



# FAITH TO FREEDOM

*God's people  
working together to end  
human trafficking and modern slavery*

RESOURCE FOR  
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## DEAR FRIENDS,

My deepest as-salamu alaykum to each of you (may peace be upon you all).

Thank you for being here.

For being interested enough in the damning reality of human slavery that currently plagues our societies to click through to this page, this document, and to want to read on.

You have before you what I hope will be a useful tool to help you, your friends, your family, and your communities to better understand what human trafficking is; the different shapes it can take, and how no tenement of faith can support any action which suppresses the free will, life and freedom of another human being.

But more than that, I hope it will be a useful resource to help further your own efforts in the fight against slavery – no matter what form, or how big or small a scale, that fight may take.

In the construction of this document, Making Herstory wishes to give especial thanks to the brave survivors whose testimonies were offered to us freely despite fears for their own safety; to Remona Aly for her vigilance and crucial editorial support, and Imam Qari Asim for the sharing of his knowledge and unending desire to help put an end to all forms of abuse.

May God help us in creating a world where all human beings, irrespective of their differences to 'us' or each other, are truly free from bondage.

Onjali Q Raúf  
*Founder & CEO, Making Herstory*



# WELCOME TO FAITH TO FREEDOM



**Take part in a global movement of worship and action against human trafficking and modern slavery.**

Modern slavery is the world's fastest growing global crime, involving over 40 million men, women and children around the world today. Faith to Freedom is an opportunity for global faith communities to stand together in prayer and take action to put an end to this horrendous crime.

We traditionally hold Freedom services on the weekend closest to EU Anti-Trafficking Day on the 18th October, but you can use the resources on any day of the year!

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We would love to hear how you and your faith community have used this resource, and how you are taking action. Post on social media using the hashtag #FaithToFreedom or send us your stories via our website: [www.freedomsundayglobal.org](http://www.freedomsundayglobal.org)

# QURANIC INJUNCTIONS ON FREEING SLAVES

## AN ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Allah lists the freeing of a slave as a crucial act of righteousness, and places this alongside the belief in Allah, the daily prayers, and giving charity.

Surah 2:177

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ  
وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي  
الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ  
الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask [for help], and **for freeing slaves**; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakat; [those who] fulfil their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”

## FREEING A SLAVE IS ZAKAT

Zakat is a pillar of Islam, and is both an obligation as well as a means to purification. The freeing of bonded human beings is listed among the eight categories of zakat in the Quran. Accordingly, the freeing of bonded human beings is seen as fulfilling a key obligation in Islam.

Surah 9:60

﴿ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَرَامِينَ وَفِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

“Zakat is only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakat] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and **to free those in bondage [or slaves]** and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveller - an obligation [imposed] by Allah. And Allah is Knowing and Wise.”

## FREEING A SLAVE AS ATONEMENT

The importance of freeing a slave is brought home in the verse about the accidental killing of a believer. Here, the atonement for this loss of life is through freeing another life.

Surah 4:92

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمَا كَانَتْ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ  
إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا

“Thus, whoever kills a believer by mistake, then **their atonement shall be the freeing of a believing slave...**”

## FREEING A SLAVE AS EXPIATION FOR BREAKING AN OATH

In Islam, breaking an oath is a serious sin, but expiation of that sin is attained via the liberation of a slave.

Surah 5:90

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّرتَهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ  
أَوْسَطِ مَا تَطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ

“Allah will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He will impose blame upon you for [breaking] what you intended of oaths. So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy/poor people (*masakeen*) from the average of that which you feed your [own] families or clothing them **or the liberation of a slave...**”

## HONOURING THE ENSLAVED

The Quran stipulates that those who are enslaved should have rights over their freedom, bodies, and wealth.

Surah 24:33

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالَّذِينَ يَبْنُونَ الْكِنَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَءَاتُوهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ  
الَّذِي ءَاتَاكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَيْتَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِنَبْنُوْا عَرْضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا

“...Moreover, if those whom your hands rightfully possess **desire a deed of emancipation, then write it for them**, if you come to know goodness in them. Moreover, **give them of the wealth of God that He has given you**. And **do not compel your slave girls to prostitution**, if they desire chastity, to seek [thereby] the temporary interests of worldly life.”

## FREEING THE ENSLAVED IS THE HIGHER PATH

These verses enjoin people to take the higher moral path; the freeing of a slave is the first to be stated in this path towards goodness.

