



Written by Prof Yusuf Da Costa  
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like that. It cannot be otherwise. Surely the receiving of souls is such an important function since the existence of humanity depends on that. And so our women folk have a very special station with Allah.

I have also, on a previous occasion, related the *hadith* (Prophetic Tradition) in which Nabi Muhammad (ﷺ) speaks about the fact that mothers are three stations higher than fathers with regard to their children. The reason that Allah has placed our mothers three stations higher than our fathers is because of the roles they play in the process of creation, because they are the receiver of souls, and also because of the particular functions they perform especially in the early life of their children, through the special emotional and physical characteristics granted to them. In the same way our daughters are two stations higher than our sons. This is because potentially they are going to become receivers of souls, and potentially Allah is going to create new human beings within their bodies. Daughters are so special that they can be a means for us to enter Paradise. It is related by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Messenger

(  
□  
)  
said: “  
*If anyone cares for three daughters, disciplines them, marries them off, and does good to them, that person will go to Paradise*”  
(Abu Dawud). The reference is not to sons but to daughters.

Now I want to come to what I want to talk about. I wanted us, first of all, to understand who women are and what they are, and their functions, and then our attitudes towards them will change. That is why when I say we should carry our women folk on platters, it is because of the functions granted to them. If we understand their functions we will have deep respect and deep regard for them and treat them with the utmost deference and kindness.

Allah speaks about husband-wife relationships in the Qur'an in the following way:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ  
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***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 placed love and mercy between you (***

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**xxx: 21).**

These Words of the Qur'an, which we profess to follow, rules out completely any forms of wife abuse. The Words stress the need to live in "tranquility" with "love" and "mercy" in the relationship. What does mercy mean? Mercy means to show extreme tenderness and regard. When you tell a person show mercy, it means show regard, show kindness, show tenderness. What do we say? We say: "It doesn't matter what Allah says. If I want to abuse my wife I will just abuse her." There is no regard for the Words of the Qur'an, no respect for Allah Almighty. The abuse of women in the home is not only confined to certain religious groups. It is found across all religious groups, across all people in this country and elsewhere. The abuse covers all sections of the world's population.

In a monograph on Violence Against Women in Metropolitan South Africa (September, 1999), the following information is provided:

\* 80% of women experience emotional abuse. This takes the form of humiliation, degrading, insulting, threatening and being scoffed at.

\* 90% experience physical abuse. Of course this takes various forms such as hitting with the hand or some object, being kicked and punched, threatened with being killed (and in many cases being killed), and being burnt and scalded.

\* 71% experience sexual abuse such as forced sexual intercourse, forced to watch and act out pornography, and compelled to have sex with somebody else.

\* 58% experience economic abuse such as taking her money, forced to hand over her wages or salary, and forced to be the breadwinner.

\* Many women experience all forms of abuse, and most of the abuse takes place in homes.

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I'm not saying you are doing this, I'm saying this to you so you can teach your children about such abuse. We must be examples in our homes, of *mawaddah* and *rahmah*. As fathers, we must be examples in our homes not of violence, not of abuse, but of love, of tenderness, of kindness, of regard for our wives.

Let me give you one example of what I used to witness as a young boy. I lived in Salt River. On the corner of Westminster Road where I lived, we had a number of hawkers selling fruit and vegetables. Every Friday night, the husbands of some of the lady-hawkers would come there drunk and start beating up their wives. I don't know if you have ever seen a drunk beating up a woman. He just hits her and kicks, just about anything that not even an animal would do. I witnessed this as a child. The one thing that shocked me was that nobody ever stopped the abuse. It happened almost every single Friday night. I used to ask myself why the women would still come every Friday night? It was because they were afraid of their husbands.

Allah Almighty does not say: "I've given fear between the two of you." I want to repeat this. Many of us like our wives to say that they are afraid of us. Allah Almighty says that He has *mawaddah* and *rahmah*

for the husband and wife, not fear. A wife must not fear her husband. A wife must love and respect and have regard for her husband, and the husband must have love and regard and respect for his wife. Why is it that today, and I'm sorry to say this to you today, but I'm talking to you because you are Muslims, why is it that today the abuse of women is so rife in our homes? And it sometimes happens on strange kinds of levels. One day a lady-teacher phoned me and told me that at the end of every month, her husband would wait for her outside the school, take her money and give her a few rand back. The rest of the money goes into his pocket. I told her that what she earns is hers. He has no right over that money. I want to repeat that. I want to repeat that. What the wife earns is hers. No husband has any right over that money. In fact if she puts any of her money into the home, it has to be given back to her. This is such an important this rule. I told this to the lady. Of course, the husband was very upset. His wife stopped giving him her money. This was major, major financial abuse.

