

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM OWNED AFRICAN SLAVES

What Does Islam Teach About...

Slavery

Does Islam condone slavery? Does Islamic teaching allow Muslim men to keep women as sex slaves?

Islam neither ignores nor condemns slavery. In fact, a large part of the Sharia is dedicated to the practice.

Muslims are encouraged to live in the way of Muhammad, who was a slave owner and trader. He captured slaves in battle; he had sex with his slaves; and he instructed his men to do the same. The Quran actually devotes more verses to making sure that Muslim men know they can keep women as sex slaves (4) than it does to telling them to pray five times a day (zero).



Quran

[Quran \(33:50\)](#) - *"O Prophet! We have made lawful to thee thy wives to whom thou hast paid their dowries; and those (slaves) whom thy right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to thee"* This is one of several personal-sounding verses "from Allah" narrated by Muhammad - in this case allowing a virtually unlimited supply of sex partners. Other Muslims are restricted to four wives, but they may also have sex with any number of slaves, following the example of their prophet.

[Quran \(23:5-6\)](#) - *"..who abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess..."* This verse permits the slave-owner to have sex with his slaves. See also [Quran \(70:29-30\)](#). The Quran is a small book, so if Allah used valuable space to repeat the same point four times, sex slavery must be very important to him. He was relatively reticent on matters of human compassion and love.

[Quran \(4:24\)](#) - *"And all married women (are forbidden unto you) save those (captives) whom your right hands possess."* Even sex with married slaves is permissible.

[Quran \(8:69\)](#) - *"But (now) enjoy what ye took in war, lawful and good"* A reference to war booty, of which slaves were a part. The Muslim slave master may enjoy his "catch" because (according to verse [71](#)) *"Allah gave you mastery over them."*

[Quran \(24:32\)](#) - *"And marry those among you who are single and those who are fit among your*

male slaves and your female slaves..." Breeding slaves based on fitness.

[Quran \(2:178\)](#) - *"O ye who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the murdered; the freeman for the freeman, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female."* The message of this verse, which prescribes the rules of retaliation for murder, is that all humans are **not** created equal. The human value of a slave is less than that of a free person (and a woman's worth is also distinguished from that of a man).

[Quran \(16:75\)](#) - *"Allah sets forth the Parable (of two men: one) a slave under the dominion of another; He has no power of any sort; and (the other) a man on whom We have bestowed goodly favours from Ourselves, and he spends thereof (freely), privately and publicly: are the two equal? (By no means;) praise be to Allah."* Yet another confirmation that the slave is not equal to the master. In this case, it is plain that the slave owes his status to Allah's will. (According to [16:71](#), the owner should be careful about insulting Allah by bestowing Allah's gifts on slaves - those whom the god of Islam has not favored).

Hadith and Sira

[Sahih Bukhari \(41:598\)](#) - Muhammad establishes that slaves are property. They cannot be freed if an owner has outstanding debt, but they can be used to pay off the debt.

[Sahih Bukhari \(62:137\)](#) - An account of women taken as slaves in battle by Muhammad's men after their husbands and fathers were killed. The women were raped with Muhammad's approval.

[Sahih Bukhari \(34:432\)](#) - Another account of females taken captive and raped with Muhammad's approval. In this case it is evident that the Muslims intend on selling the women after raping them because they are concerned about devaluing their price by impregnating them. Muhammad is asked about coitus interruptus.

[Sahih Bukhari \(47:765\)](#) - A woman is rebuked by Muhammad for freeing a slave girl. The prophet tells her that she would have gotten a greater heavenly reward by giving her to a relative (as a slave).

[Sahih Bukhari \(34:351\)](#) - Muhammad sells a slave for money. He was thus a slave trader.

[Sahih Bukhari \(72:734\)](#) - Some contemporary Muslims in the West (where slavery is believed to be a horrible crime) are reluctant to believe that Muhammad owned slaves. This is just one of many places in the Hadith where a reference is made to a human being owned by Muhammad.

