

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

LOWER
YOUR
WING

Slave





In the Name of Allah,
The Compassionate, The Merciful



LOWER
YOUR
WING

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LOWER
YOUR
WING



صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ



Birds, soaring and diving, must end their flight slowly. Landing and lowering their wings is harder than taking off and stretching their wings.

Like a bird coming down from sky to earth that slows its wing beats and lowers them to gently touch land so was the Command of **ALLAH** (Glorified be He) to His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding believers:

(And lower your wing to those of the believers who follow you)⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of Ash-Shu'ara' 26: 215.



Lower your wing
Lay down your pride
Let go of your own life
Adopt patience
Give and care for people
Relieve their burdens
Remove their ignorance
Let not your eyes overlook them
Man or woman, young or old, rich or poor,
strong or weak, enslaved or free
Humble yourself to them, O Muhammad
(peace and blessings be upon him)
And turn the darkness into light



LOWER
YOUR
WING



Slave



رَسُولُ اللَّهِ



According to the Roman mores, a slave was merely 'a thing.' Not a human; a thing with no rights at all, burdened with many harsh duties. Slaves were seized through invasions which the Romans launched with the sole aim of enslaving and subjugating others to the service of the Romans. For this heinous desire alone came the Roman occupation, of which slavery was the outcome.

Slaves drudged in the fields, heavily shackled to prevent their escape. They were fed, not because it was their natural right to have food, but rather, to keep them alive for labor.

During work, they were driven by whiplashes. They slept in dark, foul dungeons, teeming with



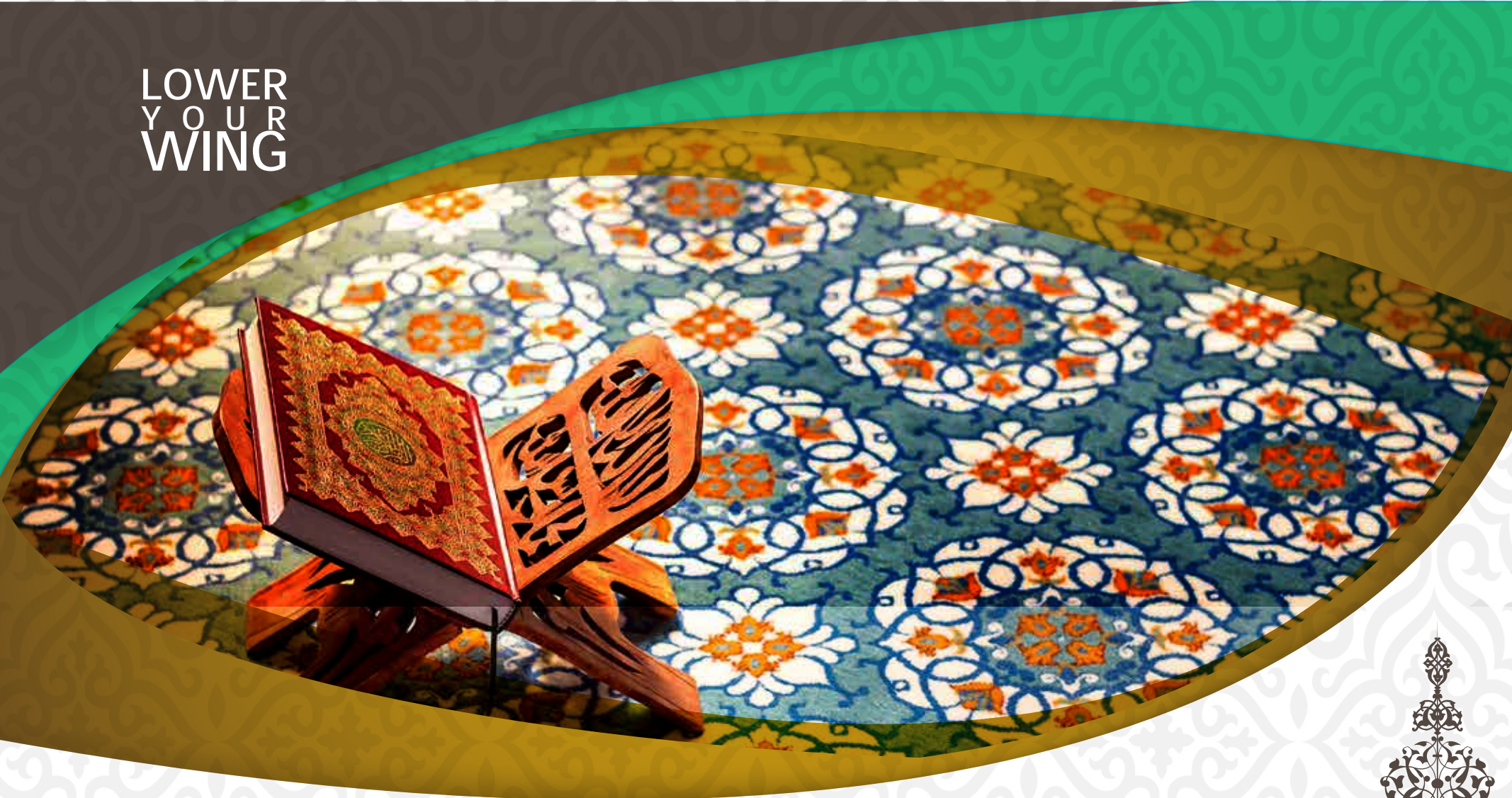


rats and insects. An excessive number were cast into each cell – perhaps fifty in one – where they were tied in chains with less space than that provided to animals in a barn.

What exceeded these atrocities were the outrageous, mortal duels fought in the Roman arenas (such as the Colosseum) between a slave or a captive and another, or a wild beast starved prior to the event. This was the favorite form of entertainment for the Romans, attended by the dignitaries and sometimes the emperor himself, who watched the slaves fight to the death.

The gladiators, who had no shields, were exposed to the blows of swords or lances on any part of





their body. The brutality of the gladiatorial combat, the spectacle of pure murder, the bloodlust of the spectators, the shouts of **“Kill him! Flog him! Burn him!”** and the callous deaths of the poor victims draw a horrible picture of slavery before the advent of Islam.

Then came Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) came to both the free and the enslaved. **“Who followed you in this matter of yours?”** ‘Amr bin ‘Abasah As-Sulami asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who answered, **“A free man (meaning Abu Bakr) and a slave (Bilal).”**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Musnad Ahmad, Book of Kuffans (Kufis), Hadith no. 18617.



‘Ammar bin Yasir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, **“I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) with no one with him except five slaves, two women, and Abu Bakr.”**⁽¹⁾

He (peace and blessings be upon him) came to say to masters about their slaves: **(You are from one another.)**⁽²⁾ To say to them: **“Whoever kills his slave, we shall kill him; whoever mutilates him, we shall mutilate him; and whoever castrates him, we shall castrate him.”**⁽³⁾ To declare to them the unity of their origin and destination: **“You are all from Adam, and Adam was from dust.”**⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Manaqib, Hadith no. 3387.

⁽²⁾ Translated meanings of An-Nisa’ 4: 25.

⁽³⁾ Samurah bin Jundab, Sunan An-Nasa’iy, Book of Al-Qasamah (Oath-taking), Hadith no. 4655.

⁽⁴⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 4452.





Superiority among them is only attained by piety: “Verily, Allah does not look at your high descent, your lineage, your bodies, or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts. Whoever has a righteous heart, Allah will have pity on him. Verily, you are (all) the Children of Adam and the most beloved of you to Him is the most pious of you.”⁽¹⁾

He (peace and blessings be upon him) spoke of slaves as brothers who must be treated kindly, “Anyone who has his brother under his hand should feed him from what he eats and clothe him from what he wears, and do not overburden them with work; if you do



⁽¹⁾ Abu Malik Al-Ash‘ary, Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jami li-Ahkam Al-Qur’an, interpretation of Surat Al-Hujurat [49: 13].



overburden them with tasks they cannot do alone, help them.” Whose dignity must be preserved: “None of you should say, ‘My slave man or my slave woman.’ You are all the slave men of Allah, and all your women are the slave women of Allah.”⁽¹⁾ Every person’s worth as a human must be realized, “O Bilal, arise and call to Prayer.”⁽²⁾

Little by little, in a world ruled by slavery, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) began to establish the law of freedom. Abu Mas‘ud narrated, “I was beating a slave of mine, when I heard a voice from behind me (saying), ‘Bear in mind, Abu Mas‘ud, that Allah has



⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 9891.

⁽²⁾ Ibn ‘Umar, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adhan, Hadith no. 569.



more power over you than you have over him.’ I turned around, and behold, it was the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, he is free for the Sake of Allah.’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Truly, if you had not done it, Hellfire would have scorched you (or Hellfire would have touched you).’”(1)

About prohibition of enslaving a free person, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) declared, “Allah says, ‘There are three whose Opponent I shall be on the Day of Resurrection: A man who gives by Me (vows in My Name), then betrays; a man who sells



(1) Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 3136.



a free person and devours (takes) his price; and a man who hires a worker and gets his full due from him but does not give him his wage.”⁽¹⁾

About prohibition of enslaving a freed person, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) declared, “There are three (types of people) from whom Allah does not accept Salah (prayer): a man who leads people (in congregational prayer) when they dislike him; a man who comes to (congregational) Salah at the end of its time; and a man who enslaves a freed soul.”⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Divine Hadith: Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Buyu’ (Transactions), Hadith no. 2075.

⁽²⁾ ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘As: Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of As-Salah, Hadith no. 501.



Steady upgrading of the society continued until the awaited moment arrived when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) claimed back their full freedom, declaring manumission to be the safest and firmest bridge to traverse to salvation and escape the perilous path in the Hereafter. **(But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is breaking through the difficult pass? Freeing a neck from bondage (i.e. a slave or a captive).)**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ *Translated meanings of Al-Balad 90: 11--13.*



Marching Towards Freedom

With the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), the slave was no longer 'a thing' but a human being with a human soul just like his master. Previous nations regarded slaves as a different race from free people, created to be enslaved and subjugated. They had no qualms about killing, torturing, burning, or subjecting them to inhumane conditions of forced labor.⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) started the process of retrieval of the exploited and abused humanity of slaves by securing their most



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhat Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, p. 42.



essential rights and, ultimately, their freedom, saying, **“For the slave (man or woman) is his food and clothing, and from work he should only be charged with what he can bear.”**⁽¹⁾

Side by side, the masters gradually developed in their faith and values to regard their slaves as a soul equal to them in rights, and perhaps superior to them in piety and more honorable in the Sight of Allah. Mu‘adh bin Jabl (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Shall I tell you about the kings of Paradise?”** Mu‘adh replied, **“Yes.”** He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“A weak, oppressed person with (only) two rags who is totally unheeded, if he takes an oath by Allah, He (Allah) fulfills it.”**⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 3141.

⁽²⁾ Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Az-Zuhd, Hadith no. 4105.



