

*The Quranic Position on Gender Identity
Homosexuality and...
Part 2: Homosexuality*



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surely all praise is due to Allah the Lord, Evolver, Maintainer of all that exists. He is the One Who taught (and teaches) the Quran and created the human being. He sent down the Book from His Own Presence so that He would cause us to move out of the darkneses into the Light. He is the Guide, Who guides whom He wills to the Straight Path. We glorify Him with praise, we ask him for all good and we seek refuge with Him from every evil. There is none to be worshipped except Him. Then, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

هَذَا بَلَّغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا بِهِ. وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ
أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

الرَّتِّكَ ءَايَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْءَانٍ مُّبِينٍ

رُبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

This is an important message directed to humanity that they will be warned by him (the message) and that they will know that, surely, He is a Single God and so that the possessors of deep understanding may be reminded. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 14: ayah 52)

Alif, Laam, Ra. These are the signs of the Book and a Noble Recitation, which is clear. Frequently those who disbelieved will wish they had submitted (to the will of Allah). (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 15: ayaat 1 – 2)

For the first time we are opening by using the end of a surah and connecting it with the beginning of the next. In addition to the important connection of thought, there is an example of the connection between two suwar, which is consistent throughout the Quran – sometimes quite obvious and other times needing close examination and thought.

As Allah describes the Quran as بَلَّغٌ, He tells us that there is a particular destination and purpose of this message. The destination is the human heart (see Surah 2: 97; Surah 26: 193 – 194) and the purpose is guiding (Surah 2: ayah 2), educating (Surah 14: ayah 1), warning, clarifying and bringing light on our journey back to Allah. When this Message reaches the heart, an awareness is meant to occur. The essence of this awareness or consciousness is the reality of the singularity (tauheed) of Allah. This awareness or clear realization leads one to pay attention to the warnings, accept the truths and give the self over to the guidance, that is to become an active, voluntary Muslim.

Commentaries

Study Quran: (Surah 14: 52) ... *people are meant to reflect deeply and ponder over the Quran's verses in order to understand the fact that He is the One God. This awareness will then cause them to worship Him truly and turn away from every kind of false god, such as the passing attractions of this world, their own caprices, or Satan.*

(Surah 15: 1 – 2) *A clear Quran denotes the Quran's ability to make known with clarity what is true as distinct from what is false.*

Homosexuality – Is It Acceptable?

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ
وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

Don't you see the one who takes his / her base desires as his / her god? And Allah left him / her astray without guidance according to a knowledge (He has) and He put a seal on his / her hearing and his / her heart and placed a veil on his / her vision. Then who can guide him after Allah? Will you not take heed? (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 45: ayah 23)

Commentaries

Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali: *If a man follows not the Laws of God, which are also the Laws of his own pure nature as made by God, but the desires of his own distorted self, as shaped by the rebellion of his will, the inevitable consequence will be the withdrawal of God's grace and guidance. All of his faculties will then be debased and there will be nothing to guide him, unless s/he turns in repentance to God.*

Study Quran: *The caprices that people are said to take as their god is defined as the inclination of the soul to passion and lust (shahwah) ... The inept person is the one who allows his soul to follow his caprice, yet hopes for God.*

Ibn Katheer: *One who takes his lust as his god is one who abides by his lust. Whatever his lust portrays as good he implements it and whatever his lust portrays as evil he abandon it!*

For the balance of the ayah, there are two meanings. One is that Allah knew this person deserves to be misguided, so He left him astray. The second meaning is that Allah led this person astray after knowledge reached him and the proof was established before him. The second meaning includes the first, but not the opposite.

The faculties are sealed so he does not hear what benefits him, understands not what would lead him to the guidance and sees not the evidence with which he can be enlightened. This is why Allah said, من يهديه من بعد الله

The root of *لوى* has in its meaning ‘to fall steep as a bird, pull down, yearn, inspire with low passion’. From this comes *tahwa* (desires) and *haawiyah* (lowest part of hell). The soul is capable of being brought low and base desires can be enlivened and fed by a number of sources – i.e. evil behaving companions, an immoral society, toxic foods, sexually explicit movies, magazines, TV shows, etc. But the soul is equipped with knowledge and ability to resist the call to evil. The soul has instinctual knowledge of right and wrong (see Surah 91: 7 – 8) and when put in a healthy environment and given encouragement to follow Divine Laws and guidance, will be likely to choose the right. However, as we see in history and in our own society, many whose lower desires are excited by some offering will follow what satisfies that appetite. The hunger for that grows and then a people can end up as did the people of Prophet Lut (as).

