

Position of Islam on Homosexuality

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At a time when homosexuality and anal sex are forced by some sections of the society as something that ought to be accepted as natural, many wonder why Islam – as with other religions – so strongly disapproves of these. The brief response below sheds some light on this issue from an Islamic perspective.

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Anal Sex is forbidden in Islam

Engaging in anal sex is regarded in Islam as a despicable act that is most strongly prohibited. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said (its translation being), *“Verily, Allah is not shy from the truth; do not come to women in their buttocks.”* This hadith was collected by Ibn Majah, Ahmed, Baihaqi and others and is authentic. Other hadith with different wording with the same prohibition were collected by Nasa’ee, Ahmed and others with an authentic chain too. Both al-Albani and Ibn Hajar rahimahumallah classed these hadith as having an authentic basis to say the least.

But he is not a kafir...

As bad as this act is considered to be in Islam, a person who does this detested major sin is not regarded as a Kafir (disbeliever). A person who commits a sin being tempted while acknowledging it to be a sin is not regarded as a Kafir (certainly abiding in Hell forever) but rather a sinner (who is deserving of temporary punishment in Hell unless if Allah forgives).

When is a person regarded to be a kafir?

He would be a Kafir if he believed something that is undoubtedly prohibited in Islam to be permissible of his own accord. Even then, a person who may do something that is Kufir (disbelief) is not regarded as a Kafir until some criteria are met. These may include the person being aware and understanding that it makes him a Kafir and why it is so from the Quran and Sunnah and sayings of Scholars and so on. The person should not be forced nor have an interpretation (ta’weel) of seemingly sound but mistaken basis in Sharia or Arabic language and so on. So, not every person who may have done something of Kufir is a Kafir unless criteria such as these are met. Therefore, the Muslims are strongly advised to not declare someone a kafir even if he seems to be doing something or believing in a way that is kufir although they may regard what he is doing as kufir. This should be left to scholars who have the appropriate knowledge and authority to do that and it is not for anyone to declare people to be kafir. Otherwise, it can open doors to tremendous fitnah (tribulations) which many people may not fully realise.

Other things that make a person a kafir...

Besides regarding a clear halal to be haram of one’s own accord without a ta’weel, there are other forms of kufir too. A person, who doubts in any part of Quran or rejects it for example, or mocks at it or belittles it, these acts also make a person a kafir. However, the above criteria

and conditions should be remembered and the difference between someone doing kufr and being declared a kafir ought to be noted and appreciated. Also, it is not up to a lay Muslim to declare others to be kafir, rather it is for a scholar with the appropriate authority and sufficient information about the accused and not just any scholar.

Hadith declaring anal sex as kufr is kufr-un-ni'mah & not kufr out of Islam

The following hadith to do with anal sex may seem to a person to be declaring the perpetrator as a kafir whereas that is not so. Abu Hurairah related from the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him) that he said, *“Whoever came to a menstruating woman or a woman in her backside has indeed done kufr with that which was revealed on to Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be on him).”* This was collected by Abu Dawud, Nasa’ee, Tirmidhi, Darimi, Ibn Majah, Ahmed and others and is also an authentic hadith. In some of the narrations of this same hadith, the wording is instead, *“...he has indeed absolved himself from that which was revealed on to Muhammad.”*

The usage of the word kufr in this hadith and similar hadith with such manners of expressions is with the word kufr taken only in its literal meaning which is to imply denying or concealing the favours (kufrun-ni'mah) of Allah on him. Here kufr does not refer to its sharia law terminology that refers to a person out of the fold of Islam due to his denial of and concealing the reality of Allah and of Islam. See explanation of Manawi of this hadith in Faidul-Qadir where he gives this same explanation. He also added therein that had this hadith meant Kufr that takes the person out of the fold of Islam as opposed to Kufrun-ni'mah only, then the Prophet (may the peace and blessings be on him) would not have said in the other hadith that whoever came to his wife while she is menstruating pays a dinar or half a dinar (as an expiation to be forgiven for the sin) as there is no expiation for kufr that removes a person from Islam except to return to Islam by accepting the whole of Islam and declaring Shahadah once again. This hadith of expiation was collected by Abu Dawud and is authentic. This then consolidates the understanding that in the first hadith, about sex with a menstruating woman or anal sex, the word ‘kufr’ is referring to kufr of Ni'mah (favours) not kufr that takes a person out of the fold of Islam.