During this transitional process of treating and gradually eliminating this deeply-rooted social illness the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) protected the community from falling into anarchy by preventing forced attainment of freedom through escape. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“If the slave flees, his Salah shall not be accepted.”**⁽¹⁾

Hence, loyalty and discharge of duty was demanded towards the masters; the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“If the slave is loyal to his master and worships Allah well, he shall have his reward twice over.”**⁽²⁾

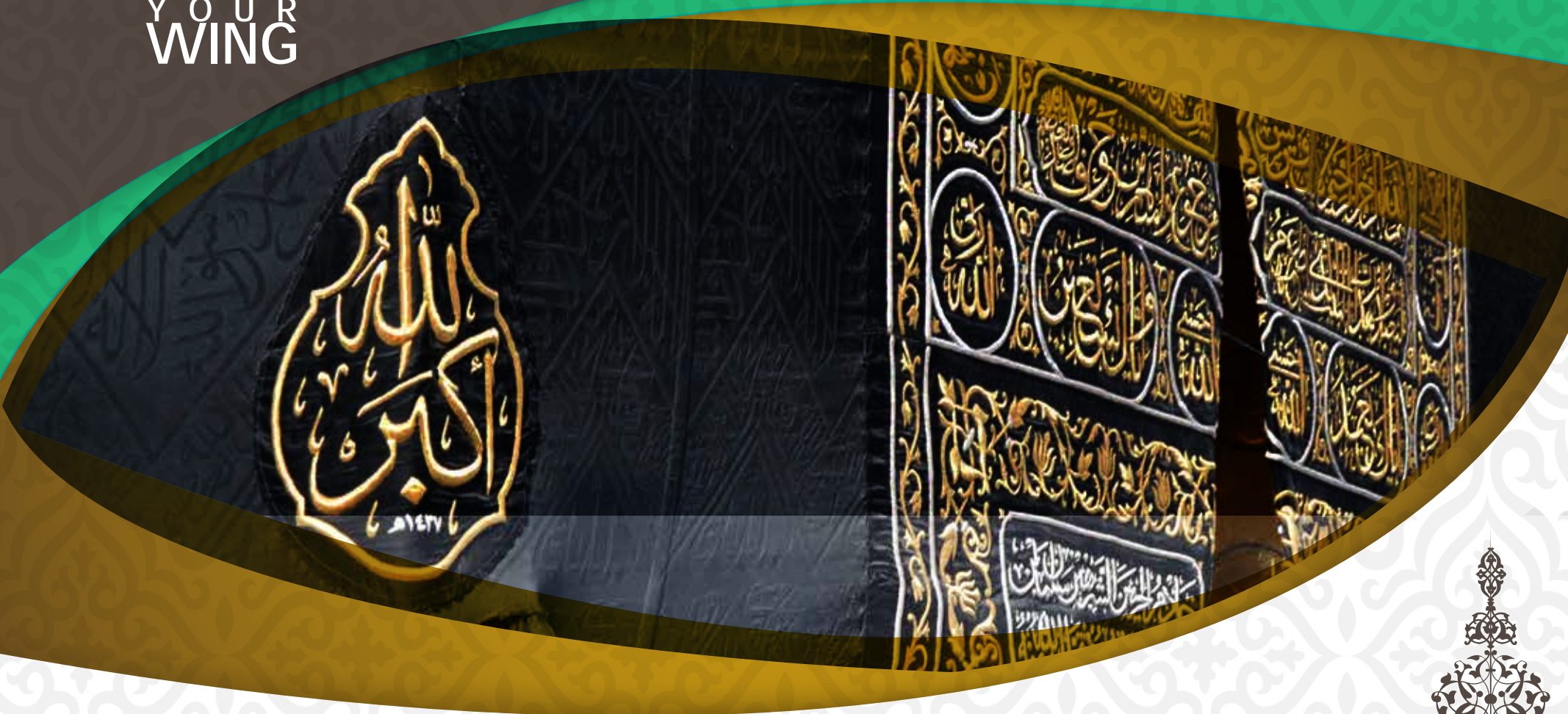
And, **“Any slave who fulfills the Right of Allah and the right of his masters shall have a double reward.”**⁽³⁾



(1) Jarir bin ‘Abdullah, Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 103.

(2) Ibn ‘Umar, Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 3143.

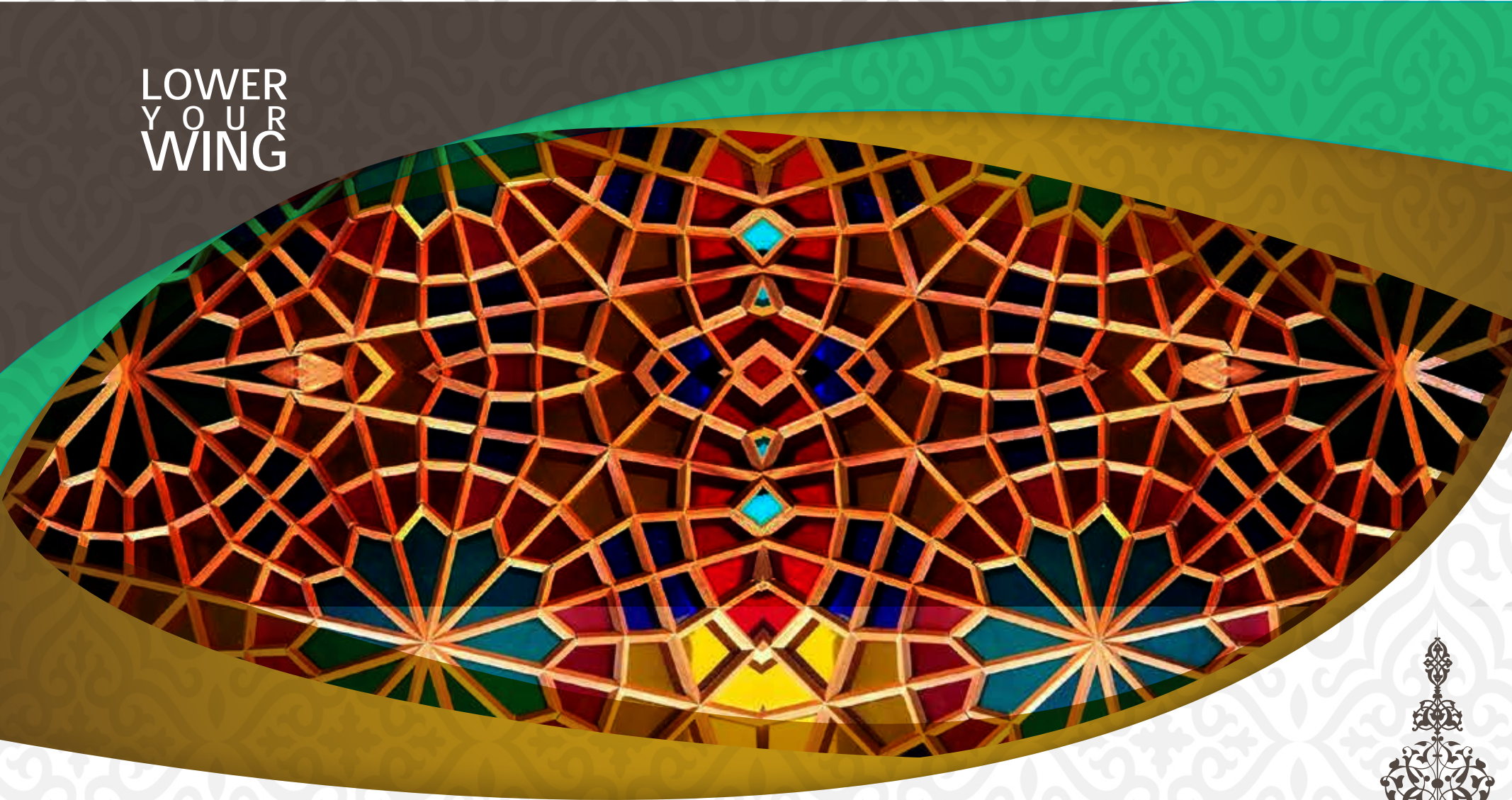
(3) Abu Musa Al-Ash‘ary: Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Atq, Hadith no. 2361.



The task, which was indeed heavy upon slaves, was lightened by the promise of double reward and further consolatory words of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who said, “**To the righteous Mamluke (owned) slave a double reward. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, were it not for Jihad in the Way of Allah, Hajj (pilgrimage), and piety towards my mother, I would have loved to die a Mamluke.**”⁽¹⁾



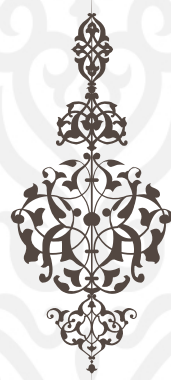
⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Atq, Hadith no. 2362.



Inviolability

The dignity and honor of slaves thus became protected by Islamic Law, inviolable by either deeds or words which have enslaving effects either physically or psychologically.

As for words, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade masters from mental or psychological enslavement of these people by calling them slaves and being addressed by them as 'my lord,' thus always reminding them of servitude, which would relentlessly instill into them feelings of subservience and inferiority.





Instead, he (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded the masters to address them with familiar names, by which he (peace and blessings be upon him) aimed to begin their freedom from within and negate any subjugation to man; for man has only one Lord, and to Him alone he must submit himself.

- The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “None of you should say, ‘My slave.’ You are all the slaves of Allah. Rather, you should say, ‘My young man.’ And the slave should not say, ‘My lord.’ Let him say, ‘My master.’”⁽¹⁾



(1) Abu Hurairah, Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Alfaz min Al-Adab wa Ghairhia (The Use of Correct Words), Hadith no. 4178.



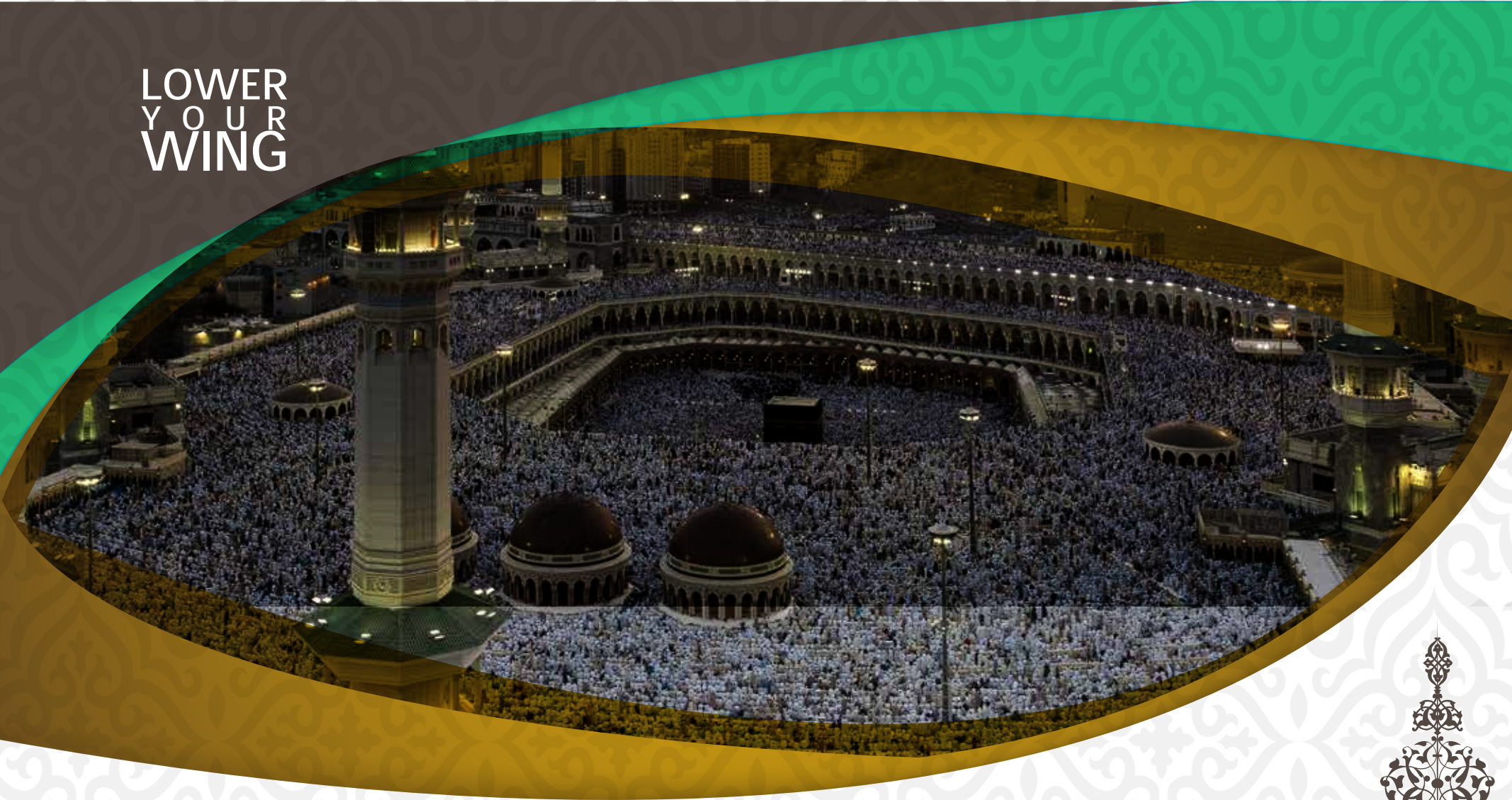
- The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) further instructed the masters, saying, “None of you should say, ‘Feed your lord, help your lord perform ablution, or give water to your lord;’ rather, you should say, ‘Your master or guardian.’ And none of you should say, ‘My slave boy or my slave girl,’ but rather, you should say, ‘My young man, my young woman, or my lad.’”⁽¹⁾

As for physical assault, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) laid down that it would incur like-for-like punishment.

- “Whoever kills his slave, we shall kill him; whoever mutilates him, we shall



⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Atq, Hadith no. 2366.



mutilate him; and whoever castrates him, we shall castrate him.”⁽¹⁾

- “Anyone who slanders his slave and he (the slave) is innocent of what he said shall be flogged on the Day of Resurrection, unless he (the slave) is as was said.”⁽²⁾

Whether moral or physical, any injustice or offence against slaves will not pass unaccounted for. Lady ‘Aishah narrated that a man sat before the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked, “O Messenger of Allah, I have two slaves who lie to me, betray me, and disobey me. I insult and hit them. Where do I stand with regard to them?”⁽³⁾



⁽¹⁾ Samurah bin Jundab, Sunan An-Nasa’iy, Book of Al-Qasamah, Hadith no. 4655.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Hudud, Hadith no. 6352.



