Allah & Amen-Ra: Slave Gods? A Response

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luntu/lumtu/muntu

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PART I

This is in response to brother Dr. Wesley Muhammad’s post on Allah and Amen-Ra: Slave Gods?, an article which can be located (if you are friends with brother Wesley) here: http://www.facebook.com/notes/wesley-muhammad/allah-and-amun-ra-slave-gods/10150249547307397

I would like to address a few points that I think should be clarified in my initial response to his initial post which prompted the dialogue. I would also like to address some of the interpretations of my response as addressed by Dr. Wesley.

Firstly, I would like to clarify for the record that I am not an individual who is a part of the same school of thought, nor do I approach history as does those of the like of Sara Suten Seti, General Tahuti, Shaka Ndugu Km.t, or anyone in that camp. Therefore, my historical arguments cannot be lumped in with theirs. With that said, we must first address this statement:

WM: 1.] It [Asar’s initial address to WM] unjustly insinuates that the Qur’an and Muhammad promote and sanction the enslavement of Black people, which was the point of my talk. Nowhere in the Qur’an is the enslavement of Black people “promoted and sanctioned”.

I for one have never made the argument that the Qur’an or Muhammad deliberately set out to enslave “black” people. The critique is against “slavery,” not the false folk taxonomic designation of race who some believe is the “reason” for the enslavement. I don’t argue that Muslims enslaved Africans because they were Black. I don’t get caught up in the whole race aspect of the discussion. When I discuss race, it is strictly on scientific terms and biologically one cannot establish the existence of race in modern *homo sapiens sapiens*. When you factor in the fact that the so-called “white” Arabs is a “mixer” (in part) of so-called “Black” African people, the one drop rule (if that is scientifically sound) makes them all “Blacks.” Genetics also throws a monkey wrench in the whole race debate as Europeans still carry “Black African” genes.

My linguistic work as well as others like Winters, Campbell-Dunn, Greensberg and others, demonstrate that Europeans and Asians are still speaking African languages (although far remote languages). The discussion then becomes null and void when trying to demarcate race. What is the percentage of melanin “shade” on the skin that makes someone no longer “Black?” What is the scientific index number for this? Are Khoisan’s Black? Are the Berbers? What about the Amharics? All sorts of epistemological problematics arise when trying to simplify cultures and populations into Black and White and until one can scientifically substantiate these folk taxonomic concepts, it doesn’t belong in discourse such as this. So I don’t make it about Black and White (or a Black on Black issue). This kind of discourse has blinded some scholars (and wanna be scholars) from seeing the atrocities committed by so-called Blacks (see the Kingdom of Benin, or Tshaka Zulu for example) around the world without any “white” involvement.

Secondly, I would like to establish the nature (in part) of the real debate. As a descendant of African people who were enslaved in the Americas, the compelling research question has always been for me, “What are the ‘reasons’ for slavery in world cultures?” What are the root causes of slavery? Is slavery the same in all cultures that practice(d) it? Or can there be identifiable demarcations which can differentiate the types of scales involved in each respective institution?
It has long been established by African scholars of the existence of slavery, indigenously, in African societies. Any student who has done basic research on this question would acknowledge this. The African-Centered scholar, however, takes it a step further and asks the very questions I asked previously, but more so asks, “How can we prevent the reestablishment of this institution in the future?” It is this last question which prompts the questions related to “What are the root causes of slavery?” You can’t prevent its resurrection without knowing its root causes. It is in attempting to answer this question that Islam comes into the picture. Identified as one of many reasons for slavery in human societies, religious proselytization is the one that is most personal for people engaged in this debate. Other acknowledged “reasons” (excuses) for slavery are: economics, effects of war, and social hierarchy.

No matter the “reason” (excuse) for slavery, it all derives from a thought process that convinced the instigators and participants of this institution that this indeed is justifiable in their eyes. So we ask, “What are the conceptual reasons for which human beings felt justified for enslaving other human beings?” On what authority does one have the right to prescribe destiny on other human beings? Again, the reason why religion gets so much attention is because so many human beings are personally attached to some form of religion one way or another. An attack on religion (African, Abrahamic or otherwise) is an attack on one’s values, culture and ancestors. So it is understandable why many are defensive of their traditions. The religious aspect of this discussion is only one aspect of a larger discussion that doesn’t get much attention. But a true historian can look beyond these superficial attachments and get to the root of the problem: acknowledging strengths and weaknesses where they are located (on both sides). We have to be careful not to exaggerate more than what is evident in the historic records and this is the case here when it comes to ancient Egypt.

