



**Break the Silence:**  
The Central Ohio Faith Community  
Responds to Family Violence

Muslim Samples readings, and preaching suggestions  
(By Sa'idah Sharif, Newark, NJ. Reprinted with permission.)

Islam condemns family violence. Once a number of women came to the prophet, on whom be peace, to complain that their husbands had beaten them. The prophet announced that men who beat their wives are not good men. The prophet also said, "Do not beat the female servants of Allah."

Allah knows that life is not always a bowl of cherries. And so He stipulates that a man must be kind to his wife even if he happens to dislike her (Qur'an 4:19). Allah offers a good reason as to why men should not dislike their wives. Allah says that He has placed much good in women (Qur'an 4:19).

In this regard the prophet Muhammad, on whom be peace, said that no believing man should hold a grudge against a believing woman. So what is a husband to do if he dislikes some things about his wife? This is bound to occur, since no human being is perfect. The prophet instructed that men should look for the agreeable traits in their wives rather than focus on their faults. (See Saheeh Muslim, chapter on advice relating to women).

The prophet also advised men that if they wish to benefit from marriage they should accept their wives as they are rather than try to straighten them out and thus end up in divorce.

In the following verse of the Qur'an, Allah warns men that if they retain their wives in marriage it should not be to take advantage of them. The verse reads: "Retain them in kindness or release them in kindness. But do not retain them to their hurt so that you transgress (the limits). If anyone does that, he wrongs his own soul. Do not take God's instructions as a jest" (Qur'an 2:231).

Once the prophet, on whom be peace, was asked what are the obligations of husbands toward their wives. He replied: "Feed her when you eat, and provide her clothing when you provide yourself. Neither hit her on the face nor use impolite language when addressing her" (See Mishkat, chapter on the maintenance of women).

The prophet equated perfect belief with good treatment to one's wife when he said: "The most perfect believer is one who is the best in courtesy and amiable manners, and the best among you people is one who is most kind and courteous to his wives" (see Tirmidhi, chapter on the obligations of a man to his wife). Finally the prophet, the best example of conduct, said: "The best among you is the one who treats his family best."

Some of the last words of the prophet delivered during the farewell pilgrimage enjoins that men should hold themselves accountable before Allah concerning the question of how they treat their wives. Therefore his advice to all men, is as follows: "You must treat them with all kindness."

## Suggestions for Preaching About Family Violence (Islam)

Many Muslims believe that while family violence is a tragedy, it is a problem that does not affect our community. We cannot afford to lie to ourselves any longer- family violence is OUR problem as well. The usual response of the Muslim community to allegations of domestic abuse is that they don't want to "interfere" in a private family affair. Awareness of the existence of a problem, in the absence of efforts to remedy the situation amounts to our silent acceptance of the problem.

Hadhrat Jareer bin Abdullah said "I heard the Messenger of Allah (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) say "When a sin is committed before an individual or group and they do not prevent it, in spite of having the capability, then Allah inflicts a severe punishment on them before their death".

Undoubtedly the best examples of how families should communicate and interact can be found in the household of Prophet Muhammad (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) and his righteous companions (*radiallahu anhu*). For Rasullullah (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*), his relationship with his family was based on love and affection, not subordination and servitude.

In the Prophet's last sermon, he exhorted men to "be kind to women-you have rights over your wives, and they have rights over you." He also said, "Treat your women well, and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers," and at a different time, he said, "The strong man is not the one who can use the force of physical strength, but the one who controls his anger" (Bukhari).

Narrated Aisha:

Allah's Messenger (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) never beat anyone with his hand neither a woman nor a servant, but only in the case of when he had been fighting in the cause of Allah and he never took revenge for anything unless the things made inviolable by Allah were made violable; he then took revenge for Allah, the exalted and glorious.  
Muslim collected this Hadith # 1082

Narrated Abu Hurayrah:

Allah's Apostle (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) said: Do you know who is poor? They (the Companions of the Prophet) said: A poor man amongst us is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth. He (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) said: The poor of my Ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakat but (he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered at his hand). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then his sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire.  
Muslim collected this Hadith #1179

Ibn Hibban transmitted on the authority of Aisha that the Prophet (*salal lahu alayhi wasallam*) said, "The best of you is he who is the best to his family, and I am the best to my family."  
[Transmitted by Ibn Hibban Charity (El-Ehsan) Vol. 9 (4177)]

The Almighty says to men about their wives: "...live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a

great deal of good." [Surah 4:19]

Concerning strains in the relationship of husband and wife, Allah says: "If you fear a breach between them twain, appoint (two) arbitrators one from his family and the other from hers; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things." [Surah 4:35]

Every one of you is a guardian, and every one of you is liable to be questioned about those in his care. The man is a guardian with regard to his family, and is liable to be questioned about those in his care. The woman is a guardian with respect to her husband's house, and is liable to be questioned about that in her care. So, every one of you is a guardian, and every one of you is liable to be questioned about those in his care." (Bukhari, Muslim)

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