

Exploring Gender Identity Through an Islamic Lens

Dr. Tauseef Ahmad Khan

National Secretary Ta'lim, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Canada

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Respected Dr. Tauseef Ahmad Khan Sahib, National Secretary Ta'lim, delivered a speech on the Islamic perspective of gender identity at Jalsa Salana Canada 2025. Its text is being reproduced below for the benefit of our readers.*

Fellow Ahmadi parents, Assalamu Alaikum!

We share a common dream: to provide our children with a safe environment where they can grow, reach their potential, follow their faith, and contribute their best to the society and nation.

That is why we chose Canada as our home, drawn by its promise of freedom, commitment to equality, and respect for diversity. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees our right to freedom of religion and belief under section 2. This enables us to raise our children according to Islamic teachings, passing on our values and beliefs to the next generation.

However, our dream faces a significant challenge. Our children are growing up in a society with values and lifestyles that conflict with our own. They are bombarded with messages suggesting freedom, happiness and fulfillment lie in material possessions, fleeting pleasures, and choices that contradict the core teachings of our faith.

As parents, do we feel confused, embarrassed, and frustrated? Do we struggle to explain to our children why these alternative lifestyles conflict with our beliefs? Do we worry they will be tempted by the 'false freedom' of instant gratification and lose sight of true freedom, which lies in adhering to Allah's commandments, establishing a relationship with Him, and learning about our faith?

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) remarked on this very challenge we face in Lecture Lahore, describing the end of a 7000-year conflict where Satan, in the guise of Dajjal (anti-

christ), will employ every form of distortion and deception to promote atheism, undermine religion, and mislead humanity. The promotion of alternative lifestyles to our children marks the climax of this battle, for which we must be prepared with our tools. While this topic is often considered taboo in many households, the time has come to set aside our embarrassment. We must openly discuss it, understand the guidance given by the Holy Qur'an, and consider the solutions provided by our beloved Khalifa.

THE CONTAGION

LGBTQ behavior and alternative lifestyles have existed across many cultures throughout history, often recognized by society, social norms, and medicine as anomalies. The term 'queer' historically referred to their perceived oddity.

Historically, only 1-2% of the population identified as LGBT. However, recent surveys show a significant rise among youth. A 2021 Statistics Canada survey revealed that 1 in 10 individuals aged 15 to 25 now identify as LGBT, nearly a tenfold increase in this age group [<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240125/dq240125b-eng.htm>].

What is causing this rapid rise? Is there a surge in the so-called 'gay gene'? And why is it becoming critically more common among young people?

Latest research has debunked the existence of a gay gene. It appears as though the increase in these behaviors is influenced by the environment and social connections, a phenomenon scientists refer to as "social contagion".

This contagion spreads through the unchecked promotion of alternative lifestyles, celebrated

in public displays, news, the so called “coming out” announcements”, gay marriages, pride marches, and pride month. Rainbow flags are flown at government buildings and schools, and the mandatory inclusion of gay characters is apparent in all media, including children’s learning materials, shows, and movies, even when their lifestyle is irrelevant to the story.

Recently, this contagion has infiltrated our schools, affecting children with innocent, developing, and psychologically immature minds. It fosters curiosity, confusion, and exploration of identity while presenting abhorrent thoughts and unchaste acts as completely normal. Like a wolf, the Dajjal targets the young and vulnerable first.

GENDER IDENTITY MOVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In Canadian schools, children are now taught about sexuality, sexual orientation, and gender identity at an age when they cannot fully comprehend these concepts. Some argue this has become a movement that influences children by appealing to their sense of compassion and acceptance of diversity. They are taught that biological sex is not strictly male or female but a spectrum, referred to as ‘sex assigned at birth’ rather than determined at conception. This perspective suggests that society, not biology, defines gender. Students learn that their gender is fluid and that they can identify as any gender based upon their feelings. They can change their gender, and choose any appearance, name, and preferred pronouns. If a child wishes to identify as an animal, such as a cat, the school is expected to affirm this “furry” identity. New laws protect transgender rights, to safeguard them from bigotry and persecution, however, these same laws also appear to limit the voice of parents who do not want their innocent children exposed to such concepts.

