

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

SEX WITH SLAVE GIRLS

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To get a proper understanding of this topic, one has to rely on the Quran first and foremost. Any good Muffassir (Quranic exegetic) takes this approach whether modern or classical.

The common interpretation of the term **‘those that your right hands possess’** as **captive girls** (with whom one can have free sex) is **not** warranted by the Quran.

To enable a truer understanding of the Quranic position, one must be willing to divorce themselves from the plethora of [extra-Quranic material](#) which not only poses theological problems but also at times stands contradictory to the Quran itself.

Firstly, the term **‘ma malakat aymanukum’** (Literally: What your right hands possesses) is not gender specific and as an idiomatic expression, applies to ‘those that one keeps in protection and honour’. This can include captives, slave girls, maidens, servants (fatayatikum 4:25) etc. Please note that the ‘right hand’ has a somewhat glorified meaning in the Quran which is apparent from its usage in different contexts (e.g. those on the right hand in heaven; books of one’s deeds given to the right hand etc).

It is also apt to note that affluent women would have also most likely to have possessed men slaves. This is confirmed by the usage of the idiomatic expression **‘ma malakat aymanuhunna’** when used in reference to women's possession. It would be inconceivable to conclude on the basis of this expression, the permissibility of women to engage in ‘free sex’ with their male slaves or captives.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TERM

‘Malakat aymanukum’ which can literally be rendered as ‘right hands possess’, appears many times in the Quran and in a variety of contexts.

Ma malakat aymanukum

What your right hands possess (2nd person masculine plural) *
(4:25; 4:36; 24:33)

Ma malakat yaminuka

What your right hands possess (2nd person masculine single)
(33:50; 33:52)

Alazeena malakat ayymanukum

Those whom your right hands possess * (2nd person masculine plural)
(24:58)

Ma malakat aymanuhum

What their right hands possess * (3rd person masculine plural)
(16:71; 23:6)

Ma malakat aymanuhunna

What their right hands possess (3rd person feminine plural)
(24:31; 33:55)

*** Please take note that masculine plurals can also be a reference to a group of both males and females. Therefore, restricting the interpretation of the term to just 'females' is unwarranted from the Quranic Arabic.**

The following points must be noted with regards to 'those that your right hands possess' from the Quran.

- (1) Be good to them as you are with your parents, orphans, needy, neighbours and free them if you can
- (2) Do not compel them to whoredom or force them
- (3) You can only have sex with them through **marriage / wedlock**

(1) BE GOOD TO THEM

004:036

And serve God and do not associate anything with Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) kin and neighbour who is not of kin, and the companion in a journey and the wayfarer and **those whom your right hands possess**; surely God does not love him who is proud, boastful

(2) AND GIVE THEM THEIR RIGHT OF FREEDOM AND DO NOT COMPEL THEM TO WHOREDOM OR FORCE THEM

024:033

"Let those who find not the wherewithal for marriage **keep themselves chaste**, until God gives them means out of His grace. And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing, give them such a deed if you know any good in them and give them from the wealth of God which He has given you. **But force not your slave girls (Arabic: fatayatikum) to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, is God, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them)**"

Note: Those that cannot marry need to stay **chaste**, attempt to free those that their right hands possess and certainly not force them to sex or prostitution. However, if the poor unfortunate slave girls are forced, they will still find mercy from God, bounties which extend to all His creatures.

(3) YOU CAN ONLY HAVE SEX WITH THEM THROUGH MARRIAGE / WEDLOCK

004:025

"If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women, **they may wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess: And God has full knowledge about your faith. Ye are one from another: Wed them with the leave of their owners, and give them their dowers, according to what is reasonable: They should be chaste, not lustful, nor taking paramours: when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, their punishment is half that for free women. This (permission) is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practise self-restraint. And God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.**"

