


As-Salamu Alaykum (اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ) Wa-Rahmatu Ilāhi Wa-Barakātuh وَعَلَيْكُمْ اَلْسَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اَللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

 **Surah An-Nisaa (The Women)**

4:34

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them [lightly]. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.

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(4:34:29)
[wa-id'ribuhunna](#)
and [finally] strike them.

وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ

PRON PRON V CONJ

CONJ – prefixed conjunction *wa* (and)
V – 2nd person masculine plural imperative verb
PRON – subject pronoun
PRON – 3rd person feminine plural object pronoun

الواو عاطفة
فعل أمر والواو ضمير متصل في محل رفع فاعل و«هن»
ضمير متصل في محل نصب مفعول به

So as we can see in Arabic the word which is used to describe the beating is "daraba". The word "daraba" could be translated to (Beat or Hit). So would it not be logical to think that it means that i can just beat up my wife if she disobeys me? The answer to that is No. that is what they want you think. To understand the verse in Surah An-Nisaa (The Women) 4:34 we should take a look how the earliest scholars (The salaf) have understood this verse to mean.

Ata' reported: Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

صَرَبًا غَيْرَ مُبَرَّحٍ

It is a striking without severity.

It was said, "What is a striking without severity?" Ibn Abbas said:

بِالسَّوَاكِ وَنَحْوِهِ

It is with a toothstick or something similar.

Source: Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī 4:34

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Al-Razi writes:

أن يكون الضرب بمنديل ملفوف أو بيده ولا يضربها بالسياط ولا بالعصا

It should be a striking with a folded handkerchief or his palm, and he should not strike her with whips or clubs.

Source: Tafsīr al-Rāzī 4:34

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Al-Zamakhshari writes:

وَقَالُوا يَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبَرِّحٍ لَا يَجْرَحُهَا وَلَا يَكْسِرُ لَهَا عَظْمًا وَيَجْتَنِبُ الْوَجْهَ

Scholars said it must be a striking without severity. It may not cause injury, nor break bones, and he must avoid the face.

Source: al-Kashshāf 4:34

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Ibn Kathir writes:

قَالَ الْحَسَنُ الْبَصْرِيُّ يَعْنِي غَيْرَ مُؤَثِّرٍ قَالَ الْفُقَهَاءُ هُوَ أَلَّا يَكْسِرَ فِيهَا عَضْوًا وَلَا يُؤَثِّرَ فِيهَا شَيْئًا

Hasan al-Basri said: It means a striking without a trace. The jurists said: It may not break limbs, nor cause a mark of any kind.

Source: Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr 4:34

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Do not cause harm or return harm.

Source: Sunan Ibn Mājah 2340, Grade: Sahih

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Amr bin al-Ahwas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

أَلَا وَاسْتَوْضُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّمَا هُنَّ عَوَانٌ عِنْدَكُمْ لَيْسَ تَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُنَّ شَيْئًا غَيْرَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ فَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَصَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبَرِّحٍ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا

I enjoin you to treat women well, for they are like captives to you. Verily, you have no right treat them otherwise, unless they commit flagrant immorality. If they do so, then you may separate from their beds and strike them without causing pain, but if they obey you then you may do nothing against them.

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1163, Grade: Sahih

All scholars unanimously agree that the striking mentioned in the verse is “without severity” (ghayru mubbarih) or “without pain” (ghayru mu’allim). It is only in the case when a wife habitually violates her marriage contract and after other means have been taken but failed to correct her behavior. It is illegal in Islam for a husband to cause bruises, injuries, or any harm whatsoever to wife.

To summarize all the restrictions placed on ‘striking’ by the scholars: it is with a light object like a toothbrush, handkerchief, or palm, not a club or whip, it must not cause pain, injury, harm, or disgrace, it must not leave any bruise or mark, and it must not be on sensitive areas like the face. A man who violates any of these restrictions is held legally responsible and his

wife may divorce him for it, all of which amounts to a prohibition of domestic violence.

Taken altogether, this 'striking' is nothing more than a teaching mechanism intended to convey to his wife the gravity of her unwarranted behavior, because the final step afterwards is divorce. The Prophet (ﷺ) would use such a symbolic 'striking' with his male companions as a means of catching their attention.

Abu Dharr reported:

فَضْرَبَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَدِهِ عَلَى مَنْكِبِي ثُمَّ قَالَ

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, struck my chest with his hand and he said...

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1825, Grade: Sahih

In this instance, the Prophet (ﷺ) 'struck' Abu Dharr on the chest before giving him an important lesson about leadership. It was not intended to hurt him or disgrace him, but rather he wanted to get his attention.

In fact, some of the early Muslims understood the 'striking' to be metaphorical and not physical at all.

Ata' said:

لَا يَضْرِبُهَا وَإِنْ أَمَرَهَا وَنَهَاهَا فَلَمْ تُطِعهُ وَلَكِنْ يَعْصِبُ عَلَيْهَا

A man should not strike his wife if he commands her and prohibits her and she does not obey him, but rather he should show her his anger.

Source: Aḥkām al-Qur'ān li-Ibn al-'Arabī 4:34

Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) never hit a woman or a servant unless he had to defend himself or his community in battle. This is the righteous prophetic model which Muslims are supposed to emulate.

