

# Between Ideals and Reality: Violence against Women and the Real Image of Women in Islam

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*It is often perceived that Islam is biased against women. Such perception, however, is not ill conceived. This is because the patriarchal conjugal relationships practiced in countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia show the subservient roles women play in relation to their husbands. This perception is further aggravated when honour killing is still being practiced in the name of Islam. Adding salt to the wound, exploitations of abusive husbands, unfair treatments with regard to women's legal, marital and financial rights by the shariah courts in many parts of the Muslim world are also rampant. These practices given as examples above are actually against the principles and the spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w). For example surah al-Baqarah verse 228 and the last sermon of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) state the rights and responsibilities of both men and women where both are to honour and protect one another. This discussion will therefore look into how Islam treats women, and the most accurate treatment of men over the women will be seen through the history of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w). The biography of the Prophet is taken to be the main reference in this discussion because it is through his biography that Islam was practiced and exemplified. It is hoped that after the actual practice is explained, the ill conceived perception that Islam is bias against women is dispelled and the real image of Islam and women will be appreciated.*

## 1. Introduction

**V**IOLENCE against women is everywhere, and it is being orchestrated in different manners, as it has appeared in the modern society in different dimensions. The 2012 Delhi gang rape case has again brought the issue of violence against women to limelight.<sup>1</sup> In some countries in Asia such as India and Bangladesh, women are easy targets of discrimination, violence, harassment and intimidation. With its multidimensional character, violence against women is not only con-

sidered as a human rights violation but also an increasingly prominent public health issue. The available statistics are alarming, as the rate of violence against women is increasing by the day. According to a recent World Health Organization study, about 71% and 15% of women in Ethiopia and Japan respectively were physically and/or sexually assaulted by their intimate partner. It is more disturbing to note that in rural Bangladesh, 30% of the women reported their first sexual experience to be forced, i.e. rape.<sup>2</sup> This universal phenomenon requires multi-dimensional responses from cultural, religious, political and legal sides. As discussed elsewhere:

Many researchers have correctly identified violence against women as a universal problem, touching all aspects of women's life, regardless of religion and culture. Although systematic efforts to understand the nature and global extent of violence against women are recent, activism and theory building on women and violence are evolving rapidly. Every year, new studies are made globally, conferences convened, and innovative projects emerged. All these are aimed at understanding violence against women and advancing strategies to confront it.<sup>3</sup>

Violence against women is becoming one of the most prevalent socio-cultural problems of the modern society. This has appeared in different dimensions in the society, which generally includes rape, sexual harassment, honour killing, and domestic violence.<sup>4</sup> In addressing these menaces, this paper encourages the adoption of a strategic policy towards declaring a war against violence on women through shared values in intercivilizational dialogue. While the prevalence of gender-based violence has increased exponentially in Muslim countries, such untoward attitude does not necessary represent the ideals of Islam on treatment of the female gender. Sieving through the Islamic ideals on the treatment of women and juxtaposing such values with modern practices will give a good understanding of the problem and provide a good basis for declaring a war against violence. It is argued that for the modern society to realise peace and harmonious coexistence, whether at the family or societal level, people of like minds, regardless of their religious or racial backgrounds, must work together to ensure that gender-based violence becomes a thing of the past.

## 2. The Nature and Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Muslim Countries

One of the prevalent social problems in modern societies is gender-based violence which is often directed at women of different ages. The theories about violence against women in South Asian societies are notably four. According to Niaz, they are “the perception of males as macho beings”, “male chauvinism”, “loss of control”, and lastly, “displacement of affect”.<sup>5</sup> It is paradoxical to see the increasing rate of violence against women in Muslim countries, which has invariably led to the negative stereotype that Islam condones such violence. This is one of the many reasons that triggered the Islamic feminism debate across the world. According to Mojab, “from the very beginning, the debate was centred on the compatibility of the idea of women’s emancipation with the principles of Islam.”<sup>6</sup> The idea of Islamic feminism, though specifically meant to provide the Islamic alternative to the modern feminism discourse, tends to focus more on the emancipation and empowerment of women. This implies a rebuttable presumption that women in Islam are subjugated and indeed considered as second-class citizens or even sub-humans in the state.<sup>7</sup> This jaundiced notion has been unfortunately portrayed more in the mainstream media as mirroring the true nature of Islam. The practical realities on the ground in most Muslim societies cannot really debunk such arguments; hence, the prominence of the Islamic feminist movements.

