

## Navigating Opposition and Promoting Constructive Dialogue in the Context of Cancel Culture: Lessons from Islamic Teachings

Abubakar Abdulkadir

### Article Information:

#### To cite this document:

Abubakar Abdulkadir. (2024). Navigating Opposition and Promoting Constructive Dialogue in the Context of Cancel Culture: Lessons from Islamic Teachings. Karachi Islamicus, 4(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.58575/ki.v4i1.52>

**For Authors:** If you would like to write for this Journal, then please use our Author Guidelines 'service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit our website for more information.

#### About Karachi Islamicus:

Karachi Islamicus is a Bi-Annual Research and Referred Journal published by MANARS, Karachi. The Journal covers authoritative, topical and original research papers in all fields of Islam and Religious Studies that interests a wide range of authors symbolizing an outstanding development within an explicit field.

#### Review and Publication Policy of Karachi Islamicus:

Articles sent for publication in 'Karachi Islamicus' go through an initial editorial screening followed by a double-blind peer review. The Editorial Board of the Journal is responsible for the selection of reviewers based on their expertise in the relevant field. All the papers will be reviewed by external reviewers from outside the organization of journal.

ISSN-P:  
2790-654X

ISSN-E:  
2790-6558

DOI:  
10.58575

Frequency:  
Semi-Annually

Publisher:  
MANARS



© 2024 by the Licensee MANARS, Pakistan. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

## Original Article

### Navigating Opposition and Promoting Constructive Dialogue in the Context of Cancel Culture: Lessons from Islamic Teachings

Abubakar Abdulkadir<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty Of Humanities, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, Nigeria;

Correspondence: [abubakar.abdulkadir@umyu.edu.ng](mailto:abubakar.abdulkadir@umyu.edu.ng);

Received: 25 February 2024; Accepted: 02 June 2024; Published: 30 June 2024;

**Abstract:** This paper explores the parallels between the historical struggle of Prophet Lūt in Sodom and the contemporary phenomenon of cancel culture within woke circles. It examines the nuanced Islamic teachings embedded in Sūratu Hūd verses 74-82 vis-à-vis the contemporary dynamics of cancel culture to foster a deeper understanding of the common threads that connect these seemingly disparate narratives. Prophet Lūt had in a revolutionary and vigorous manner challenged the prevailing norm of deviant sexual proclivity in defense of moral virtues, hence he got canceled. The city of Sodom was destroyed in a catastrophic event the like of which was never heard of throughout human history. This is because deviant sexual proclivity has become the norm rather than the exception in Sodom. In what appears to be a striking parallel, the Western liberal agenda is adopting a radical and revolutionary strategy to bring forth queer revolutionism as manifest in the five elements of the liberal idiom; 'liberal' religious ideals, gay rights, 'academic' liberalism, the discourse of hate, and the discourse of social justice. Hence the paper argues that Muslim ethicists should employ the Quranic methodology couched in Sūratu Hūd to constructively engage the liberal queer machinations in all its idiomatic elements in defense of pristine moral virtues. And unless the believers do so, there will be great oppression and corruption on earth.

**Keywords:** Prophet Lūt, Cancel culture, Woke ideology, Constructive dialogue.

---

**Introduction:** In the Glorious Quran, verses 74 - 82 of Chapter 11 (Sūratu Hūd), presented a moving historical event wherein Prophet Lūt and his followers faced a rebuff and resentment from the people of Sodom. This momentous incident of antagonism and eventual "cancellation" suffered by Prophet Lūt and his followers in the hands of the Kuffār (the disbelieving folk of Sodom) bears remarkable parallels with the modern-day phenomenon of cancel culture within the context of woke ideology. As the contemporary global society grapples with issues of the so-called "social awareness", "progressive values", and the relentless pursuit of "accountability", the intersections between the ancient narrative aptly captured in verses 74 - 82 of Sūratu Hūd, and the contemporary trend of cancel culture become both intriguing and thought-provoking.

This article seeks to explore and illuminate these intersections, delving into the multifaceted aspects of cancel culture through the lens of Quranic wisdom. By drawing comparisons between the struggles of Prophet Lūt and his followers and the contemporary dynamics of cancel culture within woke circles, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the common threads that connect these seemingly disparate narratives.<sup>1</sup> Beyond mere

comparisons, this exploration will also offer valuable insights into the human condition, shedding light on how individuals and societies grapple with deviant sexual proclivity, differences of opinion, and the quest for justice in the form of opposition to such unnatural sexual inclinations.