He (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, “Their betrayal, disobedience, and falsehood to you and your punishment of them will be weighed. If your punishment of them is equal to their faults, it will be even; nothing (counted) for or against you. If your punishment of them is less than their faults, it will be a surplus for you. And if your punishment of them is more than their faults, Allah will take retaliation upon you for the excess.”

The man stepped aside and started to weep and yell, upon which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, “Do you not read the Book of Allah? (We shall set up the





scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul shall be wronged in the least; even if it be the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it forth, and sufficient are We as Reckoners.)⁽¹⁾

The man said, “O Messenger of Allah, I can find nothing better for me and these slaves than parting with them. I call upon you to bear witness that they are all free.”⁽²⁾

Through equality in punishment, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) established equality between slaves and masters, and with it the protection by which the Islamic Law surrounded the life of these people.



⁽¹⁾ *Translated meanings of Al-Anbiya' 21: 47.*

⁽²⁾ *Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Hadith no. 3089.*

Slapping the Slave

In a giant step forward, unparalleled by any other legislation protecting slaves in the history of mankind, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) proclaimed that slapping or beating a slave was a legitimate enough reason for immediate manumission.⁽¹⁾

- Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) manumitted a slave. He picked a twig or the like from the ground and said, "There is not a reward for freeing him the worth of this. I heard the Messenger

⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhāt Hawl Al-Islām: Islam and Slavery*, p. 43; excerpted with modification.





of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say, ‘Whoever slaps or hits his slave, his expiation is manumitting him.’”(1)

- Hilal bin Yasaf reported that an old man got angry and slapped his maid. Suwaid bin Muqarrin said to him, “Could you not but slap the surface of her face? See, I was the seventh among the seven sons of Muqarrin, and we had only one maid. The youngest of us slapped her, thus the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded us to manumit her.”(2)



(1) Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 3130.

(2) Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 3133.



Mutilation or punishment with fire also requires immediate manumission and the support of every Muslim for the wronged slave.

- ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin ‘Al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “**The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Any slave who is mutilated or burned with fire is free. He is the freedman of Allah and His Messenger.’** As a consequence, they brought a man who was castrated, called Sandar, to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who manumitted him.”⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 6800.



- ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin ‘Al-As (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) crying for help. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him, ‘What is wrong with you?’ He said, ‘My master saw me kissing a slave girl of his and he castrated me.’ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Bring that man to me.’ The man was summoned, but people could not get control over him, thus the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)





said (to the slave), ‘Go, you are free.’ He said, ‘Upon whom should I rely for support, O Messenger of Allah, if my master should enslave me again?’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Upon every Muslim (or believer).’”(1)



(1) Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Ad-Diyat, Hadith no. 2670.



Redeeming Honor

The status of a slave woman was much more deplorable than that of a man. Added to the misery of slavery was the abuse she suffered under her master and the children conceived as a result of the master-slave woman relationship, who were born into slavery.

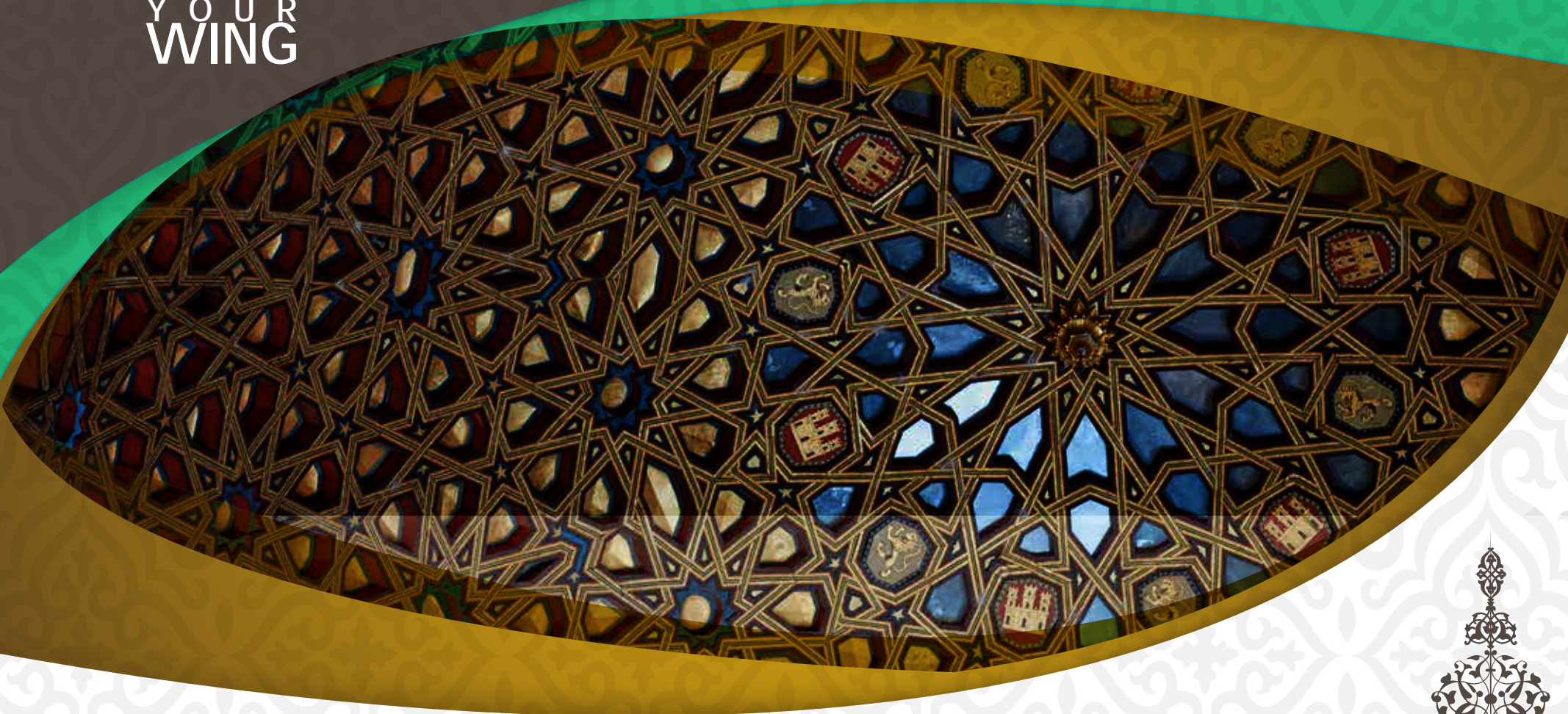
Islam did not turn its back on her, nor turn a blind eye to her status quo, for many slave women at the advent of Islam were already subjected to cohabiting with their masters.



Since the core constitutive element of a valid marriage before Allah is lawfulness, Islam took the essential step for redeeming their honor and declared the master-slave woman relationship to be as legitimate as the husband-wife relationship, and hence ensured the legitimacy of any children conceived. The noble Ayah demarcates chaste relations, saying: (...those who guard their private parts (i.e. from illegal sexual acts). Except from their wives or those their right hands possess, for then, they are free from blame. But whoever seeks (relationships) beyond that, then those are the transgressors.)⁽¹⁾ This legitimacy freed the slave woman from a sense of shame, the doubt of being an adulteress,



⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of Al-Mu'minun 23: 57-.



and the fear of bearing bastards. Consequently, any children the slave woman had from her master were legitimate children.

Most importantly, it curbed the unaccountability of masters, who henceforth were required to bear the consequences of such relationships. This was the basic step in elevating slave women to the status of wives.

Also, among the masters of Jahiliyyah were some who forced their slave women into prostitution and charged money for it. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) forbade this practice and forbade the money earned from it, saying, **“The dower (fee) of a prostitute is evil.”**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Rafi' bin Khadij, Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Musaqah (Sharecropping), Hadith no. 2932.



As for the slave women forced into prostitution, Allah assured that He is to them Most Forgiving and Merciful, as their sin falls upon the one who forced them into prostitution. Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated ⁽¹⁾ that Musaika and Umaimah were two slave women who were forced into prostitution by their owner, 'Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul. They complained about this to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), whereupon Allah revealed: **(And force not your slave girls into 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 Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.)** ⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Sahih Muslim, Book of At-Tafsir, Hadith no. 5355.

⁽²⁾ Translated meanings of An-Nur 24: 33.



Umm Walad:

The child conceived from a master-slave woman relationship paved the way for the freedom of the slave mother. Any slave woman who bore a child from her master was called, from the day she gave birth, “**Umm walad,**” i.e. the mother of the master’s child.

The master could then no longer sell the mother; and if he did not voluntarily manumit her during his lifetime, she was set free upon his death. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “**Any slave woman who gives birth to a child from her master is manumitted by his promise of manumitting her after his death or (he said) after him.**”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Ibn ‘Abbas: Musnad Ahmad, Book of Banu Hashim, Hadith no. 2760.*





‘Umar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “If any slave woman gives birth to a child from her master, he must not sell her, give her away, or bequeath her. He may have intercourse with her, and when he dies, she is free.”⁽¹⁾

The child given birth to was a legitimate, free child from the day of birth and was ascribed to the master.

Wife:

‘Abdullah bin Rawaha (may Allah be pleased with him) had a black slave woman with whom he became angry one day and slapped, after which he was dismayed. He came to the Messenger of



⁽¹⁾ Muwatta’ Malik, Book of Al-‘Atq wa Al-Wala’ (Manumission and Loyalty), Hadith no. 1268.



Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and told him her story.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, “Who is she?”

‘Abdullah said, “She fasts, prays, performs ablution thoroughly, and testifies that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “O father of ‘Abdullah, this is a believing woman.”

‘Abdullah said, “By the One Who has sent you with the truth, I shall manumit and marry her.”





He did, yet some Muslims criticized him. They said, “**He married his slave woman.**” They instead wanted to give their women in marriage to Mushrik ⁽¹⁾ men and marry Mushrik women, seeking their high descent. As a consequence, Allah revealed ⁽²⁾:

(Do not marry Mushrik women until they believe. A believing slave woman is better than a Mushrik woman, even though she might please you. And do not marry Mushrik men to your women until they believe. A believing slave is better than a Mushrik, even though he might please you. Those invite (you) to the Fire, but Allah invites (you) to Paradise and to forgiveness by His Permission.) ⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Mushrik: One who associates others with Allah in His Divinity or worship.*

⁽²⁾ *Reported on the authority of As-Sadi: Tafsir Ibn Kathir; Jalal Al-Din As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur; Al-Qurtubi, Al-Jami li-Ahkam Al-Qur’an: Interpretation of Surat Al-Baqarah [2: 221].*

⁽³⁾ *Translated meanings of Al-Baqarah 2: 221.*



Gradually, the way masters looked at their slave women changed, for the criterion of superiority changed. It was no longer a free woman versus a slave woman; with Islam it became a believing woman versus an idolatress or non-believing woman – those who invite one to Paradise versus those who invite one to Hellfire. Muslims must choose the believers. This preference opened the way to freedom and an honorable life for believing slave women.

Moreover, free men who could not afford to marry a free woman, and feared sin if they abstained from marriage, were advised to marry believing slave women: **(And whoever 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 Allah has full knowledge about your faith), reminding them: (...you are one from another)⁽¹⁾ so they must not be disdainful of marrying slave women.

The same conventions of marrying a free woman must be followed in marrying a slave woman. The man proposing marriage must seek permission from her folk, that is, her masters, and give her Mahr. Allah (Exalted be He) says: (Wed them with the permission of their own folk and give them their Mahr according to what is reasonable.)⁽²⁾

Having this established, the entire Muslim community was exhorted to help poor male and



(1) Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 25.

(2) Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 25.



female slaves get married, saying to them: (And marry those among you who are single, and (also marry) the virtuous ones among your male and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His Bounty. And Allah is All-Sufficient (for His creatures' needs), All-Knowing.)⁽¹⁾

Prior to marriage, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) aimed to elevate slave women morally and intellectually by exhorting the masters to first educate their slave women and refine their manners, and then marry them in order to earn a double reward. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “If a man teaches his slave woman good manners and does this well, and he educates her and does this well, and then



⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of An-Nur 24: 32.



manumits and marries her, he will have a double reward.”⁽¹⁾

Elevation:

To provide the necessary uplift to slaves, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) pushed his efforts at brotherhood, matrimony, social participation, and many merciful teachings by which they were smoothly blended into the society of free people.

