

Garments for One Another: Islamic Perspectives on Gender, Marriage and Domestic Violence

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Working toward ending all types
of abuse in Muslim families.



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About Peaceful Families Project

- National non-profit 501(c) 3 with international scope
- Education & Training for leaders, community members & service providers
 - Domestic Violence Awareness
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Cultural Competency
- Resource Development
- Research
- Technical Assistance for DV Service Providers
- Muslim Advocates Network Against DV

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Objectives



- Participants will gain understanding of domestic violence (DV) as it occurs in Muslim communities
- Participants will learn the prevalence and attitudes around DV in diverse Muslim communities
- Participants will understand some cultural expressions of DV in Muslim communities
- Participants will learn ways to prevent and address DV in Muslim communities

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QUICK QUIZ

1. In Islam women are considered less valuable than men
2. In Islam the goal of marriage is procreation
3. In Islam it is permissible to use physical violence against family members to ensure that they follow the husbands/ fathers commands
4. In Islam only men can initiate divorce
5. In Islam parents have the final say as to who you marry

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What is Islam?

- Islam is an Abrahamic monotheological religious tradition that has as its main tenet the ideal of one God (Allah).
- Islam incorporates most of the prophets and teachings of the Torah and the Bible but adds Muhammad (PBUH) as the final prophet of Allah.
- The five tenets of Islam are: the belief in one God, praying 5 times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadan, making pilgrimage to Mecca, and giving Zakat (charity)
- Sharia Law is the set of rules that accompany Islam for believers to follow to create families and communities that function well according to the rules of life set out in the Quran

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Who are Muslims?

- According to the latest PEW survey Muslims are the most diverse religious group in the US.
- In the US Islam was first rooted in African American Communities who saw Islam as an alternative to colonial religious traditions.
- Muslims are 65% first generation immigrant communities including Arabic Speaking, African, Asian, South Asian, Persian, etc.
- Latinx individuals make up the largest population of new Muslims

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Culture vs Religion

Many of practises thought to be “Islamic” are actually cultural issues not addressed in the Quran such as female circumcision, arranged marriages, inner family marriages, dowries, etc.

Other practises are mentioned in the quran but left to personal discretion including modesty, polygamy, etc.

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Sources of Knowledge

The Qur'an

- Divine Revelation
- Includes morals, principles, values, laws, prophets' stories
- Illustrated in daily life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Sunnah

- Body of traditional, social & legal practice based on life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as transmitted through *Hadith* (his verbal sayings, actions, & silent permissions)

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Islam: A Preventive Model



- Applying Qur'anic teachings & following model of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ prevents major social issues including DV
- Important to analyze cultural practices in light of Islamic teachings
- Some cultural practices are un-Islamic and may facilitate or perpetuate domestic violence

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Islamic Paradigm



- Men & women created from single soul (4:1; 49:13)
- Men & women both created to serve God (2:30; 51:56)
- Men & women mutual friends & protectors of one another (9:71)
- Husband & wives are garments for one another (2:187)
- Marriage based on love, compassion & mercy with desired goal being tranquility (30:21)

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Relevant Islamic Values



Justice

- All oppression, including domestic violence, is prohibited

Mercy

- No harsh treatment is acceptable

Patience & Perseverance

- Endure trials by maintaining relationship with God
- Actively seek to end oppression

Forgiveness

- Does not mean acceptance of injustice/oppression
- Process facilitated by accountability & justice-making

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Freedom of Choice: No Coercion



- Religious teachings outline what is right & wrong, with consequences for each clearly outlined. Each person has freedom of choice (18:29-31; 88:21-24)
- No coercion, even in matters of religion (2:256)

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Accountability



- Each person has the freedom to choose their own behavior, with final accountability to God
- Others cannot be blamed for one's behavior (4:112; 6:164; 53:38-41)
- The perpetrator is solely responsible for abusive behavior.

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No Victim-Blaming



- “The blame is only against those who oppress people with wrongdoing & insolently transgress....defying right & justice....” (42:42)
- “And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring God to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins...and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly (in the wrong) they have done.” (3:135)

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Gender Roles in the Qur'an



- Complementary gender roles
- Men have leadership role in family & are financially responsible (*qiwaamah*) (4:34)
- Women guard the privacy/intimacy of the home (4:34)
- Emphasis on treating women with kindness & avoiding any harshness, even during divorce (2:225-227)
- Collaborative leadership model using mutual consultation (*shura*) (42:38)

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Qur'an Prohibits Verbal Abuse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْألقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. (49:11)

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- Ridicule
- Insults
- Name-calling

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Qur'an Also Prohibits Emotional Abuse

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O you who believe, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.