While it is believed by some feminist that the growing scourge of violence against women is as a result of misogyny, violence against women is not only restricted to strangers but statistics reveal the increasing rate of violence by their intimate partners. This has been felt in a number of Muslim countries, which calls for concerted efforts in going back to the basis, i.e. the primary sources of Islam—the Qur’an and Sunnah to reinvent the wheel and apply the Islamic ideals to the modern societies. Therefore, even though countries like Malaysia have been at the forefront in empowering women in line with the justly balanced nature and moderation-laden principles of Islam, the statistics on violence against women in the country are still alarming. Table 1 below presents the statistics of violence against women tracked by the Royal Malaysian Police between the year 2000 and 2011.

Apart from these documented violence against women, there are numerous others which are either not documented or under-documented. This is usually the challenge faced by experts when profiling cases of violence against women. In most cases, the unreported cases are far

**Table 1:** Statistics on Violence against Women in Malaysia (2000–2011)

Police Reports	Domestic Violence	Rape	Incest	Abuse of Domestic Workers	Child Abuse	Outrage of Modesty (Molestation)	Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
2000	3468	1217	213	56	146	1234	112
2001	3107	1386	246	66	150	1393	86
2002	2755	1431	306	39	123	1522	84
2003	2555	1479	254	40	119	1399	82
2004	3101	1760	334	66	148	1661	119
2005	3093	1931	295	37	189	1746	102
2006	3264	2454	332	45	141	1349	101
2007	3756	3098	360	39	196	2243	195
2008	3769	3409	334	unavailable	unavailable	2131	unavailable
2009	3643	3626	385	unavailable	203	2110	unavailable
2010	3173	3595	unavailable	unavailable	257	2054	unavailable
2011	unavailable	3301	342	unavailable	unavailable	1941	unavailable

Source: Royal Malaysia Police and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development<sup>8</sup>

more than the ones reported and documented in the available data. At the international level, statistics indicate that the global patterns of violence against women reflect the cultural, religious and racial traditions of individual society.<sup>9</sup> In particular, there are no official statistics from the Arab world and this has hindered the work on female victims of violence in the region. “That also includes difficulties faced by researchers into the area due to subject sensitivity and personal relevance.”<sup>10</sup> This accounts for why there are no official statistics or court records on such violence.

Of late, there is an increasing prevalence of ‘honour killings’ in Muslim states across the world. ‘Honour killing’ is one of the major types of honour-based violence (HBV).<sup>11</sup> While there is an estimate of about 5,000 honour killings per year, Pakistan—a Muslim majority country—has up to 1,000 per year.<sup>12</sup>

In courts of law, the ‘honour defence’ is institutionalized in many Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, allowing fathers, husbands, brothers, and cousins to walk away from murder. Killing and physical violence is the form of violence associated with honour incidents in the Arab countries. A study conducted in the year 2001 in Egypt (as quoted in the 2003 Cairo Conference on Violence Against Women) showed that doubting women’s behavior constituted 79% of honour crimes, while admitting misconduct constituted 9%. The study

also showed that 41% of honour crimes were committed against the wife, 34% against the daughter, 18% against the sister and 7% against a female relative. In Jordan, honour crimes made up 23% of crimes of violence against women since 1986.<sup>13</sup>

This practice, which is completely antithetical to the fundamental basis of Islam, has worn a new look in the media as representing traditional Islamic practices. This negative backlash has adversely affected the image of Islam, particularly in the blogosphere and the social media generally. One may not blame the common man who fails to understand the difference between ideals and realities in Muslim societies. Once Muslims are portrayed to be perpetuating a heinous act, especially when such relates to emerging social problems, there is that tendency that people will easily believe such disposition represents the religion.