In Al-Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) forged the bonds of brotherhood between the Muhajirun (Emigrants) and the Ansar (Supporters) without regard to wealth or social status. He (peace and blessings be upon him) united as brothers some of the freed



⁽¹⁾ Abu Musa Al-Ash'ary, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Ahadith Al-Anbiya', Hadith no. 3190.



slaves with some of the free dignitaries of the Arabs; Bilal bin Rabah (who was a black slave) as brother of Khalid bin Ruwaihah, his freedman Zaid as brother of his uncle Hamazah, and Kharijah bin Zaid as brother of his father-in-law Abu Bakr. This brotherhood was a true bond, equivalent to a blood connection and entailed inheritance.⁽¹⁾

Ibn 'Abbas said, “When the emigrants came to Al-Madinah, an Emigrant used to inherit a Supporter (and vice versa) in place of their own blood relatives because of the bond of brotherhood which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had established between them, which was abrogated (inheritance through



⁽¹⁾ *Muhammad Qutb, Shubuhat Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery, p. 49; excerpted with modification.*



the bond of brotherhood) upon revelation of the Ayah: *(And to everyone, We have appointed heirs.)*⁽¹⁾”⁽²⁾

Still, this was not enough in the eyes of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) gave his niece, Zainab bint Jahsh, in marriage to his freedman Zaid. Marriage was a very sensitive issue, especially to a free woman. She only accepted to marry someone above her and refused to have a husband inferior to her in descent, family, or wealth. She felt that this would debase her social standing and humble her pride. However, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was aiming at a loftier



⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 33.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Hadith no. 4214.



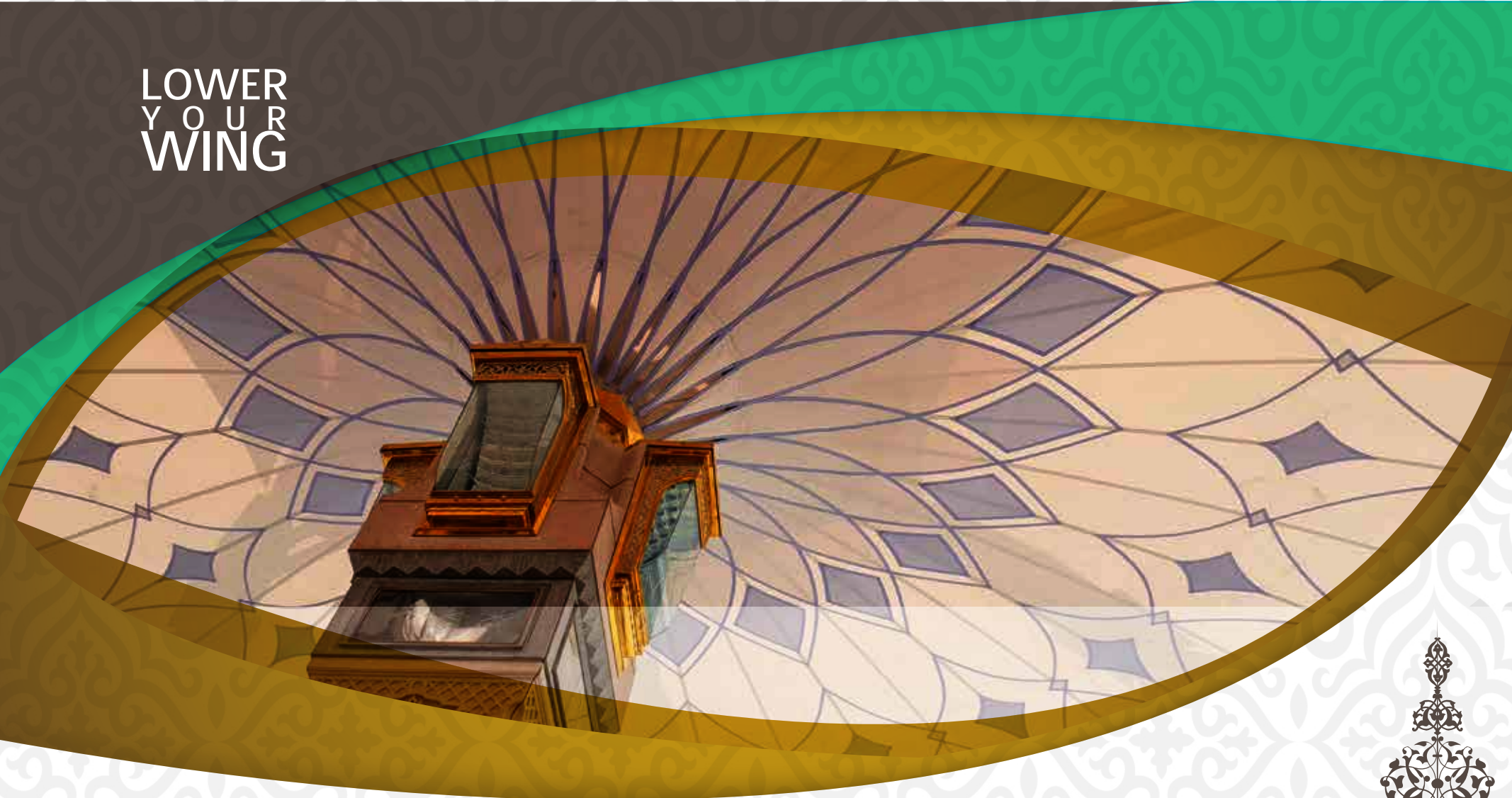
goal, which was to elevate the slaves from the dark abyss into which unjust humanity had thrust them, to the rank of the greatest masters of Quraish.⁽¹⁾

Still, this was not enough in the eyes of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

He (peace and blessings be upon him) deputed his freedman Zaid to be the leader of an army composed of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, among whom were the masters of the Arabs. When Zaid was martyred, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) entrusted the leadership of the army to his son, Usamah bin Zaid, although Abu Bakr and 'Umar were in the army – the two ministers of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and his successors. Thus, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, p. 49.



not stop at the restoration of rights but also granted the capable and qualified freedmen leadership and presidency over free people.⁽¹⁾

He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “**You should hear and obey, even if the one made your chief was an Abyssinian (Ethiopian) slave whose head looks like a raisin.**”⁽²⁾

Within a few years of reformation, their community attained a level of kindness and nobility unmatched by any other place or time. Some freed slaves were even unwilling to leave their former masters, although they were capable of that, after they had become financially independent and had developed within themselves the ability to shoulder their own responsibility. They considered



(1) Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhāt Hawl Al-Islām: Islam and Slavery*, p. 50.

(2) Anas bin Malik, *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Ahkam, Hadith no. 6609.*



their masters their own folk, having what resembled the ties of blood connecting them to one another.⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“The freed slave of a people is from themselves.”**⁽²⁾

‘Umair (may Allah be pleased with him), the freedman of Abu Lahm, narrated, **“I was a slave (of Abu Lahm). I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), ‘Can I give some charity from my master’s wealth?’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Yes, and the reward shall be (shared) between you both, two halves.’”**⁽³⁾



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhāt Hawl Al-Islām: Islam and Slavery*, p. 42, excerpted with modification.

⁽²⁾ Anas bin Malik, *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Fara'id (Laws of Inheritance)*, Hadith no. 6264.

⁽³⁾ *Sahih Muslim, Book of Zakah*, Hadith no. 1702.



Inward Freedom

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) started with kind treatment that realized freedom from within. Nothing can restore equilibrium and dignity to a distorted soul better than good treatment, whereby a man senses his worth as a human being and redeems his self-respect. Only then he can savor the taste of freedom.

The surrounding circumstances under which man lives are the ones responsible for adapting his feelings and molding his emotions and psychology.

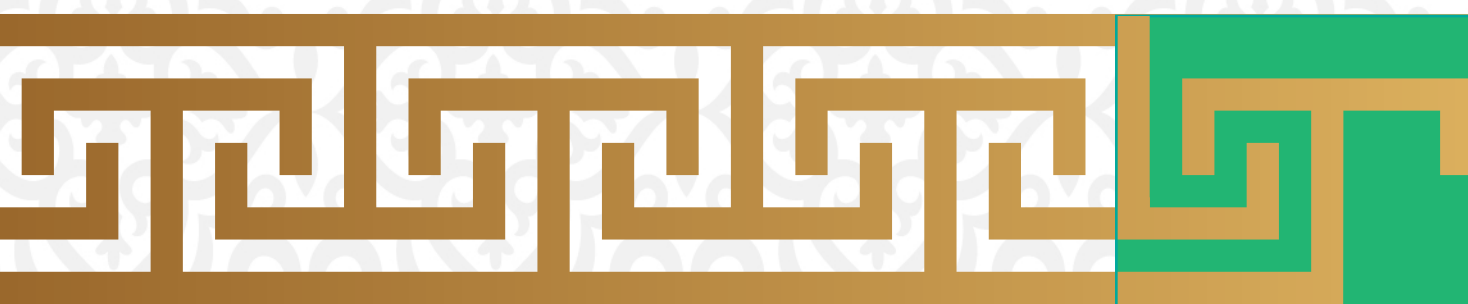
The psychological entity of a slave differs from that of a free person. Not because he is a different race, as ignorant people have thought, but because his life under permanent slavery causes the adaptation of his psychological system to such

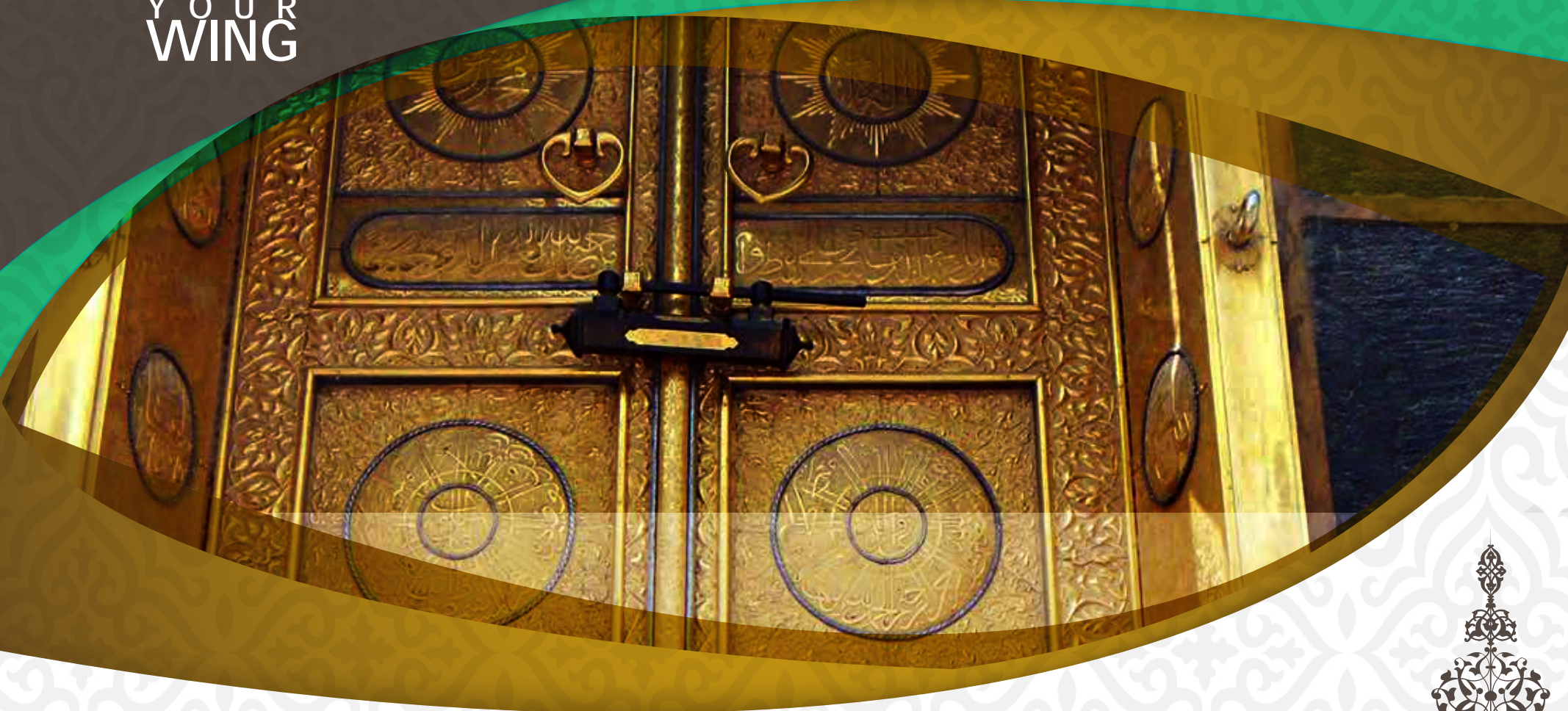




circumstances. Consequently, the system of obedience grows to its maximum, whereas the system of independence and responsibility for one's actions are atrophied to the minimum.