The worse type of abuse you get in Muslim and other homes, and I'm sorry to say this, is that husbands slap their wives, punch them, hit them, kick them, shove them, scratch them, throw things at them, and beat them up. They threaten them, attack them, lock them up in the house, throw them out when they are sick, or injured or pregnant. This is physical abuse. In so many cases these things happen. We must be extremely careful because everything that we say and everything that we do, are recorded! All those slaps, all those kicks, all those shoves, all those threats, all those swear words, all those attacks, are all recorded. How can we, and I'm sorry to say this, do that, and then that night we want to go sleep with that wife. How can we do that?

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What kind of animal behaviour is this? Do we think that the cries of our wives go unrecorded?

Allah Almighty has decreed marriage for us since the beginning of time, that certain men and certain women will enter into marriage. He decreed that for us. He decreed that certain pairs would come together. When the bridegroom sits in the mosque on the day of his marriage, he declares: *Qabiltu nikahaha linafsi bi dhalik*.

Although this is declared to the *imam*

and those present, the actual declaration is made to Allah. He says: "O my Lord, I have taken this woman as my wife according to the agreed dowry." Allah is witness to that. Allah is witness to the fact that he has said:

*Qabiltu nikahaha linafsi bi dhalik*

(*Qabiltu nikahaha linafsi bi dhalik*

). And before he can enter his wife, it is recommended that he says:

*Bismillahir rahma nir rahim*

(*Bismillahir rahma nir rahim*

: In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Good), mentioning the Name of Allah. Our relationship with our wives must be on that basis. We must say: "O my Lord I declare to Thee that I have accepted her as my marriage partner. And I mention Thy Name when I enter her. Thou hast created her so that I can become a father. I want to thank Thee for that. I am in eternal gratitude to Thee for making me a father through her."

How must we feel about her? Surely, our tenderness for her must know no bounds, our love for her, no bounds, our regard for her, no bounds, our kindness to her, no bounds. In all communities, not only the Muslim communities, but in all communities, women are so badly treated that a large number of organizations in the country have been established to protect women from abuse. I am shocked at the kinds of stories that I have to hear in my front room as women come to complain to me about the way they are being treated by their husbands. So many! One woman I know landed in hospital as a result of the way her husband hit her. I could see the marks on her face where she was injured. She told the doctor at the hospital she had fallen. If she had to report him, he would have been locked up. She didn't want to do that. She should have reported him, and charged him with assault and have him locked up and apply for a divorce. She didn't do that.

Surely the important thing about our relationships with our wives should be according to what Allah says. What does Allah Almighty say, how must I treat this woman? How should I care for her? What should my relationship be with her? What must I do for her? How kind should I be towards her? Most of our mothers, almost all of mothers, spend most of their day serving us

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free of charge. There is no compulsion in the religion for that. I want to repeat that, I hope some of the ladies upstairs are listening to me. There is no compulsion in Islam, saying that that woman must cook your food, must make your tea, must see to the breakfast, must clean the house, must feed your babies. Nothing like that! Nothing like that! But we will let our wives serve us, and our children, day in and day out, day in and day out, day in and day out and show little kindness. We never say: "Thank you!" I know of one man, he has passed away, who used to sit next to his wife when they ate. When they had finished, he would put his arm around his wife and kiss her on her cheek and say: "Thank you, *bokkie*." What a man! May Allah give him a good place in the Hereafter,

*Amin*

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How many Muslim men will express thanks to their wives for the effort they put in for him and their children? How many of us will do that? Do you know what a difference a "thank you" will make to our relationships with our wives? I want to appeal to you. I hope that there isn't anybody in this mosque that abuses his wife, in any particular way. We must treat our wives the way Allah has ordered. I hope you are all like that because if it is not like that, you will have to answer to Allah for every disregard of His Law, for every disregard of His religion, for disregard of His instruction.

We must come to understand that almost 90% of the things that our wives do in our homes are not expected from them by Islam. They do that through their love for us. There is nothing in Islam that says a wife must be a cook and be a servant. My appeal to you is that we must look at our relationships with our wives, and see in fact whether we are applying the rules of the Qur'an. And we must encourage our children to understand that part of the respect and the regard for their mothers must be because mothers are three degrees higher than fathers, and the respect for daughters is because they are two degrees higher than sons. We must ask Allah to help us, to strengthen us, to take those bad practices out of our homes, and that every home becomes a beacon of Islam.

We ask for all of these with the blessings of *Suratul Fatihah* ...

And Allah knows best, and I ask forgiveness for any mistakes or distortions in what I have said,  
*Amin*

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Yours in Islam  
***Shaykh Yusuf da Costa***