

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP PREACH-IN



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Domestic Violence and Islam

Surah 30:21, "And among His (God's) signs (miracles) is that He (God) created for you, mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put between you love and mercy. Surely in this are signs for those who reflect."

- We are to find repose with our spouses.

Islam clearly prohibits all forms of oppression and emphasizes the importance of justice among all people, especially the family.

- *Surah 5:8 reminds Muslims about the importance of justice: "O you who believe, Be steadfast for Allah, bearing witness by justice, and do not let hatred, anger, or any people prevent you from being just. Judge fairly! That is close to God-Consciousness so be conscious of God. Allah is All-knowing."*
- The Qur'an also commands the believers to stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor: for Allah can protect you both"

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Surah 4:135, "Oh you who believe! Be steadfast in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourself, parents, or relatives, whether they are rich or poor, for God is the Protector of both. So do not follow your desires lest you deviate from God's way. If you distort the truth, God is aware of what you do."

- Islam places a high value on marriage and families and provides teachings on how to maintain healthy and peaceful families.
- An Islamic marriage is one grounded in mercy and love, where each spouse can find tranquility. (30:21)
- The Qur'an says in Surah 2:187, "...they are your garments and you are their garments..."
- When abuse is occurring, the entire premise on which that family has been formed is shaken or destroyed.
- There is no teaching in the Qur'an that encourages people to stay in a relationship in which they are being mistreated, intimidated, threatened, or oppressed in any way.
- When people cannot live together in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, then Allah suggests that they separate in peace: "...The parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness..."
- Surah 2:229, "A divorce may be revoked twice: After that, The parties should either hold together on equitable and fair terms Or separate with kindness. It is not lawful for you, (Men), to take back anything of what you have ever given your wives, Except when both parties fear that they would be able to keep within the limits ordained by Allah. There shall be no sin upon either of them for what the wife may give up in order to free herself.
- There exists a number of highly-authentic ahadith to the effect that the wife of Thabit ibn Qays, Jamilah, came to the Prophet and demanded a divorce from

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her husband on the ground that, in spite of his irreproachable character and behavior, she “disliked him as she would dislike falling into unbelief after having accepted Islam.” Thereupon the Prophet ordained that she should return to Thabit the garden which he had given to her as dower (*mahr*) at the time of their wedding, and decreed that the marriage should be dissolved.

- There are clear teachings in the Qur'an to prevent oppression and to intervene when it is occurring.
- Surah 48:9 says, “If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel or fighting, make peace between them. But if one of them goes on acting wrongfully towards the other, fight (you all) against the one who acts wrongfully until they comply with the command of Allah. If they revert, make peace between them with justice, and deal equitably with them: for verily Allah loves those who are fair and just and act equitably.”

Gender Roles: The Qur'an says that God created human beings (male and female) to worship Him and to be His “*khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth,” Surah 2:30 implementing His commands and following His guidance.

- Each person is equally and directly accountable to God and neither gender has superiority over the other.
- Within the family, each gender maintains his or her primary relationship to God and is responsible for contributing to a family environment that is God-conscious.
- Spouses are to interact with each other in ways that are part of an Islamic character, and should treat each other with respect, compassion, and love.
- Spouses are described in the Qur'an as “a pair.”
- Half of a pair cannot function completely in the marital relationship without the other, and neither half is inherently more valuable.
- Both “halves” are interdependent and must work together in order to have a healthy and harmonious relationship.

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- Each person (or half) has certain gender-specific roles to play that are complementary to each other.
- Women have unique qualities enabling them to bear and nurse children; thus, this is a unique role for them.
- Men's roles are defined in Surah 4:34 as follows, "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means..."
- The Muslim man is the shepherd and imam of the family; this is more about responsibility than the too often misunderstood possession of "rights."
- This leadership role is to be fulfilled according to the criteria specified in the Qur'an and Sunnah. For example, decisions should be made through mutual consultation (*shura*) and should not be determined unilaterally to be imposed on the other party.

Surah 42:38, "(believers are) ... those who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation..."

Surah 65:6, "Let the women live in the same style as you live...and take mutual counsel together according to what is just and reasonable..."