Homosexuality is more forbidden than anal-sex

Homosexuality incorporates the sin of anal-sex and worse. Homosexuality and what they do is regarded in Islam to be even more unnatural, despicable and detested than anal sex as it is anal sex and worse since it is with a person of the same sex and not with a wife. Homosexuality being of a worse nature was mentioned by Manawi in Faidul-Qadir. But again, it is not kufr if the person acknowledges it to be a sin and prohibited by Allah and does not regard it to be permissible; knowing that the scholars in history of Islam have agreed unanimously that it is forbidden and that too forbidden most severely in Islam. The Quran refers to homosexuality as a fahishah which is more than just a sin – an obscene detested one, *“And (remember) Lut, when he said to his people: “Do you commit the fahishah (worst obscene sin) such as none preceding you has committed in the worlds? Verily, you practice your lusts on men instead of women. Nay, but you are a people transgressing beyond bounds (musrifoon).”* [Quran Surah A'araaf 7:80-81]

**A perspective on why Islam denounces homosexuality;
And it is not genetically inherited...**

Allah created man and woman two different sexes and put a unique love and mercy in them for each other for various benefits to them and to mankind in general. One of these is for them to have children and for each of the two parents to offer to their child something exclusive of love, care and protection that Allah has bestowed in each of the two parents for the child's needs. In this way humans reproduce and generations after generations follow with children being reared by both parents, each with the special abilities that Allah has given to him/her, present in one and absent in the other and yet so desperately needed by the child for his physical, emotional and spiritual growth. Homosexuality clearly does not facilitate even as little as the conception of this life!

As for a Muslim, it is sufficient for him to know that his Creator, Who has more right on him than he himself, severely detests a homosexual act to be committed by anyone, as learnt from the Quranic verse quoted above [Quran 7:80-81].

The fact that Allah orders the homosexuals (as He did via Prophet Lut to the homosexuals in his place, Sodom) to repent and leave it, shows that homosexuality is something that is not compulsive brought upon them by their genes without a choice, but rather Allah's ordering them to stop shows that they are able to stop it if they wanted. If they couldn't have stopped this, Allah would not have ordered them to nor punished them for something not in their hands. But Allah referred to it as a *fahisha* (an obscenity and a sin) and the homosexuals as those having "*transgressing all bounds*," [Quran 7:80-81] i.e. they transgressed out of their own choice such that they can stop and they are not compelled genetically. This is an important point and an argument worthy of careful consideration by all Muslims in so far as this is not genetically unavoidable.

Even some contemporary non-Muslim scientists commented on the scientific findings that even a difference that may have been noted in the brain or physiology of some homosexuals is better explained as that physiological or anatomical difference having arisen as a **result** of their homosexual behaviour as opposed to it being a genetic **cause** of their sexual preferences of homosexuality. Thus even according to a number of non-Muslim scientists, there is no scientific basis either for claims that a person is genetically inclined. If anything, experience and observation suggest that it is a liking developed by the person due to personal circumstances (environmental influences) and of their own choice. The Quran is clear, as pointed out above, that a person has sufficient choice and ability to not be homosexual, although many often do not desist once they get caught in the vicious circle. Some amongst such people may then unashamedly infringe on the rights of other innocent people, especially young helpless boys.

Sound and practical nature of Islam

Truly all praise is for Allah – not a door did He shut (such as homosexuality) that would lead to extreme behaviour by prohibiting it in Islam, except that He left others (such as heterosexual marriage) wide open – paths that are balanced, upright and in conformity with the sound human nature that He Created us on, for a noble purpose.