Brother Wesley states in his reply:

WM: Yes, it [ the Qur’an] tacitly approves the general institution of slavery by stipulating well treatment of slaves; but so does Ma’at. In the Papyrus of Nu, one who enters the Hall of Ma’at must declare his innocence of a number of sins, including confessing: “I have not vilified a slave to his master”...

There is no promotion of slavery in any Egyptian text that I am aware of by the Goddess Ma’at. When I read the original text, we get no such reading of the text. The Papyrus of Nu (A book of coming forth by Day) is in the British Museum (EA 10477). The line he is quoting is as follows from Chapter 125:

(6) n ir.i tp ra nb bAkH m Hrw irt.n.i
(6) I have not made a daily start in labours over what I did (previously);
(7) n spr rn.i r iAt nt xrp Hmw
(7) My name has not reached the office of director of servants;
(8) n nmH.i nmH m xt.f
(8) I have not orphaned the orphan of his goods;
(9) n ir.i bwt nTrw
(9) I have not done the abomination of the gods;
(10) n sDw.i Hm n Hry-tp.f (not slighted I servant to chief/expert/master his).
(10) I have not slighted a servant to his master;
The line being translated by Dr. Wesley is line (10): $n\ sDw.i\ Hm\ n\ Hry$-tp.f. This line can also be translated as “I have not slandered a servant to his superior” (see Maulana Karenga MAAT: The Moral ideal in Ancient Egypt, 2006: 144). Each translation transliterates the Egyptian word /Hm/ as “servant,” not “slave.” If it had been “slave” it would have violated the very first line: (1) $n\ ir.i\ isft\ r\ rmT$ “I have not done wrong to people.” However, in the Egyptological literature one will find that the term under examination is also defined as “slave.” A systematic look at how the term is utilized in the Egyptian language will demonstrate that one cannot always translate this term /Hm/ as “slave.”

- rmt $Hm$ "attendant, slave"
- $Hm\ ki$ "Ka Priest, Soul Priest" (a servant of the soul. A slave of the soul doesn't make sense)
- s$h\w\ Hm$ "Royal Priest of the Dead"
- $ms\ Hm$ "slave, young slave, slave boy"
- $Hm\ wr$ "cow, bull"
- $Hm\ nsw$ "servant of the king"
- $Hm\ nTr$ "Prophet, God's Servant, Priest"
- $Hm$ "servant, priest, devotee, slave"
- $Hm$ "majesty"
- $Hm$ "servant"
- $Hm.t$ "female servant, slave woman"

The underlying theme being presented here is one who is a servant, or someone who is subordinate to someone else (which makes anyone who has a job a slave). Given the nature of recent archaeological finds, Egyptologists have even debated whether slavery even existed in ancient Egypt (at least how we understand it). The Tour-Egypt website articulates the complexity of this issue regarding slavery in Egypt:

“In ancient Egypt, textual references to slaves are indistinct. From word usage alone, it is difficult to ascertain whether one was a slave or a servant. For example, a priest could be read as a god's slave, but by our definition and understanding of slavery he was not. In reading Egyptian texts, therefore, context is the only criteria for determining such a status, and even then, it can be difficult, because there were different levels of servitude. Those who were not free might not only include slaves, but also those with various degrees of encumbered liberty. For example, could an artisan who worked on tombs who lived in the Deir el-Medina worker’s village on the West Bank at Thebes simply walk of his job? In effect, almost anyone under the authority of an absolute ruler such as a pharaoh might in some degree be considered a slave. We should also note that, if it is difficult to identify slaves from textual references, it is even harder to do so with depictions.”

