

A Sunni Islamic Refutation of Objections to the Slave Exchange Narration: Race, Slavery, Emancipation and Human Dignity

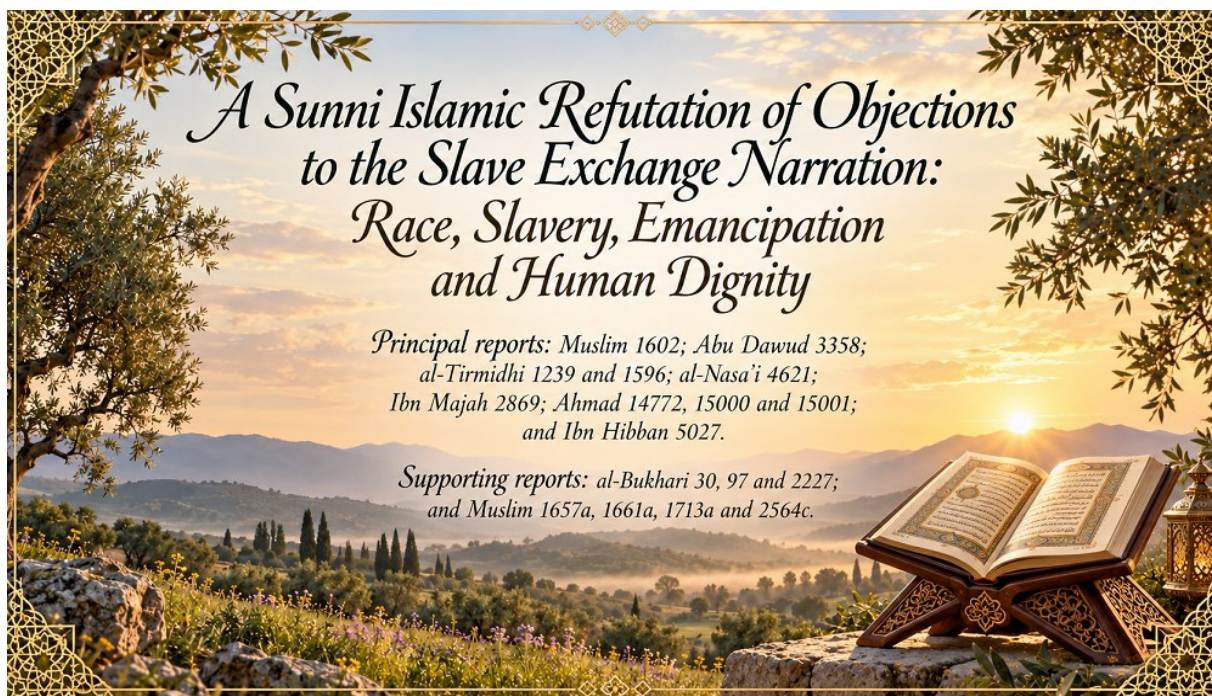
Principal reports: Muslim 1602; Abu Dawud 3358; al-Tirmidhi 1239 and 1596; al-Nasa'i 4621; Ibn Majah 2869; Ahmad 14772, 15000 and 15001; and Ibn Hibban 5027. Supporting reports: al-Bukhari 30, 97 and 2227; and Muslim 1657a, 1661a, 1713a and 2564c.

A focused Sunni Islamic textual and ethical study

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Abstract

This study examines whether the slave exchange narration principally referenced as Muslim 1602 establishes racial inferiority, exclusion from religious commitment, or an inconsistency between human dignity and recognised slave ownership. It analyses a closed corpus of ten principal and seven supporting hadith references, distinguishing overlapping transmissions from independent testimony and identifying the numbering conventions used. The method combines comparison of the transmitted wording, attribution of Sunni Islamic authentication and interpretation, reconstruction of the strongest objections, and limited Biblical comparison. The principal findings are that the purchased man's colour is unspecified, the numerical exchange does not establish a universal racial valuation, and Ahmad 15000 expressly records emancipation in a closely connected version. Nevertheless, the transaction involves proprietary transfer, and the two transferred men's consent and subsequent welfare are unreported. The Sunni Islamic defence depends on stated commitments concerning revelation and prophetic authority; it is not a demonstration that every external moral objection has been defeated. Biblical parallels illuminate consistency in interpretation without proving the Islamic transaction morally permissible. The study's contribution is a source-bounded argument that identifies which allegations the evidence contradicts, which inferences remain unsupported, and which disagreements require premises beyond the narration. It does not claim independent contemporary corroboration, manuscript collation or comprehensive coverage of every scholarly position.

