

## **Role of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in Protecting the Institution of Family Today**

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### **Abstract**

*The family is the cornerstone of human society regardless of location, race, color or belief. It is the axis around which various human and social interactions revolve. Thus, all divine religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - give special attention to the rules related to the family entity in order to ensure its efficiency and continuation. However, today's family is facing many challenges which target the legitimacy of its existence. Across the globe, many deviant trends have emerged, at odds with everything revealed in the divine religions. Such trends have started to shake the foundations of this basic unit of human life, and threaten its cohesion and continuance. The request to legitimize homosexuality, or the so-called marriage between same sex couples, is one of the major challenges threatening the family unit in Western societies nowadays. This paper examines the role of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in protecting the family in general against various challenges including the legitimization of homosexuality. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) played a vital role in protecting the institution of family through the practicing teachings of Islam.*

**Keywords:** Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), Family, Challenges, Homosexuality

### **Introduction**

The Islamic concept of family stems from its primary creed of belief in One God as the Creator and sustainer of the Universe. Islam looks at the humans to be a part of God's creation, and as His subjects. From an Islamic perspective, the aim of human life is to worship God, by conducting this worldly life in harmony with the Divine Will, and thereby accomplish serenity in this world, and everlasting success in the life of the time to come. Muslims anticipate the Glorious Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet as their family guides.

However, the institution of family today is facing many challenges which target the legitimacy of its existence. Across the globe, many deviant trends have emerged, at odds with everything revealed in the divine religions. Such trends have started to shake the foundations of this basic unit of human life, and threaten its cohesion and continuance. The request to legitimize homosexuality, or the so-called marriage between same sex couples, is one of the major challenges threatening the family unit in Western societies nowadays. This paper examines the role of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in protecting the family in general against various challenges including the legitimization of homosexuality. The decline in ethical standards and poor parenting are playing essential role in these challenges. A lack of a moral compass, along with an increasing emphasis on materialistic goals are opening the doors to the decline of the family. Nevertheless, Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) played a vital role in protecting the institution of family through the implementing of moral values within the family. This can be done through developing in awareness of these challenges among parents and youth in accordance with the prophetic value system. Muslim families are in desperate need of rectifying their lived reality, to eliminate this estrangement between the theory and the reality. As life of Prophet Mohammad is exemplary, this study deduced

recommendations from his life in protecting the family from certain challenges such as Homosexuality.

However, combination of contracts in a single deal has been controversial among the Muslim jurists as it apparently contradicts with the explicit notion of the Prophetic narrations (*ahadith*) that prohibit two contracts in one agreement. Pertinent to the combination of multiple contracts in one agreement, notably three narrations have been reported from the Prophet (SW). As reported, the Prophet (SW) prohibited combination of sale and loan (*bay' wa salaf*) in one agreement (al-Sijistani 2009, al-Tirmizi 2007, al-Nasa'i 1999, Ibn Majah 2011, Ibn Hanbal 2003 & Ibn Anas 2005b). Also, as reported, the Prophet (SW) prohibited (*bay'atan fi bay'ah*) two sales in one sale (al-Tirmizi, al-Nas'i, Abu Daud & Ibn Anas 2005b). Additionally, in another *hadith* the Prophet (SW) prohibited (*safqatan fi safqah*) two agreements in one agreement (Ibn Hanbal, al-Bazzar 2009, al-Tabrani).

Thus, this effort undertakes to investigate the shari'ah status of combination of contracts in one deal. Achieving this, the study strives to figure out the real notion of the *ahadith* that prohibit the combination of two contracts in one contract. The paper analyses the Muslim (*fuqaha*) jurists' interpretations of these *ahadith* and highlights the difference between lawful and unlawful combination of contracts in one agreement.

The upcoming section of the paper reviews the relevant literature which includes the Muslim Jurists' (*fuqaha*) interpretations and opinions on the Prophetic narrations (*ahadith*) related to the combination of two contracts in agreement, followed by another section on methodology of the paper. The fourth section of the paper discusses the legal ruling and parameters of combination of the contracts. This section also provides a discourse on valid and invalid combination of contracts in a single deal. The last section of the paper contains concluding remark and future direction of the study.