Aisha reported:

مَا ضَرَبَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ شَيْئًا قَطُّ بِيَدِهِ وَلَا امْرَأَةً وَلَا خَادِمًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُجَاهِدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, never struck anything with his hand, neither a servant nor a woman, unless he was fighting in the path of Allah.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2328, Grade: Sahih

In this regard, the best course of action for a Muslim man is to never strike his wife at all. The action of symbolically striking his wife, within the aforementioned legal limits, is considered by scholars to be permissible but ‘disapproved’ (makruh), meaning a Muslim man will be divinely rewarded for not doing so.

Iyas ibn Abdullah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

لَقَدْ طَافَ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ نِسَاءٌ كَثِيرٌ يَشْكُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ لَيْسَ أَوْلَنَكَ بِخِيَارِكُمْ

Many women have come to the family of Muhammad complaining about their husbands striking them. These men are not the best among you.

Source: Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2146, Grade: Sahih

In another tradition, the Prophet (ﷺ) rhetorically criticized men who beat their wives while

marriage in Islam is supposed to be based upon love, mercy, and partnership.

Abdullah bin Zam'ah reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

بِمَ يَضْرِبُ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَتَهُ ضَرْبَ الْفَحْلِ أَوْ الْعَبْدِ ثُمَّ لَعَلَّهُ يُعَانِقُهَا

How does one of you strike his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then embrace her?

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5695, Grade: Sahih

The Prophet (ﷺ) would also warn women in the community about men who would beat their wives. For example, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised Fatimah ibn Qais not to marry a man who was known for hitting women, saying:

وَأَمَّا أَبُو الْجَهْمِ فَرَجُلٌ صَرَّابٌ لِلنِّسَاءِ وَلَكِنْ أُسَامَةٌ

As for Abu al-Jahm, he frequently beats women. Rather, you should marry Usamah.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1480, Grade: Sahih

Hence, even with all the limitations placed on striking a wife, scholars still discouraged Muslims from doing so.

Al-Shafi'ee said:

والضرب مباح وتركه أفضل

Striking is permissible, but avoiding it is better.

Source: Tafsīr al-Rāzī 4:34

And Al-Nawawi writes:

وَإِنْ كَانَ مُبَاحًا لِلْأَدَبِ فَتَرْكُهُ أَفْضَلُ

Even if it permissible for discipline, it is still better to avoid it.

Source: Sharḥ al-Nawawī ‘alá Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2328

On at least two separate occasions the Prophet (ﷺ) separated a man from his wife because he was physically abusing her.

Ali ibn Abu Talib reported: The wife of Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah came to the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, and complained to him, saying, “O Messenger of Allah, Al-Walid has beaten me!” The Prophet said:

قُولِي لَهُ قَدْ أَجَارَنِي

Say to him: The Prophet has granted me protection.

She returned later and she said, “He did not give me anything except more beatings!” The Prophet tore a piece of cloth from his shirt and he said:

قُولِي لَهُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ أَجَارَنِي

Say to him: Verily, the Messenger of Allah has granted me protection.

She returned later and she said, “He did not give me anything except more beatings!” The Prophet raised his hands and he said:

اللَّهُمَّ عَلَيْكَ الْوَلِيدَ أَثِمَ بِي مَرَّتَيْنِ

O Allah, you must deal with Al-Walid, for he has sinned against me twice.

Source: Musnad Ahmad 1257, Grade: Sahih

Yahya ibn Sa'id reported: Habibah bint Sahl was the wife of Thabit ibn Qais and she was the neighbor of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. Thabit had struck her, so she appeared at the door of the Prophet and she said, “Thabit and I can no longer be married.” The Prophet said to Thabit:

خُذْ مِنْهَا وَخَلِّ سَبِيلَهَا

Take what she owes to you and let her go her way.

Source: Sunan al-Dārimī 2200, Grade: Sahih

As such, classical jurists upheld the right of a wife to seek a divorce if her husband harms her, either physically by hitting her or emotionally by insulting or neglecting her.

Khalil al-Jundi writes:

ولها التطليق بالضرر البين

She may have a separation due to harm caused.

Source: Mukhtaṣar Khalīl 1/111

And Al-Dardir writes:

للزوجة التطلق على الزوج بالضرر وهو ما لا يجوز شرعا كهجرها بلا موجب شرعي وضربها كذلك وسبها وسب أبيها

The wife may have a separation from her husband due to harm caused that is not legally permissible, such as abandoning her without a legal necessity, or striking her likewise, or cursing her or her parents.

Source: al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr 2/345

Finally, the Prophet (ﷺ) strongly encouraged Muslim men to treat women in general, and their wives in particular, with the utmost respect and chivalry. The measure of a man's character is directly related to his treatment of women.

Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا وَخَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ خُلُقًا

The most complete of the believers in faith are those with the most excellent character, and the best of you are the best in behavior to their women.

Source: Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1162, Grade: Sahih

In sum, the Quran does not allow Muslims to harm or 'beat' their wives. Rather, the 'striking' mentioned in the verse is a symbolic gesture and a last resort to correct a wife's misbehavior, before initiating divorce. If a husband harms his wife in any way, she has the right to seek a divorce from him. Muslim men should follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ), who never hit his wives and would behave honorably, chivalrously, and compassionately with women.

الله أعلم

Allah knows best