

How to Beat Your Wife, Or, Beat Me, Daddy, Eight to the Bar

by Hugh Fitzgerald



The popular Moroccan singer Adil El Miloudi [recently said](#): “Whoever doesn’t beat his wife is not a man. In Morocco, this is normal, anyone can do what he wants with his wife, hit her, kill her.”

El Miloudi’s candor was unusual. One Qur’anic verse that gives Muslim apologists in the West great grief is 4:34, where a Muslim husband is told that he may “beat” a wife whose disobedience he fears. There is no adverb modifying the verb “beat,” yet some apologists insist that the beating should only be done “lightly,” as if with a small toothbrush known as a “miswak.”

A video by a Qatari sociologist, Abd Al-Aziz Al-Khazraj Al-Ansari, provides a televised lesson on the proper way for a

Muslim husband to administer a “beating” to one of his wives. Because the Qur’anic verse that gives legitimacy to this “beating” does not explain how hard or soft such a beating can or should be, Al-Ansari believes there is a need to explain, and to show Muslim men, exactly what kind of “beating” is permissible.

His Qatari television performance can be found [here](#):

“First, we must understand that the man is the leader of the house. A leader has authorities, just like a company manager.

Al-Ansari unembarrassedly insists on male superiority: the man “is leader of the house.” No dissent is allowed. He is “just like a company manager” – not a romantic image, but one entirely fitting for the rich little statelet of Qatar, which is all business. In Qur’an 4:34, a Muslim husband is given license to “beat” his wife, without offering parameters to the punishment. The same verse also declares men to be the guardians of their women, for they are “superior” to them: “Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because Allah has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and send them to beds apart and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely Allah is high, supreme.”

The superiority of men over woman in Islam is not to be found only in 4:34, but is reflected both in the inheritance laws, by which a daughter receives only half that of a son, and in considering the testimony by a woman as being worth only half that of a man, which Muhammad explains in a hadith is because of the “deficiency of her intelligence.”

The leader of the house may decide to discipline the wife so life can move on.

[...]

How does a husband beat his wife? He gives her a disciplinary beating out of love. He loves her. The beating should be light, and must make the wife feel her femininity and her husband's masculinity. Now, let's see how Islam teaches how to beat your wife. Let's imagine that Nayef here... How are you, Nayef? Nayef is obviously a boy, but let's imagine that he is the wife. How should a husband beat his wife? First, he must "admonish her" – in other words, he should advise her. Then, he should refrain from sharing a bed with her. If all of this doesn't help, we start the beating as a last resort.

What is beating in Islam? Beating in Islam... Wait, don't move... The husband must make his wife feel his strength. Why aren't you listening to me?! How many times do I have to tell you?! How many times do I have to tell you so you'll listen?! Didn't I tell you not to leave the house without my permission?! You see how? A little bit of rebuke... Obviously, she's starting to talk back... I told you not to leave the house! How many times do I have to tell you? See how the beating is done? I told you not to leave the house! The beating is light, brothers. Don't leave the house again! Do you understand?! Yes or no?! You see, brothers? This is beating in Islam. But some people punch her or slap her on the face... That's not allowed. The Prophet Muhammad... Look how merciful Islam is. The Prophet forbade striking the face. He forbade men from beating their wives on the face. Slapping the face, hitting the head, punching the nose – all of this is prohibited. The beating is for discipline. Let's see how it's done. Don't leave the house again! Listen to what I tell you! This is a painless beating that does not leave bruises or cause bleeding.

Al-Ansari acts out the 'beating' on Nayef, a teenaged boy he presents as his assistant. He grabs him, shakes him by the shoulders, then hits those shoulders, but as he says, he

leaves the face alone. He claims that it was Muhammad himself who proscribed beating wives on the face, head, nose. But in giving his televised lesson in beating, he finds nothing wrong with the husband who yells at his wife for daring to disobey him when she has been told "not to leave the house." He takes for granted that in Islam, "men are the rulers of the household."

The beating I just gave Nayef is the true gentle beating in Islam.

[...]

Brothers, why do husbands beat their wives? Because some wives like domineering and authoritative husbands. By nature, they like violent and powerful husbands.

So is the "beating" that is prescribed in Qur'an 4:34 done to discipline wives, or is it done because some wives are masochists who "by nature like violent and powerful husbands"? Clearly, that Qur'anic verse says nothing about a wife liking either a "domineering and authoritative" husband or a "violent and powerful" one. These claims are pulled out of thin air by Al-Ansari, who would like to make his audience believe that women actually like to be beaten; it's another way to justify the Qur'anic license to beat your wife: first, because the beating should be administered "lightly" (the adverb is not found in the verse itself); secondly, a husband shouldn't worry overmuch about beating his wife, because according to Al-Ansari, many women actually like domineering, authoritative, violent, and powerful husbands. Al-Ansari fails to see the contradiction: either a husband "beats" his wife, however lightly, to make her obey, or a husband beats her "because she wants it," and if so, why would beating her cause her to obey? It makes no sense.

*With some women, admonishing them and refraining from sharing their beds won't help. **The only thing that helps with such***

women is beating. She needs to feel that you are a real man. That's her nature. Dear brothers, I hope you understood the right to discipline a wife in Islam. We must not start asking questions about whether our religion is cruel. No, our religion is a religion of mercy and kindness.

Of course Islam is both those things. Don't for a minute, dear brothers, think otherwise. Either you beat your wife, but only lightly, or you beat her, less lightly if you wish, because – let's face it – she wants it, she's asking for it, she wants you to be violent and domineering, as so many women do. Even the filthy kuffar would have a hard time denying Muslim mercy and Qur'anic kindness as shown in just that one part of Qur'an 4:34. It's no wonder that for the 1,390th year running, Islam has been ranked #1 in the Mercy and Kindness categories. Why mess with success?

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