*Surah 90:8-18*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

٨ أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ۝  
 ٩ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ۝  
 ١٠ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ۝  
 ١١ فَلَا اقْتِحَمَ الْعُقَبَةَ ۝  
 ١٢ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعُقَبَةُ ۝  
 ١٣ فَكُ رِقَبَةً ۝  
 ١٤ أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ۝  
 ١٥ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۝  
 ١٦ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ۝  
 ١٧ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ۝  
 ١٨ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۝

“Have We not made for him two eyes? And a tongue and two lips? And have shown him the two ways? But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? **It is the freeing of a slave**. Or feeding on a day of severe hunger an orphan of near relationship. Or a needy person in misery. And then being among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to compassion. Those are the companions of the right...”

**These verses exemplify how great an emphasis the Quran places on the freeing of a human being from bondage, and how it encourages such an action either by making it a part of fulfilling an obligation, as an expiation for a sin, or an act of immense reward.**

# ISLAM AND FREE WILL

## A) HISTORICAL CONTEXT



Brutal forms of slavery were rife across the globe in the 5<sup>th</sup> century – with trade markets and businesses across both the Eastern and Western hemispheres benefitting from the sale of enslaved men and women. Entire kingdoms depended upon slavery to safeguard their economies, while the lifelong enslavement of Prisoners of War (including women and children) was a marker for any tribe or country's status and power. It was in this world context, that the revelations of the Quran were communicated to Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH) in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Arab society – just as in other societies of the time – was steeped in the daily trading of human beings for profit and gain, with physical abuse, rape, starvation and ill-treatment of those enslaved being common practice.

The Quran does not shy away from the fact that slavery exists, just as it does not shy away from all other forms of abuse mankind is capable of. By recognising the depth of slavery's roots, over the course of the 23 years of its revelation, the Quran established an entirely new ethical viewpoint on the issue of slavery. Its objective was to gradually revolutionise mindsets. The Quran provided strong guidance and templates to those benefiting from the use of slaves on how to free themselves from treating other human beings as chattel.

## B) FREE WILL

Islam in its essence came to abolish all forms of slavery created by mankind, whatever form it took, whether it was financial debt, forced marriage, domestic enslavement, prostitution or enforced slave labour. All were ordinary facets to everyday society at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the many prophets who came before him (peace be upon them all).

The negation of one human being's free will by enslavement is, at its core, incompatible with the teachings of Islam. Islam after all, expounds the importance of free will. And humans by definition, are beings in possession of "free will" and are permitted to choose between the paths of good and evil independently.

After all, if we cannot be forced – nor force another – to believe in God/the faith as expounded in Surah Al-Baqarah (below), then surely forcing another human being into positions of unwanted servitude is as unacceptable in Islam?

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

"There shall be no compulsion in the religion."

Islam in its very meaning therefore encompasses freedom, and free will. Whilst the word 'Islam' is often translated as simply 'submission' or 'surrender', this submission to Divine Will is made in pursuit of peace for oneself. Ahmed Rehab, an American Muslim activist eloquently surmised this premise by saying Islam is 'to freely submit one's will to God's, in pursuit of divine peace'.

# ABOLISHING SLAVERY

Recognising the fact that many 7<sup>th</sup> century slave owners would be converting to Islam, the Quran adopted a middle way of reformation that was practical, sustainable, and emphasised ways in which believing individuals could begin to rectify the harm they had done to both themselves and all those enslaved.

It did so by:

- 1: Emphasising in all its revelations on slavery the emancipation and just treatment of slaves, not on their capture or the continuation of the institution of slavery. Islam made the rescuing of slaves part of *zakat* which is one of the five pillars of Islam.**
- 2: Making NO mention of slave-markets or slave-trading, whilst repeatedly exhorting believers to free their slaves as an exemplification of their piety and belief in God.**
- 3: Heightening the status of slaves, to those deserving of freedom and a share in wealth.**
- 4: Condemning the rape and prostitution of slaves.**
- 5: Highlighting that those enslaved – whether a Prisoner of War or a purchased being – have the right to purchase their own freedom, and that this right be honoured.**
- 6: Empowering the state, other authorities and the public system to play a role in the process of emancipating slaves by encouraging the public that part of their *zakat* be spent in freeing slaves.**

It may also be of note that the word '*abd*' (slave) is rarely used, being more commonly replaced by '*ma malakat aimanukum*' ("that which your right hands own"). Classical religious commentators and scholars such as Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (838–923) and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (1149–1209) hold the view that '*ma malakat aimanukum*' denotes to "women whom you rightfully possess through wedlock" and not to enslaved peoples or women. Later scholars such as W.G. Clarence-Smith and Syed Ameer Ali of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, amongst others, highlight the fact that the term is also repeatedly used in the past-tense in the Quran, potentially to signify those individuals who were already enslaved prior to the arrival of Islam. This slight change in tense is highly significant, and continues to be used by Islamic scholars to highlight that slavery was never compatible with the commandments of the Quran.