A slave can perform many things well when his master commands him to do them; all he has to do is to obey and fulfill the command. But he does not act well when it is something he should be responsible for – even if it is a simple matter. This is not because his body fails to do it or his mind is unable to understand it, but because his soul cannot bear its consequences. He starts to see in it unreal perils or unsolvable obstacles, and so runs away from it to keep himself away from troubles.





This psychological adaptation to slavery within slaves, which originates from external circumstances, is truly what enslaves them. With Islam, the slave starts to break free from it and becomes independent, like a branch hanging down towards the earth; it starts to stretch its own roots and separates from the origin.

This psychological adaptation cannot be wiped by a state proclamation abolishing slavery. It must be changed from within, through new circumstances that adapt one's feelings differently, develop the atrophied systems inside the slave's soul, and shape a normal human entity out of the deformed and distorted one, which is exactly what Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) did.⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhāt Hawl Al-Islām: Islam and Slavery*, pp. 47--49.



Outward Freedom:

The time came to the step to actual freedom. The previous steps were a struggle to overcome a culture rooted in slavery; preliminary steps to purify and elevate the morality of masters, realize spiritual emancipation of slaves, and prepare a whole community with a history steeped in condoning, justifying, and practicing slavery, for its renaissance.

Without these preparatory measures that paved the way for full freedom, the consequences would have been drastic. A sudden, reckless abolition of slavery would have only been followed by systematic discrimination and enforced segregation, which would have entrapped people into a worse





evil – namely, racism – and plunged the nation into chaos.

Emancipating Systems:

Before the advent of Islam, the world was ruled by the laws of slavery. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) came to establish within it the laws of freedom. His strategy was mainly to dry up the sources of enslavement and multiply the outlets to freedom, setting many rules and regulations that treated all cases, even the complicated case of a jointly possessed slave, which gradually ended servitude and bondage.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Whoever manumits his share of a jointly possessed slave, it is imperative for him to get that**





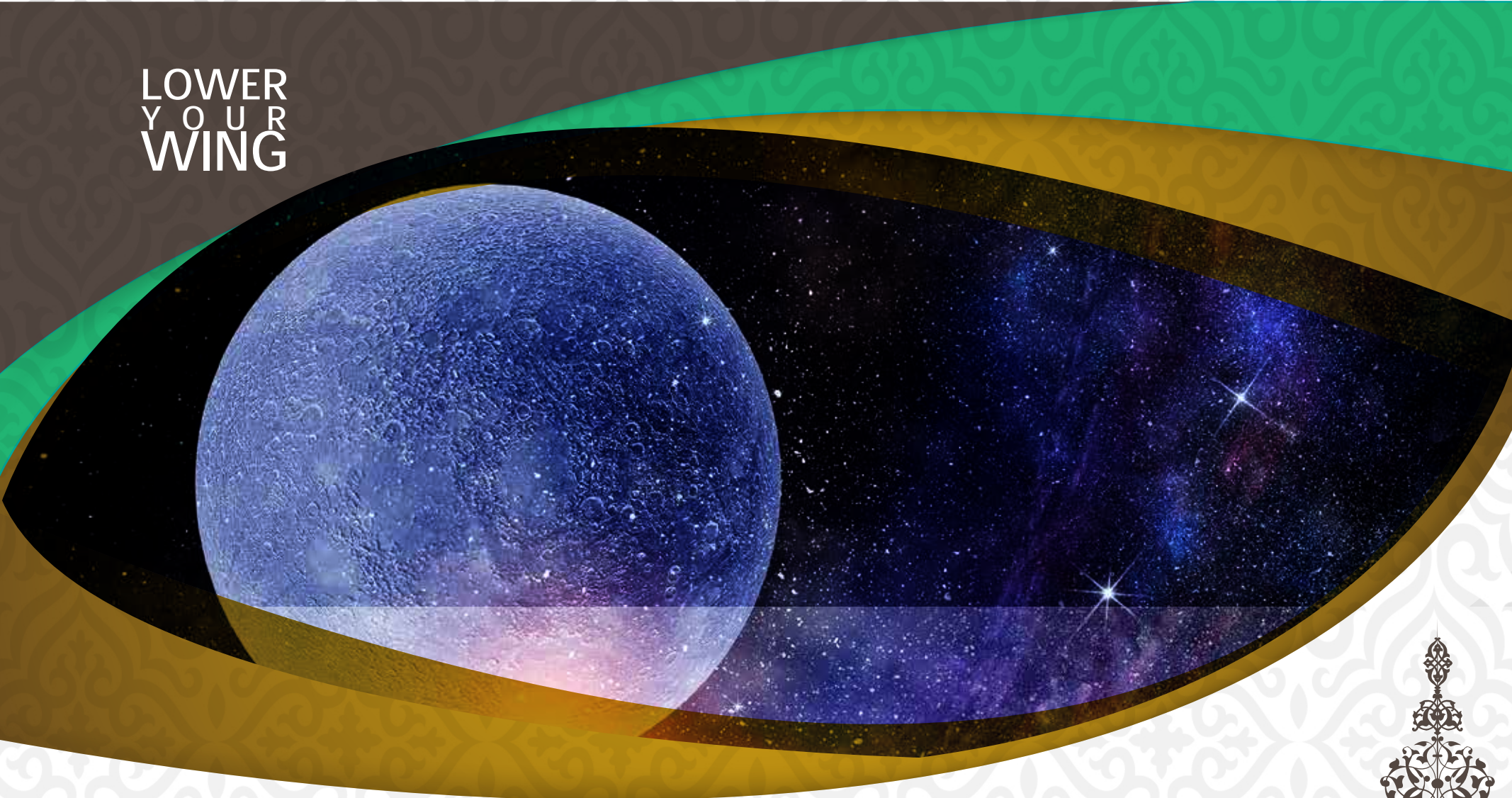
slave manumitted completely by paying the remaining price. And if he does not have sufficient money to manumit him, the price of the slave should be estimated justly, and he (the slave) is to be allowed to work and earn the amount that will manumit him without overburdening him.”⁽¹⁾

‘Atq (manumission) and Mukatabah (contracting for freedom) were the two emancipating systems that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) established and implemented to actually free slaves.

‘Atq was the voluntary freeing of slaves by masters, whereas Mukatabah was the drawing up of a contract for manumission, whereby slaves



⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Ash-Sharakah (Partnership), Hadith no. 2312.*



could earn their freedom independently and irrespective of whether their masters were willing or not. According to this contract, a definite amount of money or labor was fixed as the price of the slave's freedom. The slave worked to collect the money and pay his price to his master.

These two systems working together in parallel made the movement towards freedom a collaborative work, not monopolized by any section, in which the whole nation participated; freedom could be either granted by the master through voluntary manumission, attained by the slave through Mukatabah, or procured by the state or fellow Muslims through buying and freeing slaves or helping the Mukatab (a slave with a contract to buy their freedom) pay for their freedom.





Buying Freedom: Method and Aims

(And those who seek Al-Kitab (Mukatabah) from among those whom your right hands possess (slaves), make a contract with them if you know that they are good and trustworthy and give to them from the Wealth of Allah which He has given you.)⁽¹⁾

The aforementioned Ayah is a direct Command from Allah to slave owners; if their slaves ask to draw up a contract with them for their manumission, they should comply, provided that the slave concerned has the skill and ability to earn, so that they can pay their master and do not turn into a burden after being manumitted by living at the expense of others or resorting to bad means of living.⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Translated meaning of An-Nur 24: 33.

⁽²⁾ Tafsir Ibn Kathir & Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur'an, Interpretation of Surat An-Nur [24: 33]*.



(And give them from the Wealth of Allah which He has given you) is another command urging masters to help their slaves pay the sum owed to them, by either giving them their share of Zakah or deducting an amount from the specified sum for manumission – a fourth, a third, or a half of it, and so on.⁽¹⁾

It also urges Muslims to support the Mukatab, and sufficient indeed for them is Allah as Supporter. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “There are three persons it is incumbent upon Allah to help: the Mujahid (striver) in the Way of Allah, the Mukatab who seeks payment, and the Nakih (marriage seeker) who desires chastity.”⁽²⁾



(1) *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Interpretation of Surat An-Nur [24: 33].*

(2) *Abu Hurairah, Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Fada'il Al-Jihah (Virtues of Jihad), Hadith no. 1579.*

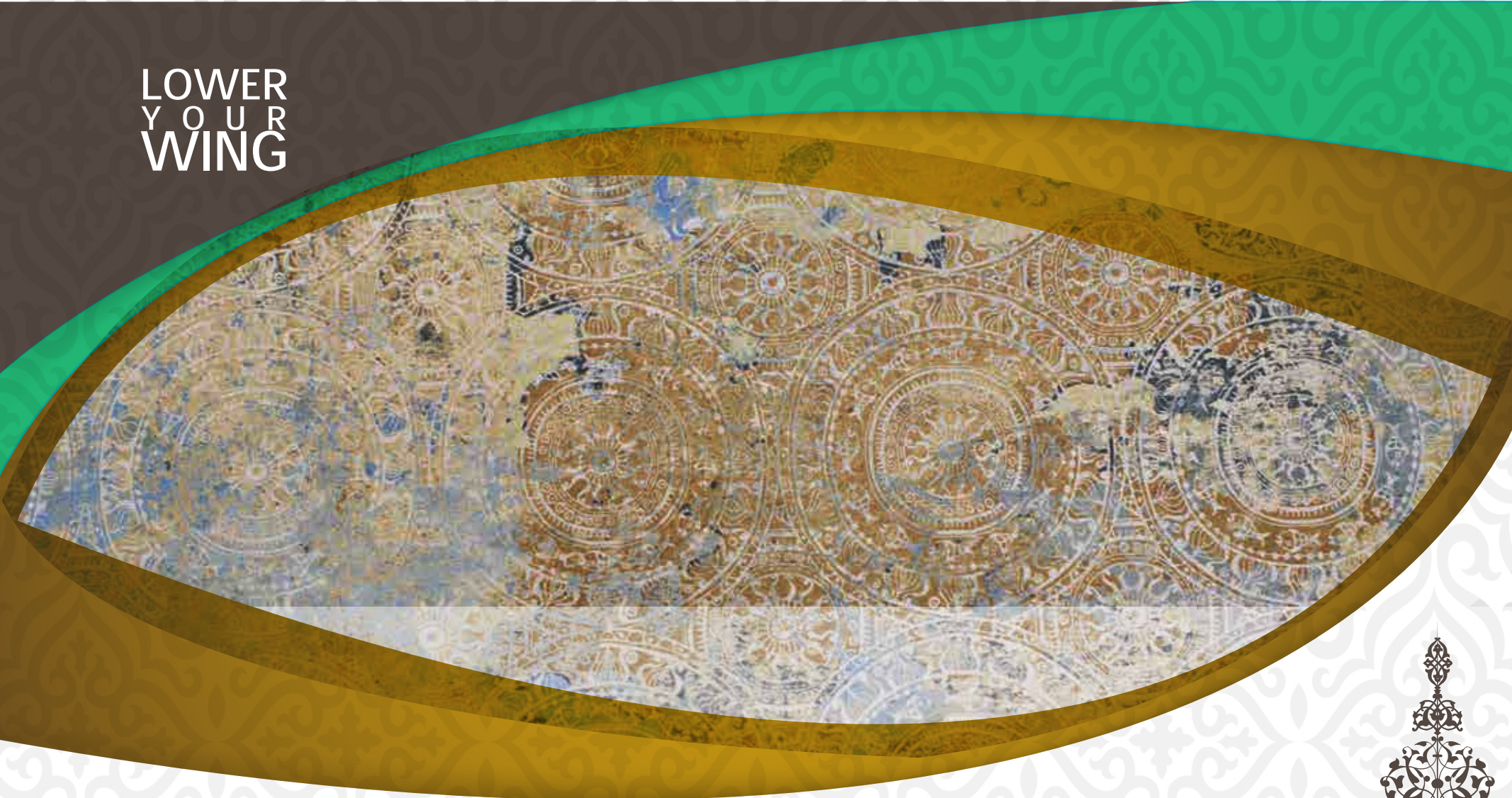


Any demand made by the slave for Mukatabah must not be rejected by the master. Al-Bukhary reported in the chapter of Al-Mukatab that Sirin, who had a lot of money, asked Anas for a contract of manumission, but he refused. Sirin went (and complained) to ‘Umar (bin Al-Khattab, the then-ruler). ‘Umar said (to Anas), **“Draw up a contract for manumission with him!”** Anas still refused, so ‘Umar hit him with his stick while reciting: **(...make a contract with them, if you know that they are good and trustworthy.)** So he made a contract with him.