- There must be room for negotiation and even disagreement, as was evidenced in the manner in which the Prophet Muhammad treated his wives.
- The mutuality that is part and parcel of the relationship must never be forgotten; spouses are described in Surah 2:187, as "garments for one another,"
- This signifies that they are each responsible for taking care of and protecting each other.
- It is a mistake for Muslims to believe that men are superior to women, or that men have the right to control women or dictate to them.

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- This attitude is completely contrary to the example of Prophet Muhammad, who consulted his wives in many matters, including those related to his position as head of state.
- The Qur'an is very clear in stating that the only manner in which Allah holds one person in higher esteem than another person, regardless of gender, is by virtue of his or her degree of God-consciousness (*taqwa*) or piety.

Surah 49:13, "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female...that you may know each other...Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you..."

Misused Verses From Qur'an and Hadith

- Some verses are commonly cited out of context from the Qur'an and hadith by abusers to justify their maltreatment and manipulate their spouses behavior.
- This equates to spiritual abuse and women will often comply in order not to "anger God."
- The abuser's distorted presentation misleads victims.
- Many abusers justify their behavior by quoting the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) saying,...

"If I were to ask someone to bow down to another human being, I would order wives to bow down to their husbands."

- Abusers fail to acknowledge that the hadith begins with a conditional clause.
- Many scholars have questioned the authenticity of this hadith: It is reported that this hadith was narrated after a Companion insisted on bowing to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) when he returned from travels in which he had seen others bowing to their priest.

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- The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) never allowed anyone to bow down to him or even stand when he entered a room.

Surah 49:13, "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female...that you may know each other...Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you..."

- It is the degree to which one is God-conscious that raises one person over another, not their gender.
- God rules over all His creation and each person (male or female) is directly accountable to Him.
- The verse most commonly used out of context to justify wife beating is the second half of *Surah 4:34*, "...As to those women on whose part you fear *nushuz* (lewd conduct), admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last) *wadribuhunna*..."
- This is the same verse that assigns men the responsibility for providing for women financially.
- This verse has often been misinterpreted by many to mean that women are to be blindly obedient to their husbands.
- The context of the verse is a three-step process to be implemented when a woman is promiscuous.
- Promiscuity undermines the family.
- The word *nushuz* does not refer to a woman expressing her opinion, or exercising her free will within the boundaries of Islamic teaching.
- This same word has been used to describe men's aberrant behavior in *Surah 4:128* and has been translated by Yusuf Ali as "cruelty or desertion."

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- ⦿ The problem is one of interpretation and translation of the Qur'anic text from original Arabic (only the original is accepted as the word of Allah (God)).
- ⦿ This has created the controversy surrounding this verse.
- ⦿ The first two steps outlined in Surah 4:34 are "...admonish them, then leave them alone in their bed..." The third step outlined in the verse is often translated "strike them lightly (*daraba*)" but it has also been translated as "go away from them, which is more consistent with the example of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) when he had difficulty with his wives.
- ⦿ In America when we play baseball and get a strike, we don't actually hit the ball.
- ⦿ A footnote found in Muhammad Asad's translation of Qur'an (1980) emphasizes that Prophet Muhammad "intensely detested the idea of beating one's wife."
- ⦿ In the same footnote, Asad cites the saying of the Prophet: "Never beat Allah's handmaidens."
- ⦿ In addition he adds that most scholars agree that any "beating" should be symbolic (using something like a handkerchief), cannot leave any mark or cause injury, and can only be resorted to if the wife committed an immoral or lewd act.
- ⦿ Different translations have been affected by cultural and historical contexts in which the interpreters and translators of the Qur'an lived.
- ⦿ The same word "*daraba*" is used in the Qur'an with multiple context and meanings.
- ⦿ Interpreting the word to mean "hit" or "strike" conflicts with the understanding of the material relationship that is derived from a holistic reading of the Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).
- ⦿ *Surah 2:231, "And when you divorce women, and they have reached the end of their waiting term (three menses), then either retain them honorably or let them*

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go honorably, and do not retain them against their will to harm or hurt them, (or) take undue advantage; If anyone does that, he wrongs and darkens his own soul. Do not treat Allah's signs as a joke and remember the Grace of Allah upon you and what He has sent down upon you from the Book and the Wisdom (contained within it), that He might caution you by it. So safeguard your selves for Allah and know that Allah knows all things."

