

# **WHAT DOES ISLAM SAY ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?**

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# WHAT IS ISLAM?

- Emphasizes the oneness of God
- Continuation of the message of Judaism & Christianity
- Teaches that God created human beings to worship Him and to be His representatives on Earth
- Teaches that everyone is accountable to God for his/her behavior
- Freedom to choose one's behavior
- Day of Judgment for final accountability

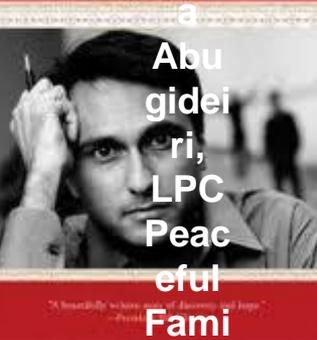
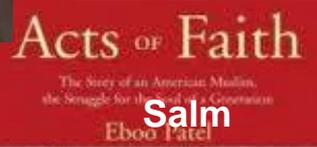
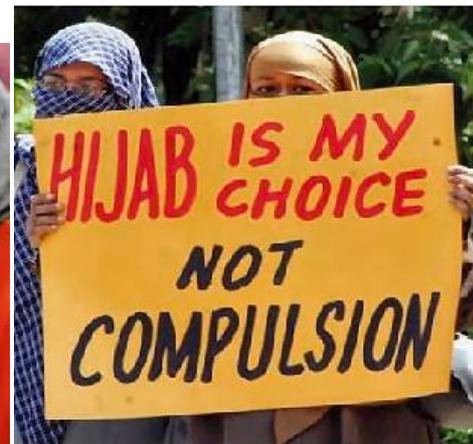


# WHO ARE THE MUSLIMS?



- “Muslim” means one who submits (to the will of God)
- Followers of Islam, an Arabic word from “peace”
- Muslims come from all over the world
- Approx 7 million Muslims in US
  - Largest concentrations: Detroit, CA, NY, VA
- Only 20% of all Muslims are Arab
- Largest populations are in Indonesia, Pakistan, India
- Approx 20 million Muslims in China
- Approx 90% of all Arabs are Muslim

# MUSLIM AMERICANS: “MIDDLE CLASS & MOSTLY MAINSTREAM” (PEW, 2007)



lies

# DIVERSITY AMONG MUSLIMS

Factors that affect the way Islam is practiced

- Ethnic background
- Religious knowledge
- Education
- Cultural rituals, values and norms
- Personality (flexible versus rigid)
- Degree of commitment



# SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

## Holy Qur'an

- Word of God
- Revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Angel Gabriel
- Revealed in Arabic
- Translated into most languages
- Contains main teachings, values, principles of Islam

## Sunnah

- Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad
- Living example of how to live according to the Qur'an
- His words and example recorded as *hadith* & *sunnah* for detailed example of daily life of Muslims

**Shari'ah**: Islamic Law Derived from Qur'an & Sunnah

# UNDERSTANDING THE QUR'AN

- Preventive model
  - Provides paradigm with principles, concepts & values for guiding human behavior
- Approach to interpreting Qur'an
  - Intra-textually; holistic approach
  - Referring to Prophet Muhammad's words & actions
- Translations & Interpretations
  - Subject to the historical & individual context
  - Need to go back to original source & language rather than rely on exegesis & translations



# ROLE OF RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

## ○ Resource

- Offers guidance for making difficult decisions
- Provides anchor, source of spiritual comfort
  - God is always there
  - Even the most righteous have been tested (prophets, companions of Prophet Muhammad)
- Offers hope for ultimate justice

## ○ Roadblock

- Uninformed imams & leaders misuse religion
- Abuser misuses religion as control tactic
- Survivor interprets abuse as punishment from God, or as destiny (*kismet* or *naseeb*)



