ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

July 7, 2015: In response to the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling granting legal rights for same-sex marriage in the United States, the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California reaffirms the Islamic position about marriage and also its moral guidelines regarding sexual conduct, with emphasis on the following key points:

- The Qur’an and Sunnah [the teachings of Prophet Muhammad] are clear that a lawful marriage is only between a male and a female. Such legal union cannot take place between persons of the same gender. Islam never has, and never will, sanction or perform same-sex marriage since it is a clear violation of Islamic Law.

- Homosexual behavior, in practice, is considered immoral in the sight of God. Homosexual feelings and tendencies, however, are like other unlawful desires that may crop up in the mind of even the most devoted Muslim. The thoughts and inclinations are not sinful unless acted upon. The Prophet Muhammad clarified this: “...if somebody intended to do a bad deed and stopped himself from doing it, then God will record a full good deed (in his account) with Him.” [source: al-Bukhari]

- Humans have the ability to potentially overcome temptations and desires, such as same-sex-attraction [SSA], or at least to maintain control over it, since the Qur’an declares, "God will not test anyone beyond their capability..." [Qur’an 2:286]. In fact, a difficult test like SSA may be a means for people coming closer to God and earning immense rewards.

- Islam recognizes gender and sexual inclinations by virtue of birth and not by virtue of choice that some people may incline towards. There has been no solid scientific research to show otherwise. Despite the decision by the American Psychiatric Association in 1973 to remove homosexuality from their list of mental disorders, they still assert today that “to date there are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality.” Islam teaches that, in the theoretical scenario where a very small number of people may have been born with same-sex-attraction, these desires can also be overcome and that all people should be provided with the opportunity to get help concerning their condition.

- Sexual behavior within a society is not a purely private concern but rather affects all the people living in that society. Islam does not forcefully impose its teachings upon people of other faiths and persuasions. Nonetheless, it draws certain moral lines to make sure that the entire society is not affected negatively.
- The verses in the Qur’an about the people of Prophet Lut [Lot] clearly describe that homosexuality is sinful. "And [We sent] Lut (Lot) when he said to his people, ‘Do you commit the shameful act in which nobody in the world has ever preceded you? You come to men lustfully instead of women. No, you are a people who cross the limits.’" [7:80-81] There is consensus among all Muslim scholars, past and present, that the people of Prophet Lut [Lot] were criticized by God for their practice of homosexuality. Attempts to reinterpret the moral teachings in the story are inconsistent with both the text and the spirit of the Qur’an and hence disregarded as baseless.

- People practicing something immoral according to Islamic values still deserve the basic respect and rights of any other human being. Muslims may associate with all people so long as their association complies and not contradicts the Islamic guidelines, Muslims should not discriminate and/or harass anyone and should remember that people can change for the better. A sinful person might change and become a better person than before. The message of Islam has transformed the lives of millions of people who were perceived to be 'beyond recovery'.

- Any Muslim engaging in sinful behavior is still considered a Muslim and must be treated with respect and decency. They should be welcomed as part of the Muslim community, as long as their behavior does not negatively affect their company.

The Islamic Shura Council of Southern California also stands in solidarity with other faith groups such as the following:

Catholics
Mormons
Seventh Day Adventists