Through a careful examination of the historical context of *Sūratu Ḥūd* and the context of cancel culture in contemporary times, we may appreciate the complexities surrounding the idea of accountability and its manifestation in social dynamics, since Prophet Lūt held the people of Sodom accountable for their actions (homosexuality) which go against the progressive human values, and as a result, he was canceled. Astonishingly, however, today, the table has turned against the rational voices of truth, where gay rights activism is likened to “social awareness”, “progressive values”, and the relentless pursuit of “accountability” for LGBTQ+ rights. The Quranic narrative is replete with instances where the rational voices of truth are being canceled in an attempt to silence them. Thus, cancel culture is by no means a novel phenomenon as it bears the whole mark of human machinations. Almost all prophets had at one time or the other got canceled, ditto their disciples. How did they contend with the challenge of woke ideology? What lessons can we learn from the Quranic narrative in this regard? This study may help in the understanding of the consequences and implications of cancel culture, exploring its impact on individuals, communities, and the broader fabric of society. Throughout this exploration, we shall also reflect on the wisdom embedded within the Quranic narrative, drawing relevant lessons that may guide us toward a strategic way of dealing with a growing bully from the liberal agenda that seeks to instrumentalize cancel culture toward promoting LGBTQ + norms among other deviant sexual practices in the modern world.

**Literature Review:** The concept of cancel culture has been extensively discussed in various academic and popular sources. For instance, Nuamah highlights the stifling of divergent viewpoints as a common consequence of opposition driven by "othering."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Pash emphasizes the punitive nature of cancel culture and its potential for silencing dissenting voices.<sup>3</sup> Rand, David, et al. explore alternative models of accountability,<sup>4</sup> which are relevant to the paper's discussion of the Quranic narrative of Pharaoh and the approach taken by Prophets Moses and Aaron (AS). This narrative is juxtaposed with the contemporary dynamics of cancel culture, where individuals and groups are often silenced or ostracized for their homophobic beliefs or opinions. The Quranic narrative of Prophet Lūt and his followers is also relevant to the paper's analysis. Ali provides insights into the moral corruption of Sodom's inhabitants and the plea for forgiveness by Prophet Ibrāhīm.<sup>5</sup> This narrative underscores the importance of forgiveness, tolerance, and empathy in addressing societal issues.

**Research Design:** The research design used in the study involves a comparative analysis of the historical struggle of Prophet Lūt in Sodom and the contemporary phenomenon of cancel culture within woke circles. The paper employs Quranic verses and hadiths to constructively engage the liberal queer machinations in all its idiomatic elements in defense of pristine moral virtues.

### **Methodology:**

1. **Comparative Analysis:** The paper compares the historical struggle of Prophet Lūt in Sodom with the contemporary phenomenon of cancel culture within woke circles. This comparison aims to highlight the common threads that connect these seemingly disparate narratives.

2. **Quranic and Hadith Analysis:** The paper analyzes Quranic verses and hadiths to support the arguments presented. These sources are used to demonstrate the importance of constructive dialogue and engagement in addressing societal issues.
3. **Contextual Analysis:** The paper provides a detailed analysis of the historical context of Prophet Lūt's struggle in Sodom, highlighting the moral corruption of the city's inhabitants and the divine intervention that led to its destruction. This analysis is juxtaposed with the contemporary context of cancel culture, where individuals and groups are often silenced or ostracized for their beliefs or opinions.
4. **Theoretical Framework:** The paper draws on theoretical frameworks related to cancel culture, woke ideology, and the importance of constructive dialogue and engagement in addressing societal issues. These frameworks are used to provide a deeper understanding of the common threads that connect the historical and contemporary narratives.
5. **Empirical Evidence:** The paper presents empirical evidence from Quranic verses and hadiths to support the arguments presented.

**Historical Context: Prophet Lūt's Struggle in Sodom:** The story of Prophet Lūt and his followers in Sodom offers an account of struggle, opposition, and unwavering faith in the face of adversity. Sodom was a city known for its moral corruption and deviation from righteousness. The people of Sodom had strayed far from the path of monotheism and engaged in wicked sexual behavior, causing widespread societal decay.<sup>6</sup> Amidst this backdrop, Prophet Lūt was divinely appointed to convey the message of monotheism and righteousness, calling the people of Sodom to abandon their immoral ways and return to the path of virtue. However, instead of heeding the call of the Prophet, the people of Sodom rejected his message, viewing it as a threat to their established way of life and their moral freedom.<sup>7</sup> Quran 7:80-84 states,

And [We sent] Lūt 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.' But the answer of his people was only that they said, 'Evict them from your city! Indeed, they are men who keep themselves pure.' So, We saved him and his family, except for his wife; We destined her to be of those who remained behind.<sup>8</sup>

As Prophet Lūt continued to preach and advocate for moral reform, the people of Sodom grew increasingly hostile toward him. They sought to silence him, fearing that his teachings would undermine their way of life.<sup>9</sup> The rejection and animosity escalated to the point where the people of Sodom conspired to eliminate Prophet Lūt and his followers, effectively canceling their presence and message.

