

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

HOMOSEXUALITY

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THE QURAN'S STANCE

There is absolutely **no ambiguity** in the Quranic verses which **clearly condemn** lustful acts between the same genders.

007.081

"Indeed, you approach men lustfully (**shahwatan**) instead of women. Nay, you are a people transgressing beyond bounds (**musrifun**)"

027.055

"Why do you approach men with lust (**shahwatan**) instead of women? Nay you are a people ignorant!"

'Shahwah' means an intense yearning, longing or desire for a thing. It has an intense significance and is normally associated with something which is not commendable. It can be a reference to lust, carnal or gratification of venereal lust. It is also used to denote the kind of intense lust a man would normally have for a woman (3:14)

شهوة [mentioned above as an inf. n.] is a word of well-known meaning ; (Ş ;) *Desire, or longing, or yearning, of the soul for a thing*; (Er-Rághib, Mṣb, TA ;) [meaning *for a thing gratifying to sense : or eager, or intense, desire*; particularly *for such a thing*; for] it has a more intensive signification than إرادة; and the intelligent agree in opinion that it is not commendable: (M in art. فرس:) [being either *lawful or unlawful*, it may be rendered as above: or *appetite*: or *appetence*: or lust: or carnal lust:]

Source: Edward Lanes Lexicon [1]

The Quran recognises no institute of marriage other than that of a man and a wife. The Quran is replete with laws and multifaceted guidance to deal with such an institution. It clearly recognises homosexuality as a **transgression**. That is certainly the Quranic position.

One can either accept the Quran's testimony or reject it. There is no coercion in religion.

QURANIC PUNISHMENT

As noted in the clear verses above, the Quran deems homosexuality as a sinful transgression and an immorality (fahisha - 4:15-16).

In the case for **believers**, once proven, the Quran has not prescribed a particular punishment for an act of homosexuality and it is left for those in governance to decide the matter in accordance to their societal conditions and keeping in view the specifics of each case.

Verse 4:16 makes this clear.

004.016

"And as for the two of you (**Arabic: alladhani***) who are guilty of it, then punish both of them. But if they repent and amend, then let them be (turn away from them). Indeed! God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"

However, there are verses in the Quran which give guidance on punishments with regards to illicit liaisons. These should be noted for possible guidance.

[alladhani* - See note below at the end of the article]

With a view to address a common misconception, the punishment delivered to the community of Prophet Lot ^(pbuh) was not only due to their immoral sexual transgressions. This was only one factor. The community had transgressed all bounds and their illicit and immoral works had become fair seeming to them despite their warnings (29:34). They also committed highway robberies and conducted evil in their meetings (29:29).

They knew **full well** that their actions were 'impure' and 'immoral', yet they had no intention to mend their ways remaining defiantly disobedient. This is confirmed with the response they advanced to Prophet Lot. ^(pbuh)

007.082

"And his people gave no answer but this: they said, "Drive them out of your town: Indeed, these are a people who want to keep themselves pure (Arabic: yatatah'harun)"

ONE'S INCLINATION

Whether a particular inclination for a particular individual is 'innate', or otherwise, is **mute** from a Quranic perspective. Furthermore, unwarranted analogies between humans and the animal kingdom are also mute. God clearly sets out **boundaries** / limits (hudood) for believers to remain conscious of as **human beings**.

In a wider context from a Quranic perspective, during our short time on Earth we are granted certain resources, faculties, social connections etc. As each human remains unique, we are also a product of our physiology with certain inherent weaknesses and strengths. Furthermore, while we may think that much of what we possess constitute our strengths, they can also be a source of our challenges and present us with enhanced responsibilities.

Whatever we have been granted innately, or otherwise, they remain conduits for us to be trialled through.

One's wealth is an immense trial (2:155), our children, spouses and our health are a trial (8:28). One's beauty can be a trial (12:31-34), one's intellectual faculties can be a trial.

We shall all remain answerable for everything that has been granted to us including our faculties (17:36) which allows us **our ability to discern**. We can either succumb to our 'inclinations' for nothing but worldly gain and personal gratification, or we can combat them in a manner which makes us grow both spiritually and as better human beings.