[Sahih Bukhari \(52:255\)](#) - To discourage emancipation, Muhammad says that the slave who accepts Islam and continues serving his Muslim master will receive a double reward in heaven. This is better than freedom for both parties, as the master benefits from slave-labor free of consequence, and the slave has the promise of eternal reward over the temporal.

[Sahih Muslim 3371](#) - Muhammad and his men take captive *"some excellent Arab women"* from the Banu Mustaliq. Their dilemma then becomes that they want to rape the women, but they also want to 'ransom' them, knowing that their captives will be of less value if pregnant. When they ask Muhammad about coitus interruptus, their prophet tells them that it doesn't matter how they rape the women because *"every soul will be born"* anyway.

[Sahih Muslim 3901](#) - Muhammad trades away two African slaves for one Muslim slave.

[Sahih Bukhari 8:73:182](#) - Muhammad had an African slave acting as his chauffeur.

[Sahih Bukhari 9:91:368](#) - Muhammad had an African slave acting as his butler.

[Sahih Bukhari 4:53:344](#) - Aisha learns that Muhammad has acquired slave girls as "booty" and asks for one as a maid.

[Sahih Bukhari 7:65:344](#) - Muhammad kept a slave to act as his tailor.

[Sahih Bukhari 2:15:103](#) - *"I was watching the display of black slaves in the mosque..."*

[Sahih Muslim 4345](#) - Narration of a military raid against a hapless tribe trying to reach their water hole. During the slaughter, the women and children attempt to flee, but are cut off and captured by the Muslims. This story refutes any misconception that Muhammad's sex slaves were taken by their own volition.

[Sahih Muslim 4112](#) - A man freed six slaves on the event of his death, but Muhammad reversed the emancipation and kept four in slavery to himself. He cast lots to determine which two to free.

[Sahih Bukhari \(47:743\)](#) - Muhammad's own pulpit - from which he preached Islam - was built with slave labor on his command.

[Sahih Bukhari \(59:637\)](#) - *"The Prophet sent Ali to Khalid to bring the Khumus (of the booty) and I hated Ali, and Ali had taken a bath (after a sexual act with a slave-girl from the Khumus). I said to Khalid, 'Don't you see this (i.e. Ali)?' When we reached the Prophet I mentioned that to him. He said, 'O Buraida! Do you hate Ali?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Do you hate him, for he deserves more than that from the Khumus.'"* Muhammad approved of his men having sex with slaves, as this episode involving his son-in-law, Ali, clearly proves. This hadith refutes the modern apologists who pretend that slaves were really "wives." This is because Muhammad had forbidden Ali from marrying another woman as long as Fatima (his favorite daughter) was living.

[Abu Dawud \(2150\)](#) - *"The Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) sent a military expedition to Awtas on the occasion of the battle of Hunain. They met their enemy and fought with them. They defeated them and took them captives. Some of the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) were reluctant to have **intercourse with the female captives in the presence of their husbands** who were unbelievers. So Allah, the Exalted, sent down the Qur'anic verse: (Quran 4:24) 'And all married women (are forbidden) unto you save those (captives) whom your right hands possess.'"* This is the background for verse 4:24 of the Quran. Not only does Allah give permission for women to be captured and raped, but allows it to even be done in front of their husbands. (See also Muslim [3432](#) & Ibn Kathir/Abdul Rahman Part 5 Page 14)

[Abu Dawud \(1814\)](#) - *"...[Abu Bakr] He then began to beat [his slave] him while the Apostle of Allah (pbuh) was smiling and saying: Look at this man who is in the sacred state (putting on ihram), what is he doing?"* The future first caliph of Islam is beating his slave for losing a camel while Muhammad looks on in apparent amusement.

Ibn Ishaq (734) - A slave girl is given a "violent beating" by Ali in the presence of Muhammad, who does nothing about it.

[Abu Dawud 38:4458](#) - Narrated Ali ibn AbuTalib: *"A slave-girl belonging to the house of the Apostle of Allah (peace_be_upon_him) committed fornication. He (the Prophet) said: Rush up, Ali, and inflict the prescribed punishment on her. I then hurried up, and saw that blood was flowing*

from her, and did not stop. So I came to him and he said: Have you finished inflicting (punishment on her)? I said: I went to her while her blood was flowing. He said: Leave her alone till her bleeding stops; then inflict the prescribed punishment on her. And inflict the prescribed punishment on those whom your right hands possess (i.e. slaves)". A slave girl is ordered by Muhammad to be beaten until she bleeds, and then beaten again after the bleeding stops. He indicates that this is prescribed treatment for slaves ("those whom your right hand possesses").

