



Sexuality and Gender in Islam: A Faithful and Honest Response to LGBTQ Advocacy

Sexuality and gender are not matters of personal choice, but of divine design. This is the core belief that guides our understanding of human nature and morality as Muslims. We believe that Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, has revealed His will and wisdom to us through the Quran and the Sunnah of His Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him). We believe that these sources of guidance are the ultimate authority for determining what is right and wrong, what is beneficial and harmful, what is dignified and shameful, for ourselves and for humanity at large.

We acknowledge that we live in a diverse and pluralistic society, where people hold different views and values on sexuality and gender. We respect the freedom and dignity of every human being, regardless of their beliefs or practices. We do not seek to impose our beliefs on others, nor do we accept any imposition on our beliefs. We do not condone any form of violence, discrimination, or harassment against anyone, regardless of their sexual or gender identity.

We uphold the principles of justice, mercy, and compassion in our dealings with all people. However, we also assert our right to speak the truth as we understand it, and to uphold our values and principles as Muslims. We do not accept any attempt to silence, censor, or marginalize our voice in the public sphere. We do not agree with the claim that our moral stance on sexuality and gender is based on ignorance, prejudice, or hatred. We do not accept the accusation that our expression of our beliefs is a form of intolerance or bigotry. We do not consent to any policy or regulation that infringes on our religious rights and freedoms, or that undermines our parental authority and responsibility.

We invite you to read our statement below, which outlines our position on sexuality and gender ethics in Islam. We hope that this statement will clarify our views, dispel any misconceptions, and foster a constructive dialogue among all stakeholders. We ask you to approach this statement with an open mind and a respectful attitude, as we have done with yours. We believe that this is the best way to promote mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in our society.

The essence of Islam is to surrender to God wholeheartedly, willingly, and lovingly. God says, “No believing man or woman has any choice in their affairs when God and His Messenger have decided on a matter” (Quran, al-Aḥzāb:36). By surrendering to God, we acknowledge that only He has perfect knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, we accept that the ultimate foundation and criterion of morality is Divine guidance, not human reason or social trends. Islam has a rich legacy of jurisprudence that embraces diverse opinions and accommodates various cultural contexts.

However, certain principles that are clearly established in revelation, known to be essential components of Islam, and unanimously affirmed by qualified scholars are considered fixed and not subject to change by anyone or anything, including the highest religious authorities. As God declares, “The word of your Lord is complete, in truth and justice. No one can change His words. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing” (Quran, al-An‘ām: 115).

God has ordained that sexual relations are allowed only within marriage, and marriage is only possible between a man and a woman. The Quran clearly forbids sexual relations with the same sex (see, for example, Quran, al-Nisā’: 16, al-A‘rāf: 80–83, and al-Naml: 55–58). Also, Islam bans sex before or outside marriage. God says, “Stay away from fornication. It is a shameful act and a bad way [to live]” (Quran, al-Isrā’: 32). These aspects of Islam are firmly established in the Quran, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and a long tradition of scholarship over fourteen centuries. They have reached the level of religious agreement (ijmā‘) and are accepted as essential parts of the faith by all Muslims.

God created humans as males and females and said that He “... made [humans] from a male and a female and formed [them] into nations and tribes so that you may get to know one another” (Quran, al-Ḥujurāt: 13; see also al-Najm: 45). Islam confirms that men and women are equally valued by God, even though they have different features and roles. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) called women equal partners of men. But, he (peace be upon him) clearly opposed copying the look of the opposite gender. Moreover, God asks humans to respect His wisdom in creation (see, for example, Quran, al-Nisā’: 119). Therefore, as a general rule, Islam strictly forbids medical operations meant to change the sex of healthy people, no matter if such operations are called gender “affirming” or “confirming.”

For people born with unclear sex, such as disorders of sexual development, Islam allows them to seek medical help for fixing reasons. Islam makes a difference between feelings, actions, and identity. God judges people by their words and actions, not by their unwanted thoughts and feelings. As our Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “God has forgiven Muslims for what they think, as long as they do not say or do it” (Bukhari, 2528). In Islam, the wrong actions of a person do not and should not define his or her identity.

So, it is not allowed for Muslims to be proud of identifying with names that label them by their sins. It is important to note that Islam’s position on unlawful sexual relations goes together with its support and respect for the person’s right to privacy. Islam forbids spying on others’ private lives and discourages public exposure of sexual behavior (see, for example, Quran, al-Ḥujurāt: 12 and al-Nūr: 19). Some religious groups have changed or updated their religious teachings to include LGBTQ views.

The Muslim community is not free from such pressures. In fact, some have tried to change Islamic texts to agree with LGBTQ views. We strongly reject such attempts as religiously wrong because these aspects of sexual ethics belong to the category of unchangeable principles and are therefore not open to change.

We understand that our moral code clashes with the aims of LGBTQ advocates. We also respect their constitutional right to live in peace and free from harm. However, we stress our God-given and constitutional rights to hold, follow, and share our religious beliefs in the best way (Quran, al-Naḥl: 125) without fear of legal backlash or systematic exclusion. Peaceful coexistence does not require agreement, approval, endorsement, support, or celebration.

We reject the false dilemma between giving in to social pressures to adopt views opposed to our beliefs or facing baseless accusations of bigotry. Such forceful demands threaten chances for peaceful coexistence. We urge policymakers to safeguard our constitutional right to practice our religious beliefs freely, without fear of intimidation, and to resist any legislation seeking to suppress the religious freedoms of faith communities. We are dedicated to working with individuals of all religious and political backgrounds to protect the constitutional right of faith communities to live by their religious principles and to maintain justice for all.

We call on Muslim public figures to honor the purity of our faith and avoid making false statements in the name of Islam. We oppose any attempt to assign views to Islam regarding sexual and gender ethics that go against well-known Islamic teachings. To be clear, we cannot emphasize enough the harmful spiritual effects for those who deliberately reject, support the rejection of, or distort the will of God, as in doing so they risk their status as believers (Quran, al-An'ām: 21). To those among us who struggle with desires that cross the limits set by God: know that even the most pious can make mistakes and that every Muslim, no matter how sinful, has the chance to be forgiven.

Practicing self-control in devotion to God is regarded as noble. Its spiritual reward grows with the level of struggle involved. Our ultimate goal is to put devotion to God above our desires and not give up our faith. We pray to God to give us the needed strength and firm commitment to fulfill our ideals. May we find inner peace and happiness through willing submission, and may God consider us worthy of being among the believers, the most noble of titles.