Despite the hostility and imminent danger, Prophet Lūt and his followers remained steadfast in the face of persecution, upholding their belief in the righteousness of their cause and their duty to convey the truth, regardless of the danger such may pose.<sup>10</sup>

The ultimate fate of Sodom serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of moral corruption and the rejection of divine guidance. The city faced divine punishment for its sins, a powerful lesson underscoring the importance of heeding prophetic warnings and adhering to a virtuous path.<sup>11</sup>

When Our command came, We turned it [the city] upside down, and We rained upon it stones of baked clay, marked from your Lord. And it is not far from the wrongdoers (Sūrah Al-Hūd, 11:82-83).<sup>12</sup>

In the verses above, the Quran recounts the events that transpired when Allah's command was executed upon the city of Sodom due to its moral corruption. This is further elaborated in the following points:

1. **"When Our command came, We turned it upside down"**: This phrase paints a sudden and dramatic upheaval, symbolizing the divine intervention that took place. The city of Sodom was destroyed catastrophically an event the like of which was never witnessed throughout human history.<sup>13</sup>
2. **"And We rained upon it stones of baked clay, marked from your Lord"**: This part of the verse describes one of how the destruction took place. Allah sent down a rain of stones made from baked clay, which were specifically marked by Him for this purpose.<sup>14</sup> These stones were a means of punishment and a manifestation of Allah's wrath against their wrongdoing and immoral behavior.
3. **"And it is not far from the wrongdoers"**: On the other hand, this phrase emphasizes that the punishment was not unjustly or arbitrarily inflicted. Rather, it was a direct consequence of the Sodom's inhabitants' transgressions and defiance of divine guidance. The destruction serves as a reminder and a warning to those who engage in sinful and immoral behavior, highlighting the consequences that can befall those who persistently reject righteousness.<sup>15</sup>

The classical Sunni commentaries on these verses emphasize the concept of divine justice and the need for individuals and societies to uphold righteousness and avoid wrongdoing.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the story (*Qissah*) of the people of Sodom holds timeless significance, transcending its historical context. It serves as a testament to the struggles faced by those who dare to challenge societal norms and advocate for moral reform. As we examine the historical context of Prophet Lūt's struggle in Sodom, we find parallels in the contemporary landscape, where morally grounded ideas are often met with resistance and hostility for challenging certain immoral norms.

**Cancel Culture in Woke Ideology: An Overview:** The phenomenon of "cancel culture" has permeated contemporary social discourse, particularly within the context of woke culture. Rooted in the pursuit of 'social awareness and progressive values', woke culture seeks to challenge societal norms, in the guise of fostering inclusivity, and addressing systemic inequalities. Cancel culture, as a subset of woke ideology, involves the public shaming, boycotting, or ostracization of individuals who express opinions that counter the narratives of the so-called liberal order that seeks to entrench unnatural sexual proclivity.<sup>17</sup>

**Origins and Evolution of Cancel Culture in Woke Ideology:** The origins of cancel culture can be traced back to social justice movements and online activism, where individuals with considerable social media influence could mobilize large audiences to demand accountability from public figures. Over time, this phenomenon has expanded beyond the virtual realm, permeating various aspects of public and private life. Cancel culture's evolution within woke culture has been shaped by the rise of identity politics, intersectionality, and the prioritization of social justice issues.<sup>18</sup> Queer organizations and other civil rights movements that champion the cause of defending queer rights often find in the liberal agenda an instrument to press for the promotion of queer norms across the globe. Though some queer activists are increasingly becoming dissatisfied with political liberalism (governments) in their support of queer justice, these activists are calling for a radical approach to advocating for queer justice through cancel culture. Schamel aptly captures this contention:

The liberal mode of justice is contrasted to the revolutionary mode across five elements of the liberal idiom of gay and lesbian justice which have found their way into the thought and nomenclature of much of the gay leadership of the U.S., and even into queer organizations that purport to be radical or revolutionary. These idiomatic elements are: the liberal-religious idea of nonviolence as a means to justice; the idea that gay and lesbian persons have made great progress since 1969; the idea that academic liberalism in its various forms serves queer justice; the discourse of 'hate'; and the discourse of rights...elements of a specifically queer revolutionism are brought forth. Queer persons must take up the revolutionary mode of justice as our political template, and it adopts a revolutionary style of conveyance of ideas that repudiates, in its rhetorical character and out of necessity, the disastrously false civility and false objectivity of liberal discourse, adopting the revolutionarily appropriate character of a manifesto.<sup>19</sup>

The parallels and intersections between the nature of cancel ideology within the woke culture and the story of the cancellation of Prophet Lūt from a religious perspective are primarily conceptual and may equally have some moral correlations, even though they come from different contexts. In the Quranic context, Prophet Lūt vigorously challenged the prevailing norm of immorality in Sodom in defense of moral virtues, and the status quo canceled him. Thus, contemporary woke ideology borrowed a leap from that historical event as evident from Schamel's argument.<sup>20</sup> They borrowed from Lūt that revolutionary persuasion and vigorous demand for moral accountability. From the status quo, they borrowed the cancel culture.

