



# Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition (Oxford Islamic Legal Studies)

*Ayesha S. Chaudhry*

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**Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition (Oxford Islamic Legal Studies)** Ayesha S. Chaudhry  
How do modern Muslims' attitudes to marital violence and patriarchy relate to the Islamic tradition?

In recent years, discussion regarding the interpretation of the Qur'an has become highly controversial. Especially contentious is passage 4:34, which covers the legitimacy of marital violence and the subjugation of women within Islam. Scholarly opinion on the topic is heavily influenced by contemporary context, so the issue remains largely unsettled. While pre-colonial Islamic jurists permitted the use of violence against women, they still held ethical concerns about the disciplinary privileges of husbands. Consequently, the debate for these early scholars was focussed on the level of violence permitted, and how to apply the three disciplinary steps: admonishment, abandonment, and physical abuse.

Ayesha Chaudhry argues that all living religious traditions are rooted in a patriarchal, social, and historical context, and they need ways to reconcile gender egalitarian values with religious tradition. Post-colonial, modern Islamic scholars that consult the Qu'ran for gender-egalitarian interpretations must confront a difficult and unique debate: equality vs authority. As in many religions, authority is derived from tradition, rebelling from which results in a loss of authority in the eyes of the community.

Chaudhry reveals that Muslims do not speak with one voice about Islam. Instead, Muslim scholarly discourse is spirited and diverse. The voices of contemporary Muslim scholars enrich the scope of the 'Islamic tradition'.

Many recent works on Islam strive to promote a 'public relations' image of Islam. This book deals with ethical problems of domestic violence as discussed in historic and contemporary Islamic religious doctrine. The stakes are high, and very real. The author confronts the significant issue of how modern Muslims can relate to Islamic tradition and the Qur'anic text.

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