebelled against the teachings of Prophet Lut a.s. and schemed for ways to reject his prophethood. The sexual act or rape as Kugle puts it, along with other actions such as robbery and murder, is a show of rebellion and rejection towards Prophet Lut a.s.

This sexual act, according to Kugle, was not driven by sexual desire. Kugle claimed the people of Lut a.s. are heterosexuals, as they had wives and children. They are heterosexual men attempting to assert their power and to showcase their rejection of the prophetic authority. Kugle analogized the act to soldiers raping as a form of weapon or to interrogators abusing as a form of domination.

Kugle remarked that the term *fāḥishah* is used in the Quran for different meanings and not primarily to mean same-sex acts. He further argues that Prophet Lut's wife, who was involved in the *fāḥishah*, was destroyed as well. This shows that the *fāḥishah* or immorality did not refer to same-sex acts.

With that, Kugle concludes that the impermissibility of homosexuality in Islam is thus disputable.

2.2.1 An Analysis of the Term Fāḥishah, but a Different Finding from Kugle

Firstly, the Quran does specifically mention same-sexual behaviour. This can be found in many terms used in the story of Prophet Lut a.s. such as fāḥisyah, la ta'tūna al-rijāl syahwatan min dūn al-nisā', a ta'tūna al-dzukurān min al-'ālamīn.

Next, it is important to analyse the term *fāḥishah* semantically. The term *fāḥishah* has a negative connotation. Linguistically, it refers to wrongful and evil (القبیح) actions and words.²¹ Ibn Manẓūr also mentions that it means evil sins. It also refers to immoral, indecent and offensive actions.

Analysing the term *fāḥishah*, Prof. Quraish Shihab notes that the term *fāḥishah* is often associated with sins, and "almost all of them are related to sexual violations."²²

Ibn Faris mentioned that it refers to whatever that has transgressed its limit.²³

The term *fāḥishah* appears three times in the Quranic story of Prophet Lut a.s. Interestingly, all of these three verses will be followed by the mention of sexual acts between men (لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ).

1. In al-'Araf, Allah s.w.t. mentions:

وَلَوْ طَا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾
 إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

Al-'Araf 7:80-81

Meaning: And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, "Do you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people."

21 Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, (Nasr Adab Al-Jauzah:1405) 6, 325 (<https://archive.org/details/lisan.al.arab/lisan.al.arab.01/>)

22 Quraish Shihab, Ensiklopedia Al-Quran Kajian Kosakata, A-J, (Jakarta: Lantera Hati), 202

23 Ibn Zakariyya, Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lugha, j4, (Dar al-Fikr: 1979) 478. (https://waqfeya.net/book.php?bid=3144#google_vignette)

2. In al-Naml, Allah s.w.t. mentions:

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَيْنَكُمُ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ
شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ ۚ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Al-Naml 27:54-55

Meaning: And [mention] Lot, when he said to his people, "Do you commit immorality while you are seeing? Do you indeed approach men with desire instead of women? Rather, you are a people behaving ignorantly."

3. In al-Ankabut, Allah s.w.t. mentions:

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَيْنَكُمُ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيَكُمُ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ
جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَأَتَيْنَا بَعْدَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

Al-Ankabut 29:28-29

Meaning: And [mention] Lot, when he said to his people, "Indeed, you commit such immorality as no one has preceded you with from among the worlds. Indeed, you approach men and obstruct the road and commit in your meetings [every] evil." And the answer of his people was not but they said, "Bring us the punishment of Allah, if you should be of the truthful."

The phrase أَيْنَكُمُ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ , which means sexual acts between men²⁴ explains and describes the *fāḥishah* that was mentioned prior to it. In addition to that, two of these three verses describe this act as driven by lust and nafs, of which the Quran mentions clearly that they lust after men instead of women (شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ). The term *shahwah* here, when linguistically analyzed from the point of view of Arabic syntax, takes the form of *maf'ul li ajlihi* which means the sexual acts were done for the sake of satisfying lust and desire.

²⁴ The term "ta'tūna" which originally means to come is used here to mean sexual act. This is similar to other verses in the Quran where Allah s.w.t. describes sexual intercourse or acts between a man and a woman by using the term *ta'tū* such as in al-Baqarah 2:223, *fa'tūhunna* in al-Baqarah 2:222 and *al-rafath* in al-Baqarah 2:187. The Quran has referred to sexual relationships by using indirect or metaphorical terms and has never used direct terms such as 'jimā' or 'wat u' to describe sexual acts. There is nothing in this term that refers to aggression.

Allah s.w.t. describes them as *musrifūn*²⁵ and *'ādūn*²⁶ because they have transgressed and went beyond the limits set by Allah s.w.t. by channeling their desires towards people of the same gender.

There is no term referring to the men approaching the same gender out of force or in order to exert their power. Instead, the term *shahwah* (lust) was repeatedly mentioned which significantly indicates that the men approached other men to satisfy their lust and desire.²⁷

Besides *shahwah*, Allah s.w.t. also uses the term *rāwada* (راود) to describe the acts of people of Prophet Lut a.s. towards his male guests:

وَلَقَدْ رَاودُوهُ عَنْ ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٧﴾

Al-Qamar 54:37

Meaning: And they had demanded from him his guests, but We obliterated their eyes, [saying], "Taste My punishment and warning."