Nonetheless, the following are some conceptual comparisons:

1. **Challenging Norms and Morality:** In the story of Prophet Lūt, he challenged the prevailing norm of immorality and corruption within his society and as such he got canceled. Similarly, cancel culture is instrumentalized by the liberals to make deviant sexual proclivity a norm rather than the exception.
2. **Demanding Accountability:** Cancel culture, as described, involves individuals using their influence to demand accountability from public figures. In the story of Prophet Lūt, he sought to hold his community accountable for their immoral actions and behavior, even when it meant challenging the status quo. The liberals are also adopting the same tactic.
3. **Social Media Influence and Mobilization:** In contemporary contexts, there is an element of mobilizing individuals to support LGBTQ+ causes through social media. Cancel culture often gains momentum through social media platforms, allowing individuals to connect and rally around a specific issue. Similarly, Prophet Lūt's call for reform within his society can be seen as a form of mobilization against the prevailing immorality.
4. **Identity and Intersectionality:** The evolution of cancel culture within woke culture has been influenced by identity politics and intersectionality. Similarly, in the story of Prophet Lūt, his challenge to the societal norm intersected with the moral and ethical dimensions of his role as a prophet, highlighting the interconnectedness of social and moral issues.

Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, even though the story of Prophet Lūt is a religious narrative with spiritual and ethical implications, cancel culture within woke ideology is a socio-political phenomenon driven by contemporary social dynamics, drawing parallels

between religious narratives and modern social issues such as these can provide insights into how societal challenges and responses have manifested across different times and contexts. Today, human social values are challenged to its very core. Deviant social norms that manifest in the form of sexual proclivity are forcefully presented as “virtues” and anyone who dares opposes this is eventually canceled under the guise of the defense of social justice. That is why aligning the concept of social justice with Islamic ethical teachings is a bizarre undertaking. Because under the social justice framework, anything goes. And until the rational segment of the society, particularly Muslim ethicists come together in defense of common good this moral corruption will continue to wax even stronger.

**Motivations Behind Cancel Culture:** Cancel culture within woke circles is often driven by a perceived need for “justice”, “accountability”, and “protection of marginalized communities”. Advocates argue that it serves as a tool to hold individuals responsible for harmful actions or statements, thus fostering a safer and more equitable society. The desire to dismantle “oppressive systems” and protect “vulnerable groups” underpins the motivations for canceling those deemed to perpetuate “harmful ideologies or behaviors”.<sup>21</sup> Thus LGBTQ+ are regarded as vulnerable communities in the woke leftist liberal ideology. And the systems which do not tolerate these tendencies are perceived as “oppressive systems”. We have just witnessed a genuine and legitimate attempt in 2023 by the Ugandan Parliament to safeguard the moral virtues inherent in the social values of Uganda by legislating against attempts at entrenching the culture of homosexuality. This led to the growing cancellation of Uganda in the form of its isolation and ridicule by the West. Astonishingly, the United Nations has also joined in making Uganda a pariah on the international scene. Hence one couldn’t help but wonder which value is the UN upholding.

**The Cancellation Process and Its Consequences:** The process of canceling an individual typically involves publicizing alleged wrongdoing, demanding apologies or accountability, and calling for boycotts or social isolation. While proponents assert that cancel culture empowers the marginalized and holds the powerful accountable, critics argue that it can lead to mob mentality, lack of due process, and even personal attacks. The consequences of cancellation can be severe, often resulting in reputational damage, loss of livelihood, and significant emotional distress for the targeted individuals.

The cancellation process, within the context of cancel culture, often occurs outside the legal realm and is driven by social and public pressure rather than formal legal procedures. It involves public backlash, social media campaigns, boycotts, and calls for accountability directed at individuals, organizations, or entities perceived to have engaged in “objectionable behavior” or “expressed controversial views”. While cancel culture does not typically involve legal actions, its consequences can sometimes intersect with the legal realm in various ways:

1. **Defamation and Libel:** In some cases, cancel culture campaigns can involve the spread of false or damaging information about a person or entity. If the information shared is defamatory or libelous, legal actions related to defamation could be pursued.
2. **Harassment and Cyberbullying:** Intense cancel culture campaigns may lead to online harassment and cyberbullying of the targeted individual. If the harassment reaches a level that violates laws against stalking or cyberbullying, individual rights may be said to be violated.<sup>22</sup>

3. **Employment and Contracts:** Cancel culture can impact a person's employment, business relationships, or contractual agreements. If someone is wrongfully terminated, denied opportunities, or experiences a breach of contract due to cancel culture pressures, he has the right to seek legal remedies.
4. **Privacy and Data Protection:** Cancel culture campaigns can involve the public exposure of private information or personal data. If such actions violate privacy laws or data protection regulations, legal action could be pursued.<sup>23</sup>
5. **Hate Speech and Incitement:** If cancel culture involves hate speech, incitement to violence, or other forms of speech that cross legal boundaries, legal consequences could arise based on laws governing hate speech and incitement.
6. **Intellectual Property Violations:** Cancel culture campaigns might involve the unauthorized use of copyrighted material or intellectual property. Legal actions related to copyright infringement or intellectual property violations could be initiated.
7. **Criminal Defamation or Slander:** In some jurisdictions, particularly if the cancel culture campaign involves false and damaging statements, there might be legal implications under criminal defamation or slander laws.

