

## Andrew Bolt: Don't be misled over Muslim video

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DON'T believe the Muslim apologists. The Koran really does instruct men to beat wives who don't obey. Prominent imams and celebrity Muslims are misleading us in their panic over a Hizb ut Tahrir video showing two Muslim women demonstrating just how men should do that hitting.

The Koran says no such thing, they claim, but it does and the Department of Social Services has sponsored another video in which an imam explains one of the rules: don't hit the face. That's right. Sheik Ayman Malas of Cabramatta Mosque, in a video of Muslim clerics denouncing domestic violence, actually explains in Arabic: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said do not abuse the face."

It shows the desperation of our political class to believe the best of Islam that it doesn't even hear what an imam says in government propaganda. That same desperation now drives politicians to join prominent Muslims in attacking the women behind the Hizb ut Tahrir video. They'd rather blame these women than admit the real problem is the Koran — the word of the Prophet Mohamed.

The women, one a teacher, were in fact correct in saying the Koran tells men they have a right to beat disobedient wives.



Prominent media Muslims, from Channel 10's Waleed Aly (pictured) to regular ABC panellist Maha Abdo, signed a joint letter denouncing the women.

The women then showed in their video how some scholars say beating should be done: symbolically, with a stick the size of a toothbrush, or maybe with a scarf. But that was telling us too much for Islam's good, so the Australian National Imams Council and prominent media Muslims, from Channel 10's Waleed Aly to regular ABC panellist Maha Abdo, signed a joint letter denouncing the women.

“Australian Muslim women and men unequivocally reject suggestions that there are religious justifications for any form of violence against women,” they said.

“Violence against women ... betrays the example of the Prophet Mohamed” and the women’s views were “not widely shared amongst the Australian Muslim community”.

Of course, we’d like that to be true. But then there are the facts.

No religious justification for violence against women?

False. The Koran instructs: “Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others”, and if their wives disobey, then husbands may “admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping places and beat them”.

Violence betrays the example of Mohamed?

False. The Sahih Muslim, considered one of the most authentic collections of sayings about the Prophet, quotes his wife, Aisha, saying what he’d done when she’d left home without permission: “He struck me on the chest which caused me pain.”

As for the claim most Australian Muslims don’t believe the Koran permits beating wives, I’d bet that’s false, too.



Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars. Picture: Getty Images

Sure, most Muslims probably oppose domestic violence, and many imams say other passages of the Koran recommend mercy. But I’d suggest most also know Mohamed gave men control over their wives and let them beat the disobedient, which is exactly what Keysar Trad, head of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, conceded in an interview with me earlier this year. Trad confirmed that beating wives was “step three” after counselling, but urged: “Before you even consider using your hand, before you consider an act of violence, have you checked box No. 1?”

But when you point all this out, quoting the Koran, apologists protest. Silma Ihram, a convert from the Australian Muslim Women’s Association, even claimed on Sky News we had “no right” to quote the Koran like this: “That is for a scholar to do and not for you or me.”

More evasion, I’m afraid. You see, the most authoritative scholars confirm the Koran’s plain words.



The most authoritative scholars confirm the Koran’s plain words. Picture: Valeriu Campan

Take Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars: “If the husband senses that feelings of disobedience and rebelliousness are rising against him in his wife”, he should counsel her or stop sleeping with her. But “if this approach fails, it is permissible for him to beat her lightly with his hands, avoiding her face and other sensitive areas”.

Or take Sheik Ahmad al-Tayyeb, Grand Mufti of the Egypt’s famed Al-Azhar Mosque and voted the “most influential Muslim in the world” by the Muslim 500 magazine: “With regard to wife beating ... in a nutshell, it appeared as part of a program to reform the wife ... “By Allah, even if only one woman out of a million can be reformed by light beatings ... It’s not really beating, it’s more like punching ... “It’s like shoving or poking her. That’s what it is.”

I’m glad apologists say that’s not how they understand the Koran, but they shouldn’t pretend that’s not what Mohamed preached.

Otherwise, it seems they’re fooling themselves ... or us.