[Abu Dawud 1:142](#) - *"Do not beat your wife as you beat your slave-girl"*

Sunan Nasai 2:12:1125 - *Aisha said, "I noticed that the Messenger of Allah was missing from bed... I thought he had gone to one of his concubines"* - Muhammad's wife thought that he had gone to one of his slaves for sex.

Ibn Ishaq (693) - *"Then the apostle sent Sa-d b. Zayd al-Ansari, brother of Abdu'l-Ashal with some of the captive women of Banu Qurayza to Najd and he sold them for horses and weapons."* Muhammad trades away women captured from the Banu Qurayza tribe to non-Muslim slave traders for property. (Their men had been [executed](#) after surrendering peacefully without a fight).

Umdat al-Salik (Reliance of the Traveller) (o9.13) - According to Sharia, when a child or woman is taken captive by Muslims, they become slaves by the mere fact of their capture. A captured woman's previous marriage is immediately annulled. This would not be necessary if she were widowed by battle, which is an imaginary stipulation that modern apologists sometimes pose.

Notes

Slavery is deeply embedded in Islamic law and tradition. Although a slave-owner is cautioned against treating slaves harshly, basic human rights are not obliged. The very fact that only non-Muslims may be taken as slaves is evidence of Islam's supremacist doctrine.

Of the five references to freeing a slave in the Quran, three are prescribed as punitive measures against the slaveholder for unrelated sin. They limit the emancipation to just a single slave. Another ([24:33](#)) appears to allow a slave to buy their own freedom if they are "good." This is in keeping with the traditional Islamic practice of wealth-building through taking and ransoming hostages, which began under Muhammad.

A tiny verse in one of the earliest chapters, 90:13, does say that freeing a slave is good, however, this was "revealed" at a time when the Muslim community was miniscule and several of their new and potential recruits were either actual slaves or newly freed slaves. Many of these same people, and Muhammad himself, later went on to become owners and traders of slaves, both male and female, as they acquired the power to do so (there is no record of Muhammad owning slaves prior to starting Islam). The language of the Quran changed to accommodate slavery, which is why this early verse has had negligible impact on slavery in the Islamic world.

The taking of women and children as slaves, particularly during the conquests outside Arabia, belies the notion that Jihad was being waged in self-defense, since the enemy's families reside neither with the Muslims nor (generally) on the battlefield. These were innocent people captured from their homes and pressed into slavery by Muhammad's companions and successors.

Contrary to popular belief, converting to Islam does **not** automatically earn a slave his freedom, although freeing a believing slave is said to increase the master's heavenly reward (Muslim slaves are implied in Quran ([4:92](#))). As far as the Islamic courts are concerned, a master may treat his slaves however he chooses without fear of punishment.

By contrast, Christianity was a major impetus in the abolishment of slavery. Abolition had to be imposed on the Islamic world by the European West.

Given that there have never been abolitionary movement within the Islamic world, it is astonishing to see contemporary Muslims write their religion into the history of abolition. It is a lie.

There was no William Wilberforce or Bartolome de las Casas in Islam. As mentioned, Muhammad, the most revered figure in the religion, practiced and approved of slavery. Even his own pulpit was built with slave labor. Caliphs since have had harems of hundreds, sometimes thousands of young girls and women brought from Christian, Hindu and African lands to serve Islam's religious equivalent of the pope in the most demeaning fashion.

One of Muhammad's closest companions was Umar, who became the 2nd caliph only two years after the prophet of Islam died. It is fair to say that he would have known Islam better than any contemporary apologist - those who say that slaves can only be captured in war and wars can only be waged in self-defense. He obviously did not agree with this.