This term implies a sexual desire and solicitation. It has been used in other parts of the Quran to refer to sexual connotations. This can be found in the story of Prophet Yusuf a.s. where the term *rāwada* was used to describe the attempt of a lady to sexually seduce Prophet Yusuf a.s.²⁸

The Quranic story also mentions Prophet Lut a.s. "introducing" his daughters, whom he describes as purer. Allah s.w.t mentions:

وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهَرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَتَقَوْمَ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِي بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ ﴿٨٠﴾

Hud 11:78-79

25 Al-'Araf 7:81.

26 Al-Shu 'arā' 26:166.

27 The term *syahwah* in the Quran has been used to refer to sexual and non-sexual desires. An example of *syahwah* related to sexual desire is as mention in surah Ali-'Imran verse 14 where lure of women are mention in relation to *syahwah*.

28 Al-Quran 12:23, 12:25, 12:26, 12:30, 12:32 and 12:51.

Meaning: And his people came hastening to him, and before [this] they had been doing evil deeds. He said, "O my people, these are my daughters; they are purer for you. So fear Allah and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not among you a man of reason? They said, "You have already known that we have not concerning your daughters any claim, and indeed, you know what we want."

Should the people of Prophet Lut a.s. assaulted and raped men, Prophet Lut a.s. would not have introduced his daughters to the men. This description of purer is an indication that sexual intercourse should only happen between a man and a woman (within a married couple), and conversely sexual acts between men is considered as immoral and indecent.

2.3 Summary

The analysis presented in this discussion asserts that Kugle's interpretation is inaccurate. An examination of the Quranic story of Prophet Lut a.s. reveals that alongside the call to Tauhīd, the story emphasizes the immoral conduct of the people of Lut. This immoral behaviour is explicitly described as sexual acts between men which are driven by desire. The story of Prophet Lut a.s., thus, serves as a clear example within the Quran that same sex acts are explicitly addressed and condemned.

This underscores the importance of careful examination when interpreting the Quran. It also highlights the importance of being analytical and cautious in receiving and teaching knowledge. An examination of Kugle's interpretation reveals several critical shortcomings.

Firstly, Kugle does not adequately address the linguistic and textual evidence within the Quran. His interpretation overlooks the explicit references to same-sex acts based on desire found in various Quranic verses.

Furthermore, Kugle and his peers undermine the focus of the narrative, which in addition to calling to piety, primarily condemns the immorality of the people of Lut a.s., particularly the same-sex acts driven by desire. This was repeatedly mentioned in various Quranic verses, indicating an important message within the narrative of Prophet Lut a.s.

It is also evident that Kugle is inconsistent in his methodology, such as when citing Ibn

Hazm's opinions. He was selective on Ibn Hazm's writings, citing points that may seem to be in line with his view and neglecting to mention Ibn Hazm's contributions which clearly reject and condemn homosexual acts.²⁹

Such an attempt to revise the interpretation of the Quran, as a way to religiously affirm the permissibility of same sex acts, is hence unacceptable.

فاحشة



Analysis of Fāḥishah

Kugle's Claim	Our Analysis
Kugle interprets the term fāḥishah in the story as assault and rape .	The term <i>fāḥishah</i> mentioned 3 times in the Quranic story of people of Prophet Lut a.s.
The sexual act was not driven by sexual desire . But is a manifestation of the rebellion against the prophetic authority and demonstration of power .	In all of the 3 verses, there is a mention of sexual acts between men (لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ), which explains the meaning of fāḥishah .
	No term in the story refers to assault or approaching out of force.
	Rather the term shahwah (شَهْوَةٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا) and rāwada were used, indicating the acts were driven by lust .

²⁹ Mobeen Vaid, "Can Islam Accommodate Homosexual Acts? Quranic Revisionism and the Case of Scott Kugle", American Journal of Islam and Society, 34 (3), 45-97.

3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to recognize that Kugle's interpretation is just one example of a revisionist approach to understanding the Quranic text in relation to the story of Prophet Lut a.s. and his people as well as the issue of homosexuality. Such interpretation requires further scholarly inquiry and critical engagement. Hence it is important for Muslims to approach the Quranic interpretation with caution.

As we are presented with an array of diverse opinions and views on Quranic interpretation and religious matters, Muslims should, as taught by their tradition, be responsible learners and receivers. This responsibility extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and how it is received and taught. It also means exercising caution when selecting sources from which we draw our knowledge.

One crucial aspect of this responsibility is ensuring that knowledge emanates from qualified scholars. While the Quran is available and accessible for all, its interpretation requires expertise. It is not a task suited for everyone, as misinterpretation can have profound consequences leading to confusion, misunderstanding, misguidance or even distortion of the Quranic messages.

Being a responsible and respectful Muslim also entails a commitment to not speak about matters which one has no knowledge of. Remember that Allah s.w.t. has said:

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ
مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

Al-Isrā' 17:36

Meaning: And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.

Therefore, as Muslims, we have to be cautious, and we need to scrutinise information before we speak about religious matters.

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