### **Historical Background and View of Divine Religions on the threat of Homosexuality**

The position on this crime is very similar among all the divine religions. All have precise and integrated statutes to define lawful versus illicit relationships. All divine religions agree that all forms of homosexuality are prohibited, and prescribe different forms of punishment for the offenders. Such crimes bring the wrath of the Lord and texts in divine books show that the spread of homosexuality in prior nations was the cause for their extinction.

In Judaism<sup>i</sup>, thirty six sins are considered heinous among which are adultery and homosexuality. These sins are punishable by death by stoning, strangulation, or decapitation. Moreover, there are 207 pardonable sins among which is incest which is punishable by flogging. The Book of Leviticus says:

“Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity

thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God.”

In Christianity, this crime is heinous in both the Old and New Testaments. The Epistle to the Romans says:

“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness...”

Nevertheless, distorted interpretations began to seep into these divine texts. People who introduced such misinterpretations were affected by the philosophies of certain eras, and by the studies which emerged from time to time to propagate, justify, and legitimize such aberrant activities, which violate all human and religious values.

One of the most prominent philosophies in this regard is the Biblical Criticism Methodology. This philosophy originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the research centers of German universities. Thence, it spread out to the countries of Western Europe, and then to the United States<sup>ii</sup>. The objective of this study was the investigation of biblical writings of the Old and New Testaments in order to judge their authenticity. These efforts which started out as authentication efforts concluded by stating that the Old and New Testaments were human documents containing contradictions and echoes of ancient historic incidents of nations with epochal particularities, and that they were not divine texts by any means.

The founder of the philosophy of Biblical Criticism was Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). The common belief among the philosophers of Biblical Criticism on the Old Testament is that it was not written by Moses but was a set of cumulative traditions which were documented at different times in history.

The impact of this philosophy was clearly felt when the Reformist Jewish Movement announced its rejection of Mosaic and Rabbinic laws, including the Revelation and all related scriptures. This was due to the influence of prevalent philosophies of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Biblical Criticism. From that point onward, the Reformist Jewish Movement viewed their holy texts as historical accumulations; and the Holy Book as an outcome of cumulative historical events<sup>iii</sup>, not as a revelation sent directly from Heaven.

This led to a change in viewpoint on homosexuality. The movement introduced new interpretations for various legislative holy texts in an attempt to view homosexuality from a historical narrative perspective and not as a crime incurring the wrath of God.

In due course, the Reformist Jewish Movement accommodated homosexuals, and believed that their existence was a cause for strengthening familial bonds in Judaism. Moreover, they believed that legitimizing gay marriage did not threaten the traditional family, or the sacred concept of reproduction and procreation in Judaism.

“Welcoming gay and lesbian families into the synagogue will strengthen all our families, by bringing the exiles home and by reuniting children, parents and siblings who have been forced to keep their partners and innermost lives hidden. Kelal Yisrael is strengthened when we affirm that there can be more than one way to participate in the Covenant”.

Therefore, the rabbis of the largest Reformist Jewish community in the United States voted for legitimizing gay marriages in their Central Conference for American Rabbis. As of 1995 the movement began to approve the appointment of gay rabbis.

The Conservative movement emerged in 1886 in an attempt to establish a middle ground between the Reformist and Traditional Movements. It announced its full commitment to the inherited rabbinic traditions while reserving the right to interpret the Mosaic Law in accordance with the changing requirements and conditions.

This direction is reflected in the Conservative view on the traditional family versus gay marriage.

Conservatives believe that the legislative texts which prohibit homosexuality were authentic teachings to be followed. However, they believe that texts should be considered within the historical and social framework in which they originated. Thus, the outcome of modern scientific research which claims that homosexuality is an uncontrollable biological process can, absolutely, alter such interpretations!

