

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ



إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

Friday Sermon

HADHRAT MUHYI-UD-DIN AL-KHALIFATULLAH

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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on: "The Expression: What your Right Hands Possess".

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ
إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ

Wallaziina hum li-furuujihim haafizuun. 'Illaa 'alaaa 'azwaajihim aw maa malakat 'aymaanuhum fa-'innahum ghayru ma-luumiin.

"And those who guard their chastity; Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then surely they are not to be blamed." (Al-Muminun 23: 6-7).

Much misunderstanding prevails as to what the expression "their right hands possess" means, and what are the rights and status of the persons to whom it applies.

It should be clearly understood that Islam has condemned slavery in no uncertain terms. According to it, it is a moral sin to deprive a person of his liberty, unless of course, he renders himself liable to a loss of liberty by taking part in a war waged to destroy Islam or an Islamic State. It is also a grievous sin to buy or sell slaves. All human beings are equal in the sight of God and enjoy equal human rights. Islamic teachings on this point are quite clear, unequivocal and emphatic. According to Islam, a person who makes another person his slave commits a grave sin against God and man (Bukhari, Abu Dawud).

It is also worthy of note that when Islam came into the world, slavery was a part and parcel of the human social system and there existed large number of slaves in every country. It was not feasible, even wise, to abolish, with a stroke of the pen, an institution which had become so inextricably interwoven into the whole texture of human society, without doing serious injury to its moral tone. Islam, therefore, sought to abolish it gradually but effectively and surely.

The Quran has laid down the following very sound principles for the speedy and complete abolition of slavery:

- (1) Prisoners of war can only be taken after a regular battle.
- (2) They cannot be retained after the war is over.
- (3) They are to be set free either as a mark of favour or by exchange of prisoners.

The Holy Quran says: **“So, when you encounter those who disbelieve (in battle), smite at their necks; until you have crushed them, then bind your captives firmly; thereafter (you are entitled to) set them free, either by an act of grace, or against ransom, until the war ends. That is for you to do (i.e. this is what you are commanded to do).”** (Muhammad 47: 5).

Those unfortunate persons however, who, may fail to gain their freedom through any of these means, or should choose to remain with their Muslim masters can purchase it by entering into a contract of manumission called *Mukatabat*.

“And let those who do not find the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them of His Bounty. And such of those whom your right hands possess (i.e. your slaves and captives) as seek a writing (of emancipation), give them such writing, if you know that they are good and

trustworthy. And give them something yourselves out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you. And do not force your maids to prostitution, if they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the (perishable) goods of this worldly life. But if anyone compels them (to prostitution), then after such compulsion, Allah is (to those women) Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (An-Nur 24: 34).

Now if a woman is taken prisoner in a war of the nature I just mentioned and thus loses her liberty, she has the following avenues open to secure her freedom. Her relatives or her state can pay a ransom and get her free. She can be released in an exchange of prisoners of war. She can enter into an agreement, i.e. the *Mukatabat*. If she fails to get her release by any of these methods, it will be obvious that she may consider it dangerous to go back to her country. In that event, she should be married to one of her captors. In case she bears him a child, she will be a free woman and will not be considered a prisoner of war anymore.

Since there are so many avenues open to effect her release, if a female prisoner of war does not avail of any of them, then getting her married to one of her captors will be the right thing to do to safeguard morality. It is very difficult to justify the great hue and cry raised over this issue. Let it be clearly understood that the Quran does not lend any support to the idea of establishing sexual relations with a female prisoner of war or a slave, without first marrying her. Not only does the Quran not give any sanction for the treatment of female prisoners of war as wives without first taking them into proper wedlock, but there are clear and positive injunctions to the effect that these prisoners of war, like free women, should be married if they are to be treated as wives. The only difference between the two being a difference of social status in as much as prior consent of prisoners of war is not considered necessary as in the case of free women.

Islam in no way encourages concubinage. Besides the verse cited, at least in four other verses of the Quran, the injunction has been laid down in clear and unambiguous terms that female prisoners of war should not remain unmarried. These verses are as follows:

“And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.” (An-Nur 24: 33).

“And whoever among you cannot (find) the means to marry free, believing women, then (he may marry) from those whom your right hands possess (of the believing slave girls). And Allah is most knowing about your faith. You (believers) are of one another. So marry them with the permission of their people (masters, guardians, families etc.) and give them their due compensation (dowry) according to what is acceptable.” (An-Nisa 4: 26).

“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not deal justly, then (marry only) one or those your right hand possesses.” (An-Nisa 4: 4).

The verses may also be rendered as *“then marry of women as may be agreeable to you, two or three or four or what your right hands possess.”* The words, *“But if you fear that you will not deal justly, then marry only one”*, forming a parenthetical clause. According to this rendering also slave girls are to be married before they are treated as wives.

“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you.” (Al-Baqara 2: 222).

The sense being that the believing slave wife should be preferred to a non-believing free idolatrous wife.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is also very explicit on this point. He is reported to have said: *“He who has a slave girl, and gives her a proper education and brings her up in a becoming manner and then frees and marries her, for him is double reward.”* (Bukhari).

This Hadith implies that if a Muslim wishes to have a slave girl as wife, he should first set her free and then marry her. The Holy Prophet’s own practice was quite in harmony with his precept. Two of the Holy Prophet’s wives, Juwairiya and Safiyya came to him as prisoners of war. He married them according to Islamic Law. Maria a slave girl was sent to him as a gift by the King of Egypt. He also married her and she as well as the two other captives (Juwairiya and Safiyya) enjoyed the status of free wives like his other wives. They observed the veil

(*Purdah*) and were included among “the Mothers of the Faithful” (*Ummahaatul Mumineen*).

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“O Prophet! We have made lawful to you your wives to whom you have paid their dowers; and those whom your right hand possesses out of the prisoners of war whom Allah has assigned to you; and daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and daughters of your maternal uncles and aunts, who migrated with you.” (Al-Ahzab 33: 51).

This verse points to the fact that the commandment regarding marriage applies to whom your right hands possess as much as it does to daughters of the Holy Prophet’s paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. Both are to be legally wedded before they are treated as wives. All the three categories mentioned were made lawful to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through marriage.

Therefore, it is preposterous for non-Muslims to label Islam, its Holy Founder and followers as lustful and adulterous persons, for no physical relation in whatever perspective one may view it is taken forward without the bond of marriage. God Almighty’s provisions are the best provisions and it is He who sees to it through perfect laws that both the rights of men and women are respected, and He made sure that slavery is abolished through the diligent practice of His Laws. But is it most evident that if people do not consult the *Quran* and *Sunnah* and trample the teachings of Islam, then concealed slavery shall continue until the right teachings are re-established and acted upon.

May Allah protect the dignity and rights of all human beings, men and women and may their rights be well-cared for, especially for women who most of the time are taken as the weaker and inferior sex and trampled upon. Islam views the woman as a most important person. Indeed, she is the one who gives birth to man. She is the first educator of man and we, Muslims need all recall that the first believer of Islam was none other than a woman, the blessed first wife of our Noble prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). Indeed the women of Islam are free, liberated women and are not slaves of men, but their equal partners, companions, and spouses. May Allah protect all true and sincere women of Islam and may Islam prosper through their endless sacrifices for the cause of Islam. *Insha-Allah, Ameen.*