Keywords: Muslim 1602, Ahmad 15000, slavery, emancipation, racial inference, Sunni Islamic interpretation

1 General Introduction and Overview

The report attributed to Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah describes an enslaved man who pledged to migrate with the Prophet Muhammad, his master’s subsequent demand for him, and the Prophet’s purchase of him in exchange for two enslaved men described as Black. It concludes that the Prophet thereafter enquired about an applicant’s enslaved status before accepting a pledge. The principal reference is Muslim’s Authentic Collection, “Sahih Muslim”, report 1602. The transaction raises questions about race, ownership, religious commitment, personal freedom, and the relationship between a particular prophetic action and a general legal rule.

This study examines nine principal objections that can be raised against the account: failure to abolish slavery; subordination of the man’s autonomy; commodification; discrimination in accepting pledges; failure to emancipate; racial valuation; religious valuation; slave trading as prophetic precedent; and the classification of the report under a chapter about animals. It also addresses the strongest connected objections: the consent and welfare of the two transferred men, possible market incentives, the Prophet’s initial lack of knowledge, and the limits of Biblical comparison. Each objection is assessed in its strongest defensible form. The objections are analytical reconstructions, not purported verbatim quotations from named critics. Criticism of a historical institution is not, by itself, evidence of hostility towards Muslims; the merits of an argument must be examined independently of a critic’s identity.

The central conclusion requires precision. The report does not establish that Black people possess half the human worth of White people, that Islam excludes enslaved believers, or that the Prophet called Black people animals. Moreover, a relevant parallel narration, Ahmad 15000, expressly reports the purchased man’s emancipation. However, the transaction really does involve slavery and the transfer of enslaved people. A sound defence cannot deny that fact,

substitute voluntary employment for slavery, or claim that every ethical objection disappears once the racial allegation is disproved.

The Islamic interpretation proceeds within the teachings of the people of the Prophetic tradition and the united community, “Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jama‘ah”, according to the understanding of the righteous predecessors, “al-Salaf al-Salih”. Its doctrinal authorities are the Qur’an, authenticated prophetic reports, and relevant Sunni Islamic interpretation, particularly the explanations of ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-‘Abbad, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Baz, and ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sa‘di. Historical and Biblical scholarship supplies comparative evidence; it does not determine Islamic doctrine.

The argument moves from the textual record to racial inference, emancipation, autonomy and pledges, ownership and consent, abolition and precedent, the chapter heading, and finally Biblical comparison. Conclusions distinguish direct textual evidence, reasoned interpretation, and questions the surviving account does not answer. This distinction is essential to a conclusive answer about what the report proves. It also prevents a theological defence from claiming to have conclusively settled every disagreement about the moral foundations of slavery.

The hadith evidence is closed: the ten principal references are Muslim 1602; Abu Dawud 3358; al-Tirmidhi 1239 and 1596; al-Nasa’i 4621; Ibn Majah 2869; Ahmad 14772, 15000 and 15001; and Ibn Hibban 5027. The seven supporting references are al-Bukhari 30, 97 and 2227; and Muslim 1657a, 1661a, 1713a and 2564c. No other prophetic narration is used as evidence, including narrations quoted incidentally within a commentary consulted here. The Qur’an, relevant Sunni Islamic scholarly explanations, Biblical passages and historical scholarship have distinct functions and are identified accordingly.

