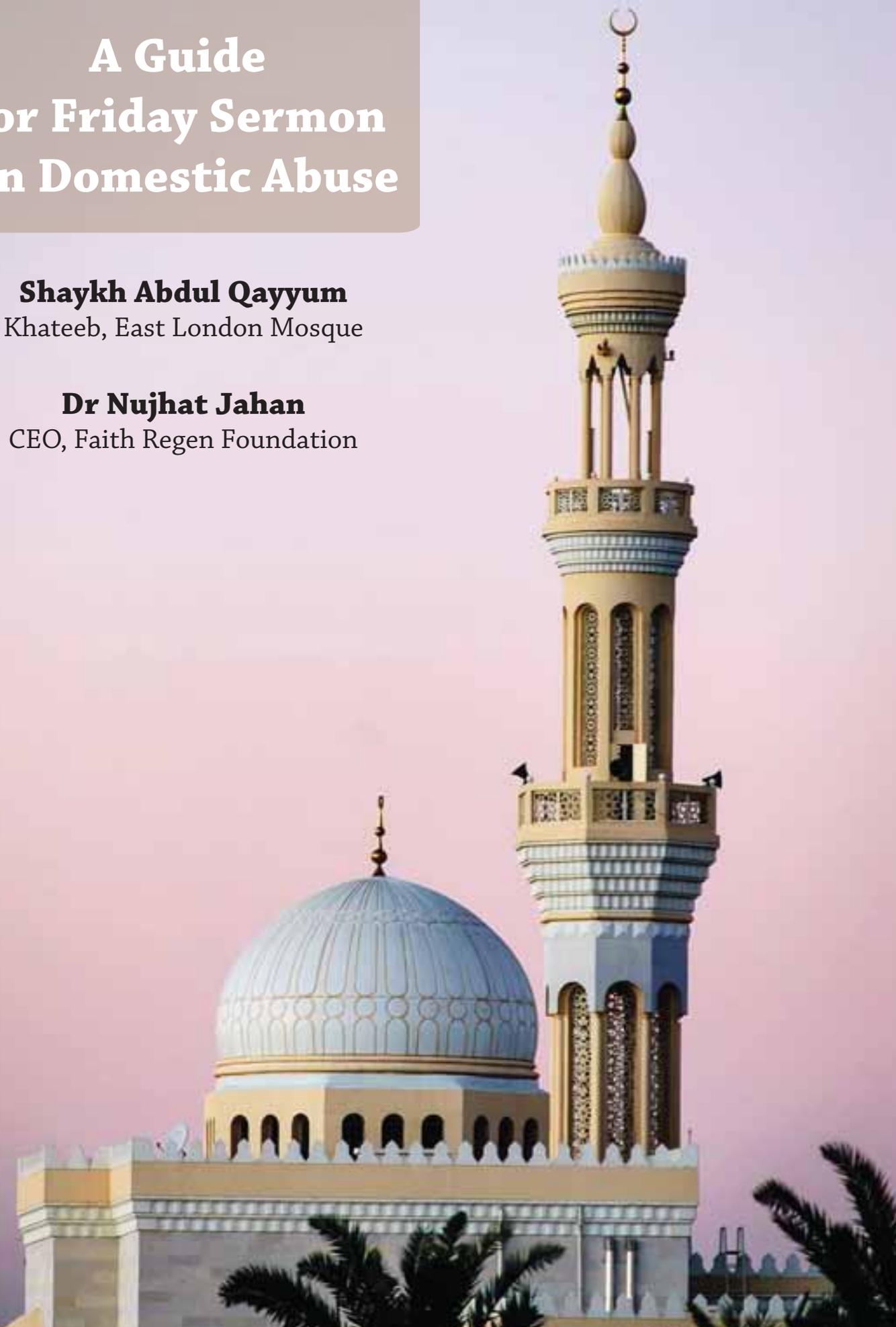


# A Guide for Friday Sermon on Domestic Abuse

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“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir Raheem.

All Praise is due to Alláh (SWT), We praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Alláh, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Alláh, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad (pbuh), is His servant, and His messenger.

Today we are going to discuss about domestic abuse- abuse that happens behind the closed doors.

In Islam, violence against family members or any creation of Allah is Haraam (forbidden). In the holy Qur'an Allah says that there is no compulsion in Islam. What Islam requires from its followers is to educate people about the teachings of Islam, but no one has the right to force a family member or any other person to follow anything against his/her will.

Domestic violence is a problem that transcends race, culture, color, and religion. It is a plague that contaminates every society and socioeconomic status. It is a stain on the human condition, and to blame any religion for it is totally unfair. Domestic violence is a cancer and must be stopped.

