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# GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & ISLAM

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WOMEN IN ISLAM SERIES



MUSLIMS FOR  
PROGRESSIVE VALUES



According to the UN's Declaration on the  
Elimination of Violence against Women

## GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IS

An act that results in, or is likely to result  
in, *physical, sexual or psychological* harm  
or suffering to women, including threats of  
such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation  
of liberty, whether occurring in *public* or in  
*private* life.



# Examples of Gender Based Violence

**Psychological  
Violence**

**Stalking**

**Physical Violence**

**Forced / Child  
Marriage**

**Sexual Violence &  
Harassment**

**Female Genital  
Mutilation**

**Honor Killings**

**Infanticide**



# GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an, through a number of verses (30:21, 9:71, 16:90, 4:19, and 2:187), is explicit in the protections that women are entitled to, their elevated status in Islam, and the importance of establishing and maintaining harmony between partners. Through these verses, Allah (SWT) implores any relationship to be one filled with peace, tranquility, and harmony. The presence of abuse or violence in any relationship or interaction is a violation of the sacredness of human relationships, particularly the institution of marriage, as established by the Qur'an. Likewise, the Qur'an is unambiguous in its instruction that individuals uphold justice (4:35, 5:8, and 49:9), implying that Muslims are responsible for preventing gender based violence in addition from being forbidden of committing such an act.



AND AMONG GOD'S SIGNS IS THIS: GOD CREATED FOR YOU MATES FROM AMONG YOURSELVES, THAT YOU MAY DWELL IN TRANQUILITY WITH THEM, AND GOD HAS PUT LOVE AND MERCY BETWEEN YOUR (HEARTS): VERILY IN THAT ARE SIGNS FOR THOSE WHO REFLECT.

*Qur'an 30:21*

# WHAT ABOUT VERSE 4:34?

## THE VERSE

"As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct (*nushūz*), admonish them first, next, refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat (*ḍaraba*) them (*iḍribū*) lightly." (Surah al-Nisa 4:34)

## DARABA

In traditional jurisprudence, *daraba* is often interpreted in this verse to mean "beat" but *daraba* is mentioned multiple times in the Qur'an and in these contexts is interpreted to mean "give an example" (14:24) or "go abroad" (4:94).

## HOW TO INTERPRET THE VERSE

In following with the Quranic precedents that call on humans to practice compassion, justice, and harmony above all else, we should understand that this verse is instructing the husband to physically separate himself from the wife during marital disputes as domestic violence violates basic Quranic themes.



# GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & THE PROPHETIC TRADITIONS

A number of examples of the impermissibility of the gender based violence exist in both the Hadith and the Sunnah, as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) constantly demonstrated the high status that women are to be given in society. These traditions, from treating women with kindness, to refusing to abuse his wives, to highlighting the status of women in Islam during his last sermon, made clear that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never once condoned gender based violence and instead, sought out every opportunity to condemn the practice.

“We Quraish used to control our women, but when we came to the Ansar (the helpers in Medina) we found that they were a people who were controlled by their women. So our women started to adopt the ways of the Ansari women. I got angry with my wife and she argued with me and I did not like her arguing with me. She said, ‘Why do you object to me arguing with you? By Allah, the wives of the Prophet argue with him...’”

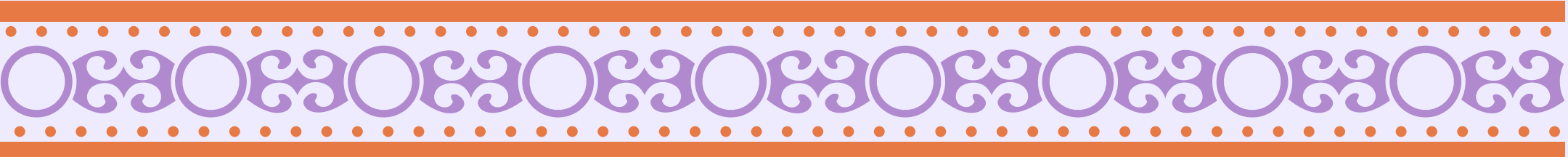
Umar bin al-Khattab

According to Ibn  
Hajar Al-  
Asqalani

"The Prophet (PBUH) adopted the way of the Ansar with their women and forsook the way of his people..."

According to these Hadiths, we see that rather than continue the misogynistic practices of his predecessors, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) chose instead to follow Quranic instructions to maintain peace with women.





Is there a general principle in Islamic jurisprudence that prohibits gender based violence?

The concept of *maslaha mursalah* (a type of benefit that is considered to be good in a reasonable sense for public interest) in Islamic jurisprudence calls on all individuals to proactively pursue benefits for all humankind by prohibiting or allowing something depending on whether it serves to benefit the entire Muslim community. *Maslahah mursalah* obliges Muslims to act in the unrestricted best interest of the public, which implies that Muslims must protect against various practices that are categorized as gender based violence.



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