A steelman analysis reconstructs the strongest defensible objection before answering it. Here that requires distinguishing an allegation of racial inferiority from an objection to human ownership itself. It also requires examining a possible moral contradiction within Sunni Islamic teaching separately from an external criticism that rejects the permissibility of ownership from the outset. The former tests the consistency of the cited sources; the latter needs an argument about moral authority in addition to textual interpretation. The discussion does not equate criticism of Islam with prejudice against Muslims.

Verification compares the cited Arabic wording, the transmitted chains and the reference systems displayed by the identified editions or electronic texts. It does not claim a new collation of manuscripts, discovery of independent contemporary witnesses, or access to every historical circumstance of the exchange. The historical studies contextualise slavery; they do not independently corroborate this particular event. The Biblical comparison tests consistency of interpretation and acknowledges stronger Christian responses. Appendix A records verification and its limits.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, report nos. 14772, 15000–15001). The complete bibliographic entries appear at the end; precise source references are also supplied beneath each substantive section.

1a Research questions and the scope of the contribution

The analysis asks four questions. What does each authorised version actually state? How far do the shared transmission route and narrative sequence warrant reading those versions together? Which racial, religious and moral conclusions follow from that record? What can a Sunni Islamic theological defence establish for readers who do, or do not, accept its premises? These questions determine the order of the argument. The contribution is the disciplined

comparison and evaluation of this specified corpus; no priority claim about discovering the texts or their interpretation is made.

The study is a confessional textual analysis with a limited historical comparison. It is not a systematic review of all writing about Islamic slavery or an independently reconstructed history of the event. The corpus was fixed before this revision. Its closure makes the analysis reproducible but limits its coverage: a finding that a proposition is absent here is not a finding that it is absent from every Islamic source. The doctrinal selection is likewise declared rather than presented as a representative survey of all Muslim schools. Excluding a school from the interpretative framework does not, by itself, disprove an argument associated with it.

The objections are reconstructed analytical positions. The manuscript does not claim that they are equally prevalent, that every named religious community advances them, or that they reproduce the words of identifiable critics. Establishing those empirical claims would require a separate, documented sample of publications. The present question is whether each argument is sound, not how frequently it appears.

1b Terms and standards of inference

An enslaved person here is someone represented as subject to another person's ownership and transfer, rather than an employee free to terminate a service contract. Emancipation means release from that status. Commodification identifies the treatment of a person as transferable consideration; it does not automatically establish that the same legal system denies the person all moral standing. Dignity refers to the human honour and obligations discussed in the cited sources, without presupposing that their entire legal content is identical to a modern theory of equal rights.

Race is an analytical term in the objections, not a claim that the narration uses modern racial classifications. Black describes the transmitted colour designation. Neither a continent of origin nor a modern racial identity can be recovered from that adjective alone. The argument distinguishes an allegation of personal contempt, an allegation of discrimination in a transaction, and an allegation of a general racial rule. Evidence adequate for one is not automatically adequate for the others.

Textual occurrence, historical reliability and moral justification are separate questions. A clause can be visibly present in a transmitted text without that observation alone establishing its historical reliability. An authenticated report can establish a narrated act within Sunni Islamic methodology without supplying every motive or circumstance. An account of an act also requires an explicit normative premise before it can establish what anyone ought to do. For each objection, the analysis tests the evidence, identifies the necessary inference, considers its strongest alternative, and limits the conclusion accordingly.

1c Authentication and historical evidence

The authentication discussion reports identified Sunni Islamic judgements and compares the authorised chains and wording. It does not claim to reproduce every stage of an independent narrator-critical investigation. Multiple collections can preserve the same earlier transmission; their agreement is therefore not automatically independent corroboration. Conversely, dependence alone does not demonstrate fabrication. The case for reliability and the case for independence require different evidence.

No contemporaneous non-Islamic account of this particular exchange is identified in the sources used here. Historical works on other periods supply context, while the religious judgement depends on the specified Sunni Islamic framework. The study does not use an

absence of identified external corroboration as proof that the event did not occur, or Sunni Islamic authentication as a claim that such corroboration exists.