FURTHER CHANGES

Schools are starting to teach young children about sex and different types of relationships from a very young age. In Ontario, and similarly in other provinces, sexual orientation is taught starting in grade 3, when children are just 8 years old. By grade 5, at age 10, they learn about gender identity and human reproduction. By ages 11 – 12, they discuss relationships, consent, and various premarital relations.

As Ahmadi Muslims, we believe that since sex education is related to the topic of chastity, it is the parents’ responsibility to educate their children on such topics, while schools should focus solely on reproductive biology. Upon reviewing Ontario’s health curriculum, I noticed a lack of

mention of the traditional family of mother, father, and children — the basic unit of society.

Outside of lessons, schools are promoting acceptance of all alternative lifestyles. Rainbow flags are prominently displayed alongside the Canadian flag, and pride days and special pride assemblies are common. Classrooms feature signs indicating they are safe spaces for LGBT students. All-gender washrooms have replaced traditional facilities, impacting privacy, comfort and safety of female students. Reading materials often include LGBT characters, with some books containing explicit content. Additionally, LGBT clubs such as Gay-Straight Alliances and Skittles Clubs are advertised as places to make friends, without explicitly stating their true purpose.

Nine years ago, our Jama’at protested the early introduction of human sexuality in the Ontario school curriculum, arguing it should be taught at an older age with more parental involvement. Last year, we joined another protest against gender identity activism and the promotion of alternative lifestyles in schools. Polls indicate that parents from diverse backgrounds, both religious and secular, share these concerns. Despite the freedom of choice and expression guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights, parents who voice their concerns about the increasing presence of alternative lifestyles in schools are vilified as bigoted, narrow-minded, and transphobic. This creates a culture of fear around being ‘canceled,’ making open discussion on the topic difficult.

PROTECTING FROM GENDER IDENTITY INFLUENCE

While we can inform our children that alternative lifestyles are considered unlawful in the Holy Qur’an, how should we address gender identity and the concept of sex being a spectrum?

For this we can turn to the Holy Qur’an, written by the same Supreme Being who created biology. In Surah Najm, Chapter 53, verse 46 it states:

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ۖ

That He creates the pairs, male and female [53:46]

Allah presents two sexes as a universal truth and explains that the survival of the human race depends on the union of two individuals of opposite sexes—male and female — and it is the biological sex that determines the gender roles. Only through the union of the two sexes, male and female, can a child be produced. For millennia, such unions have been integral to human society, prompting societies and governments to regulate marriage to ensure human sur-

vival. From these unions emerge families, extended relationships, societies, and nations.

The Holy Qur'an states this in verse 2 of Surah an-Nisa:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ۝

O mankind, be mindful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the two created and spread many men and women; and be mindful of your duty to Allah in Whose name you appeal to one another, and of your obligations in respect of ties of kinship. Verily, Allah watches over you.

[4:2]

GENDER IDENTITY IS A DISORDER

Some people present intersex individuals as evidence of more than two sexes. How should we respond to this question? Biologically, there are only two sexes. Intersex individuals experience disordered development of their reproductive system due to chromosomal variations, hormonal imbalances, genetic mutations, or environmental factors. They deserve our compassion and protection of their rights. The Holy Qur'an does not mention intersex as a separate gender because it is not another sex but a disorder. Similarly, the Qur'an does not mention other congenital anomalies, such as children born blind or with extra limbs, as these are disorders, not separate categories.

On the other hand, transgenders are individuals who choose to act, dress, and identify as the opposite gender, despite being biologically healthy males or females — they do this because of dissatisfaction or unease with their own biological sex. Historically, this condition was considered a mental illness known as “gender identity disorder” but in 2013 the term was changed to “gender dysphoria,” meaning gender dissatisfaction. This reclassification aimed to reduce stigma but it also shifted gender identity from a mental disorder to a natural variation of human experience.

Canada has a very progressive stance on transgender rights, and provides legal protections and healthcare access. While our sense of compassion argues that we do not hate or persecute individuals who have opted for such a lifestyle, Islam teaches us to reject adopting such behaviors ourselves as it is contrary to Allah's instructions.

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا

Our Lord, You have not created this in vain. [3:192]

Allah reminds us that He has made everything with a purpose, this includes the distinctive biological features of a male and female, each suited for their respective reproductive, physiological and functional roles.