“As a Conservative Jew, I believe that Halakha (normative Jewish law) is binding. The Conservative Movement, however, understands the traditional Halakhic sources (Bible, Talmud, etc.) as products of different historical ages- which are often very different from our own age! Deciding what is Halakhically permissible is not only a matter of reading the texts, but also understanding the social/cultural contexts in which they developed”.

Notwithstanding the above, Orthodox Jews and many Conservatives still believe that the inherent concept of the family, which is based on the relationship between man and woman, is the one and only legitimate family concept, and that preserving it is a prerequisite for the survival and continuance of the human race. They view homosexuality as a deviation from human instinct, a threat to the family as an entity, and a disobedience to the Lord who has decreed reproduction, procreation, and respect for the inherent marital relationship between man and woman.

“Homosexuality destroys the individual's ability for ontological fulfillment in the Halakhic world.... frustrates the divine intent of procreation; undermines the family; and is biologically and anatomically unnatural.... Homosexuals should be viewed as patients rather than criminals. As a result, psychological assistance must be extended to those who cannot avoid homosexual desire”.

The New Testament was subjected to a similar authentication process. Rudolf Bultmann, Samuel Sandmill and others stated that the Bible was a set of diverse narratives and legends without resonance in the reality of history.

The influence of this philosophy was reflected in many areas, most prominent of which was the view on the family unit and on the prohibition of homosexuality. Now statutes on aberrant sexual compartment could be re-interpreted, critiqued, or re-considered in a new socio-historical context.

Although both Catholics and Protestants believe in the Bible, and the importance of preaching its words to the whole world, the influence of Biblical Criticism has steadily been increasing among reformists who do not view the Old and New Testaments as sacred revelations, but as inherited traditions. Accordingly, the Holy Book has lost its status as the absolute and indisputable word from heaven.

The views of Christian Reformists on gay marriage resemble those of Jewish Reformists. They also try to critique and re-interpret legislative texts which prohibit homosexuality in the Holy Books. They support the idea of reading these texts within their socio-historical context. Thus, they perceive the terrible end of the people of Lot as a punishment for their cruelty and ill-treatment of others, and not as retribution from God for their homosexual activities and deviation from the pure human instinct.

**Under the title: Understanding the Bible in a New Way, we see:**

"There are at least two important things to keep in mind when reading the Bible. First, you must always consider its context. In order to understand any writing (whether it be a letter, a speech, or even the Bible) it is necessary to understand its background. Think about who is speaking, to whom it is addressed, why it written, and what the culture was like. In the case of Scripture, the cultural and social context of Biblical times was very different from our own".

Before 1973, homosexuality was classified as a mental disorder in the Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; the major source for diagnosing mental disorders in the United States and most other countries. However, pressure from gay groups resulted in the formation of a committee to review the language of the Manual. People who believed homosexuality was a mental disorder were excluded from the committee. Thus, in record time and bypassing many of the common legal channels, an unprecedented decision was taken to remove homosexuality from the classification of mental disorders in the Manual. The Manual still included a case known as eco-dystonic homosexuality which is defined as dissatisfaction of a person with his own sexual tendencies to a degree which causes severe psychological suffering. Shortly afterwards, even this isolated case was removed from the Manual!

Moreover, homosexuals started lobbying, through their organizations and associations, for recognition of their marriage contracts. Their idea was to portray the gay marriage as an acceptable alternative form of marriage or even as a substitute for normal marriage, and to present a new definition for the family. Committing the sin openly and without shame wasn't enough; they wanted their aberrant relationships to become the social norm. They demanded all the rights of marriage including inheritance rights, tax discounts, services, and even the ability to adopt children... Although these were mere wishes up until recently, many of them are coming to realization in some Western countries where Constitutions are changed to allow and bless these anomalous unions.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2003, the Vatican issued a document re-asserting the position of the Catholic Church on homosexuality and warning the world about the consequences of legitimizing homosexual marriages. It also emphasized the danger of giving credence to ideologies that threaten the normal family structure and equate the relationship between homosexuals with the normal relationship between man and woman... Pope John Paul II has persistently defended traditional marriage in the face of demands for recognition of homosexual marriage in the United States and Europe. Yet, the influence of homosexuals in Western societies is very strong and growing and claims for legislation of civil union laws for homosexuals in Western countries are on the rise.

