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LGBTQ: Some Islamic Perspectives

Cosmic Duality/Pairs

Sanctity of Marriage

- Marriage, between **a man and woman**, is sacred. It is the foundation-stone of society.
- The institution of marriage is firmly protected and safeguarded in Islam.
- Allah's creation is of cosmic duality: **51:49 "And We created everything in pairs that you may reflect."** This includes examples such as the sun and the moon, the day and night... and the male and the female; sacred pairs.



Sexual Intimacy



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- Muslims **do not see sex as a sin**; rather it is viewed as an act of worship within the sanctity of marriage.
- Rasool Allah (saw) encouraged couples to enjoy intimacy as an expression of worshipping God.
- Contrast this to the Christian West historically, with a tension between procreation and desire/enjoyment.
- Even after the Enlightenment, sex has remained an area to be scientifically studied in the West; analysed and labelled (note the modern identity movements). This is not the case in many cultures where labels and identities are not so scrutinised and applied.

Sexual Orientation: Fluidity of Desire and Attraction

- Muslims centre God and God's laws in life.
- As developing brains grow, sensitivity to hormones, sexual desire and orientation can be fluid and change. Feelings and thoughts may be in flux.



Sexual Orientation



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In Islam, our thoughts do not necessarily define us.
Instead, we are defined by our intentions and actions.

Muslims differentiate between **SSA** (same sex **attraction**) and **SSE** (same sex **experience**).

Same Sex Attraction is a **feeling, a desire** – and you are not held accountable for your feelings and desires, so long as you try to manage them - don't delve in them.

In fact, your thoughts and feelings, anything that goes on in your mind that is opposed to Islam and you try to manage: is a struggle that you are blessed & rewarded for.

As developing brains grow + sensitivity to hormones → **sexual desire can be fluid**

- Islam: we are not held to account for **thoughts** and desires as we are with actions.
- Certain sexual **acts** (zina, liwat, sihaq), **not desires** are prohibited.
- Tackling thoughts/feelings that conflict with Islam, is a personal struggle. **SSA v SSE**

Terms 'Homosexuality' and 'Heterosexuality' are modern (1869)

Essentialised

Thoughts → Behaviours → Identity

I am my thoughts → Identity label

VERSUS

Non-Essentialised paradigm:

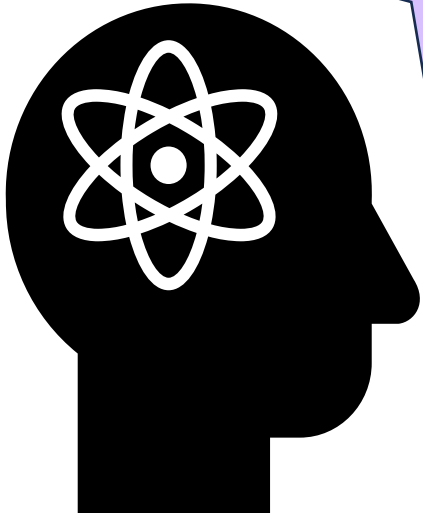
“I am not my thoughts. They do not define me. I am not identified by my thoughts.”

Modern view: **Thoughts + Behaviours + Desires + Actions have ALL been squashed into one identity label, e.g. 'gay'.**

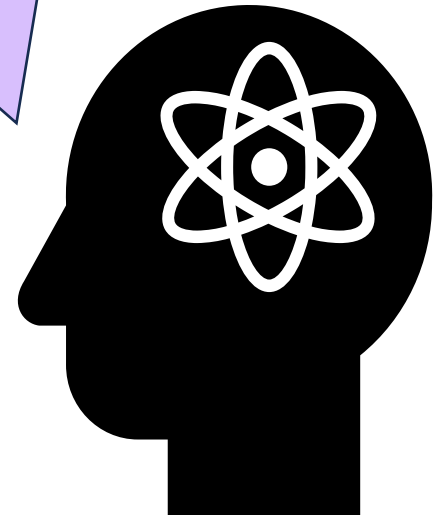


To be true to myself I need to act out my thoughts and desires → identity labels which promote a certain lifestyle.

My thoughts do not define me. My actions are what really count. I will live in accordance with my faith. I will find support, sustenance and forgiveness in my Creator and a compassionate community.



Current Ideological Gap



Postmodernism



Post-modernity has led to:

- **A loss of identity**, leading to a preoccupation with defining ourselves. Contrast this with **the ambiguity and openness enjoyed by many Muslim and Eastern cultures** e.g. men holding hands in public, and not defining the self by thoughts and feelings.
- **Individualism** being prioritised over family and community.
- **An age of 'feeling' and self identification** with religion and tradition being seen as barriers to self discovery. The mantra of 'Be your authentic self!' is a modern mantra.

Sexual Orientation: in Muslim societies



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- The **labels** 'Homosexuality' and 'Heterosexuality' as identities are modern (1869)
- Muslims/many cultures have not used identity labels for sexual orientation/desires. **Having same sex desire is not seen as a defining criteria in terms of an identity label.**
- Many Muslim countries only legally outlawed homosexuality after being colonised.
- Only certain sexual acts (zina, liwat, sihaq), **not desires**, are described as prohibited/haram.
- Islam teaches that **everyone has a right to their private life** and what remains behind closed doors is private.
e.g. it is not lawfully Islamic to spy on people so as to find evidence to arrest them.
- **Here lies an ambiguity/openness that is protected in Muslim society.**

Sexual Orientation: Qur'anic quotes



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- The Quranic narrative of Prophet Lot AS appears on 9 occasions; 6 mention male-male sexual acts
- 7:80-81 '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.'"

'innakum la-ta'tuna 'rijala shahwatam min dunin'nisa'
(‘you approach men lustfully instead of women’).
- 26:165-166 'Do you approach males among the worlds. **And leave what your Lord has created for you as mates?** But you are a people transgressing.'
- Through the story of Prophet Lot, there is a scholarly **consensus** outlawing the act of homosexuality.

Theology

Qur'anic
verses
mentioned
earlier

Difference between Same Sex Attraction and Same Sex Experience

Hadith, Bukhari "Allah forgives my Ummah for
the evil deeds their souls may whisper or suggest
to them as long as they do not act on it or
speak."

Legal Aspect

Sexual Orientation is a
protected characteristic
under the Equality Act
Direct Discrimination
Indirect Discrimination
Harassment

Homosexuality

Muslim Societies in the Past

Suspicion + spying are
not allowed.
Colonial laws based on
Christian values brought
harsher laws.

Identity Politics

Identity labels and
lobbying are new,
Western, liberal
phenomena.

Freedom to Speak

As LGBTQ+ has become a matter
of identity, it may seem that
people of faith speaking against
the act is abusing the person, but
this is often not the case.