# ISLAMIC FAMILY MODEL

- Men & women are created from a single soul (Qur'an 4:1)
- Both men & women are created to worship God (Qur'an 51:56)
- Men & women are equally accountable to God (Qur'an 33:35)
- Marriage based on mercy, compassion, tranquility (Q 30:21)
  - Relationship of mutuality
  - Gender Equity
  - Complementary Roles
    - Men are given responsibility of financial support & family leadership through consultation & collaboration (Q 4:34)





Diverse

May be

Interracial

Interethnic

Interfaith

Dual or single  
income

Traditional or  
Modern

# DISPELLING MYTHS

## MYTH

- Muslim women have no rights
- Muslim women are uneducated
- Men are responsible for women's choices (*hijab*, career, etc.)
- All women who wear *hijab* are forced to do so by men

## FACT

- Islam gave women the right to inherit, to vote, to lead, to own property....
- Islam encourages men & women to seek knowledge to strengthen their faith
- Islam holds men & women accountable for their individual actions
- Modesty is expected of men & women. Many women feel liberated by wearing *hijab*

# CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

- Women are usually held responsible for the success/failure of the marriage
- Women may not have job skills since men are financially responsible for them
- Family and community support varies widely
- Support from a religious leader will reduce guilt



# CULTURE VS RELIGION

TAKEN FROM SHARIFA ALKHATEEB, "WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE," UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM & ME WOMEN IN DV WORK.

## Tradition Bound Ideas

- Women created to serve men
- Men superior to women
- Men make all family decisions
- Divorce not accepted in many cultures

## Qur'an Based Ideas

- "I did not create human beings...except to worship Me." Q 51:56
- "Reverence your Guardian-Lord who created you from a single soul..." Q 4:1
- God rewards those who conduct their affairs "by mutual consultation..." Q 42:38
- Divorce accepted as a peaceful option. Q 2:227-241; Q65

# GARMENTS FOR ONE ANOTHER

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

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

- What is a garment?
- What purpose does it serve?
- How are garments cared for?



# ISLAM & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Completely unacceptable in Islam
- Occurs across all ethnic groups
- Low community awareness of the problem
- Religion may be misused to justify battering
- Some cultures tolerate or perpetuate norms that encourage or exacerbate the occurrence of domestic violence



# ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR IS PROHIBITED

Contradicts the model of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his treatment of his family members

*"The Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand a Muslim is safe..." (Hadith: Bukhari & Muslim)*

*"The most perfect of the believers is the best of you in character, and the best of you are those among you who are best to their wives." (Hadith: Tirmidhi)*

*"O you who believe...nor should you treat them (women) with harshness...on the contrary, live with them on a footing of kindness and equity..."(Q 4:19)*

*"The blame is only against those who oppress people with wrong-doing & insolently transgress beyond bounds through the land, defying right & justice...." (Q 42:42)*

# MISUSING RELIGION TO JUSTIFY BATTERING

- Abuser of any faith may take teachings out of context to justify behavior
- Abusers may use religion for control
  - Tell victim she is a “bad Muslim”
  - Restrict outside sources of teaching
  - Abuse leadership position of protection and become tyrant and dictator



## AN ABUSED VERSE

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the one more than the other, & because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient [to God], and guard in (their husband’s) absence what God would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear *nushuz* (disloyalty & ill-conduct), admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, and last *wadribuhunna* (tap them or separate from them); But if they return to obedience seek not against them means of annoyance, for God is Most High, Great (above you all). Qur’an 4:34

- Italicized words have multiple translations with significant differences in meaning. Only the original Arabic is considered divine revelation.