Sources for these methodological subsections: The authorised texts and transmission relationships specified in Section 2. The distinctions and research questions are the analytical framework of this study, not quotations attributed to a historical authority.

2 The narration and its textual boundaries

A translation prepared for this study from the Arabic text of Muslim 1602 reads:

An enslaved man came and pledged allegiance to the Prophet for migration, while he did not realise that the man was enslaved. His master came seeking him. The Prophet said to him, “Sell him to me.” He purchased him for two Black enslaved men. Thereafter, he did not accept anyone’s pledge until he had asked whether the person was enslaved. (Muslim, n.d., report no. 1602; translation prepared for this study)

The chain attributes the account to Jabir. The translation renders the narrative wording without reproducing the chain or the devotional blessings accompanying the Prophet’s name. The Arabic conclusion asks whether the applicant is enslaved; “or a free man” is an explanatory expansion in some English renderings, not a second alternative expressly stated in this version. Ahmad 15000 does expressly give the free-or-enslaved alternative. This small difference does not change the argument but should remain visible in a textual study.

2a Citation systems and the distinction between dates and report numbers

Author–date citations identify bibliographical sources; report numbers identify passages within them. The present study cites the electronic primary texts actually checked and labels

report numbers explicitly. An undated electronic text is cited as n.d.; that does not imply that the underlying work is undated or modern.

For al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah, the identifiers in this study follow the main "Reference" field of the Arabic and English primary texts on Sunnah.com. The suffixes a and c in the authorised Muslim references are part of that website's differentiation of transmissions; they must be retained. They are not necessarily printed as part of the number in every edition. Neither the site's "in-book reference" nor an alternative English translation field is substituted for the authorised identifier. In particular, the alternative English numbering displayed beside al-Nasa'i 4621 differs from the main reference; this study uses only 4621, as authorised.

The Ahmad numbers follow the al-Risalah edition edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, 'Adil Murshid and colleagues, under 'Abd Allah al-Turki's supervision (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 2001). Ibn Hibban 5027 follows the arrangement by Ibn Balban, in the al-Risalah edition edited by al-Arna'ut (Ibn Hibban, 1993, Vol. 11, p. 401). These identifiers are edition-specific, not interchangeable numbers across every publication. Electronic transcriptions were used to inspect the passages; the audit does not claim personal inspection of the original manuscripts or every printed impression. The reference list identifies these access sources. The hosts supply access to primary texts, not independent theological authority.

2b Principal reports and the wording each contributes

The following ten authorised references form a connected Jabir report family. The full narrative, an emancipation variant and terse commercial versions must remain distinguishable. Sharing a subject alone would not establish identity; here the relationship is also supported by the common transmission route and, for the fuller variants, a distinctive narrative sequence.

Table 1*Principal reports and their distinct wording*

Principal reference	Form of report	Content established by this version
Muslim 1602	Full migration account	Pledge for migration; previously unknown enslaved status; master's claim; purchase for two Black slaves; subsequent enquiry. No explicit emancipation clause.
Abu Dawud 3358	Brief commercial account	Purchase of one slave for two. No colour, migration, master's demand or emancipation detail in this wording.
al-Tirmidhi 1239	Full account with legal comment	Migration sequence and two Black slaves. The compiler discusses immediate exchange and disagreement over deferred exchange.
al-Tirmidhi 1596	Full account in the pledge context	Substantially the same narrative, with minor wording differences; an assessment of its transmission follows.
al-Nasa'i 4621	Full account in commercial law	Migration sequence, two Black slaves and later enquiry; no express emancipation clause.
Ibn Majah 2869	Full account in the pledge chapter	Migration sequence, two Black slaves and later enquiry; no express emancipation clause.
Ahmad 14772	Full account through two later routes	Migration sequence, two Black slaves and later enquiry.
Ahmad 15000	Related narrative with an addition	Pledge; master identifies the status; purchase; explicit emancipation; later enquiry. Neither migration nor the price is expressly stated here.
Ahmad 15001	Brief commercial account	Purchase of one slave for two. The editor connects the person to the immediately preceding report.
Ibn Hibban 5027	Full account	Migration sequence, two Black slaves and later enquiry.