Under Umar's authority, Arab armies in Egypt invaded Black Africa to the south and attempted to conquer the Christian Makurians who were living there peacefully. Although the Muslims were held off, the Makurians had to sign a treaty to prevent recurring invasions. The terms of the [Baqi](#) included an annual payment of 360 "high quality" African slaves. The treaty stood for 700 years without the least bit of moral objection from generations of Muslim clerics and scholars.

Umar himself was stabbed to death by a slave whose liberty he refused to grant. In this case, the slave was captured during the campaign against Persia, one of many offensive wars waged by the Muslims against people who were not attacking them.

Modern day apologists trying to defend slavery under Islam generally ignore the basic fact that reducing people to property is dehumanizing. They distract from this by comparing the theoretical treatment of slaves under Sharia with the worst examples of abuse from the era of European slavery. ("Fatwa [64](#) from ISIS instructs slave owners to "show compassion" and "kindness" to the women they rape.)

The first problem with this is that the actual practice of Muslim slavery was often remarkably at odds with the relatively humane treatment prescribed by Sharia. For example, according to the Ghanaian scholar John Azumah, nearly three times as many captured Africans died in harsh circumstances related to their transport to Muslim lands than were ever even enslaved by Europeans.

A more insurmountable problem for the Muslim apologist who insists that slavery is "different" under Islam are the many examples in which Muhammad and his companions sold captured slaves to non-Muslim traders for material goods. The welfare of the slave was obviously of no consequence.

Some contemporary apologists interpret sex slavery as a favor done to the subject - a way in which women and children are taken care of in exchange for their sexual availability to the pious Muslim male. Although morally repugnant in its own right, this is easily belied by the fact that slavery would be unnecessary if the arrangement were of benefit to the slave.

Another myth about Islamic slavery is that it was not race-based. In fact, it was. Muhammad's father-in-law, Umar, in his aforementioned role as caliph, declared that Arabs could not be taken as slaves and even had all Arab slaves freed on his deathbed. This helped propel the vast Islamic

campaign to capture slaves in Africa, Europe and Asia for import into the Middle East.

The greatest slave rebellion in human history took place in Basra, Iraq beginning in 869. A half-million African slaves staged a courageous uprising against their Arab-Islamic masters that lasted fifteen years before being brutally suppressed. (See [Zanj Rebellion](#))

Literally millions of Christians were captured into slavery during the many centuries of Jihad. So pervasive were the incursions by the Turks into Eastern Europe, that the English word for slave is based on Slav.

Muslim slave raiders operated as far north as England. In 1631, a French cleric in Algiers observed the sale of nearly 300 men, women and children, taken from a peaceful English fishing village:

"It was a pitiful sight to see them exposed in the market...Women were separated from their husbands and the children from their fathers...on one side a husband was sold; on the other his wife; and her daughter was torn from her arms without the hope that they'd ever see each other again." (from the book, [White Gold](#), which also details the story of an English slave, Thomas Pellow, who was beaten, starved and tortured into embracing Islam).

The Indian and Persian people suffered greatly as well - as did Africans. At least 17 million slaves (mostly black women and children) were brought out of Africa by Islamic traders - far more than the 11 million that were taken by the Europeans. However, these were only the survivors. As many as 85 million other Africans are thought to have died en route.

Most telling, perhaps, is that slavery is **still** practiced in the Sudan, Niger, Mauritania and a few other corners of the Muslim world - and you **won't** see any of those Muslim apologists (who shamelessly repeat the lie that Islam abolished slavery) **doing or saying anything about it!**

In fact, a fatwa (Islam Q&A 33597 originally at <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/33597>) was recently issued by a mainstream Islamic source reminding Muslim males of their divine right to rape female slaves and "*discipline*" resisters in "*whatever manner he thinks is appropriate*". Not one peep of protest from Islamic apologists was recorded.

In 2013, the same site prominently proclaimed (Islam Q&A 10382 originally at <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/10382>) that "*there is no dispute (among the scholars) that it is permissible to take concubines and to have intercourse with one's slave woman, because Allah says so.*"

In 2003, a cleric in Saudi Arabia's highest religious body [declared](#), "*Slavery is part of Islam. Slavery is part of jihad and jihad will remain as long as there is Islam. Those who argue that slavery has been abolished are ignorant, not scholars. They are merely writers. Whoever say such thing is an infidel.*"

In 2011, Salwa Al-Mutairi, who is considered a women's rights activist in Kuwait, [suggested](#) that Russian women be taken captive in battle and turned into sex slaves in order to keep Muslim husbands from committing adultery.

