

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & ISLAM

WOMEN IN ISLAM SERIES V

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

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. Gender Based Violence includes:

Physical Violence

Forced Marriage

Sexual Violence

FGM/C

Honor Killings

Infanticide

IN 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.

WHAT ABOUT SURAH AL-NISA 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 (idribū) 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 & in these contexts is interpreted to mean "give an example" (14:24) or "go abroad" (4:94).

INTERPRETING THE VERSE

In following Quranic principles that call on humans to practice compassion, justice, & harmony, we can understand 4:34 as instructing a husband to physically separate from the wife during marital disputes as violence violates these themes.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE & PROPHETIC TRADITIONS

A number of examples of the impermissibility of the gender based violence exist in both the Hadith and the Sunnah. 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.

ACCORDING TO UMAR BIN AL-KHATTAB

"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...'"