# WHY DOES SHE STAY?

ADAPTED FROM SHARIFA ALKHATEEB, "WHAT IS SHE LEAVING?," UNDERSTANDING MUSLIMS & MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORK

- What is she leaving?
  - Legitimate living arrangement
  - A home, and an intact family unit
  - Safety from gossip and blame
  - A familiar environment culturally
  
- What is she going to?
  - Unfamiliar place, may not be culturally appropriate
  - Scary place that may have dangerous people
  - Threat of losing children to non-Muslims
  - Threat of separation from older male children in shelter
  
- Consequences
  - Possible blame from family and community
  - Possible shunning by community
  - Possible future of being single for rest of life



## 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

*Taqwa* (God-  
Consciousness)

Equality

Mutuality

O humankind! 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 God, through whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for God ever watches over you. (Q4:1)



## Men & Women

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا  
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ  
خَبِيرٌ

O humankind! 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* (not that you may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Q 49:13)

Different by design

Must get to know each other

Only superiority is in degree of *taqwa* (God-consciousness)

*God is watching over all*



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 God and His Messenger. On them will God pour His mercy: for God is Exalted in power, Wise. (Q 9:71)

## *Relationship Between Men & Women*

Mutual  
responsibility to  
take care of each  
other

Mutual  
responsibility to  
advise each other

Obedience to God



- Marriage is mutual relationship between two equal partners designed to meet both spouses' needs & to provide foundation for healthy family

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.” (Q 30:21)

Spouses  
 created for  
 one another

*Sakeenah*  
 (Tranquility)

*Mawaddah*  
 (Love)

*Rahmah*  
 (Mercy)



## *How Spouses Relate to Each Other*

Mutual care-taking,  
loving, nurturing

Mutual  
consultation for  
making decisions

Respect

Kindness

Mercy

Humility



- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا
- “.... live with them (women) on a footing of kindness and equity...” (Q4:19)
- وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ
- “Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance” (Q42:38)

## 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 فَإِنِ  
أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

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

God is the Creator of both spouses

Each spouse accountable to God

God gave men an added *responsibility* of financial support

This is NOT a right to be a dictator or tyrant, which is oppression



# Obedience

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

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

Each spouse must obey God

*Qanitaat* refers to obedience to God, not the husband

Obedience to the husband is within the context of obedience to God. His leadership should follow model of Prophet (pbuh)



## *A Special Verse for a Specific Case*

وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي  
الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا 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 God is Most High, Great” (4:34)*

For *specific* situation involving immoral behavior

Must begin with communication

Separate beds emphasizes severity

*Daraba* has multiple meanings including to leave, separate, strike, tap

The Prophet (pbuh) was known to never hit a woman or child



# INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS

## ○ EMPHASIZE

- Safety versus leaving
- Well-being of children

## ○ RESPECT

- Client needs & values
- Different values which lead to different goals
- Religious holidays (no appointments)

## ○ FLEXIBILITY

- Use what works & fits
- Be creative & willing to deviate from traditional models
- Include non-biological “family” members for support
- Work with a community/religious leader if needed

# BEST PRACTICES

- Assess importance of religion & spirituality
- Assess prior trauma history
  - Impacts coping, general mental health, decision-making
- Assess impact of geo-political events
  - Islamophobia, Muslim ban, increased anxiety/fear
- Explore cultural norms about gender roles
  - Work within paradigm to empower the client
- Focus on safety & well-being of each member of family including abuser
  - Educate about long-term psychological impact on children of witnessing/experiencing abuse



# CULTURE & RELIGION AS RESOURCES

- Faith/spirituality help victims survive
- Islam teaches personal accountability
- Women are more likely to protect their children than themselves
- Ask the client to tell you what teachings support living a violence-free life
- Ask the client what God would want for the family
- Ask what Islam teaches about justice and what Islam views as oppression

# ROLE OF IMAM

- Influential role
  - shaping attitudes
  - interpretation of Qur'an
  - teasing apart cultural norms from Islamic values
- Has captive audience during Friday prayers
- Provides education for general community
- May provide premarital counseling
  - Teach healthy gender roles
  - Use marriage contract as a preventive tool
- Should clearly communicate that all forms of violence & abuse are unacceptable



# BUILDING BRIDGES

- Build relationships with community leaders to increase trust and credibility
  - Identify individuals within the community who are willing to work collaboratively
  - Have educational workshops in community centers, mosques, Islamic schools
  - Invite community members to your agency to increase awareness of services



## Presenter Contact Information

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