### **3. A War on Violence Against Women: The Islamic Approach**

With a view to declaring a war on violence against women, Islam has provided a number of strict measures to ensure peaceful co-existence in the society. For the purpose of this paper, the Islamic response to violence against women has been limited to three major issues. These are honour killings, rape and domestic violence.

#### **3.1 Honour Killing**

Islam seriously frowns at killing a soul for whatever reason other than in accordance to the prescribed law. Honour killing is not known as a permissible act under Islamic law. Hence, it is a gross violation of one of the five higher objectives of the law (*maqasid al-Shariah*). In Qur'an 4: 93, it is provided that: "And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein; and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him." This totally proscribes discriminate killing of a human being in the name of keeping the honour of the family. This is further buttressed in a prophetic tradition narrated from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah said: "The believer will continue to be encompassed by the mercy of Allah so long as he does not shed blood that it is forbidden to shed."<sup>14</sup> Even if one assumes without conceding that a person deserves to be killed for committing a crime known to Islamic law, which is not usually the case in honour killing, one is precluded from taking law into his hands. The prescribed punishments in Islam cannot be carried out until they are proven and established in an open court or an outright confession of the

accused. On top of that, individuals are not allowed to carry out such punishments, merely because the accused is a family member who has brought “disgrace” to their family. Any punishment recognized in Islamic law must be carried out by a competent authority such as the head of state or his deputy. This is meant to avoid chaos and anarchy in the society if people are freely allowed to take the law into their hands.<sup>15</sup>

In accordance to the principles of Islamic law, it is advisable to conceal the action of someone who has committed evil or “brought shame” to the family in order to give him or her the opportunity to repent. This is the general attitude of Islam. It proactively favours pardon above punishment. On this basis, Muslim scholars have unanimously agreed that the modern practice of honour killing is a total violation of Islamic law and thus declared forbidden. It is instructive to cite an example that justifies the inappropriateness of honour killing in Islamic law. Most case of honour killing in Muslim societies involves a situation where a virgin fornicates. The applicable law for a virgin who fornicates is merely a corporal punishment not the capital punishment being meted out to innocent girls. Even if it is proven that the accused person deserves to be killed, must an individual take the laws into his hands?

### 3.2 Rape

Rape, as an abominable transgression against the honour of women through the use of force, is generally known as *ightisāb* in Islamic law. This is strictly forbidden in Islamic law, and as such the strictest penalties are imposed to punish and deter others from falling into the same sensual trap. The psychological trauma associated with rape cases is clearly factored into the type of punishment prescribed in Islamic law. The clear stance of Islam on rape is that of utter prohibition with a consequential deterrent punishment. Islam takes a number of precautionary measures to shut the door against criminals who might exploit any given situation to perpetuate the heinous crime. Some of these measures include the prescription of marriage for matured people, direct instruction to the female gender to draw their veils over their bosoms to avoid molestation and sexual harassment, and prohibition of alcohol and all dangerous drugs that intoxicates a normal human being. In a situation where these precautionary measures have been put in place and one still proceeds to commit the crime of rape, the perpetrator will have to pay for such grievous crime.

The punishment for rape in Islam is similar to that of fornication and adultery but since force is applied in this case and may involve the use

of a weapon such as knife or any other dangerous object, Muslim jurists have suggested that he be considered as an armed robber who has violated the honour of an innocent soul. Therefore, the punishment of a rapist may involve crucifixion according to the Qur'anic requirement in Qur'an 5: 33 which provides: "The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides, or be exiled from the land. That is their disgrace in this world, and a great torment is theirs in the Hereafter." Some Muslim jurists also require some form of financial compensation to the victim for violating her honour.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.3 Domestic Violence

There are numerous Islamic prescriptions that are targeted at preventing domestic violence. These include some dispute avoidance as well as dispute resolution mechanisms enshrined in the primary sources of Islamic law. Islam does not in any way prescribe, condone or approve of any violence whatsoever, particularly in family relationship.