- Chapter 2:231 is a command from Allah to men that when one of them divorces his wife with a reversible divorce, he should treat her kindly during her 'Iddah (waiting period of three menses).
- This command explicitly prohibits men from inflicting any injury or harm (darar) or disadvantaging their wives during times of conflict, and specifically divorce.

Reference: Hans Wehr: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic Page 538; Al-Mawrid Arabic-English Dictionary Page 511

- It goes without saying, that, harm is not to be inflicted during times of peace.
- The three-step process found in Surah 4:34 should be viewed as a part of a larger process of conflict management and can be applied when safety is established.
- Surah 4:35 outlines the arbitration process to be employed when divorce is eminent.
- Each partner is to appoint a neutral and trustworthy arbitrator from his/her family to help work through the issues, with the ultimate goal of reconciliation whenever possible.

Surah 4:35, "If you fear a breach between them both, appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers. If they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. For Allah has full knowledge and is acquainted with all things."

- Reconciliation should only be encouraged when neither party is being subjected to abuse, and when safety is absolutely guaranteed.

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- These conditions can only be met after abusers have taken the appropriate steps to change abusive attitudes and behaviors.
- The overarching juristic maxim, “There is to be no harm done or reciprocation of harm,” must be observed at all times.
- A verse that has been used to justify sexual abuse is Surah 2:223, *“Your wives are a tilth unto you so approach your tilth when or how you will; but do some good act for your souls beforehand; and fear Allah, and know that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter)...”*
- When the first part of this verse is taken out of context, men who are abusive use it to manipulate their wives into submitting to sexual acts that are uncomfortable, undesirable, or prohibited in Islam.
- The second part of this verse declares that the sexual part of a relationship incorporates a spiritual aspect and accountability; Allah is a witness to it and both spouses will be held accountable.
- Another misused hadith by husbands is, “If a husband calls his wife to bed, and she refuses, causing him to go to sleep angry, the angels will curse her till the morning.”
- This hadith merely points out the importance of a wife accommodating her husband’s sexual needs; it does not give him the right to ignore her needs or force her to have sexual relations.
- One hadith states that when spouses make love, it should be as if they had provided a banquet for each other.
- Both parties are to be sexually satisfied.
- It is not immodest for a women to approach her husband for sexual fulfillment.
- A husband will be punished for neglecting his spouse sexually.

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- One of the Companions of the Prophet was admonished for spending the whole night in prayer, with a reminder that his wife has a right over him.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ISLAM

- Within the Islamic paradigm of a healthy marriage, neither partner should deny the other the right to have their physical needs met.
- Providing mutual satisfaction and fulfillment in the relationship, making sure no harm or pain is caused to the other is indicated beautifully in the metaphor in Surah 2:187, "...they are your garments and you are their garments..."
- Often Muslims confuse cultural norms, beliefs, and attitudes about gender roles with Islamic teachings and beliefs.
- The majority of countries highly populated by Muslims support misogyny and oppress women in numerous ways.
- In these cultures, women are marginalized and men and women are socialized to accept the position of women as inferior.
- This encourages and facilitates abuse and violence towards females.
- These oppressive attitudes are reminiscent of the era prior to Islam, when women did not have rights.
- Prior to Islam, women were considered property of men and female infanticide was common.
- Islam raised women to be equal to men and does not burden with "the original sin."
- Islam gave women the right to vote, inherit, own property, be educated, obtain a divorce, hold positions of leadership in society.
- Islam elevated women's status as a mother through the teachings of the Prophet, "Paradise lies at the feet of the mothers."

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- Once a young man asked the Prophet, 'Who is most deserving of my respect?' He said, 'Your mother.' The young man said again, 'Then who?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The young man asked a third time, 'Then who?' The Prophet said, 'Your mother.' The young man asked the Prophet the fourth time and he replied, 'Your father.'"

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