The moment the slave becomes a Mukatab, their service to their master must be paid for, or they must be allowed to work elsewhere in return for payment until they collect the sum agreed upon.⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, p. 45.



The slave, while still a Mukatab, begins to acquire the rights of a free person, such as inheritance and blood money, in proportion to the amount paid off from the sum agreed upon for manumission. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“If the Mukatab deserve blood money or inheritance, they should inherit according to what was manumitted of them.”**⁽¹⁾

After the slave pays off the sum agreed upon, manumission becomes compulsory, and cannot be rejected or postponed by the master; otherwise, the state (the judge or the ruler) must intervene to execute the deed of manumission by force and grant freedom to its seeker. ⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Ibn ‘Abbas: *Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Al-Buyu’*, Hadith no. 1180.

⁽²⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, p. 45.



Thus, the system of Mukatabah opened the door to freedom for slaves who yearned for it and did not wish to wait for a voluntary gesture of manumission.

Islam encourages and urges manumission by all means; nevertheless, Mukatabah is part of the psychological education of slaves that helps them feel capable of obtaining their freedom themselves and enjoying the rights of free people. This deepens their desire for freedom and renders them ready to bear any consequences for its sake. Hence, Islam grants it to them, because only then they are worthy and capable of guarding it.⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, pp. 5051-; excerpted with modification.

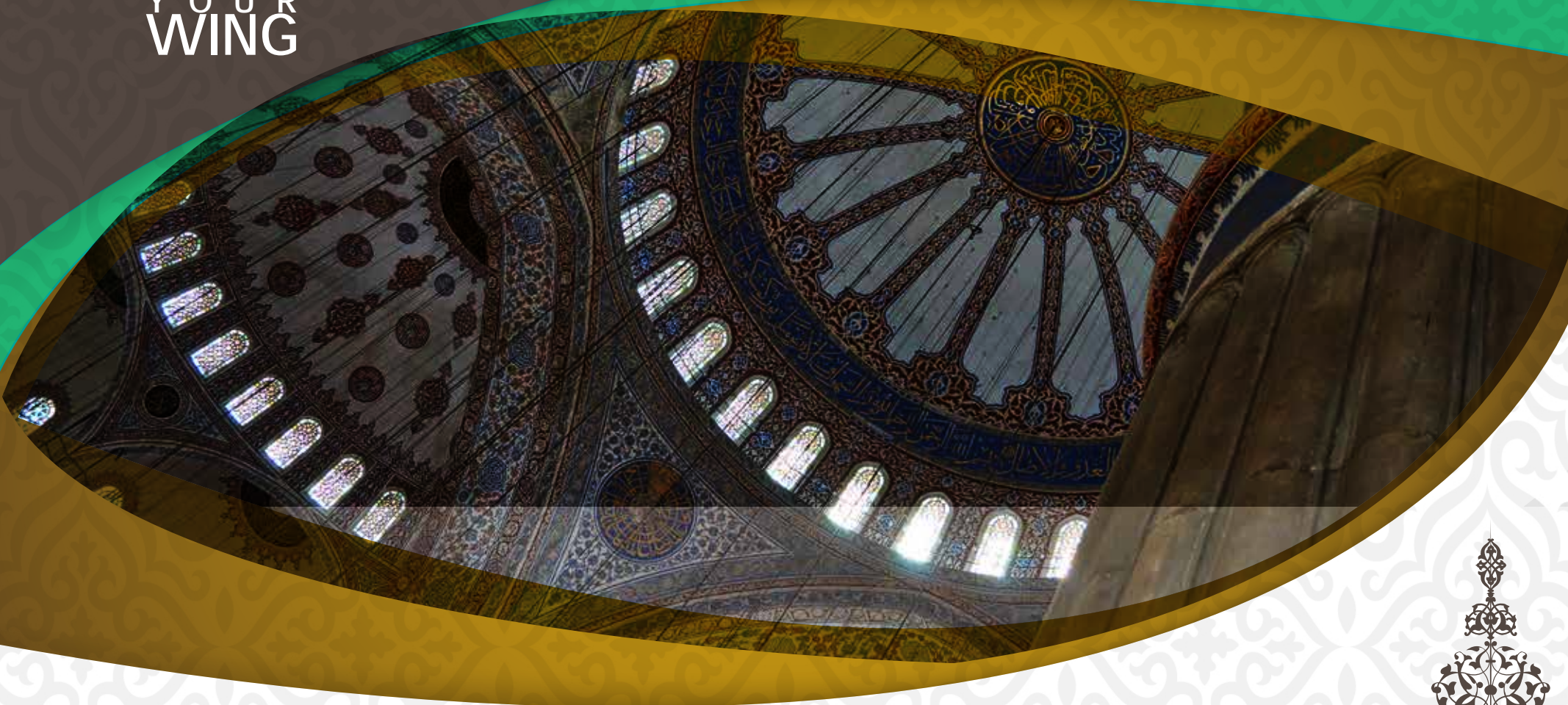


The Persian Mukatab

Salman the Persian (may Allah be pleased with him) forfeited his freedom in his quest for the truth, which he reached after long years of slavery, and with it he had his freedom restored. His life and manumission story testify to the greatness of Mukatabah in building a free, united society.

‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas narrated: Slavery (slave labour) absorbed Salman until he missed attending the Battles of Badr and Uhud with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). Salman said: Then the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to me, **“Draw up a contract of manumission, O Salman.”**





I drew up a contract of manumission with my master in return for three hundred palm trees, which I should grow for him in dug holes, in addition to forty ounces of gold. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions, **“Help your brother.”**

They helped me with the palm trees; a man gave thirty saplings, another twenty, another fifteen, and another ten; each gave according to what he had until they had collected three hundred saplings for me.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to me, **“Go, O Salman, and dig holes for them. When you have finished,**





come to me so that I may plant them with my own hands.” I dug holes for them, helped by my companions. When I had finished, I came and informed him.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) came out with me, and we started bringing him the saplings which he (peace and blessings be upon him) started planting with his own hands. By the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Salman, not one sapling from them died. I paid off the date palms, but there still remained for me the money.

A piece of gold the size of an egg from one of his victories was brought to the Messenger of Allah





(peace and blessings be upon him). He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“What happened to the Persian Mukatab?”** I was summoned to him. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Take this and pay off what you owe with it, O Salman.”** I said, **“What would this pay, O Messenger of Allah, from what I owe?”** He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Take it, for Allah, the Exalted and the Glorious, will pay off what you owe with it.”** I took it, and by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Salman, I weighed for them forty ounces from it. I paid them their due and I was manumitted. ⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Ansar, Hadith no. 22620.



Barirah... Free to Choose

Slave women also used their right of emancipating themselves through Mukatabah. Lady ‘Aishah narrated, “Barirah came and said, ‘I have drawn up a contract for my manumission with my folk for nine ounces (of gold by installments), one ounce per year. Please help me.’ ‘Aishah said, ‘If your folk agree, I will pay them the whole amount in one payment and manumit you, and your Wala’ (manumitter’s right of inheritance from the freed slave) becomes mine.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Atq (Manumission), Hadith no. 2375.





After attaining her freedom, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) gave Barirah (may Allah be pleased with her) the choice either to stay with her slave husband or leave him. Ibn ‘Abbas narrated, “**Barirah’s husband was a slave called Mughith. It is as if I am seeing him now, going behind Barirah, weeping, his tears flowing down his beard. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to ‘Abbas, ‘O ‘Abbas, do you not wonder at the love of Mughith for Barirah, and the hatred of Barirah for Mughith?’ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then said to Barirah, ‘If only you would return to him.’ She said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, are you commanding me?’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘I am only interceding (for him).’ She said, ‘I have no need of him.’”**⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of At-Talaq, Hadith no. 4875.



Granting Freedom: Method and Aims

(But he has not broken through the difficult pass. And what can make you know what is breaking through the difficult pass? Freeing a neck from bondage (i.e. a slave or a captive).)

For mankind to traverse the path, likened to a steep mountainous pass, coming between them and Paradise is the freeing of a slave. The reward is certainly equitable to the deed. “Whoever manumits a Muslim neck, Allah will manumit



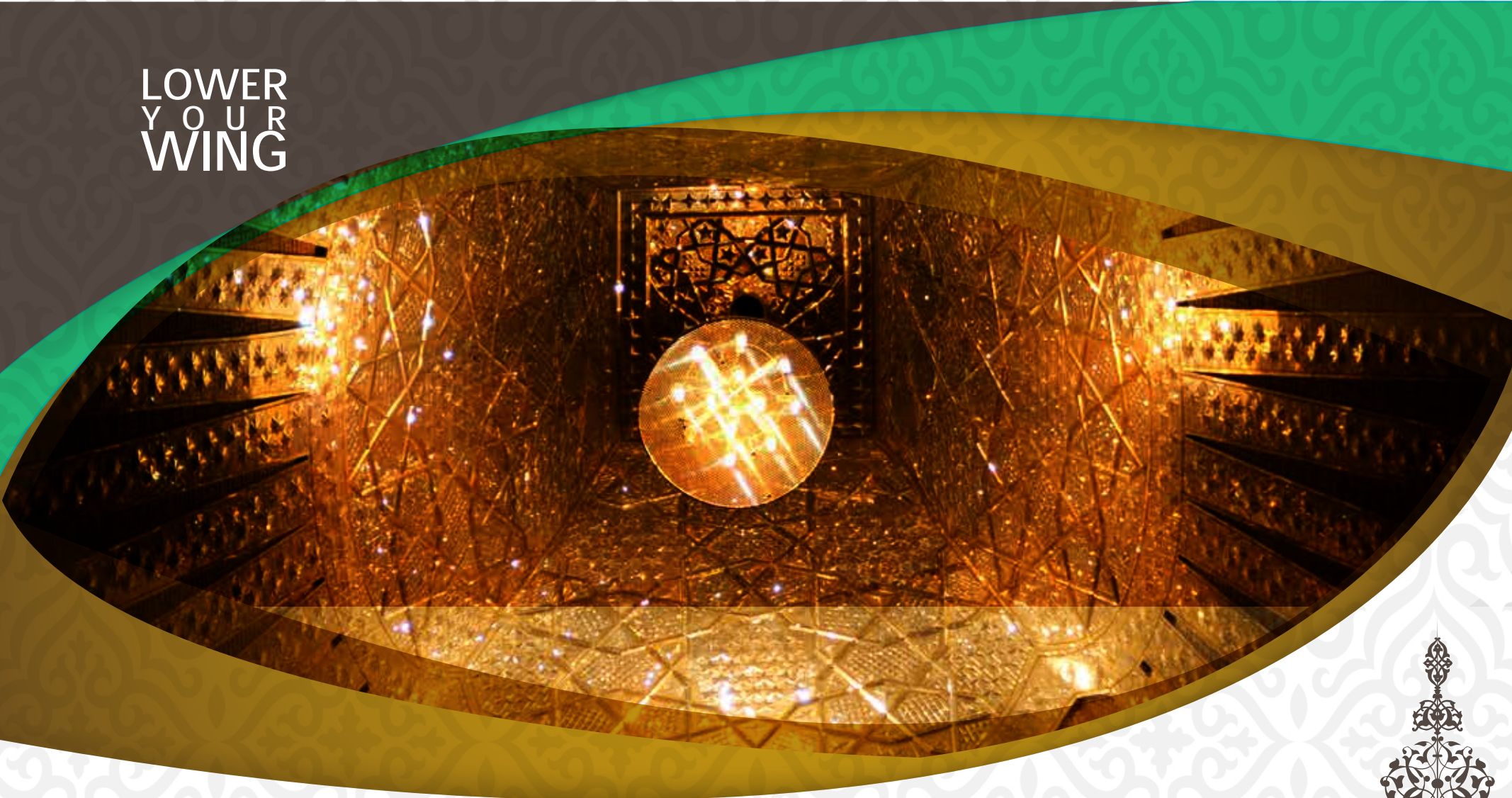


in return for every organ of the slave an organ (of the manumitter) from Hellfire, even private parts for private parts.”⁽¹⁾

When confronted with frightening signs from Allah, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prescribed seeking forgiveness and manumission for safety. Asma’ bint Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “We were ordered to manumit slaves at the lunar eclipse.”⁽²⁾ She also said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) enjoined manumission at the solar eclipse.”⁽³⁾



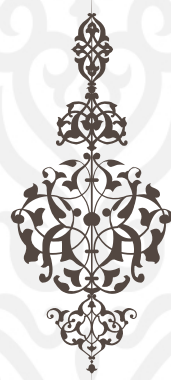
- (1) Abu Hurairah, *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Kafarat Al-Aiman (Expiation of Unfulfilled Vows)*, Hadith no. 6221.
 (2) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Atq*, Hadith no. 2336.
 (3) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Jumu‘ah*, Hadith no. 995.