Dr. James Dobson, the famous American writer, commented on the danger of homosexuality on the familial entity in his “State of the American family report” published in 2000, when he said:

“It is attempting to destroy the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman. If homosexuals are successful in that effort, then marriage will lose its meaning. If marriage is not exclusively between one man and one woman, then any combination of temporary relationships could qualify, such as two men and three women. Polygamy itself would be legal. In short, if marriage now means everything, then ultimately it will mean nothing. Second, homosexual activists have targeted children and youth with the objective of capturing their hearts and minds. Our public schools in California and Massachusetts, in particular, appear to be moving relentlessly in that direction. In some curricula, children are taught that homosexual behavior is acceptable and normal and that moral perspectives are hate-filled and bigoted. We must be diligent to oppose those initiatives’.

Specialists confirm that the youth of today are expressing their need for security and their opposition to the domination of materialism, through their drug dependency, complex issues, and aberrant behavior. This could very possibly be a result of the collapse of the family institution and its related support systems.

The famous writer, Henrietta Moore, portrays the many aspects of the moral and social crisis in Western societies as reflected in the increasing divorce rates, familial disintegration, homosexuality, drug abuse, and suicide among youths. She says:

“Historians and social scientists have documented many instances in different societies at various times of what they term "moral panic". These moments of crisis in what are perceived as deeply rooted and firmly held cultural and social values have often occurred in periods of transition and rapid social change. The extent to which such crises accurately reflect changing circumstances is questionable, since they often appear to be part of a response to change rather than an instigator of it. However, it is clear that many countries and communities at the present time sense their social and cultural values to be under threat from a diverse range of social, economic and political changes that appear both interconnected and global in their spread”.

“We have sensed for a long time that the traditional family is in serious trouble, and the recent Census revealed just how dire the situation has become. The alarming results show that households headed by unmarried partners (most of them involving people living together out of wedlock) grew by almost 72 percent during the past decade. Households headed by single fathers or mothers increased by 25 percent and 62 percent respectively, and for the first time ever, nuclear families dropped below 25 percent of households. Thirty-three percent of all babies were born to unmarried women, compared to only 3.8 percent in 1940. Other studies show that cohabitation increased by

close to 1,000 percent from 1960 to 1998, and that households headed by same-sex couples are soaring. We are also seeing a growing number of unmarried women in their 20s and 30s who are choosing to bear and raise children alone”.

Several years ago, Prince Charles expressed the growing concern of the West for this deteriorating situation, when he said:

“Modern materialism has caused a great crises in the life of the individual and the community. It lacks the element of balance which is necessary for establishing a normal consistent integrated life. In the Western world, a dangerous division has occurred in the way we perceive the universe, the environment and our responsibility towards God’s creation. In order to comprehend the inherent perception of our existence and our mission on earth, we may seek help from the Islamic heritage which preserves this integrated, spiritual view of the world and the human being. We can also benefit from this great heritage in enhancing our view of the regency of Man on Earth... Science and technology have become increasingly separated from ethical, moral and sacred considerations..... the Message of Islam, is important for the West as it preserves an integrated view of the universe...”

The result, in many countries, eventually led, among other things, to (1) the repeal of sodomy laws that criminalized homosexuality; (2) the enactment of laws protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in society and the workplace; (3) the ability of LGBT personnel to serve openly in the military; (4) marriage equality and civil unions in an ever growing number of countries; (5) the facilitation of gay parents’ adoption rights; (6) the easing of gay spouses’ rights of inheritance; and (7) an ever increasing number of religious denominations that would allow openly gay people to serve as clergy.