This is important to note because the depictions on reliefs often touted as “slavery” is not slavery at all, but those of 1) subordinates (usually foreigners) and 2) captives of war. One would be hard pressed to find “slavery” scenes in ancient Egyptian reliefs. The website www.ancient-egypt.org also articulates the difficulty in identifying slavery in Egypt: (www.ancient-egypt.org/glossary/miscellaneous/slavery.html). From the beginning it states:

“Contrary to popular beliefs, there were no slaves in Ancient Egypt such as we know them in the histories of Greece or Rome or in pre-20th century America. There were serfs, who, compared to our views on "slavery", enjoyed several freedoms, such as that of acquiring property. They were rewarded for their services, they could have families without fearing that the person they worked for would sell their children. Their children could enjoy education and break free of the life of servitude.”
Another website articulates this same thing when it states (http://histclo.com/act/work/slave/anc/sa-egypt.html):

"Slavery in Egypt seems to have followed the basic pattern set in Mesopotamia. Slavery in ancient Egypt is a poorly understood subject. It is not well understood how slavery fit into the overall social-class structure. One problem is that there does not seem to be a Egyptian cartouche for slave as distinctly from servant. Nor is there any known way of identifying slaves in the reliefs and tomb paintings of ancient Egyptian. It was once commonly thought that major construction projects were undertaken by large gangs of slaves. This is generally dismissed today. It is now thought that labor at major projects was more likely peasants who had a labor obligation after the plowing or harvest seasons."

A more detailed account and address can be found here: (http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/timelines/topics/slavery.htm). It too articulates the difficulties of this matter:

“There is some controversy whether there was slavery at all in ancient Egypt. The differences of opinion stem mostly from how slavery is defined [18]. Theory and practice of Egyptian slavery were, as far as we can ascertain, quite different from those of Greece, Rome or the southern states of the USA, where slaves were wholly at the mercy of their owners with little protection from society, and more in line with the kind of slavery practiced in the rest of Africa [16]. Hem (Hm), generally translated as 'slave' and originally meaning body, was seemingly a person with lessened rights dedicated to a certain task such as the service of a god (since the 1st dynasty) or the royal administration. The hemu (pl. of hem) are mentioned in the context of private persons only since the end of the Old Kingdom [27]."

I present this quote here, in part, because it differentiates “slavery” found in Africa and slavery found in Europe and the Middle East. All of the sources (and others not named) articulate the basic human rights of a “slave” or “servant” which was denied outside of Africa. I have yet to find Egyptian literature discussing how one can beat their slave “legally” as in the Bible, or other non-rights as you would find in Surah 16:77. In the Middle Kingdom, under king Khufu (c.2040-1650), articulated in the pBerlin 3033, the Sage Djedi was asked by Khufu if he could separate a head from its body and place it back together again. Djedi states that he can. Khufu then orders that a prisoner be brought out to be sacrificed for this magical experiment. Djedi replies:

\[\text{in is n rmT ity nb.i}  \\
\text{mk n wD.tw irt mnt iry n tA awt Spst}\]

But not to a human being, O’ Sovereign, My Lord
Surely, it is not permitted to do such a thing to the noble herd of God (a human being)

The king concedes and a duck is brought out. Here it demonstrates the value of a human life and not even one’s social status within the society is grounds for mistreatment.

Also articulated in the link directly above is that the word /Hm/ stems from the same root that means “body.” This is quite common in African languages as can be seen below (from GJK Campbell-Dunn’s Sumerian Dictionary 2009):

PWS (proto western sudanic) \(kù\) “companion, accompany, with, and” may be relevant as may PWS \(kàà\) “person, slave” etc.
PERSON, HUMAN BEING

Sumerian na “human being”

(GA) “king”
NA “demonstrative”, “article”, “person”, “hand” (<ta>)

PWS káá “man, slave”
PWS káán “life”
PWN (proto western negritic) GHWYÁN “child”
Bantu jána “child”
Kele wana “child”, Swahili bwana “master”
Kongo, Bangi, Ngala, Poto, Ngombe mwana “child”
Lolo bona “child”, Soko mona “child”
Mande de-n.kye “son”
Mangbetu ne “demonstrative”

[The word wana meant “child-king” in early Niger-Congo]. [But na “that man”] [nama “animal” ?]

