

Imam Umer and Nueces Mosque

Part 1: The Foundational Teachings for Healthy Relationships

[Mufti Mohamed Umer Esmail](#) (Imam Umer), the imam of [Nueces Mosque](#) in Austin, Texas, has extensive experience in youth and marital counseling. His extensive knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him [pbuh]) sayings, "hadiths," and practices, "sunnah," helps him cite the teachings of Islam to his congregation. This is the first of a two-part article highlighting Imam Umer and the Nueces Mosque's efforts in educating and supporting the Austin community, regarding the importance of peaceful relationships within a family and among men and women.

Equality Among Men and Women in the Qur'an

Imam Umer teaches his congregation by citing God's words in the Qur'an which establishes the foundation for healthy relationships, including the relationship among men and women. **There are many verses in the Qur'an in which God tells us that men and women are created equal, and hence should treat each other as such, with respect and high regard.**

In [verse 187](#), of the second Qur'anic chapter, "[Al Baqara](#)," or "The Cow," God describes men and women as complimentary to one another, "They are as a garment for you and you are as a garment for them." **This verse also expresses that men and women are equally important to one another, and like garments, they protect, cover, adorn, give warmth, give cheer, etc. to one another.** Thus the marriage union brings with it many blessings as well as being a special relationship between every husband and wife, and they should honor it as such.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Honors Women in Word and Deed

Imam Umer explains Islam's stance against domestic violence (DV) also in light of the hadiths (sayings) and sunnah (practices) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him [pbuh]). Imam Umer cites **one of many hadiths of the Prophet regarding the importance of proper behavior within a family: "The one with the most perfect faith is the one with the best character, and the one with the best character is the one who is best to his family."** Clearly the Prophet is highlighting the importance of having good solid familial relationships.

No Excuse for Violent Behavior

Imam Umer explains that some men have excused violent behavior toward their wives by quoting a controversial and misunderstood verse in the Qur'an that they say justifies hitting a wife (chapter 4, entitled, "[Al-Nisaa'](#)" or "**The Women**," [verse 34](#)). That particular verse begins by stating that men have responsibilities toward their wives as their protectors and as the main financial supporters of their families because men are physically stronger. Further along in the same verse, the focus is on the husband's responsibility in relation to his wife's behavior if he fears "**nushuz**," ill will and illicit behavior, including major sins and abusive behavior,

Imam Umer and Nueces Mosque

Part 1: The Foundational Teachings for Healthy Relationships

harmful to the sanctity of the marriage and a dismissal of her responsibilities to the family. If the husband fears “nushuz,” then he has the right to confront her and encourage her to change her behavior. *(It is important to note that in the same chapter, in [verse 128](#), God also mentions that if a wife fears “nushuz” of her husband’s behavior she also has the right to confront her husband.)*

Various other verses elevate the status of women throughout the Qur’an, and as well as the message of fairness and kindness throughout the Qur’an. There is no justification for hitting a wife or anyone else for that matter. ²

The Prophet said, **“The strong [person] is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong [person] is the one who controls himself while in anger.”** Thus, there is no permission to hit your wife, instead a man’s anger must be controlled. Imam Umer repeats that understanding the lifestyle of the prophet and putting all the Qur’anic verses together, Islam forbids the hitting of women. In his [farewell sermon](#), the Prophet said: **“O people, your wives have a certain right over you and you have certain rights over them. Treat them well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers.”**

Notes

¹All Qur’anic quotes are from [Muhammad Asad’s translation, The Message of the Qur’an](#).

² While this article mentions the perpetrator of the abuse being the man and the woman being the victim, there are cases where women are the perpetrators of the abuse and men are the victims. Certainly, the same prohibitions exist whereby wives should not be hitting their husbands, and no violence should be committed toward any family member, children, elderly, intimate partner, etc.