The sooner the better, before it is robbed of any merit by postponing it until death is near. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“The example of the one who manumits at (the time of) death is that of he who gives when satiated.”**⁽¹⁾

Expiation of Sins

Setting those in bondage free is a deed so loved by Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) that He rewarded it with an expiation of sins, especially those repeatedly committed.



⁽¹⁾ Abu Ad-Darda': Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Al-'Atq, Hadith no. 3454.



The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) knew that expiatory manumission would help emancipate the largest possible number of slaves, which was his aim, for sins never end. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Every son of Adam often sins, and the best of sinners are those who repent.”**⁽¹⁾

The expiation for a sin such as slapping or beating a slave is manumission of that slave. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Anyone who slaps or hits his slave, his expiation is to manumit him.”**⁽²⁾

The Noble Qur’an lists other grave sins whose expiation is manumission.



⁽¹⁾ Anas bin Malik, *Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Sifat Al-Qiyamah wa Al-Raqa’iq wa Al-Wara’*, Hadith no. 2423.

⁽²⁾ Ibn ‘Umar, *Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman*, Hadith no. 3130.



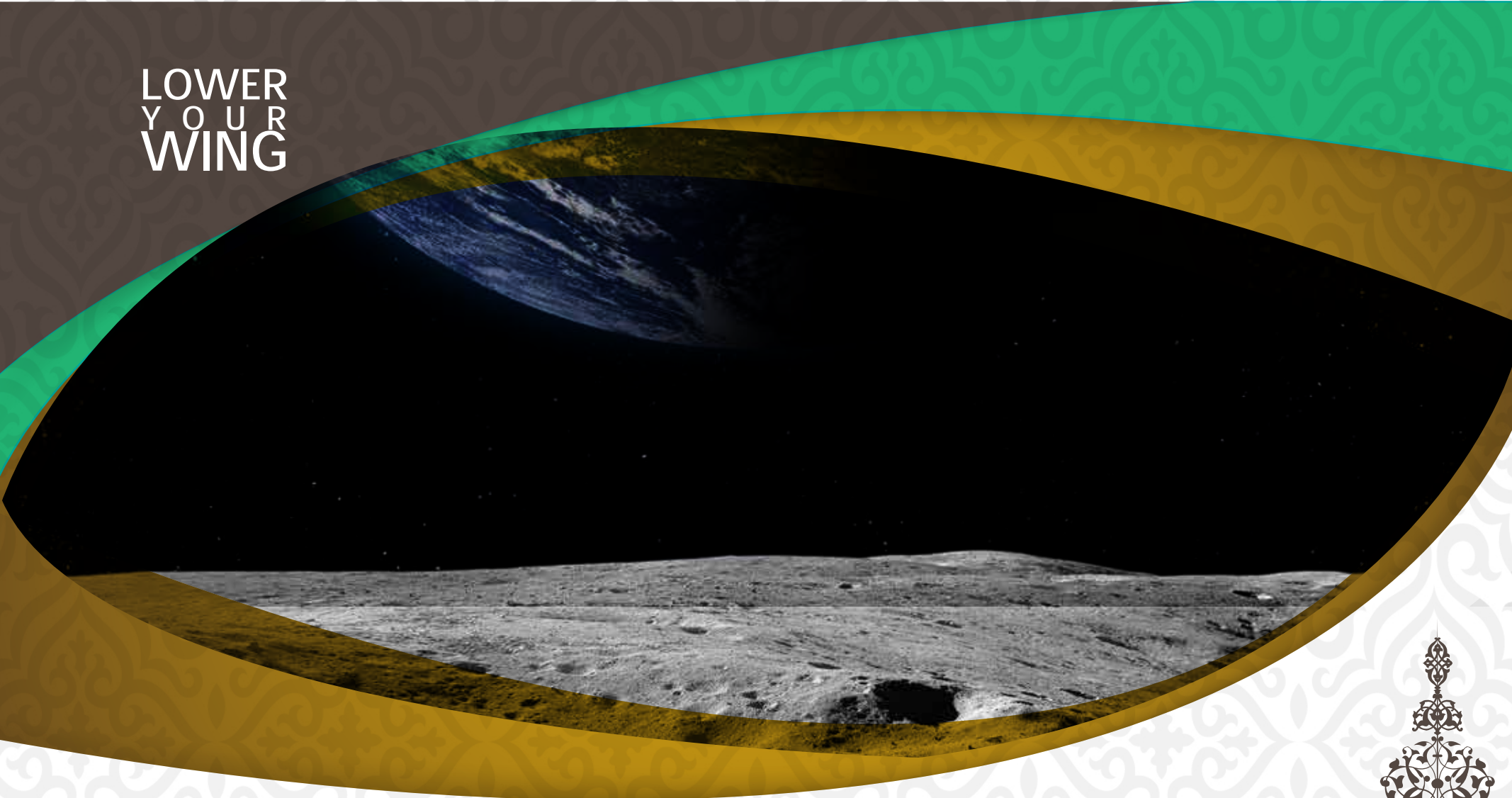
01 *Unintentional Killing:*

The expiation for accidentally killing a believer is setting free a believing male or female slave and paying blood money to the deceased's family. **(Whosoever kills a believer by mistake must set free a believing neck and submit blood money to the deceased's family, unless they give up their right as charity.)⁽¹⁾**

The person killed by mistake is a human soul whose family, and society in general, is unjustly deprived of him. Therefore, the two sides are to be compensated for this loss; the family by blood money and the society by freeing a believing slave.



⁽¹⁾ *Translated meanings of An-Nisa' 4: 92.*



Freeing a slave is like reviving a soul, and **(anyone who revives a soul, it would be as if he revived all mankind.)**⁽¹⁾ It hence compensates for the soul killed by mistake. It clearly implies that slavery in the eyes of Islam is death or akin to death, in spite of the protection with which Islam surrounds slaves. Therefore, it seizes every opportunity to revive slaves by freeing them from slavery.⁽²⁾

I 02 *Zihar:*

Zihar, derived from Zahr meaning back, was one of the practices of Jahiliyyah whereby a husband simply declared his wife no longer lawful to him, as



⁽¹⁾ *Translated meanings of Al-Ma'idah 5: 32.*

⁽²⁾ *Muhammad Qutb, Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery, pp. 44--45.*



is his mother, likening her to a kinswoman forbidden to him, saying, **“You are (henceforth as unlawful) to me as my mother’s back.”**

Through Zihar, the wife was rendered unlawful to her husband forever, neither divorced nor married. Islam abolished this unjust kind of separation and imposed a disciplinary measure against the husband who pronounced Zihar by prohibiting sexual intercourse until he retracted his statement and made expiation, which was to either free a slave, fast for two successive months, or feed sixty poor persons. Recourse to the next expiation was not allowed unless the husband was genuinely unable to do the first.





Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: (Those among you who make their wives unlawful to them by Zihar, they are not their mothers. Their mothers are none but those who gave birth to them. Verily, they utter an abominable word and a lie. And verily, Allah is Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving. Those who make unlawful to them their wives by Zihar and then retract what they have said, a neck must be freed before they touch each other. That is an admonition to you. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.)⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ *Translated meanings of Al-Mujadilah 58: 24-.*



Ibn ‘Abbas narrated that a man who made his wife unlawful to himself by Zihar, then had intercourse with her, came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He said, **“O Messenger of Allah, I made my wife unlawful to me by Zihar, but then I had sexual intercourse with her before I made the expiation.”** He (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, **“What made you do this, may Allah be merciful to you?”** The man said, **“I saw her anklet in the moonlight.”** He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Do not come near her until you have done what Allah has ordered you to do.”**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of At-Talaq, Hadith no. 1120.

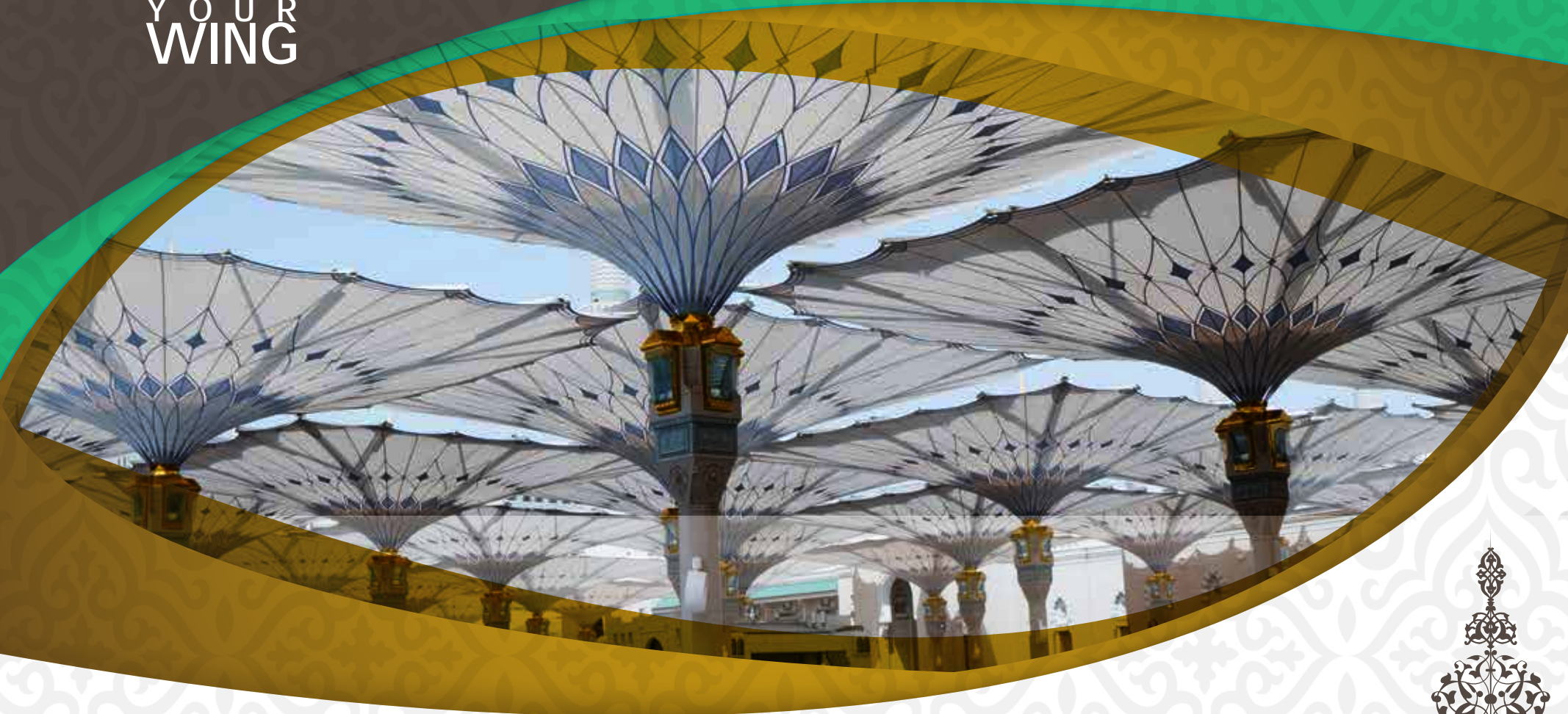


03 Oath-breaking:

Frequent vows and oaths by Allah, such as “No, by Allah,” and, “Yes, by Allah” which tongues repeat without really intending them, are considered unintentional and therefore are excused. However, expiation must be made for deliberate oaths taken in the Name of Allah that are then broken. Among the expiations for a broken oath is the freeing of a slave. Allah says: (Allah will not punish you for what is unintentional among your oaths, but He will punish you for (breaking) what you intended of oaths. Its expiation (of a deliberate oath) is to feed ten poor persons, on a scale of the average of that with which you feed your own families; or clothe them; or manumit a neck.)⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of Al-Ma'idah 5: 89.



Procuring Freedom: State

Almighty Allah prescribed eight channels in the Noble Qur'an for spending Zakah, which is the third of the Five Pillars upon which Islam is built and every Muslim is obliged to perform. One of these charitable channels is dedicated to freeing slaves and captives, and helping the Mukatab pay for their freedom (being regarded as both in bondage and in debt to their master). Allah (Exalted be He) says: **(Charities (Zakah) are for the poor; the needy; those employed to collect it; those whose hearts have been inclined (towards Islam); those in bondage; those in debt; for the Cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.)**⁽¹⁾



⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of At-Tawbah 9: 60.