Surah 4.3 states: "If you fear lest you become unfair, then you shall be content with only one, or with what you already have (*'ma malakat aimanukum*')." Many religious scholars suggest the word '*malakat*' is not only deliberately structured in the past tense to signify "What you already have", or "what you already possess" or "what came into your possession", but also structured so as to refer to, and encompass, a neutral gender which is applicable to both male and females, making the interpretation of the term to mean solely captive girls (with whom one is permitted to have sex) as interpreted by some, contradictory to the fundamental laws laid down by the Quran. Other key examples of passages to support the view that the term '*malakat*' does not refer to women and girls held in bondage alone, include:

[Surah 4:36] "You shall regard the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, the related neighbour, the unrelated neighbour, the close associate, the traveller, and your servants (*'ma*

*malakat aimanukum*)..."

[Surah 16:71] "God has provided for some of you more than others. Those who are given plenty would never give their properties to *their subordinates* ('*ma malakat aimanukum*') to the extent of making them partners. Would they give up God's blessings?"

[Surah 30:28] "He cites for you herein an example from among yourselves: Do you ever elevate *your servants or subordinates* ('*ma malakat aimanukum*') to the level where they rival you, and to the point that you pay them as much allegiance as is being paid to you? We thus explain the revelations for people who understand."

In addition to the Quran's specific and consistent emphasis on the God-given duties and methods by which Muslims were to free slaves, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was an exemplary guide on the freeing of slaves. Following his noble approach, the Prophet's beloved companions also exemplified the many ways in which people could honour the Quranic instruction to help free those trapped in bondage.

# THE PROPHETS AND THE COMPANIONS

## 1. PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have said:

**“Allah, the Exalted, said: ‘There are three whose opponent I will be on the Day of Resurrection, and whomever I oppose, I will defeat ... [The first] a man who sold a free man and consumed his price.’”**

**Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2227)**

The above is an explicit condemnation of human trafficking and the trading of ‘free’ human beings – a term which, according to the Quran, refers to and is comprised of ALL human beings. During his lifetime, the Prophet’s many roles as a trusted businessman inevitably brought him into contact with slaves. But even prior to the receiving of his first revelation, his actions and compassion for those trapped in bondage marked him out as being one whose views upon slavery differed wholly from those around him. He had an unending solicitude for the material and spiritual condition of slaves in society, and his example inspired his companions to emancipate thousands of slaves.

This included the freeing of one of the most prominent former slaves in Islam’s history, Bilal: the man responsible for reciting Islam’s first ever *adhan* (call to prayer).

## 2. BILAL IBN RABAH

Bilal (may God be please with him) is one of the most beloved companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He is respected and admired by Muslims everywhere, as the epitome of unwavering faith, loyalty and fortitude.

Of Ethiopian heritage and born into slavery, Bilal worked as housekeeper for a man by the name of Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who was himself the keeper of keys to the much-worshipped idols of the Kaba (the central house of worship in Mecca). Aged 40, Bilal began to listen to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, and believed in one God as opposed to the idols worshipped by the majority of tribes. He took the *shahadah* (the Muslim profession of faith) and became one of Islam’s first Muslims.

His act of becoming a Muslim and his refusal to renounce Islam, led to endless persecution and torture. Umayyah ibn Khalaf’s modes of torture included having Bilal dragged through the streets of Mecca while calling on others to mock him; followed by his being whipped and beaten while spread-eagled upon the Arabian sands under the burning desert sun, his limbs bound to stakes. When Bilal still refused to renounce Islam, it was ordered that a hot boulder be placed on Bilal’s chest.

On hearing the news of the plight of this slave, Prophet Muhammad sent Abu Bakr, his best friend, to negotiate for the emancipation of Bilal.