<(*GW = # *A = a) *N = n *A = a>

SLAVE

Sumerian arad “slave”

LA, DA, RA “go” a-
LA, DA, RA “make, work” -d

PWS lá “to make, to work”, Guang lálá

Guinea-West Cameroons (Johnston) ara “war” [Frequent –ra added in this area]

[Initial t- has been lost. Compare S. a-a = PWS tata “father”, S. a₂ “arm, strength” = PWS ta “hand”. Plosive t > Lenis th > Zero grade]?

Bantu jidá “road”
Kongo ngila “road”
Mande dā-ndā “to escort”, tača “to go”, sīra “road”
Mande lá,(da) “to make, to work”

[ An old African word la, ra “to go” has been used of “going to war” and “capturing slaves”?]  

*L = r *A = a *D = d ?

SLAVE

Sumerian nim “slave”

NI “person”

PWS ni “person”, Úwet o—nut “man”, Wolof nit “person”, compare Avatime ba-ni-ma “person”, Nyangbo ba-nu-no “person”, Bulom a-nin “people”, Gola o-ńun “person”
PWS ni “this”, PWS ni “to be someone or something”
PWN NINTU, (NITU) “person, man”
Bantu ntu “person”
Mande iō-n gyō “state slave”

*N = n *I = i *M = m

SLAVE

Sumerian sağ(a) “head; slave”
Trying to narrow down what is a “slave” in an African context is quite complex as can be seen above. The same word for “slave” is the general word for “man.”

Dr. Kimbwadende Bunseki Fu-Kiau of the Kongo warns us about using western labels to define African realities. In his work titled *Mbongi: An African Traditional Political Institution* (2007:31), in discussing the central African phenomenon of knotted message ropes, he discusses how he came across a woman who still had these ancient ropes and could “read” them how we read books (this system is no longer used in the Kongo). He goes on to state:

One would believe she was reading from a book. Knots “talked” about extended family’s members “sold as slaves” (this expression should be understood as giving away as adoptees or as mortgage) and marks represented measures of animals given in the process. Some of the people mentioned in those knots were ransomed in the 1930’s and are still alive today.

He goes on to further explore this topic later on in the book. I will quote at length so that we are given the full context for which he makes his assertion. In discussing the *Kisinsi* system in the Bantu-Kongo, he describes the nature of an *N’danga*. He notes that:

A “N’nanga” is an individual “bought” by the community. To “be bought” means to be accepted as a full community member in a lineage into which one is not a blood-related member. This was a traditional African way of officially adopting new members (young and old, but never children) into the community. Hence, when an alien individual arrives within the community, he is allowed total freedom as an independent human being in all his activities. He was never seen or considered a “beast of burden” as in the case of slavery within Europe and the New World. In the community of Mbongi, this originally “bought” or “adopted” individual could cultivate and harvest the land of his new community with full rights. He could have a family and take care of it according to social standards of life style. He had rights and liberty to everything within the community, although he could take the leadership of the community policy only according to certain circumstances.

As long as the community had its own original “Nkasi/Lesi” (heroes/militants) be they male or female able to take direction of the community leadership, the access to that position was prohibited to community “adopted” members. In the case where the community lacked the person able to lead the community, then the “N’nanga” or the adoptee could temporarily assume that responsibility of head of the Mbongi—until the time when the community again had its own hero of full community blood to reassume such responsibility.

Although the N’nanga was a full member of the community, he could not change his original “Luvila” (ethnic link identification, as praise name) or his “Ndumbudulu” (ethnic motto identification, as community standing). These symbolize his regional or national ethnic identity, his true historic-biologic citizenship roots.
When a female N’nanga or alien had offspring after her community integration, her children were known as the “kids-result-of-community-integration-wealth.” Such children became full community members although their biological origin came from a woman of different “Luvila” (ethno-biological link). Such children, however, were not known like this if the father was a member of the local indigenous community. In this case, the children were very often adopted for “Luvila” and for “Ndumbudulu”—those of the community integrated by their mother. But they could also keep their mother’s previous community status. I rather prefer to use “adoptees” and “adopters” than slaves and masters in African practice of the so-called “slavery,” since the concept of slavery based on the “slave-master” relationship of the West did not exist in Africa. In practice, there was no difference between “slave” and “master” in Mbongi. (Fu-Kiau, 2007: 61-62) (emphasis mine)