**Impact on Freedom of Expression and Dialogue:** Cancel culture's prevalence has sparked debates about the implications it holds for freedom of expression and open dialogue. The fear of being canceled may stifle diverse perspectives and discourage open discussions, hindering the free exchange of ideas necessary for societal progress. Striking a balance between accountability and fostering a culture of dialogue remains a complex challenge within woke circles.

**Nuanced Approaches to Accountability:** Critics of cancel culture advocate for more nuanced approaches to addressing problematic behavior, emphasizing the importance of restorative justice and education over punitive measures. They argue that focusing on growth and learning opportunities for individuals may lead to more meaningful changes in attitudes and behavior.<sup>24</sup>

Cancel culture's emergence has significantly impacted contemporary sociocultural dynamics. Understanding the origins, motivations, and implications of cancel culture provides valuable insights into the complexities of navigating "social justice issues" within the modern world. As society grapples with questions of accountability, justice, and freedom of expression, it is crucial to engage in constructive discussions that seek to balance social progress with empathy, and understanding. The Quranic example demonstrates that striving for a more compassionate and thoughtful approach to addressing contentious issues remains vital for the growth and cohesion of a diverse and ever-evolving global society.

"And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."<sup>25</sup>

This verse was revealed to Moses and Aaron. It advised them not to cancel or shun Pharaoh, despite his crimes against the Banū Isrāīl, but to engage him constructively. The verse suggests that through gentle and constructive dialogue, there is a possibility that Pharaoh may change his ways or develop a sense of fear or reverence towards Allah.

The verse equally suggests that by striving for a compassionate and thoughtful approach, we can foster growth and cohesion within a diverse and ever-evolving society. This



involves actively listening to different perspectives, promoting dialogue that encourages empathy and understanding, and working towards finding common ground that respects the rights and dignity of all individuals involved rather than canceling them. Ultimately, the verse encourages us to navigate the challenging societal issues with wisdom, respect, and a commitment to fostering positive change. This argument is further reinforced in the following hadith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sent Abū Mūsā and Muādh to Yemen and advised them,

"Make things easy and do not make them difficult, give glad tidings and do not create aversion, and cooperate."<sup>26</sup>

When juxtaposing the verse "But speak to him mildly; perchance he may take warning or fear (Allah)" and the above hadith that advises making things easy, giving glad tidings, and cooperating, to discourage cancel culture, it becomes evident that both teachings promote a compassionate and thoughtful approach in dealing with others. The hadith also emphasizes the importance of giving people a chance to change, guiding them toward self-reflection, and promoting positive transformation.

**The Nature of Opposition: Parallelism in Prophet Lūt's Time and Woke Culture:** In this segment, we take a closer examination of the reasons behind the opposition faced by Prophet Lūt vis-a-vis the reasons for cancellation within the woke culture to find common threads. These threads are rooted in the concept of "othering" as demonstrated in the ensuing argument presented in the paper.

**Historical Context: Opposition Faced by Prophet Lūt and His Followers:** In the Quranic narrative, Prophet Lūt and his followers were met with vehement opposition from the people of Sodom due to their preaching of monotheism and righteousness. The inhabitants of Sodom, deeply entrenched in their immoral practices, regarded Prophet Lūt's message as a direct challenge to their way of life [Quran 27:54-56].

"And 'remember' Lot, when he rebuked 'the men of' his people, "Do you commit that shameful deed while you can see 'one another'?"

Do you really lust after men instead of women? In fact, you are only a people acting ignorantly." But his people's only response was to say, "Expel Lot's followers from your land! They are a people who wish to remain chaste!"<sup>27</sup>

This opposition was driven by a fear of change, a threat to established norms, and a sense of discomfort caused by the possibility of personal accountability for their actions.

**Contemporary Cancel Culture: Reasons for Cancellation:** The reasons for cancellation within woke culture are often underpinned by similar fears and discomforts. Individuals or ideas that challenge prevailing societal norms or question deeply ingrained ideologies can trigger opposition from those who feel threatened by change. In the world of social media, a public figure expressing a controversial opinion might face swift backlash in the form of cancellation campaigns. This can stem from a fear of ideological disruption, and a desire to preserve the status quo.

**The Role of "Othering" in Historical and Contemporary Contexts:** Both in the story of Prophet Lūt and in cancel culture scenarios, the concept of "othering" plays a pivotal role. In Prophet Lūt's time, the people of Sodom perceived the Prophet and his followers as outsiders challenging their social order. This "othering" was used by the *Kuffār* to justify

their opposition and facilitate the dehumanization of the Prophet's message. Similarly, cancel culture can involve the perception of specific individuals or ideas as "other," marking them as different from the norms being promoted.<sup>28</sup>

### Practical Examples:

1. **Prophet Lūt's Time:** The people of Sodom labeled Prophet Lūt's call for righteousness as a disruption to their way of life, branding him as an outsider meddling in their affairs. This perception of "otherness" led to their collective rejection of his message.
2. **Cancel Culture Today:** A contemporary example could involve a public figure expressing "unpopular" opinions on social media. If these opinions challenge prevailing "cultural norms", they may be perceived as an intrusion into societal values, prompting cancellation attempts by those who view these opinions as "other."