**What is domestic abuse** - domestic abuse is a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviors used by one person over another to gain power and control. This may include verbal abuse, financial abuse, emotional, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

The majority of domestic abuse is against women but there is also a rising issue with violence towards men. Male victims of domestic abuse are increasingly speaking out and looking for support.

**Who are the abusers** - The abuse is not just limited to wife by husband or husband by wife, it encompasses children by their parents, parents by their children, daughter-in-law by their in-laws even it happens between sisters and brothers as well.

So it needs a basic teaching of compassion, justice, and respect among others. However, this sermon will be focusing on the domestic violence by husband to his wife/wives.

In our society we think that domestic abuse only occurs in poor, uneducated and families living on council properties. Domestic abuse does not discriminate; it occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels. It also happens among heterosexual couples and in same-sex partnerships. No matter where they live or how much money they have domestic abuse can happen to anyone and comes from all walks of life.

Abusers are as likely to be lawyers, accountants, teachers, professionals as they are cleaners, construction workers, milkmen, other frontline workers or unemployed. Although women are more commonly victimised, men are also abused—especially verbally and emotionally, sometimes even physically as well.

Abusive behavior is never acceptable, whether it's coming from a man, a woman, a teenager, or an older adult. We all deserve to feel valued, respected, and safe in the community.

### **What is marriage in Islam -**

Marriage is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity.

It has been reported that The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said,  
***'A person who possesses the means to marry (i.e. he is able to work etc. to support a wife and children) and does not marry then he is not from amongst us (i.e. the believers).'***

In Islam Marriage is "mithaq" - a solemn covenant (agreement). It is not a matter which can be taken lightly. It should be entered into with total commitment and full knowledge of what it involves. It is not like buying a new dress where you can exchange it if you don't like it. Your partner should be your choice for life.

For a Muslim, marriage should only be undertaken after gaining an understanding of all that Allah has prescribed in terms of rights and obligations as well as gaining an understanding of the wisdom behind this institution. Nearly all peoples and all societies practice marriage in some form, just as they practice business (buying and selling).

'Umar ibn Al-Khattab used to expel people from the marketplace in Medina who were not knowledgeable of the fiqh of buying and selling. Similarly, a Muslim should not engage in something as important as marriage without having understanding of the purpose of marriage in Islam as well as a comprehensive understanding of the rights and obligations between husband and wife.

In Islam for a marriage to be valid certain conditions must be met.

- 1) consent of both parties.
- 2) " Mahr" a gift from the groom to his bride.
- 3) Witnesses- 2 male or female.
- 4) Finally, the marriage should never be kept secret as it leads to suspicion and troubles within the community.

In our society some people believe they can abuse their spouse or partner emotionally, physically, verbally or sexually. Some believe that they have given right by ALLAH (swt) to beating up their wife or partner.

This is completely a false believe - in Islam marriage offers tranquility to the soul and peace of mind, so that man and woman may live together in an atmosphere of love, mercy, harmony, co-operation, mutual advice and tolerance, and lay the foundation for raising a Muslim family in a nurturing, sound environment.

### **How Islam teaches us to treat our wife:**

The Holy Qur'an has described, in the most moving and eloquent terms, the eternal, natural relationship between man and woman, which filled with tranquility, security, love understanding and compassion.

ALLAH (swt) says:

***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. (Al-Qur'an-30: 21)***

A true Muslim should adhere to the Islamic injunction to treat his wife well. The Islamic recommendations concerning women and the way in which Islam encourages men to respect them, are nothing short of amazing.

Islam recommends men to treat women well, and gives them a status that they have seldom enjoyed in any other religion as Prophet (pbuh) said: *"no believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one of her characteristics, there will be others that do please him" [Muslim].*

Allah (swt) praises His Prophet (pbuh) saying: ***And you [stand] on an exalted standard of character. (Al-Qur'an 68:4)***

These words of Allah in appreciation of His Messenger are enough of an introduction to the personality of the Prophet and the height of perfection that his manners had attained.

Regarding the special relationship between a husband and his wife, or a family man and his family, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

*"The best of you is he who is best to his family, and I am the best of you to my family".*

This shows that the Prophet's (pbuh) benchmark for measuring a person's good manners was how he behaved in his home. Therefore, it is not sufficient that a person acts like an angel outside the home with friends and while he is at home with his family he gets irritated with small things and get furious.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, *"The most perfect man in his faith among the believers is the one whose behavior is most excellent; and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives."* [At-Tirmidhi].

In the sight of Allah (swt) he who practices kindness and tolerance with his children and is good to his family is worthier. Therefore, in this section, we will insha'Allah shed some light on how the Prophet (pbuh) conducted himself with his wives.