Most importantly, in medicine, psychiatry, and other mental health professions, removing the diagnosis from the DSM led to an important shift from asking questions about “what causes homosexuality?” and “how can we treat it?” to focusing instead on the health and mental health needs of LGBT patient populations.

Today, there are calls for the imposition of Western culture in Islamic countries through all methods of cultural and economic dominance. This was clearly stated in a number of international events such as: the Conference of Population in Cairo 1994, and the Women’s Conference in Beijing 1995. Muslim Societies have to understand their role in protecting the institution of Family which is strongly based on moral values. They have to study the efforts of the noble Prophet (PBUH) in this regard, which were well-organized, wisely planned and balanced.



## **Quran and Life of Prophet as a source of Moral Values**

Morality and religion are interlinked to some extent. Most religions have value frameworks regarding individual behavior intended to lead followers in deciding between good and bad. These include the Triple Jems of Jainism, Judaism's Halacha, Islam's Sharia, Catholicism's ecclesiastical law, Buddhism's octuple Path, and Zoroastrianism's "good mutations, good words, and good deeds" concept, among others.

Muslims have firm belief in Allah and His words (Quran), and in its standards. According to Muslims belief, Allah unequivocally outlined their moral values, which are practiced by the Prophet (PBUH).

When examining the story of Lot's people, as mentioned in Sūrat Al A'rāf, it is noticed that the Sūrah did not start with calling for monotheism; rather, it began with the following statement: "And (We sent) Lot, (and recall) when he said to his people, Do you commit such abomination (of sodomy) as is unprecedented and unsurpassed in the whole world?" (Al A'rāf: 80).

Al-Beqā'ī says about this: "He changed this method in the story of Lot because one of the greatest purposes of telling these stories is to comfort the Prophet - peace be upon him - as his people contradicted him, did not reply to his call and hurt him severely, and to warn his people that there may befall them the like of that calamity which befell former peoples. The stories of peoples other than the people of Lot are similar to that of Quraysh with regard to associating anyone or anything with Allāh in worship and maligning His believing servants. As for the story of the people of Lot, it has another terrible heinous shameful humiliating element, namely: sodomy. So, He changed the method as a warning of its heinousness and outrageousness to comfort the prophet more."

In fact, the issue of monotheism presented by Sūrat Al A'rāf and other Sūrahs of the Qur'ān in general is not a theoretical issue far from addressing the real life with its problems and crises. Monotheism awakens the true faith in man's heart and motivates him to do good deeds. There is a clear correlation between monotheism and the fruit of monotheism, which is the good deeds. There is no doubt that this obscene heinous crime was committed by the people of Lot such as no people in creation ever committed before them. They were the leader and forerunner in inventing and committing lewdness and sodomy which is obscene, hateful, heinous and contrary to human nature. Also, the call to monotheism includes forbidding the perpetration of evil and the making of mischief. So, Lot says to his people directly: "Do you commit such abomination (of sodomy)?"

This heinous lewdness is as disgraceful as a devastating moral drain inflicting a person. Just as stopping bleeding is a top priority for the treating physician, addressing the abomination of sodomy ranks at the top of the priorities of the noble Prophet Lot, peace be upon him. He provides human societies with a model for treating such a moral drain devastating all principles and elements of human nature.

Homosexuality is deprived of all meanings of human nature and is profoundly destructive of the institution of family that fosters children.

Adopting the method of the Holy Qur'ān in treatment of such indecencies and using words appropriate to the situation, the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him, identified the problem in a very kind and lofty manner without outrage of human modesty, which is an important Quranic requirement and purpose.

When the answer of the people of Lot is read along with the human reality today, it becomes clear that purity, chastity, integrity and adherence to the innate primitive approach may turn under the pressure of abnormal groups in society into an offence punishable by exile and deportation. "His people had no reply to make but that they said (to one another), Turn them (Lot and his followers) out of your township, for they are a people who show off to be pure." (Al A'rāf: 82).

