

Misconception: Wife beating is allowed in The Quran



Background: The common view is that it allows a husband to hit his wife as a last resort in specific circumstances. Some have argued that this means it sanctions domestic violence against women. Whilst this is the prevalent view, even amongst Muslims, it is mired in many flaws.

The first and perhaps most important point to mention is that this view is based only upon the use of one word in chapter 4, verse 34 of The Quran shown below:

The men are supporters/maintainers of the women with what God preferred/bestowed on some of them over others and with what they spent of their money, so the righteous women are dutiful/obedient; guardians/protectors to the unseen with what God guarded/protected. And as for those women you fear their uprising/disloyalty, then you shall advise them, and (then) abandon them in the bed, and (then) idriboo them. If they obeyed you, then seek not against them a way; Truly, God is High, Great. [4:34] And if you (authority) feared a rift between them two, then appoint a judge from his family and a judge from hers. If they both want to reconcile, then God will bring agreement between them. God is Knowledgeable, Expert. [4:35]

The Arabic word *idriboo* is commonly translated as hit/beat/strike, however the flaws in this are as follows: (1) The derivative *idriboo* is formed from one of the most multiple meaning and diversely used words (DaRaBa) in the Arabic language, and is used in several ways in The Quran itself. (2) There is not one clear occurrence of this word meaning "beat" anywhere else in The Quran, and in almost all cases, this meaning is problematic or would not make sense. (3) No Classical Arabic (the language The Quran is written in) dictionary gives the meaning of "beat" in a comparable example and none reference 4:34 at all. (4) When The Quran uses this word to mean a literal/physical strike/hit, the preposition "bi" (with/by) is always used, but there is no such use in 4:34. (5) This understanding causes internal contradictions within The Quran, and this is also probably why no commentator, past or present, uses The Quran itself to justify this view. (6) There is no consensus amongst traditional commentators on the origin and interpretation of this verse, except on perhaps the basic points. (7) If "beat/strike" is chosen, it would cause inconsistencies amongst Traditional Hadith (narrations) and Classical Arabic dictionaries, which show a variance in view. (8) It contradicts the alleged reaction of prophet Muhammad to wife beating, in which he is reportedly to have found it unjust and said woman have the right to retaliate. The traditional story goes that he was over ruled by 4:34, apparently.

The evidence from The Quran suggests the correct meaning of the word in this case would be "cite" or "indicate" them to the authority, hence authority involvement in 4:35. This also fits in with its usage elsewhere with direct objects.

It is strongly recommended to weigh and consider the following study which presents a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the claim of wife beating and domestic violence in Islam: www.Quran434.com

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