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (rwa) said: *"Hind bint 'Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyaan, entered upon the Messenger of Allah and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, Abu Sufyaan is a stingy man who does not spend enough on me and my children, except for what I take from his wealth without his knowledge. Is there any sin on me for doing that?' The Messenger of Allah said, 'Take from his wealth on a reasonable basis, only what is sufficient for you and your children.'" (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5049; Muslim, 1714)*

Islam recommends men to treat women well and gives them a status that they have never enjoyed in any other religion. So, we see the Prophet (pbuh) admonishing all men:

*"Treat women kindly, for woman was created from a rib. The part of it that is most bent is the top. If you try to straighten it you will break it, and if you leave it alone it will remain bent. So, treat women kindly." (Bukhari and Muslim)*

This description given by the Prophet eloquently describes the reality and nature of woman. She will not remain consistent, in the way her husband may wish, but the Muslim husband must understand that this is her nature, the way she has been created. He should not try to straighten her in the way he is influenced to be correct, but he should respect her unique feminine nature and accept her the way Allah (SWT) made her. If he insists on straightening her and molding her to his wishes, it will be like trying to straighten a bent rib: it will break in his hands, and the matter will end in divorce.

'Aishah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: *The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "Allah is Forbearer and He loves forbearance, and rewards for forbearance while He does not reward severity and does not give for anything besides it (forbearance)." [Muslim].*

In another verse, the Qur'an describes spouses thus: ***They are your garments, and you are their garments. (Al-Quran 2:187)***

This verse of Quran teaches us that as garment protects one from the elements of heat and cold; hides the faults that are hidden below the garment; covers what should not be seen by others; and also adorns and makes the wearer beautiful – that what spouse should do - protect each other and care for each other's need. It is worth to note that in the hadith quoted above, the Prophet (pbuh) started with the words ***"Treat women kindly,"*** then after analyzing the nature of woman, he ended with the same words: ***"Treat women kindly."*** How great was the concern of the Prophet (pbuh) for women, and how deep was his understanding of their psychology! Does the sincere Muslim husband have any choice but to follow this guidance and put it into practice at every moment?

The Prophet's (pbuh) concern for women reached such an extent that he did not forget to remind Muslims to treat them kindly, in his farewell sermon (khubat al-wada). This is the khutbah in which the Prophet (pbuh) reiterated the essential points of Islam, when he realized that this was the last time he would stand and address the Muslims during Hajj. He did not omit to advise Muslims to treat women kindly.

We can't expect that in our day to day life that there will be no dispute or disagreement between husband and wife. There will be family issues where husband and wife will not agree. Nevertheless, no matter how difficult the dispute may be, physical or verbal violence can never, ever be an option.

So far we have discussed on what Islam teaches us on how to treat our wife. But as community we also bear responsibilities. We all have a circle of influence around us, whether it's a whole organisation, the local mosque, church or temple, or simply the family. We have enormous capacity to lead by example and show other men how to champion change.

On a community level, we must get extremely serious about the issue of domestic violence. There must be zero tolerance for domestic violence. If any sister comes forward and claims to be in fear for her life at home, she must be taken with the utmost of seriousness. She must be supported, protected, and the claim must be investigated.

As a faith leader we are in a unique position to assist victims and their children by providing spiritual and emotional support, as well as resources, to help deal with the devastating effects of domestic violence. Additionally, our faith institutions may be one of the few places the abuser does not control or restrict the victim's movements and hence we can provide support to the victims.

There is no shame upon the victim if they come forward and report abuse, and they must not be made to feel ashamed. Our imams and community leaders must not tell the sisters to "be patient" with an abusive husband. Our communities must establish strong ties with social service organisations that help the victims of spousal abuse, and there are several excellent such organizations right here in Chicago as well as across the country.

Imam Abdullah Hasan from Imams Against Domestic Abuse (IADA) said, "Unfortunately there is this notion in the media that domestic abuse is sanctioned by Islam – and which some Muslims, due to their ignorance, extenuate this false understanding! It is our duty and responsibility to eliminate that misrepresentation and eradicate any form of abuse from our society."

As Muslims, we are accountable before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment, we must eradicate the stain that is domestic violence from our community, once and for all.

Ibn Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, "*Shall I not tell you whom the (Hell) Fire is forbidden to touch? It is forbidden to touch a man who is always accessible, having polite and tender nature.*" [At- Tirmidhi].

The message and teachings of the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, needs to be a regular reminder and the opportune time is at Friday prayers at Mosques.

As Muslims, we know Allah does not turn down the Dua (supplication) of the oppressed person, and if a man is abusing his wife and she makes a Dua against him, Allah, if He wills, will accept it and make it happen.



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