I don’t know if he can accurately speak for all of Africa, but we at least get some understanding from a Bantu-Kongo context. We see this same kind of practice and understanding in Ancient Egypt as attested in many of the links listed above (thus priest, majesty, servant and slave is represented by the same word /Hm/). I quote this at length to demonstrate that one cannot use the term “slave” at every nook and turn in African societies (at least under the understanding of Eurocentric scholarship). The concepts don’t always match.¹ There are definitely some instances of known “slavery” in Africa. However, the bulk of sources on this phenomena document such instances after the introduction of Islam (in the case of the Fulani Jihads in West and Central Sudan) or (Christian) European colonial efforts starting in 1441. But without written records before the colonial period, there is no way to accurately tell the nature of so-called “slavery” in pre-colonial Africa.

PART II

As stated in my initial post:

AI: So the response would be, well that's Thutmose speaking; who said that he was "the" representative of Amen-Ra (Amandla in many African languages)? In other words, this could be argued to be the speech of an individual (not of a spiritual tradition) who invokes the name of God during a time of war.

The argument isn’t whether Islam promotes and sanctions slavery and targets specifically “black” people. The question is does Islam promote and sanction slavery against human beings PERIOD, no matter the cultural group. This was already acknowledged by Dr. Wesley. So there is no need to hark on that issue.

From there we ask, “Is the Arab (black or white) slavery strictly political (as in the case of Egypt with centuries of warring with hostile neighbors)?” Or is it rooted in a slave mode of production as was the case in Greece, Rome, Britain, Spain, Portugal and the United States? Or was it strictly a religious thing with the aim of spreading Islam to make Arab (black or white) thought and culture dominant on the world stage? Many historians (and layman alike) believe that it is the latter, with some advocating a mixer of various reasons/excuses (it not solely being religious).

When it comes to ancient Egypt, all one can cite is texts made by generals in war (with the texts establishing that ones were captives, but doesn’t establish the state institution of slavery or what was done with the slaves). Only during the new kingdom do we see a great number of slaves arrive in Egypt and all as a result of war (captives). These wars being the result of continuous fighting and protecting the borders since the 2nd Intermediate period which saw the rise of the Hyksos shepherd kings and the

¹ like many others: i.e., the concept of “empire/kingdom” in African societies. See Theophile Obenga’s article in UNESCO’s General History of Africa Vol. 1 “Sources and specific techniques used in African history: a general outline”.
alliance between the Hyksos and (a group of) the “Nubians” (thus the extreme hatred of the Nubians for aligning with Egypt’s historical enemies).  

From the INSCRIPTION OF KAMOSE AT KARNAK

(18) ... I captured
(19) his messenger in the oasis upland, as he was going south to Kush with a written dispatch, and I found on it the following, in writing by the hand of the Ruler of Avaris:
(20) "[É] son of Re, Apophis greets my son the ruler of Kush. Why have you arisen as ruler without letting me know? Do you
(21) see what Egypt has done to me? The Ruler which is in her midst - Kamose-the-Mighty, given life! - is pushing me off my (own) land! I have not attacked him in any way comparable to
(22) all that he has done to you; he has chopped up the Two Lands to their grief, my land and yours, and he has hacked them up. Come north! Do not hold back!
(23) See, he is here with me: There is none who will stand up to you in Egypt. See, I will not give him a way out until you arrive! Then we
(24) shall divide the towns of Egypt, and [Khent]-hen-nofer shall be in joy."

Truth be told, Egypt has always attempted to conquer Nubia. Dr. Mario Beatty sums up the history very nicely IMO here: [http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-3434087937070392047]. I bring this up because we have an issue of context in regards to the relationship between Egypt and various groups in “Nubia” that go back to pre-dynastic times. While the new polity of /hnw/ (no formal name of Egypt until after the first intermediate period) was able to successfully conquer the Delta region to bring about the unification of upper and lower tA-mry, this was not the case with Nubia until centuries later. Egypt’s imperial desires have always caused friction between the two entities. But there is no evidence that the “reason/excuse” was something religious. One can argue economic or political, but not religious.