Islam is often maligned and intellectually attacked when issues relating to wife beating emerge in public discourse. To this end, Zaleha Kamaruddin provides a general outlook of the position of Islamic law on wife beating or wife battering:

The misconception of the divine sanction that the Qur'an and Islamic tradition gives to violence against women is stated to be the core reason why domestic violence is epidemic in some parts of the Islamic world. This phenomenon reflects deep societal dysfunction ... Some Muslims believe that the teachings of Islam allow wife-beating in certain circumstances. For example, Kemal Guran, a Turkish Muslim cleric mentioned in his booklet, *The Muslim's Handbook* that men can beat their wives moderately. On the other hand, Dr. Jamal Badawi, author of *Gender Equity in Islam*, in his discussion of Surah An Nisa' verse 34 which is often used by some to justify maltreatment of women, indicates that, "under no circumstances does the Qur'an encourage, allow, or condone family violence or physical abuse. In extreme circumstances, and whenever greater harm, such as divorce, is a likely option, in an effort to save the marriage it allows for a husband to administer a gentle pat to his wife that causes no sort of physical harm to the body nor leaves any sort of mark." He does not deny the prerogative, but explains that such a measure is more accurately described as symbolic than punitive.<sup>17</sup>

The above summarizes the position of Islam on domestic violence. Islam does not in any way condone or prescribe the abuse of women. In order to resolve marital discords (*nushūz*) which often lead to quarrels and ultimately violence, Islam prescribes mediation (*sulh*) and arbitration (*tahkim*) in an integrated process to resolve any disagreement between the couple. It is a great disservice to Islam for one to still believe a religion that prescribes such mechanisms for dispute management in a family setting condones domestic violence.

#### **4. The Real Image of Women in Islam: Reflecting on the Prophetic Precedents**

Having highlighted the negative backlash against Islam which is the result of increasing practices of violence against women in different forms, it is pertinent to take a glimpse at the biography of the Prophet to establish the real image of women in Islam. It goes without saying that there are numerous prophetic precedents that show the true position of women in Islam and why they must be accorded a high status in the society when compared with their male counterparts. The ill-conceived perception that Islam is biased against women is dispelled through a conceptual analysis of how Islam and its law treats women in terms of property rights, matrimonial rights and human rights generally with a specific focus on certain prophetic precedents. It is imperative to begin with the clarion call made by Prophet Muhammad during his last sermon:

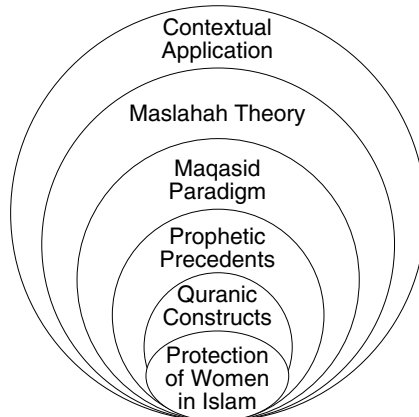
O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.<sup>18</sup>

This last sermon was delivered on 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah (12 month of the Islamic calendar), 10 AH (9th March 632 CE) before the death of the Prophet but one unique feature of the sermon is its general reference to mankind rather than Muslims.<sup>19</sup> It was an important message coming from the horse's mouth specifically meant to the generality of mankind because the contents of the speech are of generally application up till



today. This was the first platform where a Prophet made the first declaration of women rights. Despite the fact that throughout his prophetic sojourn, there have been numerous occasions where he had clarified these rights and advised his companions to treat women kindly, he had to reiterate this point during his farewell address since he was almost sure he would not have any better opportunity to personally inform mankind of the significance of treating women kindly among other values.

The real image of women in Islam and the multidimensional safeguards put in place to ensure their protection are based on a number of mechanisms. While the Qur'an establishes the fundamental basis of these mechanisms through what may be called the *Qur'anic constructs*, historical *prophetic precedents* which have similar binding effect complement the Qur'anic constructs. Furthermore, there is the *maqasid paradigm* which specifically establishes the higher objectives of the Shariah and stipulates what the law seeks to protect and preserve. In doing this, the *maslahah theory* comes into play, as it seeks to bring benefits to mankind and ward off all sorts of harm. An amalgam of these targets achieves one singular objective: protection of women. The contextual application of these targets seeks to put in place reasonable policies based on the principles of Shariah-oriented policy otherwise known as *siyasah shar'iyah*. Therefore the target of modern policy makers in Muslim countries should look more like what is presented in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** The General Basis of Protection of Women in Islam