Humanity today marks the peak of material and technical urbanization; however, it is ravaged by the shameful and scandalous affliction of homosexuality to the extent that it is forcibly imposed on societies by different organizations. Meaning, these organizations have their powerful voices heard at the highest levels and impose their agenda for promoting this lewd and lascivious behavior in different societies. Homosexuality has become a matter of personal liberty defended by human rights.

Historically, the matter of homosexuality and sodomy is clearly considered a crime in the divine books such as the Bible and the Torah, and even in the human laws in near recent times in Europe and the United States of America. However, it is well-known that those people have turned away from their divine books and regarded them as mere historical legends and stories. When this issue was first talked about, it was considered as a disease. The inflicted person goes to psychiatric clinics to be treated as a psychiatric patient. How does such a bunch of people manage to transform and change the values of the global human community, and make their abnormality, aberration, offense and contradiction to human nature an acceptable reality with defensible rights?! When those people demand their rights, they definitely do not say, "Drive all the opponents of this heinous crime out of your city; (these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!)" They will never use such words, but rather will use other words such as lack of respect for human rights.

A person, organization or institution that stands in the way of these perverse deviants will be referred to as people who do not recognize or protect human rights. They regard homosexuality and sodomy as a legitimate right for them. So, they will not use this Quranic term: "these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!". The Holy Qur'ān shows the facts as they are. Hence, one of the methods of promoting this crime was to use the word "marriage", which is a legitimate contract known to all human societies, and has a well-known form that befits the humanity of man. The matter has reached the point where some churches in many European countries now recognize this "marriage" and solemnize it as well, which is a blatant violation and challenge to the values of religion and humanity. Hence, one of the greatest means of treating this disease is enjoining good and forbidding evil, which is one of the major rituals of this great religion.

Muslims as individuals, communities and institutions are required to fulfill this role in protecting the family and society. Al-Gazālī, may Allāh have mercy on him, says in this regard: "Enjoining good and prohibiting evil is the basic subject of religions. It is such a necessity for which all the Prophets were sent to the world. Had it been closed, prophethood would have been meaningless,

religions lost, idleness reigned, ignorance spread, disturbance prevailed, dangers and calamities appeared and mankind destroyed. Regretfully, what we feared has happened. So, verily we belong to Allāh, and verily to Him do we return. This basic subject of religions has vanished and is no more considered or practiced. The hearts are, in fact, permeated with flattering others and heedless of observing Allāh, the Creator. People follow their evil inclinations and lusts like beasts. It is hardly ever to find a faithful believer who does not let the fear of blame stop him from carrying out the command of Allāh. So, whoever strives for combating such idleness and curing such deficiency, puts the said subject into effect, and revives this neglected sunna, for such shall be the highest degrees and exalted ranks.”

The Holy Qur’ān has described those who commit this crime as “extravagant” and “guilty” people. These two descriptions in this context indicate the magnitude of this crime. According to some interpreters, extravagance (Isrāf) refers to spending on forbidden things and indicates that this heinous crime is a disease that must be faced in society. Lot - peace be upon him - was a messenger, a prophet, but there was no one on his side and he faced a society where corruption and obscenity were endemic.

Also, the great number of people who commit an act of crime and fall into obscenity does not make what is forbidden permissible: “Say, Verily, My Lord has forbidden all acts of indecency, open and hidden”. This is one of the most terrible obscenities that have been ever committed in different societies.

The source of legitimacy of an act is known by what is prescribed by Allāh Almighty, The All-Knowing, the All-Aware. Lot, peace be upon him, stood as an individual in the face of a deviant society, as Allāh Almighty said: “He said, Would that I had power to deal with you, rather I should betake myself for refuge to a strong support (of God).” (Hūd: 80). He had no strength or power; however, weakness and small number do not mean changing facts and surrendering to a corrupt reality under the pressure of the few number of reformers or great number of degenerates.