In marriage, the relationship between a man and a woman promotes chastity, protects health, fosters love and comfort, and preserves the human race. In Islam, while men and women can share and perform the same tasks, there are distinct primary responsibilities assigned to each gender. The primary responsibility for providing for the family falls upon the man, while the primary responsibility for raising children falls upon the woman. These roles are considered default in gender-based responsibilities because they complement the strengths that Allah has endowed each gender with. However, this does not mean that men and women cannot assist each other in their respective duties; rather, it emphasizes the complementary nature of their roles in maintaining a balanced family structure — which is crucial in building societies and nations. If men start identifying as women and vice versa, the societal fabric unravels, endangering the family unit and the future of humanity.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has warned us against switching our gender roles. Hazrat Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْمُتَشَبِّهِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ بِالنِّسَاءِ،
وَالْمُتَشَبِّهَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ بِالرِّجَالِ

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) cursed the men who resemble and imitate women; and the women who resemble and imitate men. [Sahih al-Bukhari, no. 5885]

Many transgender individuals also undergo life-changing hormonal or surgical treatments, resulting in infertility. The Holy Qur'an, in Surah An-Nisa, warns against altering our healthy bodies as they are Allah's creation:

وَقَالَ لَا تَخْذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ۖ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا مَيْيَتَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا مَرْتَهُمْ فَلْيُبْتَئِكُنَّ إِذَا نَ الْاَعْلَامُ وَلَا مَرْتَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرَنَّ خَلْقَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرًا مُبِينًا ۝

[Satan] said to Allah: I will assuredly beguile a fixed portion from Thy servants; And will lead them astray, and will excite in them vain desires, and will incite them to cut off the ears of cattle and to alter Allah's creation. Thus, whoso takes Satan for a friend beside Allah has certainly suffered a manifest loss. [4:119-120]

The Holy Qur'an describes such alterations as a "manifest loss." This loss is evident first in the inability to have children and second in the severe impairment of personal, social, and occupational functioning experienced by transgender individuals, who feel an incongruence between their physical sex and psychological gender. Rather than addressing their psychological condition, they often attempt to alter their physical anatomy. Furthermore, these individuals experience high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, psychiatric disorders, eating disorders, substance abuse, and suicidality, with attempted suicide rates almost 8 times higher in transgender youth in Canada [<https://www.cmaj.ca/content/194/22/E767>]. Their poor mental health and suicide ideation are often attributed to societal rejection and stigma. However, long-term studies indicate that gender-reassignment surgery does not reduce suicide rates nor improve the quality of life for transgender individuals [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38699117/>]. High rates of suicidality and psychological distress persist post-surgery, suggesting that the underlying psychological issues remain unaddressed. This indicates that gender dysphoria is a manifestation of a deeper underlying psychological trauma or burden. Many eventually experience sex-change regret and wish to de-transition, as evidenced by numerous published personal accounts.

ROLE OF PARENTS IN FORMING GENDER IDENTITY

Recently there has been an alarming rise in gender dysphoria, among youth in Canada and other Western nations. This trend is particularly notable in younger Generation Z — those up to 26 years old — having a sevenfold higher proportion of transgender individuals compared to older generations [<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/4192-pride-canada>]. The question arises, why would a young person lose their gender identity and develop gender dysphoria.

A vast body of research highlights the critical role of a nurturing home and parents in children's gender identity development. Infants are born with only their biological sex and no sense of gender. Around 18 months, children start identifying as male or female, though these are just labels at this stage. By ages three to four, children segregate play by gender: boys engage in competitive, rule-based play, while girls focus on relationships and communication. At this stage, children mistakenly believe that changing clothes can alter their gender—a misconception that fades by age five. By this age, most children understand their sex is stable over time, recognizing that boys will

grow into men and girls into women. By age seven, gender consistency develops, heavily influenced by parental interaction and modeling. Children identify with the masculine or feminine traits of the same-sex parent and imitate them to develop a stable gender identity. A nurturing mother who provides comfort and affection, and an engaged, warm father, reinforce gender identity aligned with the child's biological sex. For example, the father's role is crucial for both boys and girls, reinforcing gender identity in boys through imitation of their 'baba' and in girls through reinforcement of their mimicry of their 'mama'. As children age, they conform to traditional gender roles to avoid social rejection. Peer acceptance becomes increasingly important, especially during adolescence. Same-sex peer groups at school help refine and solidify gender identity into late teens and young adulthood. Outside school, gender-based groups and role models in our auxiliary or-

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ganizations, such as Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya and Lajna Ima'illah, further refine this identity.