Upon obtaining his freedom, Bilal chose to remain with the Prophet Muhammad throughout the

many years of persecution inflicted by the pagan Meccans upon those who chose to become Muslim. The early Muslim community found sanctuary in Medina, where the first mosque was built. Prophet Muhammad did not wish to use bells or horns to signal the call to prayer out of respect to, and to differentiate from, Christian and Jewish traditions. So it was that Bilal was selected to give the *adhan*. Renowned for his melodic voice, Bilal is said to have ascended the highest wall to give Islam's first ever call to prayer. We hear it resound from mosques all over the world to this day.

The very fact of Bilal's ascendance from an emancipated slave to one of Islam's greatest and most beloved companions of the Prophet, is itself a testament of the importance of safeguarding the freedoms of those trapped in slavery.

# MODERN SLAVERY TODAY

The slave trade continues to be one of the most profitable illegal trades in the world, second only to the illegal drugs trade. An estimated **45 MILLION PEOPLE** are currently enslaved according to the Global Slavery Index. Below are three stories from survivors\* of human trafficking and slavery, each showcasing the deeply rooted and alarmingly common ways in which men, women and children alike can find themselves trapped in bondage.

*\*All names have been changed. All testimonies sourced by Making Herstory (April–June 2018)*

## STORY 1: 'AYISHA', SOLD AND TRAFFICKED AT THE AGE OF 14, BANGLADESH



“When I was four, my mum died. I went to live with my Auntie and Uncle after my dad remarried quickly and moved to London, leaving me behind. After I turned 13, my father died in London after suffering with cancer. Several months later, the British embassy in Bangladesh told me he had secured a British passport for me and my sister before he died. I appealed to my family to help me get to London so that with my dad's gift, I could go to school and college and maybe get to know my stepmother.

My grandfather, who I hadn't seen since I was 4, suddenly turned up, and decided to take me to lots of beautiful places to visit in Bangladesh – places as an orphan I had never been taken to before. I later realised it was so he could get me to trust him enough to do what he was about to do next.

After a month or two, he said he was taking me to Dhaka on an exciting trip. So I went with him – I was only 14 at the time, and so excited. I had never been to Dhaka before. But when we got there, things changed rapidly. Instead of going to the zoo, I was taken to the airport and told to board the plane, because if I didn't, he would leave me in Dhaka without money or food.

I was so terrified that I did as I was told and boarded the plane. My grandfather told me not to cry or whimper so I bit my tongue and squeezed my eyes shut. I was so scared as I had never been on a plane and had no idea where I was going. That journey is one I will never forget – it felt like hell. I wanted to scream and cry to the stewardesses and the people sitting in front of me or behind me that my grandfather was taking me away from my home, but he kept his hand tightly clasped on my arm the whole time, and only let it go when I needed to go to the bathroom. I had wanted to come to London so bad – but not in this way, not without my sister.

When we landed in Heathrow, my grandfather took me to the arrival gates where a man was waiting. The man gave my grandfather an envelope, promising that there was £10,000 inside it, and that he would treat me nicely until I turned 18 when I could legally be married off to his brother – who needed to marry someone with a British passport. They were laughing and joking whilst saying all this – as if my life was something they owned, that they could do whatever they liked with.

My grandfather told me to be a good girl, to not bring shame on the family and to go with the man. I didn't want to and started to cry and shake and then suddenly I became limp. Now I know it was the shock of it all. The man carried me to his car. That was the last I ever saw of my grandfather. He

tracked me down a few years ago when he was on his deathbed to ask for my forgiveness. I told him I would never forgive him and that he deserved God's punishment for what he did to me.

In my first months of captivity, I was taken to a town far away from London. I wasn't treated badly but was told I had to work in the house and couldn't go to school or speak to anyone. Sometime later, I was bought to a flat in Tower Hamlets to visit someone who wanted to 'see' me and check whether or not I would be suitable for marriage sooner than my age would allow. I was never allowed to go anywhere on my own except the bathroom.

That flat proved to be my escape route. As soon as we got to it I said I needed the bathroom. I managed to pull myself out of the small window located next to the toilet cistern, and luckily for me, not only did the window lead straight out onto a balcony, but there was no one outside to see me. As soon as I got up, I ran up and up and up the stairs. I didn't run down because I was so scared someone would see me from the windows of the flat and come after me. I banged on the first door I found, and when it opened I was so relieved – because not only was it a woman who opened the door, but she was Bengali too. That woman became my saviour, my replacement family, and with the help of a local charity, helped me retrieve my passport and my freedom.