The Sunnah of the noble Prophet (PBUH) and his familial life provide the finest examples on successful family relations. Moreover, they are a guide for raising children and adolescents on a righteous value foundation so that they can become effective members of society and provide security and stability for themselves, their families, their countries, and the whole world. It also introduces superior educational methods in a wholesome environment far removed from moral and behavioral deviations. Moreover, the Prophetic Sunnah includes several examples for successful socialization.

The family is, absolutely, the primary social group wherein young individuals acquire their psychological and social attributes. It provides the individual with the first set of values which guide his behaviour and actions. Recent studies and research show that the methods of socialization applied by parents reflect parental attitudes; i.e. their emotions and tendencies in the ways of treating their children. Most individual and collective potential stems from the structure of the family. The more sound and constructive the family structure, the more it yields efficiencies that feed communities with elements of strength and success.

The most prominent methods of fostering the role of families include:

- Treating the child positively; with love and respect for his individuality. This contributes to the openness of his personality, and the development of his creative skills. The role of the family is to provide the child with opportunities for expressing new and positive ideas through reading, discussion, and asking questions. In this regard, the noble Prophet (PBUH) provided a good example for educators and parents to follow.

*Sahl bin Sa'd (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: "A drink was brought to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and he drank some of it. On his right was a boy and on his left were some elderly people. He said to the boy, "Would you permit me to give the rest of this drink to these on my left?" The boy said, "O Messenger of Allah, I would certainly not give preference to anyone in anything that might come to me from you." So he, PBUH, handed over the rest of the drink to him."*

The Prophetic biography includes several examples of the Prophet's, PBUH, tolerance and respect for children and adults, his kind patient attitude in guiding towards correct behavior without temper or emotions. His style, PBUH had a lasting impact on the learner and made the lesson memorable.

Mu'awiya bin al-Hakam said:

*"While I was praying with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), a man in the company sneezed. I said: "Allah have mercy on you!" The people stared at me with disapproving looks, so I said: "Woe be upon me, why is it that you stare at me?" They began to strike their hands on their thighs, and when I saw them urging me to observe silence I became angry but said nothing. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) finished the prayer (and I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than he (for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom)). I swear that he did not scold, beat or revile me but said: "Talking to persons is not fitting during the prayer, for prayer is a practice of glorifying Allah, declaring his Greatness, and recitation of the Qur'an or words to that effect."*

Omar bin Abi Salama said:

*"I was a boy under the care of Allah's Apostle PBUH and my hand used to go around the dish while I was eating. So Allah's Apostle said to me, "O boy! Mention the Name of Allah and eat with your right hand, and eat from the side of the dish that is nearer to you." Since then I have always applied his instructions while eating".*

- Families should focus on moral discipline and avoid bad practices in the upbringing of their children. Among such malpractices is the absence of rules or extreme strictness without explaining the fault in the child's behavior. If the child develops negative interactions with his peers, rejects acceptable forms of communication, and moves to violence and aggression, then parents must deal firmly with the child, impose a punishment, and watch his behavior. On the other hand, parents should develop the child's compassionate tendencies to help others and enhance his peaceful coexistence skills.

The noble Prophet's (PBUH) adoption for this approach was unrivalled.

*A young man came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, permit me (with special license) to commit fornication (and adultery).' The people started to rebuke him harshly, but the Prophet sat close to him and asked: 'Would you like it for your mother?' He replied: 'No, by Allah, may Allah make me a sacrifice for you!' The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their mothers.' He said: 'Would you like it for your daughter?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their daughters.' He said: 'Would you like it for your paternal aunt?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their paternal aunts.' He said: 'Would you like it for your maternal aunt?' 'No': he replied. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'And thus the people do not like it for their maternal aunts.' Then the Prophet put his hand on the youth and said: O Allah forgive his sin and purify his heart and make him chaste (fortify his abstinence from sexual sins)". Thereafter, the young man was never seduced by anything.*

The noble Prophet (PBUH) displayed a tolerant edification style by giving examples which showed the young man the error of his way. Such an approach strengthens the personality of the child, and develops his sense of independence and confidence.