Disruptions such as parental death, divorce, abusive households, sexual abuse, exposure to pornography, lack of proper masculine and feminine gender role models can severely impact a child's gender identity development. Studies show that nearly all male transgender individuals report childhood trauma, including sexual exposure or abuse. These disruptions lead children to seek comfort in other relationships, making them targets for peers or activist groups in schools that offer a seemingly friendly and welcoming environment. Such children then start identifying as a different gender as a coping mechanism to their trauma and a way to be accepted. Thus, there is no inherent transgender identity in children; it is their en-

vironment which influences them.

For teenagers experiencing gender confusion, the appropriate approach is to support them by emphasizing their gender based upon their biological sex. Long-term studies show that most children with gender dysphoria eventually align with their biological gender if they undergo natural puberty. These children need our compassion and support to identify and overcome their challenges, and a nurturing environment that can help reverse their deep-seated mental trauma. However, using puberty blockers, administering hormones for gender transition, or performing irreversible surgeries at a young age, when children's brains and bodies are still developing, can cause significant and irreparable harm. Unfortunately, clinical guidance on transgender medicine in the youth is often influenced by activism rather than robust, long-term research evidence with news reports showing how research on this topic has been manipulated and scientists silenced [<https://www.economist.com/united-states/2024/06/27/research-into-trans-medicine-has-been-manipulated>]. Similarly, emerging reports from many countries have started to reveal the immense harm done to children by such treatments.

In Canada, schools often do not inform parents if their child shows symptoms of gender confusion, fearing potential 'abuse' at home, while schools are seen as providing so-called "safe spaces". Additionally, the associated mental health issues are frequently ignored. If parents take such a child to a doctor, the doctor is legally required to affirm the child's perceived gender rather than their biological sex.

HOW TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

As Canada's schools, healthcare, and legal systems appear to be lacking in protecting our children from gender identity and alternative lifestyles, our only refuge is to turn to our faith — this is the jihad of our times!

Our beloved Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) warned us that the absurdities that are being taught to our children in schools are, and I quote "[These are] very harmful Dajjali schemes at work, to take the world away from religion and to establish atheism." [[This Week With Huoor, February 24, 2023](#)]

To counter this, the primary responsibility of protecting the children lies with the parents. Huoor (may Allah be his Helper), in a mulaqat with Majlis Atfalul Ahmadiyah Canada Amila in June 2024, stated, "It is the responsibility of the parents to speak to their children at home and explain to them [about this issue]." [[This Week With](#)

[Huoor, June 14, 2024](#)]

I will now provide some key points of guidance given by our beloved Huoor to parents expanding on their responsibilities from various mulaqats and speeches.

1. We, as parents, must provide a friendly and nurturing environment at home

Beloved Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) advised Arab Ahmadi during a mulaqat about the negative influence of schools by instructing: "Develop a friendship with your children. From childhood, the child should know, 'my mother is my friend and I can share everything with her.' They should know, 'my father is not strict. He doesn't look at me with anger or scold me; rather, he is my friend.'" [<https://www.alhakam.org/arab-ahmadis-in-canada-meet-hazrat-khalifatul-masih/>]

Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) emphasized that this approach encourages children to share everything with their parents. Especially as children reach 12 to 14 years of age, they may start to fear their fathers and distance themselves. At this stage, fathers should bring their children closer and befriend them. Beloved Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) advised: "You should interact with your children and answer their questions when they come home." [[This Week With Huoor, June 16, 2023](#)]

In addition, as parents, we must also be appropriate gender role models for our children. Fathers should ask themselves if they take their families on road trips, hiking, camping, or other outdoor activities away from screens. Mothers should consider if they have meaningful conversations with their children, spend quality time with them, engage in their interests, and get to know their friends.