Whenever there was surplus, the Muslim State would buy slaves from their masters through Baitul-Mal (Islamic treasury) and manumit them. Yahya bin Sa'id narrated, “Umar bin Abdul-Aziz dispatched me to collect the Zakah of Africa. I collected it, and then I searched for poor people to give it to, but we did not find any poor person or anyone to take it from us. ‘Umar bin Abdul-Aziz had made people in need of nothing. So I bought slaves and manumitted them.”⁽¹⁾

With ‘Atq, Mukatabah, and other outlets to freedom, Islam took large strides in manumitting slaves. It preceded any historical progress in this domain by at least seven centuries and added



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, p. 44.



novel achievements, such as state sponsorship, which the world became aware of only at the beginning of its modern history, besides others it remained ignorant of, such as equality with slaves, kind treatment, and voluntary manumission for nothing in return – and this without causing any external economic or political pressures that forced the West to manumit slaves.⁽¹⁾

The Liberator of Mankind

The last will and testament of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to his Ummah while suffering the agonies of death was Salah and those in bondage. Umm Salamah narrated, **“In his last illness, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) kept**



⁽¹⁾ Muhammad Qutb, *Shubuhah Hawl Al-Islam: Islam and Slavery*, pp. 4546-.



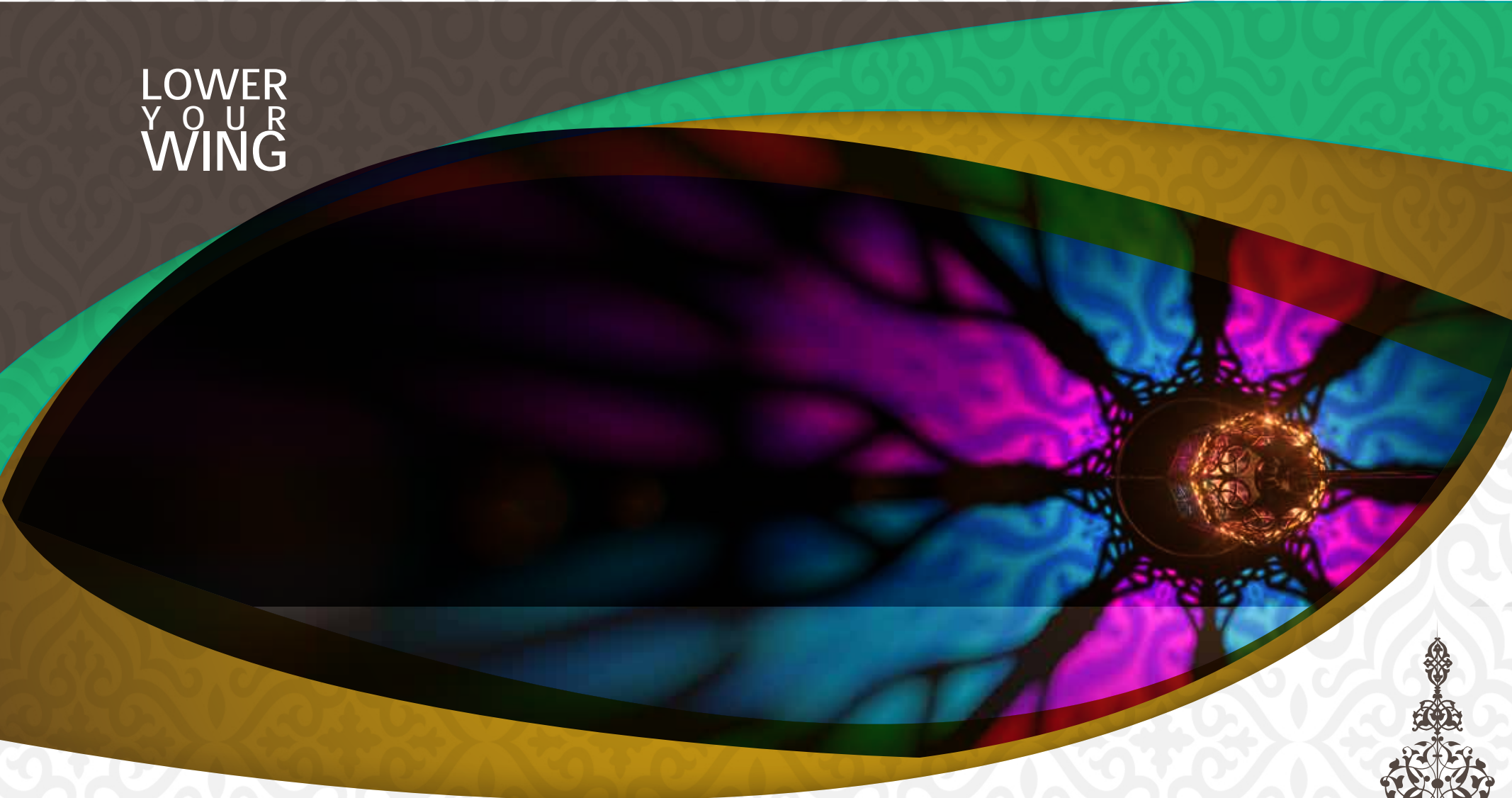
repeating, ‘Salah and those whom your right hands possess (slaves and captives)!’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) kept repeating these words until his tongue could no longer utter them.”⁽¹⁾

Anas bin Malik narrated, “The last will and testament of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) on the whole, when dying, was, ‘Salah and those whom your right hands possess!’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) kept gurgling these words in his chest, his tongue barely uttering them.”⁽²⁾



⁽¹⁾ Sunan Ibn Majah, Book of Al-Jana'iz, Hadith no. 1614.

⁽²⁾ Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 11725.



Many years before Islam and prophethood, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) started manumission. When he (peace and blessings be upon him) grew up, he (peace and blessings be upon him) freed his beloved nurse, Barakah (may Allah be pleased with her), the Abyssinian slave woman who devotedly served his parents and whom he (peace and blessings be upon him) regarded as part of his family and used to call **“Mother.”**

Zaid bin Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with him) was a slave whom the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) freed and adopted. After his marriage to Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), Hakim bin Hizam bin Khwailid bought some slaves from Sham (the Levant). Among





them was Zaid bin Harithah, whom he gave to his aunt Khadijah bint Khwailid.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) saw him and asked his wife Khadijah to grant him Zaid, which she did. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) manumitted and adopted him. That was before he (peace and blessings be upon him) received the divine revelation.

Harithah, Zaid's father, searched and found his son. He came to take him back while he was in the company of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to Zaid, **“If you wish you may stay with me, and if**





you wish you may go with your father.”
Zaid said, “I would rather stay with you,”
and his father allowed him to stay.

Zaid remained with his adoptive father (peace and blessings be upon him) until Allah made him a Prophet. He believed in him, embraced Islam, and prayed with him. When Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) revealed: **(Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers; that is more just with Allah)**⁽¹⁾, Zaid said, “I am Zaid bin Harithah.”⁽²⁾

Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said, **“We never called Zaid the son of Harithah, only Zaid the son of Muhammad, until the**



⁽¹⁾ *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 11725.*

⁽²⁾ *Ibn Hisham, As-Sirah Nabawiyyah: Commencement of Enjoining Salah, vol. 1, p. 120.*



following Ayah was revealed: *(Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers; that is more just with Allah.)*⁽¹⁾

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) deeply loved both Zaid bin Harithah and his son Usamah. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“He who loves me, let him love Usamah.”**⁽²⁾ He (peace and blessings be upon him) had confidence in his ability; he (peace and blessings be upon him) never dispatched Zaid in an army without making him their commander.⁽³⁾

After prophethood, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) continued to manumit any slave who came to him as a believer. ‘Ali



- (1) Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami li-Ahkam Al-Qur’an: Interpretation of Surat Al-Ahzab* (33: 5).
 (2) Fatimah bint Qais, *Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Fitan wa Ashrat As-Sa’ah*, Hadith no. 5235.
 (3) Lady ‘Aishah, *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Ansar*, Hadith no. 24711.



bin Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

Some slaves (of the disbelievers) went out to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) on the Day of Hudaibiyah before the concluding of the treaty. Their masters wrote to him, saying, “**O Muhammad, by Allah, they have not gone out to you out of an interest in your religion. They have gone out to escape from slavery.**”

Some people (Companions) said, “**They have spoken the truth, O Messenger of Allah. Send them back to them.**” But the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be





upon him) became angry and said, “I do not see that you will desist, O people of Quraish, until Allah sends to you those who strike your necks for this (i.e. judgment of handing back the slaves).”

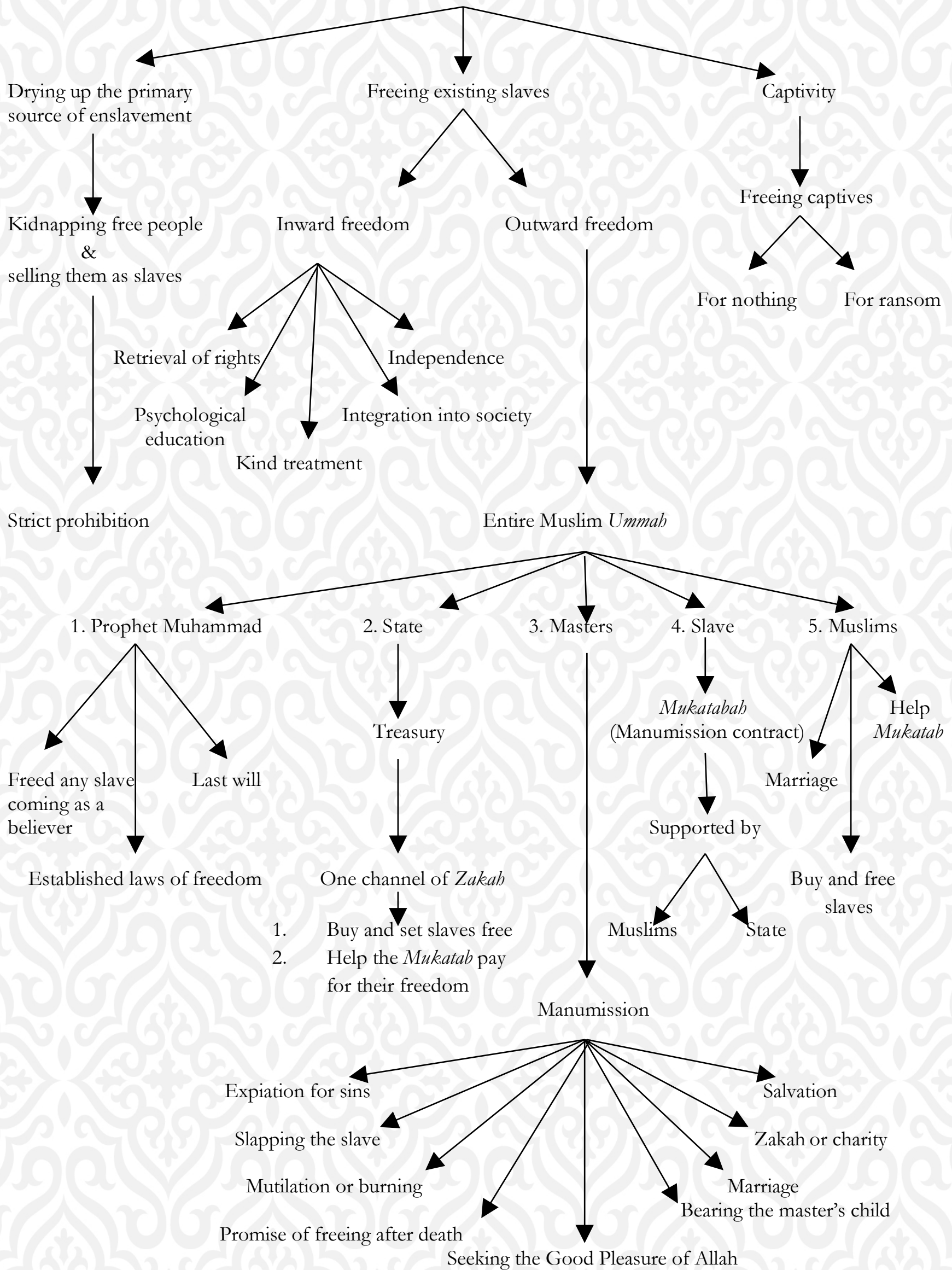
So he (peace and blessings be upon him) refused to hand them back and said, “They are the emancipated slaves of Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He).”⁽¹⁾



(1) Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Jihad, Hadith no. 2325.

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