#### 4.1 Protection of the Female Gender

The female gender is jealously protected by Islam in different ways. Whether as daughters, sisters and wives, women are honoured and protected in Islam. Women are considered the twin half of men;<sup>20</sup> and thus they are not in any way subservient to men. With regards to the protection of women as mothers, Abu Hurairah narrated that: “A man came to the Messenger of Allah and said, ‘O messenger of Allah, who among the people is most deserving of my good company?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Your mother’. He asked, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet replied, ‘Your mother’. He asked again, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet said, ‘Your mother’. He asked once more, ‘Then who?’ The Prophet said, ‘Then your father.’”<sup>21</sup> This prophetic precedent explains the prime position Islam places women with particular reference to mothers. In a similar vein, as daughters, Islam came to emancipate girls from the heinous crime committed during the pre-Islamic period where female infanticide was the norm. With unprecedented earth-shattering reforms, the advent of Islam in the 6th century totally proscribed female infanticide among other obnoxious practices that were prevalent during the pre-Islamic era. It is regrettable to note that in the modern highly advanced world, the scourge of female infanticide, sometimes called gynocide or femicide, is increasing by the day. In India and China, the increasing rate of female infanticide and female foeticide calls for concern. This is a practice that has been totally forbidden by Islam over 1,430 years ago as clearly established in the Qur’an and in a number of prophetic precedents.<sup>22</sup> Apart from declaring a clear and unambiguous prohibition against female infanticide, Islam also frowns at the preference of males over females particularly when the news of childbirth is given.<sup>23</sup> Just as Islam honours mothers, daughters are also revered with special reference to the parent’s role in proper female child upbringing. In a prophetic precedent, Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet once said: “Whoever has three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters, and takes good care of them and fears Allah with regard to them, will enter Paradise.”<sup>24</sup>

Having explained the image of women in Islam as daughters and mothers, it is important to now consider the status of women as wives.<sup>25</sup> In a clear statement narrated by the wife of the Prophet, Aishah, she reported that the Prophet once told his companions: “The best of you are those who are best to their wives, and I am the best of you to my wives.”<sup>26</sup> In essence, women are to be treated nicely as the law confers on them rights similar to those of men in most situations. They have the rights of inheritance, which was hitherto denied women in other

civilizations until about 2 centuries ago, and they can choose their husbands and acquire property of their own. These distinct rights granted to women during a period when most parts of the world were still wallowing in the dark with barbaric civilizations are established permanently in Islamic law and cannot be changed by the change in time and space.

Furthermore, contrary to the general beliefs, there are some cultures, though not contrary to Islam, that give women an edge in terms of control subject to the overarching provisions of the law. A prophetic precedent explains this clearly. ‘Umar bin al-Khattab once said to the Prophet: “We Quraish used to control our women, but when we came to the Ansar (the helpers in Medina) we found that *they were a people who were controlled by their women*. So our women started to adopt the ways of the Ansari women. I got angry with my wife and she argued with me and I did not like her arguing with me. She said, ‘Why do you object to me arguing with you? By Allah, the wives of the Prophet argue with him...’”<sup>27</sup> It can be gleaned from this prophetic tradition that men are prevented from being harsh to their women. According to Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, “the Prophet adopted the way of the Ansar with their women and forsook the way of his people.”<sup>28</sup> The implication of this interpretation of the precedent is that the Prophet chose the easier path by being nice to women and allowing them to have their ways in most issues insofar they remain within the ambits of the law.

## **5. Intercivilizational Dialogue Towards Preventing Violence Against Women**

Some of the Islamic principles explained above runs through other religious traditions. This therefore calls for intercivilizational dialogue towards preventing violence against women. One may begin by jointly declaring a war on violence against women based on the shared values of most religions. Like minds need to come together to enlighten the public on the need to shun violence against women. This broad approach will assist in utilizing common values and shared interest in solving this seemingly insurmountable social menace.