2. We must remove our shyness, educate ourselves on these sensitive topics, and be ready to discuss them with our children

Beloved Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) emphasized that parents should discuss modern-day issues with their children.

Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) said: "It is essential to openly address the immoral tendencies prevalent in modern times. Children should be aware of the vices, what they need to avoid, what is taught in schools about these matters, and what our responses should be."

Huoor (may Allah be his Helper) added, "These things now have to be openly discussed; otherwise, you will remain shy, and those people will continue teaching indecencies". [<https://www.alhakam.org/atal-amila-uk/>]



Beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) has advised that for children aged six to eight, parents should explain that while they may learn certain things at school, they are not yet able to fully understand these matters. Once the children reach the age of 10 or 11, parents can then discuss the topic and provide the Islamic perspective.

3. We should educate our children about biological differences between genders

Regarding what children learn about genders at school, our beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) asked us to explain to our children that whatever gender God has created a person with, that will always be their gender! Beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) emphasized “Explain to them the true reality of these issues. Explain how nature has made them the way they are. Tell them that the biological differences that God has made between the bodies of both genders is very clear. A mother can only be a mother. The differences that are found between males and females cannot be changed.” [[This Week With Huzoor, June 16, 2023](#)]

4. We must set a personal example and teach children our faith

Beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) has told us: “When children observe their parents worshipping, recit-

ing the Qur’an, praying and speaking about faith, then they will also have a practical example [to follow]. If the elders do not set a practical example, children will learn nothing.” [[This Week With Huzoor, February 23, 2023](#)]

To counter the influence of the school atmosphere, Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) reminded parents that out of 365 days, their children spend 180 days at home. Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) guided: “You should make a plan to teach your children religious knowledge for at least 90 out of the 180 days. Then, at least a third of the year will be dedicated to learning religious knowledge. Educate them about the importance of religion, who we truly are, the facts that we are Ahmadi Muslims, what Islam is and what Allah the Almighty desires of us.” [[This Week With Huzoor, February 24, 2023](#)]

5. Offer prayers for your children

The Promised Messiah (may peace be upon him) has said, “Indeed, the prayers of parents for their children are blessed with special acceptance.” [*Malfuzat*, vol. 2, p. 181]. Therefore, we should pray for our children, offer *istighfar*, *durood* and *nawafil*. We should regularly write to our beloved Huzoor (may Allah be his Helper) requesting prayers for our children and encourage them to write letters also.

THE FUTURE

In the end, I would like to emphasize that Allah has declared alternative lifestyles as a vice and deserving of divine punishment. Such acts were practiced by the people of Prophet Lot (peace be upon him). Religious scriptures such as the Torah, Bible, and Holy Qur'an bear witness to their severe destruction.

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

Lot, whom We sent, rebuked his people: Do you realize you practice an abomination of which no people in the world before you has been guilty? [7:81]

How is it that a much larger population now brazenly practices even more heinous acts without expecting destruction?

Furthermore, a painful chastisement is promised to those who wish to spread these indecencies. The Holy Qur'an states:

Those who desire that indecencies should spread among the believers will have a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter. Allah knows, and you know not.

[24:20]

Fortunately, we are now witnessing the melting of this Dajjal, as many people have begun to recognize the dangers of the alternative lifestyles including the gender identity activism targeting children. Parents, doctors, scientists, and politicians are highlighting its absurdities, and some Western countries are enacting laws to protect young children from age-inappropriate education and treatments, as well as bringing back protections for women's spaces and sports. Unfortunately, the world may only realize the folly of these actions after its destructive impact on future generations has manifested!

In a letter addressed to National Amir Jama'at Canada, Huzoor-e-Anwar (may Allah be his Helper) said:

"The fact of the matter is that children should be properly trained from the very beginning. Parents should tell them, prepare them, educate them and bring their attention towards this vice. In regard to this vice, the zealousness we see in these people is short-lived and will cool down. They will realize it themselves in a few years. During that time, you should make every effort and focus on safeguarding your children." [Parents' Guide for an Islamic Perspective on Ontario's Health Curriculum by National Tarbiyyat Department Canada, 2018]

I pray that we are able to protect our children from this vice by following the guidance provided by our beloved Khalifa. Ameen!