The fact that I was sold into a forced marriage for my British passport by my own family, still haunts and angers me. And I know there are lots of other girls out there who aren't as lucky as me – who have been sold just like I was but couldn't escape, and had to marry the men that bought them. Our communities know it goes on. Which means our mosques know too. So why don't they ever speak of it. Why don't they work to stop it?"



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## **STORY 2: 'MELANIE' FROM THE PHILIPPINES, HELD CAPTIVE AND RAPED BY HER 'EMPLOYERS' IN KENSINGTON, LONDON**

"My employers brought me to London from Qatar in February 2017. My English was very bad and because I wanted to make them happy so that I could support my family back home, I did whatever they wanted me to. In Qatar, after they said they wanted to employ me, they said I needed to come to London with them for a month, and then I would be sent back to work in the family house in Qatar like usual.

So I agreed. My husband works in Mecca most of the year to help with children's costs and pay for their education, but he was struggling which is why I had to work too. When I told him that this new family wanted me to come to London for a few weeks, he told me to go and to ask for a salary or to stay longer so I could earn in pounds. But I didn't want to stay longer – my children were only 4 and 7. They needed me and it was cheaper and easier to get home from Qatar.

So I agreed to come. The family was made up of 4 men and 2 women. The women were not leaving Qatar but the men couldn't look after themselves which is why they wanted me. When we got to the airport, the older brother told me to give him my passport to make things easy at the gates. So I did. Then he told me he needed to change the SIM card on my phone so it would work properly. So I gave him my phone. I didn't know I would never see them again.

When we got to London, we went to a big house. The family were very rich and the house was very nice. On the first day I was happy. I cleaned and cooked like I usually did, and thought on my time

off I would see some of London and buy some presents for my children. But then in the evening, when I asked for my phone and passport and when I would be paid my wages, I was slapped in the face and told not to ask again. I had never been hit before, and was in shock. Some Arab men used to shout and scream at me in my old jobs, but none of them had ever hit me.

When I realised what had happened I said I wanted to go home straight away. But they said I could not go anywhere because I was an illegal immigrant. It was then I realised why they wanted my passport and phone. There were no phones in the house – the family only ever had mobile phones – so I couldn't even call anyone for help.

I was forced to stay in that house for nine months, and whenever they left the house, the men would lock me in a store cupboard with onions and vegetables. Even now I hate the smell of onions. After the first slap, the men began to beat me more regularly and especially if anything I did displeased them. One day, I tried to cook a dish they had ordered me to make but I didn't know how. And because they didn't like it, two of the men smashed the plates at my feet making me bleed. That was also the night that I was...first attacked [raped].

Without any phone or my passport and not knowing any English, I didn't know how to escape. But one day, all the men had left to go somewhere, and I realised they hadn't locked the store cupboard properly. When I got out, I ran out into the streets and screamed for the police. Some people came and helped me and took me to a police station. But because I didn't have papers and didn't know English, I had to wait for a translator. The translator then contacted a charity who helped women like me, and now I am waiting so that I can go home and see my children. My mum and husband don't know what happened to me. I am too ashamed."



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### **STORY 3: 'IZAD' FROM PAKISTAN, HELD OVER FAMILY DEBT BONDAGE BY 'EMPLOYERS' IN WALES**

"My family back home is poor, but things became worse when my father borrowed money to pay off a debt. The men he borrowed the money from began to come to my house and threaten him and my mum with beatings if he didn't pay them, and every day that went by, they would add more and more interest to the borrowing.

One day, they came to my father and said they would burn the house down if he didn't give them something for their money. We believed them because they were powerful and could get away with it.

My dad said he didn't have anything, but one of the men looked at me and my mum. I had just turned 16. He said I could work off the debt if I agreed to do as he said for seven months, or that he would take my mother.

My dad agreed for them to take me, so the next day, the men came and took me away. One of them said that his brother-in-law in London needed cheap labour for his businesses, so he sent me and two other men who also owed money to the gang to Islamabad, where we were put on planes with false passports. We couldn't say or do anything or go to the police, because we were told our families would be hurt. There was one man who came with us on the plane, and he kept watching us in case we did anything. Before we reached the border gates, the man told us what to say – that

we were coming for a wedding. If we ended up in jail, no-one would help us and we would be left behind.