A close study of each of the world religions and their values regarding the treatment of women and their respective positions on violence against women reflects some sort of convergence in their stances. None of the religions condone violence against women; hence, this should be the starting point of the intercivilizational dialogue and cross-cultural and religious discourse on how to, first, dispel the

overblown media backlash against Islam; and second, work together to form a formidable position on this growing menace which is expected to influence the policymaking process in most jurisdiction.

**Table 2:** Islamic Intervention in Preventing Violence Against Women

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Islamic Intervention</b>
<b>Preventive Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should not be any harm or reciprocating harm whatsoever. Men and women are supporters/ guardians of one another and none of them should harm the other.</li> <li>• Special status of women in Islam. They occupy an important position as daughters, sisters, wives and mothers as fragile vessels that must be preserved and protected.</li> </ul>
<b>Remedial Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the victims and punish severely the offenders as a deterrent to the public.</li> <li>• Provide proprietary rewards for victims through shelter and other financial support.</li> </ul>
<b>Intercivilizational Efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative efforts with like minds across the world who share the same values are encouraged in Islam.</li> <li>• Concerted efforts from different civilizations may result in a formidable policy framework which is implantable across borders.</li> </ul>
<b>Laws/Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming up with sustainable policies and laws to combat violence against women is important.</li> <li>• A move to codify the Islamic principles that seek to protect women in the society is necessary to bridge the gap between theory and practice in Muslim societies.</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The above steps culminate into a framework that displaces the negative stereotyping and media backlash against Islam.</li> <li>• Utilizing the social media and the blogosphere to correct the native perception of some untoward practices perpetuated in the name of Islam.</li> </ul>

As a general rule, Islam seeks to be the harbinger of benefits to the people; hence, its efforts toward addressing key social problems such as violence against women. While different approaches are envisaged, the Islamic intervention in cases of violence against women is orchestrated in different ways. As presented in Table 2, this ranges from preventing measures, remedial measures, intercivilizational dialogue, to laws and policies, and providing an alternative media to dispel the wrong perceptions about the position of Islam on violence against women.

## 6. Conclusion

An attempt has been made to clarify the actual image of women in Islam and the various mechanisms put in place to protect women at various stages of their lives. As explained above, Islam goes beyond mere rituals; it is a complete way of life which proactively pursues benefits (*masālih*) for mankind and blocks all means leading to evil or harm (*darar*). Therefore, violence against women is strictly forbidden in Islam. But one must admit that the prevailing trends in Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and even Saudi Arabia have promoted a patriarchal marital relationship that have shaped the general perception of people about the subservient role of women in Muslim societies.

Despite the prevailing trends in Muslim societies, one must not shy away from the fact that there is a glaring dichotomy between the Islamic ideals and the realities on the ground. This is why the intercivilisational dialogue comes into play. Once all like minds unite to fight this untoward phenomenon of violence against women, our societies which are now becoming more multi-religious, multi-racial, and multi-cultural in nature, will be gravitating towards peace, harmonious co-existence which will be sustainable in the long run. From the Far East to the West, one must admit that there is an eclectic wind of change blowing across the world which has made most cities melting pots. In such circumstances, there is no better time than now to build bridges across cultural, racial and religious backgrounds to tame this rising tide of violence against women. It is logical for people to begin to think correctly when people of other religious and cultural backgrounds remind them of their unique religious values about peace, harmony and love. Above all, once these shared values are recognized and duly acknowledged, the role of law in curtailing such menace would have been greatly facilitated. It is therefore pertinent to conclude that Islam as a complete way of life transcends mere religious rituals but relates more to the well-being of mankind; hence, it forbids violence against women in its totality.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner Harris, “Murder Charges Are Filed Against 5 Men in New Delhi Gang Rape”, *The New York Times*. (Accessed on 3 January 2013).

<sup>2</sup> World health Organization, WHO *Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women*, November 2012, at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/> (Accessed on 12 February 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Zaleha Kamaruddin, “Violence Against Women in the Muslim Communities”, *International Journal of Muslim Unity*, vol. 5 (1) (2007), pp. 122–123.