**Impact on Divergent Viewpoints:** In both historical and contemporary contexts, the stifling of divergent viewpoints is a common consequence of opposition driven by "othering." Prophet Lūt's struggle illustrates how suppressing diverse perspectives can lead to societal stagnation and/or its ultimate damnation. Similarly, cancel culture's tendency to silence dissenting voices can hinder meaningful dialogue and the exchange of ideas.<sup>29</sup>

**Accountability vs. Cancellation: Evaluating the Impact:** Cancel culture, often motivated by the desire to hold individuals accountable for their actions and words, has become a focal point of contemporary social discourse. However, as this approach raises questions about its punitive (castigatory) nature and the potential for redemption, it prompts an exploration of alternative models of accountability.<sup>30</sup> Drawing inspiration from the Quranic narrative of Pharaoh and the approach taken by Moses and Aaron, we can evaluate the efficacy and fairness of cancel culture within this broader context.

**The Intent of Cancel Culture: 'Accountability and Consequences':** Proponents of cancel culture argued that woke ideology emerged as a response to the lack of accountability for individuals who perpetuate 'harmful ideologies or behaviors'. By publicly addressing and condemning 'objectionable actions', cancel culture aims to create consequences for those who would otherwise escape repercussions.<sup>31</sup> They further contend that this approach helps correct power imbalances and encourages a re-evaluation of personal conduct.

**Debates Surrounding Cancellation: Punishment and Redemption:** Critics of cancel culture raise valid concerns about the potential consequences of swift and severe punishments. The question of whether cancellation allows room for personal growth, redemption, and meaningful change remains at the forefront of these debates.<sup>32</sup> Cancel culture does not in any way provide individuals the opportunity to learn from their mistakes or engage in constructive dialogue.

**Learning from the Quran: Constructive Engagement with Pharaoh:** The Quranic account of Pharaoh's atrocities against the Jews presents a thought-provoking contrast to the prevailing cancel culture approach. Despite Pharaoh's grave transgressions, Allah instructed Moses and Aaron to engage with him constructively [Quran 20:43-44]. This divine directive aimed at transforming a tyrant through discourse rather than shunning him outright. This approach demonstrates a commitment to change and redemption through dialogue.<sup>33</sup>

### Practical Examples:

1. **Cancel Culture:** In the realm of cancel culture, a public figure who expresses offensive remarks may face immediate and severe backlash, which might include loss of employment, reputation, and public standing.
2. **Quranic Narrative:** Moses and Aaron's interaction with Pharaoh showcases a different approach. Despite Pharaoh's atrocious leadership style, Moses was instructed to engage him in dialogue and provide opportunities for change.

**Initiating a Conversation: Comparing Divine Approach with Cancel Culture:** The Quranic narrative of Pharaoh suggests an alternative model of accountability—one that prioritizes constructive engagement over shunning. By juxtaposing this divine approach with the outcomes of cancel culture, we can initiate a conversation about the broader impact of cancelation. While the proponents of woke ideology argue that cancel culture addresses accountability, they however fail to come to terms with the fact that it often misses the potential for transformation and personal growth that arises from constructive dialogue.

Thus, the evaluation of cancel culture's impact, when contrasted with the Quranic story of Pharaoh, highlights the limitations inherent within woke ideology. Recognizing the potential for change through constructive engagement underscores the need for a balanced approach to addressing problematic behavior. As we navigate the nuances of cancel culture, we can draw inspiration from the Quran's emphasis on transformation and embrace a more compassionate and forward-looking perspective on accountability.

**Echoes of Forgiveness and Tolerance: Lessons from Sūratu Hūd:** The Quranic narrative of Prophet Lūt where Prophet Ibrāhīm pleaded for forgiveness for the people of Sodom offers profound lessons in forgiveness, tolerance, and the power of empathy. Despite the adversities faced by Prophet Lūt and his followers, including the moral corruption of Sodom's inhabitants, Prophet Ibrāhīm's plea for forgiveness, a disposition that fetched him the heavenly title of "the forbearing one" provides valuable insights for fostering healthier discussions in times of conflict.<sup>34</sup>

"And when the fear had left Abraham, and the glad tiding had been conveyed to him, he began to plead with Us for Lūt's people".<sup>35</sup>

**Importance of Open Dialogue and Empathy:** Prophet Lūt's example in Quran 11:78 underscores the importance of open dialogue, empathy, and understanding in addressing societal issues. Instead of reacting irrationally when the *Kuffār* were making violent attempts to sexually harass his guests who incidentally were angels (though, unknown to him), he engaged the intruders constructively.