I ended up spending two years working 20 hours a day before the police raided the restaurant I was working and sleeping in. By that time, even though I was 18, I had gotten so used to being hit around the head and eating very little, that I weighed less than I did at 13.

Every day in the restaurants I worked in, I would see people with their families, eating nice food and going home to their houses. Sometimes I could hear the adhan and wished I could go to a mosque and pray. It made me miss my mum and dad and my home, and eating proper food. But there was nothing I could do. I had no telephone, no passport, no papers. And I was never allowed to touch or have money. I slept in a room with sometimes 7 men, sometimes 12. We were allowed to wash once every two days to look nice in the restaurant, and could only go out if one of the big men was with us.

After the police came, I was taken to a centre where I met the people helping me now. They helped me contact my family who are safe but if I ever get to go home again, I will make them move. One of the men I stayed with at the restaurant was trapped for six years. He was only meant to come for two months. He had been beaten every time he asked if the debt had been paid and when he could go home again. I dream of going home and being with my family and being free again. Nobody deserves to be like this, and I think more people need to know about this evil.”

# CRIMES IN THE COMMUNITY

## FORCED MARRIAGES

A forced marriage is forbidden and void in Islam. A large number of women and girls continue to be 'shipped in' from poorer overseas towns and cities to be sold into marriage – often by their own relatives. Young men can also be forced into marriage to women and girls in the UK for the purposes of legalised immigration. Both are not only criminal acts in the eyes of UK law, they also go against Quranic laws governing marriage too.

Islam regards marriage as a sacred right of the individual. No one, not even an elder relative, is permitted to make the decision for them. A marriage must only be entered into freely, happily and through the love of Allah. One of the requirements for the *Nikah* (marriage ceremony) to be valid is to ensure both the bride and groom are asked, independently of each other, whether they freely consent to the marriage. If either of them say 'no', the ceremony cannot continue. Where this is not done freely and either party feel under duress to concede to the marriage, the continuation of the marriage itself becomes a grave sin. All witnesses to an unwanted marriage share responsibility and have a duty to ensure no person is ever trafficked and forced into such a union.

## DOMESTIC SERVITUDE

The practice of trafficking in 'help' continues to persist in many communities – both Muslim and non-Muslim. In a large number of cases, young girls and boys are trafficked by relatives under the guise of guardianship, to work 'for free' within the guardian's home. Often denied an education or freedoms in later life, this constitutes the enslavement of human will itself from a young age.

Alternatively, hired maids, nannies, builders, farm labourers and factory workers believing themselves to be legally hired persons, arrive in the UK willingly – only to find themselves stripped of all documentation and forced into slave labour. In other cases, women are forced into marriage and are placed in bondage through lifelong domestic servitude within the homes of their 'husbands' or 'in-laws'. All forms of domestic servitude need to be noted and reported – for it strips the individual of all free will.

## DEBT BONDAGE

Holding a debt over the heads of an impoverished family so as to enslave their loved ones, continues to yield huge profits for many traffickers. Many of those trapped in debt bondage can spend their whole lives trying to pay off a debt which never ends, often remaining in their positions to safeguard the lives of their families while fearing for their own.

## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The trafficking of women and girls for the prostitution trade often involves physical violence, rape, drugging and threats to both their own lives and those of their loved ones, amongst many other crimes. The continuing abuse of women and girls by 'clients' stemming from all walks of life and faiths, coupled with a lack of willingness by many religious communities to aid women and girls to exit such a heinous trade, enables this form of slavery to prevail and grow.

**All forms of human trafficking and bondage go against the tenets of Islamic faith.**

**Quranic injunctions make it an essential duty upon Muslims to free those bonded in slavery, with practical examples of how to do so epitomised by the actions and words of not only Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions, but of such prophets as Prophet Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus) (PBUT). It is therefore an essential tenet of every Muslim's faith to actively fight against human trafficking crimes taking place in today's world, and in so doing, uphold every human being's right to free will and social justice to which the Islamic faith is committed.**

# THANK YOU

to everyone who has contributed to this Faith to Freedom resource.

We would love to hear how you and your faith community have used this resource, and how you are taking action. Use the hashtag **#FaithToFreedom** or social media or send us your stories via our website: [www.freedomssundayglobal.org](http://www.freedomssundayglobal.org)