Wesley Muhammad states the following:

WM: Nowhere in the Qur’an does God (or the human speakers for him) gives such an order.

The Semna Inscription of the viceroy Merimose of the XVIII Dynasty, cited by Dr. Wesley is along the same lines as what can be found in the Qur’an.

33:50 - "Prophet, We have made lawful to you the wives to whom you have granted dowries and the slave girls whom God has given you as booty."

Here it is clearly stated that they believe that the women of the conquered people by Muhammad’s army was given to them by God (Allah) as “booty.” Again, when trying to ascertain the motivation behind certain human atrocities, the ones that get the most attention are the one’s inspired by religious ideology. And one cannot deny that any future enslavement by “Black or White” Arabs, since the time of Muhammad, didn’t find any scriptural (Biblical and Qur’anic) “justification” for the acts. Since Muhammad allowed it, didn’t condemn it, and was given slaves by Allah, adherers to the Qur’anic

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2 Apophis tried to expand the war to a second front, by calling on the ruler of Kush, at Egypt's southern border, to attack Kamose to the rear. As the inscription indicates, Apophis' plan did not succeed.

3 Another name for Kush
ideology, in their hearts and minds, are justified in their actions. Not only that, they find ancient justifications in the Torah as mentioned previously.

So again, the issue is about “religious tradition” and “religious justification” which one cannot argue is the motivation in Egypt. Egypt is known for incorporating foreign deities into their pantheon because they had a different foreign policy than the Abrahamic adherers. This kind of inclusion is not allowable in Islam.

We also soon forget that the Qur’an is not the only Muslim Holy Book: so is the Bible. The Arabs (Black or White) see the Biblical stories and patriarchs as the beginning of their tradition: Moses, Abraham, Adam, Noah, Ishmael, Isaac, the angel Gabriel…even Jesus. The Biblical and Qur’anic traditions even share the same God (El, Eloh, Eloh’yim, Allah). Even Jews recognize that they are the same (see this video clip here: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMOAM1Ln8o&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMOAM1Ln8o&feature=related)). So when Allah in the Bible states:

Exodus 21:20-21 – "If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property."4

...are we to then argue that now Allah and Eloh are separate? That Allah doesn’t promote slavery, doesn’t sanction it and provide “ethical” rules for the slaves’ treatment? Allah didn’t state:

However, you may purchase male or female slaves from among the foreigners who live among you. You may also purchase the children of such resident foreigners, including those who have been born in your land. You may treat them as your property, passing them on to your children as a permanent inheritance. You may treat your slaves like this, but the people of Israel, your relatives, must never be treated this way. (Leviticus 25:44-46 NLT)

This was right after the Israelites got out of “slavery” (allegedly). Did not Allah command the Israelites to kill, cause war, plunder and steal?

"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them" (Deuteronomy 7:1,2).

"But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: But thou shalt utterly destroy them … as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee" (20:16,17).

So when we read in the Qu’ran in 47:4

So when you meet those who disbelieve⁵ [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or

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⁴ See Abu Dawud (Hadith), vol. 2, chapter 597 for a comparative verse in Islamic tradition- "On a Man who Beats His Slave While he is in the Sacred State (wearing Ihram)." #1814-"(Abu Bakr) began to beat him (Bakr’s slave) while the apostle of Allah was smiling and saying: "Look at this man who is in the sacred state, what is he doing?" [The note for this Hadith says "Abu Bakr beat his slave to teach him sense of responsibility."]
ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens. That [is the command]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them [Himself], but [He ordered armed struggle] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of Allah - never will He waste their deeds.

…am I not to view this as a cultural continuum between both traditions? What is the “cause of Allah” and how is this not religious in nature? Where does “belief” fit into this greater context, and how are we not to interpret this “belief” as religious? How do we explain:

8:65
O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved [What? In Allah?] because they are a people who do not understand.

8:67
It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] UNTIL he inflicts a massacre [upon Allah’s enemies] in the land. Some Muslims desire the commodities of this world, but Allah desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

8:69
So consume what you have taken of war booty [as being] lawful and good, and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Believers in what? Believers of the religion: in Allah? And since when does God have enemies? Also, what would be the purpose of trying to promote Islam to your captive slaves?