The Prophet (PBUH) gave us other examples on how to deal with the mistakes of the young gently and positively.

A study of the meanings in the above Hadeeth shows the gentle instructive method the Prophet (PBUH) used for addressing Anas which solicited an effective response and a move to rectify the mistake.

A long time is needed for a child to acquire righteous concepts and values, but it is a worthwhile investment as these values represent the only outcome of value for a human being.

The message of the noble Prophet (SAWS) caused a revolution against the corrupt society prevailing at the time of its revelation. The early believers were totally committed to its values, which led to an enormous change in their intentions, attitudes, behavior, and social activity. Through their changed attitudes, they convinced the world of the success of the message, and its effective transformational attributes. Thus the truth of the message was demonstrated through the practical behavior of those who followed it.

The positive and effective change in Muslims' attitudes, and the ability to communicate with acts rather than words, is the one and only path towards rectifying the distorted image of Islam. Muslim communities should stay on this path until there is no inconsistency left between the lofty ideals of Islam and the reality in their societies. The return to the Islamic civilization identity and values will succeed provided that we keep the doors of communication open with each other and with Western and Eastern societies through social, cultural, and economic relations. Interaction is required to display the good example.

Early Muslims were able to enter the hearts of the people of the conquered lands before entering their lands, thanks to their moralities and applied ethics. They embodied the principles they learnt from their noble Prophet (SAWS) and followed his good example in behavior and communication.

The Prophetic biography laid the foundation for this concept. Communication scientists of modern ages confirm that non-verbal communication which relies on acts and attitudes is a significant factor in delivering messages. The future of education is in practical, rather than verbal or written, messages.

The noble Prophet (SAWS) did not use direct words of admonition or rebuke, nor did he sermonize and outline the punishment for fornication. Rather, he showed impact of his deliberate action and guided people and those who do mistakes.

The moral decay destroying individuals, families, dynasties and nations alike from within. It starts slowly with seemingly harmless choices by some individuals but then it spreads like an epidemic affecting the society at large.

perhaps in the name of freedom of choice, is unwilling to condemn or prevent the spread of moral degradation; and even when it tries to it is unable to because of human limitations of knowledge, reasoning and wisdom. Such society goes in circles chasing the symptoms and dressing up the outcomes rather than addressing the root cause.

The studying of life of Prophet (PBUH) and his methodology in bringing the positive change, can help in protecting the Muslim family and the institution of family in the entire world.

The famous historian Bernard Shaw emphasizes this fact when he says: "I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phases of existence which can make it appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion (he is) far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today".

Common principles and values bind the believers of different religions - in fact the whole of humanity - with bonds of protecting the institution of family.

The Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah abound with values and practical steps in various fields of reform. Such values are capable of steering the ship of the world, which is currently on the verge of sinking into moral decline, to safety. These values are not idealistic or unrealistic; they were applied by Muslims in their lived reality as observed by the whole world. Muslims converted these principles to mannerisms, laws and moralities. Hence, the Islamic world bears a great responsibility to the world which is doubly important in view of the increasing need for such values and principles.

## Conclusion

The family is the cornerstone of human society regardless of location, race, color or belief. It is the axis around which various human and social interactions revolve. Thus, all divine religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - give special attention to the rules related to the family entity in order to ensure its efficiency and continuation. However, today's family is facing many challenges which target the legitimacy of its existence. Across the globe, many deviant trends have emerged, at odds with everything revealed in the divine religions. Such trends have started to shake the foundations of this basic unit of human life, and threaten its cohesion and continuance. The request to legitimize homosexuality, or the so-called marriage between same sex couples, is one of the major challenges threatening the family unit in Western societies nowadays. This paper examines the role of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in protecting the family in general against various challenges including the legitimization of homosexuality. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) played a vital role in protecting the institution of family through the practicing teachings of Islam and the Islamic world bears a great responsibility to the world which is doubly important in view of the increasing need for such values and principles.