091:007-10

"And a soul (Arabic: Nafsin) and Him Who perfected / proportioned it. And inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow (purifies it), and he is indeed a failure who corrupts it (buries it)"

If we do not possess certain inclinations, then the need to perform 'jihad' (struggle) with ourselves becomes obsolete and its purpose, meaningless. The very need for 'jihad' is to fight our inner self, our negative inclinations.

Humans are often placed into hardship.

090.004

"Certainly We have created man into toil / struggle hardship (Arabic: kabad)"

For example, anger is a trait and exists to varying degrees in different people. However, God instructs us to suppress it (3:134). How one responds to anger is intricately linked to the degree of their inclination. Only God can judge how far one has struggled to combat it given their abilities whilst remaining fully cognizant of God's guidance.

Holding grudges, inclination to backbite, inclination to be spiteful, to hold back the wealth that has been granted to one (niggard, miser) are all traits (whether acquired or innate) which exist in us to varying degrees. We can either combat them or succumb to them.

Similarly, sexual inclinations between men and women or towards each other also exist to varying degrees. Yet, God propounds multifaceted guidance to keep them within the laws that God has ordained so that one may not transgress into 'Fahisha' (lewdness). The inclination may remain, but our ability to perform 'jihad' potentially keeps it in check.

The greater one's inclination to do wrong, the **greater is their opportunity to perform 'jihad'** and seek spiritual growth. This responds to the very purpose of our existence on Earth which is to be trialled, to be tested.

We all have clear choices to make.

075.036

"Does man think that he will be left aimless / in vain / uncontrolled (without a purpose) (Arabic: Suda(n))?"

029.002

"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe", and that they will not be tested?"

047.031

"And We shall try you until We make evident those who strive among you and persevere in patience; and We shall test your affairs"

However, to mould or to reinterpret God's guidance without warrant, with a view to legitimise one's own worldview and bring it into the folds of societal acceptability or permissibility is another matter.

This amounts to nothing but deception and dishonesty. It also does little but props one's own desire against the guidance of God whilst committing gross injustice to God's revelations.

025.043

"Have you seen him who takes his desires (passion, impulse, lust) (Arabic: Hawahu) for his God (Arabic: Illahahu)? Will you then be a protector over him?"

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Quran deems homosexuality as a sinful transgression and an immorality (fahisha - 4:15-16). Whatever inclinations we may possess which stuns our spiritual growth, we must combat it with an inner struggle (jihad), seeking our strength and guidance from God. This sentiment is not limited to homosexual tendencies, but is applicable in the broadest sense, covering all areas of the human condition.

Believers should remain true to scripture at all times and deal with each other **in peace, with wisdom, understanding and collective responsibility.**

REFERENCES

[1] LANE. E.W, Edward Lanes Lexicon, Williams and Norgate 1863; Librairie du Liban Beirut-Lebanon 1968, Volume 4, Page 1614

Highlights marked in red on the lexicon excerpt are my own insertions. They have no bearing on the original text other than they emphasise relevance to the topic at hand. These are merely illustrations and have solely been utilised for educational and explanatory purposes.

NOTE

* In Arabic, when a **dual or plural** masculine form is used, this can denote a male group or a mixed gender group. In verse 4:16, the Arabic word used is '**alladhani**' which is a **masculine dual pronoun**. Albeit, this can refer to a mixed gender group (a male and a female), **it most likely** refers to **two men** in this context. This is supported by the context of the previous verse which refers to and addresses women (4:15). Furthermore, some assert the duality of verse 4:16 as a reference to 'two guilty parties' of 4:15. This is also implausible given the plural context of the guilty women in verse 4:15, the structure of the argument of the verse and the punishment instructed. Verse 4:16 is also very unlikely to be a reference to illicit heterosexual relationships as this matter is firmly dealt with in verse 24:2. Therefore, verse 4:16 with the use of the dual masculine pronoun is most likely a reference to **two men** which is **primarily** supported by context.

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