8:70
O Prophet, say to whoever is in your hands of the captives, "If Allah knows [any] good in your hearts, He will give you [something] better than what was taken from you, and He will forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

So believing in Allah somehow will make my captivity under Muslims bearable? All is “forgiven” then if Allah sees good in the slave’s heart? What is the punishment from Allah for having slaves in the first place? This is just an excuse to spread the religion or justify it. Doesn’t this sound like the rhetoric espoused by European slavers with their African captives?

As I stated in my initial reply:

**AI:** So while there was definitely Black African on Black African war and atrocities, one can’t argue that the promotion of one’s religion was the reason for the actions.

This, again, isn’t brought up to excuse the Egyptians for their war atrocities. But in the spirit to distinguish different causes /reasons/excuses for slavery, the promotion of one’s religious ideology is not the motive in Ancient Egypt, but is clearly a motive in the Abrahamic traditions. If one wants to talk about captivity and slavery in Egypt for political reasons, then that discourse is justifiable given the data. With Islam, there is a religious thrust and that is the critique against Islam which promoters of Islam would like to deny or downplay as nothing important. The critique is more narrow in focus and doesn’t include a lot of what people are trying to throw in the mix.

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*See vs 47:1 Those who disbelieve and avert [people] from the way of Allah - He will waste their deeds.*
There is no tradition in Egypt of them going to war with others because they don’t “believe” in Amen-Ra or Het Heru or in Osiris. There is no Ma’atian religious tradition in Egypt which promotes slavery. The issue here, the charge against Islam, is slavery as a result of a religious tradition (motivated and justified by Holy Scriptures). The citations Dr. Wesley recites are not religious texts. They are more like Blogs or Newspaper reports on stone. The Bible, the Torah, the Qur’an are religious texts: seen in the eyes of practitioners as the words of God directly (often through a medium, a prophet, or “inspired” men). The Egyptians didn’t have a religious “text” that everyone was required to follow. Just decentralized wise sayings from various priesthoods or elders and wise men and woman on various subject matter. So there is no obligation to adhere to one text over another as we find in the Abrahamic traditions. This affords a flexibility and allowance for critique not present in the Abrahamic faiths.

The issue again, for this specific reason/excuse for slavery, is that when we talk about slavery as a result of war, greed, economics, etc., from a group of people, we can appeal to the people for reparations for such actions. This includes the generals, leaders, businessmen, etc., who commanded the troops to partake in the atrocities. However, if the people are claiming (whether God actually said it or not) that these commands to enslave and pillage come directly from the Creator, how do you hold responsible the Creator for these commands or allowances? What are the religious and ethnical motivations for these acts? This is part of the critique of Islam and Christianity. The whole Abrahamic faith is rooted in slavery. That is not the case in ancient Egypt. I will be finishing an article soon titled Religious Proselytization as a Form of Violence: Infringement of the African Principle of Simultaneous Validity that will go into detail as to the real charge against the Abrahamic faiths by African-Centered scholars (some of which has been addressed here in this reply).

All human beings are sovereign beings and have the right to believe what they want to believe. So under what right does the Prophet Muhammad have to engage in a “reform movement” (as Dr. Wesley argues in his book Black Arabia) against sovereign human beings who have the God given right to worship 1, 5 or a 100 gods if they feel like it? If others don’t “believe” in Allah, what business is it any Muslim: including Muhammad? This type of behavior emerges as a result of a long cultural tradition which begins with the Bible who Muslims feel that the Qu’ran is the “fulfillment” and extension of this tradition. The charge is against the Abrahamic evaluation of the person and how this gives rise to such atrocities as slavery. The same Allah that commanded the Israelites to plunder, pillage and commit genocide, is the same Allah that inspired Prophet Muhammad to plunder, pillage and commit genocide against his own people in Mecca in 630 and forced them to accept Islam as he saw fit (W. Muhammad Black Arabia and the African Origins of Islam, 2009: 177).

Until we get to the core of the real argument, we will continue to debate in circles with focuses which don’t bring us to the root cause of these catastrophic disharmonies. It is not about Muslim slaving “blacks.” The question is whether Islamic slavery is religiously motivated and what kind of additional problems has this posed on human populations as a result of this mindset?

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