- It was better if one practiced self restraint. But if one couldn't marry free believing women, then the directive was given to **marry** from what their right hands possessed. Not for prostitution, not for lust, but for wedlock.
- Notice here that although one can 'marry' a woman from one's right hands possess, her status is **not** that of a 'Free believing woman' (as can be seen from the half punishment she can potentially exact for the same sin). This is the reason why women that form part of those whom your right hands possess are referred to as a separate category. However, they do not form an exception to the marital rule in terms of who is lawful for sex. See 23:6 & 70:30. In other words, they still have to be married.
- One logical question bears asking keeping in view any appetite for carnal desires. If one has wives along with many hand maidens with whom one could potentially have free sex, then what kind of sexual predator and maniac does one have to be to still commit adultery? The Quran imparts a consistent message with regards abstention from any unrighteous lust. What is the purpose of having sex with captives if it is not for lust?

004.024

"Also (prohibited are) women already married, except those whom your right hands possess"

- From this verse, it is clear that one can marry women who are already married if they constitute those from what your right hands possess (taken captive). Again, focus is on marriage, not sex for lust and they have to believing captives (Not pagans). See 4.25 above.

(Continued 004.024) "...Thus has God ordained (Prohibitions) against you: **Except for these, all others are lawful**, provided ye seek (them in marriage) with gifts from your property,- **desiring chastity, not lust**, seeing that ye derive benefit from them, give them their dowers as prescribed (**Arabic: faatuhunna ujurahunna faridatan**); but if, after a dower is prescribed, agree mutually, there is no blame on you, and God is All-knowing, All-wise"

This verse makes it clear that all **married** women are **forbidden apart** from a **specific exception**.

Exception:

Those women who **are** married but have come to be captured or possessed (Ma Malakat Amanakum) are **lawful** are in marriage. Note this exception. But the question still remains - lawful to one in what way?

The rest of the verse clearly states that all women (**including the exception** - Right hands possess) have to be married (in wedlock). The legality being **wedlock**. Note the Arabic term: faatuhunna ujurahunna faridatan (give them their bridal due as obligation).

It is clear therefore that the intention is of wedlock **not** of fornication, or lust.

This seals the fate of sex with women from the category of 'right hands possess' outside marriage. These women are only lawful to one in marriage.

004.003

"If you fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), **then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess**, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice"

- Marry one if you cannot deal justly **or from what your right hands possess**, but **still** take those whom your right hands possess **in marriage**.

024.032

"And marry those (Arabic: wa-ankihu) among you who are single and those who are **righteous among your male slaves and your female slaves**; if they are needy, God will make them free from want out of His grace; and God is Ample-giving, Knowing"

070.029

"And those who guard their chastity"

070.030

"Except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hands possess (in wedlock), for (then) they are not to be blamed"

WHY DOES THE QURAN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'MARRIED WOMEN' AND 'RIGHT HANDS POSSESS' AND CLASSIFY THEM AS SEPARATE CATEGORIES?

Women who are from the category of 'right hands possess' are not 'free' women in the same sense. They are either slaves or captures. When one takes them in marriage, all the rules of responsibility of wedlock on part of the male applies to the one he marries. However, this spouse still has reduced answerability such as her punishment in the case of 'Fahisha' (lewdness).

There remains a crucial difference between a marriage based on complete freedom of choice exacted by a 'free believer' without circumstantial influence and one based on compromises, incentives such as freedom, status and financial stability gained through a compromise marriage. These differences in choices based on free and non-free parties are clearly recognized. Hence the noted difference in answerability as well.

004:025

"And whoso is not able to afford to marry free, believing women, let them marry from the believing maids whom your right hands possess. God knows best (concerning) your faith. Ye (proceed) one from another; **so wed them by permission of their folk**, and give to them their portions in kindness, they being honest, not debauched nor of loose conduct. And if when they are honourably married they commit lewdness **they shall incur the half of the punishment (prescribed) for free women (in that case)**. This is for him among you who fears to commit sin. But to have patience would be better for you. God is Forgiving, Merciful"

FINAL THOUGHTS

Scripture has never permitted men to engage in sex outside the institution of marriage whether this is from the category of free believing women, or from the category of 'right hands possess'.

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