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- Accusations without evidence
- Spying
- Suspicion
- Backbiting

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No Physical or Verbal Abuse

A Muslim is one who avoids harming Muslims with his or her tongue and hands.

(Bukhari, book #2, hadith #9)

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Core Values

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! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single soul, created, of like nature, its mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you. (4:1)

- Primary relationship with Allah governs all other relationships
- Taqwa (God-consciousness)
- Equality
- Mutuality

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Men & Women

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (the one who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

- Different by design
- Must get to know each other
- Only superiority is in degree of taqwa
- Allah is watching over all

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Relationship Between Men & Women

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise. (9:71)

- Mutual responsibility to take care of each other
- Mutual responsibility to advise each other
- Obedience to Allah

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Qur'anic Model of Marriage

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.” (30:21)

- Mutual relationship
- Spouses created for one another
- Sakeenah (Tranquility)
- Mawaddah (Love)
- Rahmah (Mercy)
- Broader than rights & responsibilities

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How Spouses Relate to One Another

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا
تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ
بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيَّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ
فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

“....nor should you (men) treat them (women) with harshness.... live with them (women) on a footing of kindness and equity...” (4:19)

- Mutual care-taking, loving, nurturing
- Respect
- Kindness
- Mercy
- Humility

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Decision-Making

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

“[The believers are] those who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation....” (42:38)

- Spouses should practice the qualities of Believers with each other
- Prophet Muhammad ﷺ consulted his wives & companions

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Garments for One Another

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

“....They (women) are your garments and you (men) are their garments...” (2:187)

Mutual Care & Responsibility

- How do you care for a garment?
- What is the purpose of a garment?

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Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a Husband

- Embodied teachings of the Qur'an
- Expressed affection publicly & privately
- Expressed appreciation & gratitude
- Helped with household chores
- Avoided criticism & harsh language
- Corrected others' behavior gently & politely
- Used humor and was playful
- Was divorced

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Conflict Resolution

Conflict is normal part of every relationship

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ dealt with wives, companions, & enemies using multiple tools:

- Listening & validating when people complained to him
- Speaking & arguing in a kind, respectful manner (16:125)
- Agreeing to disagree (109: 1-6)
- Consultation with others
- Mediation
- Being forgiving, gentle & patient (3:159)
- Giving clear options (including divorce) when differences seem irreconcilable
- Taking time out

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Gender Roles

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ
حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِن
أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Men are the protectors & maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means....(4:34)

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- Allah is the Creator of both spouses
- Each spouse accountable to Allah
- Allah gave men an added *responsibility* of financial support
- This is NOT a right to be a dictator or tyrant, which is oppression

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4:34 Continued

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

“...Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (qanitaat), and guard in (the husband’s absence) what Allah would have them guard...” (4:34)

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- *Qanitaat* refers to obedience to Allah, not the husband
- Obedience to the husband is within the context of obedience to Allah. His leadership should follow model of Prophet ﷺ

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Remedy for Specific Situation

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْعُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

“...As to those women on whose part you fear disloyalty and ill-conduct (nushuz), admonish them first, then refuse to share their beds, and lastly wadribuhunna, but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means of annoyance, for Allah is Most High, Great” (4:34)

- *Specific situation: wife's immoral behavior*
- *Must begin with communication*
- *Separate beds emphasizes severity*
- *Daraba has multiple meanings including to leave, separate, strike, tap*

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Prophetic Model



Aisha reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, never struck anything with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, unless he was fighting in the way of Allah. (Muslim)

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The Husband's Nushuz (ill-conduct or cruelty)

وَإِنْ امْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

If a wife fears ill-conduct or cruelty (nushuz) or desertion or aversion (i`raad) on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if you do good and practice self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do. (4:128)

- *Either spouse can be guilty of nushuz*
- *Qur'an offers different remedy for each spouse's nushuz with goal of preserving family unit*
- *Neither remedy promotes abuse*

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Divorce: A Peaceful Option



- A legitimate option
 - Can be initiated by either spouse, or by an imam or judge
- Divorce is regulated to prevent injustice to either side, but especially to women
- "...the husbands should either retain their wives on equitable terms or let them go with kindness..." (2:229)

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وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." (25:74)

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Thank You!



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