"And his people came forward towards him, and for long they were used to practice of hateful and loathsome things (homosexuality). He said: "O my people! Here are my daughters: They are purer for you (if you marry)! Now fear Allah, and do not cover me with shame about my guests! Is there not one single right-minded man among you?"<sup>36</sup>

In the Quranic narrative, Prophet Lūt's response to the hostile crowd stands as a testament to his commitment to constructive engagement, even in the face of a tense and potentially dangerous situation. He recognized the gravity of the situation, where the people of Sodom intended to harm his guests. Instead of reacting with anger or hostility, Lūt chose a path of dialogue and empathy.<sup>37</sup> The following are some takeaways from the verse:

**Empathy and Understanding:** Prophet Lūt's offer to provide his daughters (in marriage) as a way to deter the crowd from committing a grave sin demonstrated his willingness to maintain a moral high ground, even as he faces a tormenting situation. This act reflects the importance of constructive engagement.

**Call for Right-Mindedness:** Prophet Lūt's plea, "Is there not one single right-minded man among you?" shows his hope for the possibility of redemption and change, even in a morally challenging environment. This call for self-reflection and moral rectitude highlights the power of addressing issues through dialogue rather than confrontation.

**Woke Cancellation: A Different Approach:** In contrast, woke cancellation often involves swift and public condemnation of individuals who are deemed to express 'controversial opinions or engage in objectionable behavior'. While the intent may be to hold individuals accountable, this approach can sometimes lead to a culture of exclusion and division.<sup>38</sup>

### Practical Examples:

1. **Prophet Ibrāhīm 's Forgiveness and Prophet Lūt's Constructive Engagement:** In the story, despite the people of Sodom's egregious behavior and opposition, Prophet Ibrāhīm 's plea for their forgiveness and Prophet Lūt's constructive engagement exemplifies their unwavering commitment to empathy and reconciliation.
2. **Contemporary Context:** In the contemporary world, individuals, groups, and even nation-states with differing ideologies often find themselves in heated debates. The prevailing liberal agenda tends to align with woke ideology to cancel those nations with divergent views on a host of socio-political issues. Now more than ever before, the liberal agenda is forcefully and shamelessly promoting deviant sexual proclivities. When some African states propose laws prohibiting gay activities, they not only face a backlash from the West, but the United Nations also threatens to withdraw several developmental funds for no reason other than attempts by these states to promulgate laws that reflect their value system! Then who has the role of de-escalating tensions and fostering productive discussions on the international scene?

**Applying Lessons from Prophet Lūt's Story:** The lessons from Prophet Lūt's story can be applied to contemporary discussions within woke culture. In a bid to react to Western liberal machinations on queer-related subjects, Muslim ethicists should embrace broadmindedness even in the face of opposing views, as this can lead to more constructive and harmonious interactions. Embracing empathy enables erring individuals from diverse backgrounds to understand Islamic experiences and perspectives, thereby fostering an environment of mutual respect. No doubt, the story of Prophet Lūt's forgiveness and tolerance serves as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of empathy and open dialogue in a world suffocated by a liberal agenda. By drawing lessons from his example, Muslim intellectuals can move towards healthier discussions that prioritize understanding over confrontation.

**Conclusion:** Through the exploration of Islamic teachings and the parallel of cancel culture, this paper sheds light on the significance of empathy, understanding, and constructive dialogue in addressing social issues within the world community. The story of Prophet Lūt in Sodom exemplifies the importance of understanding the psychology of woke culture while upholding moral principles, as well as the power of addressing issues through dialogue rather than confrontation. In contrast, woke cancellation, characterized by swift and public condemnation, often leads to exclusion and division. By embracing the

teachings of Islam, Muslim ethicists can foster an environment that promotes growth and learning while avoiding the pitfalls of cancel culture.

The lessons derived from Islamic teachings advocate for a gentle and respectful manner of communication, allowing individuals the opportunity to change, encouraging self-reflection, and promoting positive transformation, this is necessarily so because some Muslim thinkers are also beginning to borrow from woke ideology by engaging in canceling erring individuals in the name of promoting ethical behavior. Hence, building upon commonalities and addressing differences through dialogue can create a more harmonious global society, free from an incessant Western bully that seeks to entrench moral corruption in the civilized world.

Through understanding the nature of the opposition and the machinations of the deviant West that seeks to corrupt the pristine moral and ethical values, Muslim states can navigate the complexities of the world order in pursuit of an effective strategy to counter the liberal philosophical narrative. Hence, the teachings of Islam provide valuable insights and lessons for navigating opposition and promoting constructive dialogue within the context of cancel culture.

**Recommendations:** Based on the teachings of Islam and the insights gained from the parallel of cancel culture, the following recommendations can be made to navigate opposition and promote constructive dialogue:

1. Encourage empathy and understanding: Foster an environment that values empathy and understanding, recognizing that individuals may have different perspectives and experiences. By listening actively and seeking to understand others, we can bridge divides and promote dialogue.
2. Educate and raise awareness: Address the root causes of cancel culture by promoting education and awareness. Encourage individuals to learn about diverse perspectives, historical context, and the potential impact of their actions. By fostering a culture of learning and growth, we can reduce the tendency to cancel and encourage individuals to engage in thoughtful dialogue.
3. Build bridges and find common ground: The OIC member states for example should look for areas of shared values and interests to build bridges and foster unity. Emphasize the importance of working together toward common goals, even with other international blocs with whom they may have differences. By seeking common ground, they can promote collaboration and understanding, leading to more effective solutions to societal challenges.