وَلُوْطًا اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ اَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَحِشَّةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ
 مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾
 اِنَّكُمْ لَتٰتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَاءِ ۗ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ
 مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
 وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ اِلَّا اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَخْرِجُوْهُمْ مِّنْ
 قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۗ اِنَّهُمْ اَنَاسٌ يَنْظَهَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾
 فَاَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَاَهْلَهُٓ اِلَّا اِمْرَاَتَهُۥ ۗ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰثِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾
 وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا ۗ فَاَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾

And one of constant sympathy (Lut), as he said to his people, “Are you committing flagrant immorality such as no one in all creation before you has done? Truly, you are taking men for your desires instead of women, Now you are a people steeped in sin.” And, the only response of his people was that they said, “Put them out of your city. Indeed they are individuals who keep themselves pure.” Then We saved him and his family, except his wife. She was of those left behind. And, We rained down upon them a mighty rain (of brimstone). So, see how is the end of those who cut off ties with Allah. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 7: ayaat 80 – 84)

First, let me explain the rendering of *لوطا* as “one of constant sympathy”. The verb *لوطا* means to have fixed or stable feeling of affection, caring and sympathy and to hold thoughts related to these feelings in one’s mind. As you read the story of Prophet Lut in various places in the Quran, you get a sense of this dominant aspect of his character.

Commentaries

Ibn Katheer: *Lut is the son of Haraan, the son of Azar (Terah) and he was the nephew of Ibraheem. He migrated with Ibraheem to the Sham area. Then, Allah sent him to the people of Sadum (Sodom) and the surrounding villages ... In this area, they did things that none of the children of Adam or any other creatures ever did before them. They used to have sexual intercourse with males instead of females. This evil practice was not known among the Children of Adam before. ...Indeed this behavior is evil and ignorant because you have placed things in their improper places.*

Abdullah Yusuf Ali: *The story of Lut is also in the English Bible (Genesis 19: 30 – 36). His story is biblical, but here is freed from some shameful features, which are a blot on the biblical narrative. The two Angels came as handsome, young men in the evening and stayed as guests for the night. The inhabitants of Sodom, in their lust for unnatural crime, invaded Lut's home but were repulsed. In the last hours of the night, the Angels warned Lut to escape with his family. Note that Lut's people are those to whom he was sent on a mission. He was not one of their own brethren.*

Their response (in ayah 82) is an instance of withering sarcasm that hardened sinners use against the righteous. They wound with words and follow up the insult with deeds of injustice.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed for their unspeakable sins. They cannot exactly be located, but it may be supposed that they are somewhere in the plain east of the Dead Sea (which is also called Bahr Lut).

The Study Quran: *Another report identifies Lut as Abraham's maternal cousin and as the brother of Ibraheem's wife, Sarah. Lut became a believer with Abraham and traveled with him to Syria. Then, he was sent to Sodom as messenger to her people.*

The indecency for which Lot chastises his people is that of men coming with desire unto men instead of women, understood by the traditional commentators to refer to the practice of homosexuality and sodomy specifically, a practice the verse indicates originated with the Sodomites.

The aggressive behavior of the men of Sodom in the Biblical account as well as in Surah 11: 78 – 79 and 15: 67 – 71, has led some to speculate that the real crime of the people of Lut was forcible sodomy, rather than consensual homosexual relations. However, the emphasis in Surah 7:81 and parallel accounts (26: 165 – 166; 27:55, etc.) is explicitly on the act of men desiring men instead of women.

What we have in these ayaat is the core of the story. There are other segments in seven other suwar with multiple ayaat given. Further references will be provided at the end of this writing, but we will not include all of the content in this study. Here, we have the Prophet, the people, the crime, the punishment and the saving of the righteous. Regarding this latter group, Allah says:

فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾
وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾

Then We didn't find in her (the city) more than one house of those submitting (to Allah). And We left in her a sign for those who fear the painful punishment. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 51: ayaat 36 – 37)

What is interesting to note about this story is that two major Prophets were involved and concerned about the people of Sodom, Ibraheem and Lut (as). Both, as Allah describes them, were kind hearted and forebearing. Following are ayaat regarding Prophet Ibraheem (as) as the Angels visited him with good news of a son, before proceeding on to visit Lut.