In 2014, al-Azhar (the Islamic world's most prestigious university) [proclaimed](#) that Muslims can capture women in battle for sex slavery. The woman making the announcement was Suad Saleh, a so-called 'moderate,' who said this at the very same time that thousands of Yazidi women were being [horrifically](#) raped by the Islamic State.

In 2016, a British imam who claims to be anti-extremist, affirmed the legitimacy of sex slavery to

his followers. The next year, a Kuwaiti Sheikh [called](#) enslaving unbelievers "*one of the virtues of Islam.*" There have also been several modern-day fatwas [endorsing](#) the sexual abuse of non-Muslim women following capture.

After the Islamic State kidnapped and pressed into slavery thousands of Yazidi women and children in 2014, the caliphate issued an FAQ of sorts on slavery, which included rules on sexually molesting children: "*It is permissible to have intercourse with the female slave who hasn't reached puberty if she is fit for intercourse; however, if she is not fit for intercourse, then it is enough to enjoy her without intercourse.*" The best that "mainstream" apologists could muster in response was a letter appealing to "*the reality of contemporary times*", meaning that Islam has [no fixed moral position](#) on the rape of woman and children.

In 2016, a scholar at Egypt's al-Azhar, the most prestigious Islamic school in the Sunni world, [stated](#) that non-Muslim women could be captured in a time of war become "*property*" and can be raped "*in order to humiliate them.*"

A 12-year-old girl taken captive by the Islamic State [explained](#) that her 'master' would pray before he raped her: "*He told me that according to Islam he is allowed to rape an unbeliever. He said that by raping me, he is drawing closer to Allah.*" Other sex slaves have been forced to [pray](#) before the rape or [recite](#) passages from the Quran during. When a Yazidi woman begged a caliphate member not to rape a little girl, he [responded](#), "*She's a slave... and having sex with her pleases God.*"

In 2017, African slaves were freed from captivity in Libya, where their Arab masters not only [raped and starved](#) them, but forced them to drink from toilets. Groups like CAIR, which pretend to be concerned with "human rights," never lifted a finger to help them.

A Quran memorization competition in [2015](#) offered slave girls as the top three prizes. Again, there were no voices of Muslim protest from elsewhere. As Uzy Bulut keenly observed, "*A religion that encourages destructive rioting and killing over cartoons, but shows no sign of sorrow as little girls are sold and raped, does not have much to contribute to advancing civilization.*"

An [American](#) apologist for Islam defended slavery in a 2020 interview, saying that "renting" labor is "better than owning."

Since Muhammad was a slave owner and slavery is permitted by the Quran, the Muslim world has never apologized for this dehumanizing practice. Even Muslims in the West will often try to justify slavery under Islam, since it is a part of the Quran.

See also:

[Islamic Slavery and Denial](#)



[Answering-Islam: Slavery Myth: Muhammad was an Abolitionist](#)
["And Take Their Wives as War Booty"](#)
["White Harlots, Eager for Sex': Islam's Sadomasochistic Fantasies](#)
[Islam's Sexual Enslavement of Western Women - in Pictures](#)

[Video](#) of Islamic State members at one of the caliphate's sex slave markets in November, 2014. A price list was released setting the rate Yazidi and Christian girls between ages 10 and 20 at \$130. Women between the ages of 20 and 30 were being sold for \$86; a 30 to 40 year was being sold for \$75 and 40 to 50 year old women were listed for sale at a price of \$43.

The price list began with these words: *"In the name of Allah, most gracious and merciful. We have received news that the demand in women and cattle markets has sharply decreased and that will affected Islamic State revenues as well as the funding of the Mujaheddin in the battlefield. We have made some changes. Below are the prices of Yazidi and Christian women."*

<https://www.thereligionofpeace.com/pages/quran/slavery.aspx#hadith>