<sup>4</sup> Lori L. Heise, "Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework", *Violence Against Women*, 4 (June 1998), pp. 262–290.

<sup>5</sup> U. Niaz, "Violence against women in South Asian Countries", *Arch Womens Ment Health*, vol. 6 (2003), p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> Shahrzad Mojab, "Theorizing the Politics of 'Islamic Feminism'", *Feminist Review*, No. 69, The Realm of the Possible: Middle Eastern Women in Political and Social Spaces (Winter, 2001), p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> Zaleha Kamaruddin, Abdul Haseeb Ansari & Umar A. Oseni, "Equality Clause of Modern Constitutions, Women and Islamic Law", *Journal of Islamic Law Review*, vol. 8 No. 1 (2012), pp. 33–63.

<sup>8</sup> See the data online at "Police Statistics on Violence against Women 2000–2011", *Women's Aid Organization*, [http://www.wao.org.my/Police+Statistics+on+Violence+against+Women+2000+-+2011\\_64\\_5\\_1.htm](http://www.wao.org.my/Police+Statistics+on+Violence+against+Women+2000+-+2011_64_5_1.htm) (Accessed on 12 February 2013).

<sup>9</sup> See the argument on the multi-dimensional social problem in Natalie J. Sokoloff and Ida Dupont, "Domestic Violence at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender: Challenges and Contributions to Understanding Violence Against Marginalized Women in Diverse Communities", *Violence Against Women*, 11 (January 2005), pp. 38–64.

<sup>10</sup> Nora Almosaed, "Violence Against Women: A Cross-cultural Perspective", *Journal of Muslim Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (April 2004), p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Other forms of honour-based violence include honour suicide, forced marriage, abduction and imprisonment, forced abortion and hymen repair.

<sup>12</sup> "Statistics and Data", Honour-based Violence Network, at <http://hbv-awareness.com/statistics-data/> (Accessed on 12 February 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Nora Almosaed, "Violence Against Women: A Cross-cultural Perspective", *Journal of Muslim Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (April 2004), p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> Related by Al-Bukhari. See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic—English). Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Muflih, Muhammad, *Al-Furu'*, Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 2002, vol. 6, p. 53. Also see Al-Mausu'ah Al-Fiqhiyah Al-Kuwaitiyah, 2nd Ed. Kuwait, Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, 1983, vol. 5, p. 280.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Muntaha Sharh al-Muwatta', vol. 5, pp. 268–269.

<sup>17</sup> Zaleha Kamaruddin, "Violence Against Women...", pp. 124–125.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Hisham, 'Abd al-Malik, *The Life of the Prophet*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> Colin Turner, *Islam: The Basics*, New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 35–36

<sup>20</sup> This is a prophetic saying reported as follows: "Women are the twin halves of men." This hadith was related by Abu Dawud in his Sunan, 236, from the hadith narrated by 'Aishah.

<sup>21</sup> This hadith was related by Bukhari. See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic—English). Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> Qur'an 6: 151 provides: "Kill not your children on a plea of want. We provide sustenance for you and for them. Come not near shameful deeds, whether open or secret. Take not life which Allah has made sacred." Qur'an 17:31 also provides: "Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin."

<sup>23</sup> Qur'an 16: 58–59 provide: "When news is brought to one of them of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkness, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on

(sufferance) the choice they decide on?”

<sup>24</sup> This hadith was related by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, vol. 2, p. 190.

<sup>25</sup> For more discussion on the status of women in Islam, particularly the controversies surrounding their rights and duties, see Zaleha Kamaruddin, Abdul Haseeb Ansari & Umar A. Oseni, “Equality Clause of Modern Constitutions, Women and Islamic Law”, *Journal of Islamic Law Review*, vol. 8 No. 1 (2012), pp. 33–63.

<sup>26</sup> Related by al-Tirmidhi. Al-Tirmidhi, ‘Isa Muhammad ibn Sawrat, *Shama’il al-Muhammadiyah*. Beirut: al-Yamamah lil-Tiba’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> This hadith was related by Bukhari. See Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Arabic—English). Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Baari Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 2004, vol. 9, p. 291.