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبَشْرَىٰ يُجَادِلُنَا فِي قَوْمِ
لُوطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾
إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾
يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَذَا ۖ إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَاتِلْمُهُمْ عَذَابٌ
غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

Then when the reverent fear had left Ibraheem and the good tidings were given to him, he pleaded with us concerning the people of Lut. Indeed, Ibraheem was forebearing of faults, tender hearted, turning frequently (to Allah with sincere deeds and duah). ‘Oh Ibraheem, turn away from this. Surely the command of your Lord has come and, without doubt, there is coming to them a punishment that cannot be turned back. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 11: ayaat 74 – 76)

Further in this Surah, Allah says:

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا
حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ ﴿٨٢﴾
مُسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ وَمَاهِي مِّنَ الظَّالِمِينَ بِبَعِيدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾

Then, when Our command came, We made the elevated parts of her the lowest parts (reduced the city to rubble) and We rained down on her stones of hardened clay, reserved for this destruction, layer upon layer. Distinctly marked in the presence of your Guardian Evolver. And, she (this punishment) is not far off from the wrongdoers. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 11: ayaat 82 – 83)

There are many things to be studied here and needing careful consideration. Understand that we are only touching the surface for some general understanding. Homosexuality, here in the story of the people to whom Prophet Lut was sent, is given as sexual practice of men with men. It is not acceptable to Allah. It is a societal sin, which left unchecked spreads and intensifies in degrees of wrong and corruption of character. When those who engage in this activity do not turn back and restore their relationship with their Creator by following His laws and they allow their wrong to attract and attach others, the punishment of Allah is inevitable. In other words, this is a personal and social sin for which there is a punishment.

Commentaries

Study Quran: *It is said that the people of Lut lived in five or seven cities of which Sodom was the greatest. God caused Sodom to become completely overturned, making it the lowliest of the cities after it has been the greatest of them. The stones are referred to as “marked” (musawamatan), since it is believed that each stone had inscribed upon it the name of the person for whom it was intended.*

Abdullah Yusuf Ali: *If we take the words literally, they would mean that the showers of brimstones were marked with the destiny of the wicked as decreed by God. But, would it not be better to take them figuratively to mean that the shower of brimstones were especially appointed in God’s decree or plan to mark the punishment of the crimes.*

The individual punishment is found in Surah tun Nisaa’

وَالَّتِي يَأْتِيَنَّكَ الْفَاحِشَةُ مِنْ نِسَائِكَ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ
 أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى
 يَتَوَفَّيَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾
 وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنَّهَا مِنْكُمْ فَآذُوهُمَا فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا
 فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

And the ones who commit lewdness from among your women, let four from amongst you testify against them. And, if they testify, then confine them in the homes until death takes them or until Allah makes a way for them. And the two of you who commit the same sin, then inflict suffering on them both, Then, if they repent and make amends, then let them be. Surely, Allah is One Who turns (to His servants), Compassionately Responsive. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 4: ayaat 15 – 16)

Commentaries

Abdullah Yusuf ‘Ali: *Most commentators understand this (ayah 15) to refer to adultery or fornication; in that case, they consider the punishment was altered to 100 stripes by the latter*

verse Surah 24: 2. But, I think it refers to unnatural crimes between women, analogous to the unnatural crimes between men in 4: 16, which follows because (1) no punishment is specified here for the men, as would be the case where a man was involved in the crime. (2) the word 'allatee', the purely feminine plural is used for the parties to the crime. (3) the punishment is indefinite. To protect the honor of women four witnesses are required.

Study Quran: (ayah 16) The meaning of the “two of those among you” is debated. Most commentators and jurists consider it a reference to the male and female who commit an act of fornication or adultery. Some say that it specifically refers to unmarried fornicators ... Others suggest that since the pronoun and the verb are in the masculine dual form, it may refer to those guilty of a homosexual act between two men, sometimes adding that the previous verse (ayah 15) may refer to those guilty of female homosexual acts, but there is significant doubt about this interpretation.

I hope you have time to consider what has been said and have some opinions that you will share or questions that will generate some discussions. Certainly, I have withheld some of my own thoughts to be brought out, in shaa'a Allah, when we come together.

DU'A



My Evolver, grant me wisdom and join me with the righteous. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 26: ayah 83)