#### **Suggestions for Further Studies:**

1. Comparative analysis of cancel culture in different cultural and religious contexts: Explore how cancel culture manifests and is addressed within different cultural and religious frameworks. Compare the approaches and values upheld by different societies in navigating opposition and promoting constructive dialogue.
2. Impact of cancel culture on individual well-being and mental health: Investigate the psychological impact of cancel culture on individuals who have been canceled or faced public condemnation. Examine the potential long-term effects on their mental health, self-esteem, and social relationships.

3. Role of media in cancel culture: Analyze the influence of media platforms in shaping and propagating cancel culture. Investigate the role of social media, online communities, and traditional media in amplifying cancellation and its implications for public discourse.
4. Historical analysis of opposition and constructive dialogue: Conduct a historical analysis of different cultures and civilizations to understand how opposition and constructive dialogue have been navigated throughout history. Draw lessons and insights from historical examples to inform contemporary approaches.
5. Ethics and accountability within cancel culture: Examine the ethical implications of cancel culture, including questions of accountability, forgiveness, and redemption. Investigate alternative models of accountability that prioritize growth, learning, and meaningful change.

### Notes and References:

- 
- <sup>1</sup> J. Butler, *J. Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University Press, 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> N.A. Nuamah, N. A. Cancel Culture: A Tool for Progress or the Road to Ruin? *The Point Magazine*, 2021, January 15
- <sup>3</sup> C. Pash. Engaging Productively in Online Conflict: An Analysis of Cancel Culture. *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 14, 2020, pp. 365-371.
- <sup>4</sup> B. Rand, G. David., et al. Social Heuristics Shape Intuitive Cooperation. *Nature Communications*, vol. 5, no. 3677, 2014.
- <sup>5</sup> A.Y. Ali. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Amana Publications, 2000.
- <sup>6</sup> Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 421.
- <sup>7</sup> J. Khaleel. The Story of Lūt in the Quran. *The Islamic Monthly*, 2015, September 2.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Hilali, and K.M. Taqi-ud-Din. *The Noble Qur'an*. Riyadh, Darussalam Publishers, 2003. P. 375
- <sup>9</sup> Khaleel, *The Story of Lūt in the Quran*, 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>11</sup> Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 341.
- <sup>12</sup> Hilali, and Taqi-ud-Din, *The Noble Qur'an*, 376.
- <sup>13</sup> H. Ibn Kathir. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*. Dar Al-fikr. 1993. P.385.
- <sup>14</sup> M.J. Al-Tabari. *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah. 1983.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibn Kathir. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*, 421.
- <sup>16</sup> Khaleel, *The Story of Lūt in the Quran*, 3.
- <sup>17</sup> M.W. Dixon. The Practice of Cancel Culture: Implications for Communication, Power, and Ethics. *Communication Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 2, 2020, pp. 217-238.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>19</sup> C. Schamel. The Liberal as an Enemy of Queer Justice. *A Social Justice Forum*, vol 6 issue 1, 2020. [www.trace.tennessee.edu](http://www.trace.tennessee.edu)
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>21</sup> M.C. Nisbet, M.C., and N. Brendan. The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 22, 2019, pp. 129-146.
- <sup>22</sup> E.G. Krumhuber, et al. Empathy in Virtual Reality: Enhanced Perspective Taking through Access to the Plight of Others. *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 62, 2016, pp. 526-533. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/computers-in-human-behavior>
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>24</sup> A. Kohn. The Limits of Call-Out Culture: A Conversation with Loretta Ross. *The New Yorker*. 2019, October 2.
- <sup>25</sup> Hilali, and Taqi-ud-Din, *The Noble Qur'an*, 396.
- <sup>26</sup> Transmitted by Muslim hadith no. 2041.
- <sup>27</sup> Hilali, and Taqi-ud-Din, *The Noble Qur'an*, 377.
- <sup>28</sup> N.A. Nuamah. Cancel Culture: A Tool for Progress or the Road to Ruin? *The Point Magazine*. 2021, January 15.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>30</sup> Rand, David., et al. Social Heuristics Shape, 8.
- <sup>31</sup> Pash. Engaging Productively in Online Conflict, 368.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>33</sup> T. Ramadan. *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad*. Penguin UK. 2008
- <sup>34</sup> Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 461.
- <sup>35</sup> Hilali, and Taqi-ud-Din, *The Noble Qur'an*, 387.
- <sup>36</sup> Hilali, and Taqi-ud-Din, *The Noble Qur'an*, 347.
- <sup>37</sup> Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 461.
- <sup>38</sup> Ö. Sensoy and D. Robin. Towards a conception of white guilt: Implications for white Americans. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2009, pp. 301-317.