The collection titles mean Authentic Collection, “Sahih”, Comprehensive Collection, “Jami’”, Collection of Prophetic Traditions, “Sunan”, and Collected Narrations, “Musnad”. A work’s title identifies the source; individual wording and transmission still require examination.

2c Supporting reports and their separate evidential functions

The supporting reports concern other episodes or teachings. They are not further witnesses to the exchange. Al-Bukhari 30 and Muslim 1661a overlap in the Abu Dharr account and should not be counted as two independent examples of prophetic conduct merely because they occur in different collections.

Table 2

Supporting reports and their evidential functions

Supporting reference	Narrator or report context	Relevance and boundary
al-Bukhari 30	Al-Ma‘rur reporting Abu Dharr	Rebuke for disparaging a man through his mother; brotherhood, food, clothing and limits on burdens. The insulted man is unnamed.
al-Bukhari 97	Abu Burdah from his father, Abu Musa	Double reward includes an enslaved person fulfilling obligations to Allah and the owner. This establishes recognised religious standing, not civil freedom.
al-Bukhari 2227	Abu Hurayrah	Condemnation of selling a free person and taking the price, alongside covenant-breaking and withholding wages. It does not narrate the origins of the three men’s status.
Muslim 1657a	Zadhan reporting Ibn ‘Umar	Release as expiation for slapping or beating a slave. It does not set out an automatic judicial termination procedure.
Muslim 1661a	Al-Ma‘rur reporting Abu Dharr	Overlaps with al-Bukhari 30; specifies the disparaged man’s mother as non-Arab. Neither version identifies him by name.

Supporting reference	Narrator or report context	Relevance and boundary
Muslim 1713a	Umm Salamah	Judgement proceeds on what is heard; a favourable judgement does not legitimise taking another's right. It does not adjudicate this exchange.
Muslim 2564c	Abu Hurayrah	Divine assessment concerns hearts and deeds rather than appearance and wealth. It does not prescribe a market valuation.

Sources for this table: al-Bukhari (n.d., report nos. 30, 97, 2227); Muslim (n.d., report nos. 1657a, 1661a, 1713a, 2564c).

2d Transmission relationships and the authentication question

The shared route runs from Jabir to Abu al-Zubayr, then to al-Layth ibn Sa'd. The later routes branch after al-Layth. Muslim records Yahya ibn Yahya, Muhammad ibn Rumh and Qutaybah ibn Sa'id; both al-Tirmidhi entries and al-Nasa'i use Qutaybah; Ibn Majah uses Muhammad ibn Rumh. Abu Dawud combines Yazid ibn Khalid and Qutaybah. Ahmad 14772 uses Hujayn and Ishaq ibn 'Isa, while 15000 and 15001 use Abu Sa'id, the freedman associated with Banu Hashim. Ibn Hibban's route passes through Ibn Qutaybah and Yazid ibn Mawhab to al-Layth. Thus the corpus supplies multiple later transmissions of a common earlier route, not ten independent Companion testimonies (the principal references in Table 1).

The objection that Abu al-Zubayr does not expressly state direct hearing from Jabir in these chains deserves a specific response. Al-'Abbad explains, in his commentary on Abu Dawud 3358, that al-Layth's transmission concerns material distinguished as heard from Jabir. This is relevant to potentially obscured transmission, "tadlis". An explicit "he narrated to me" between al-Layth and Abu al-Zubayr would establish that link; it would not, by itself, establish

the separate Abu al-Zubayr–Jabir link. The defence should not confuse the two (al-‘Abbad, n.d.-a, lesson 386).

Al-Tirmidhi evaluates 1239 as good and authentic, “hasan sahih”, and 1596 as good, singular in transmission and authentic, “hasan gharib sahih”. At 1596 he identifies Abu al-Zubayr as the route known to him. Singularity at that point is not a declaration of fabrication. Abu Dawud 3358 is also graded authentic by al-Albani in the assessment reproduced with the cited electronic text. These are identified Sunni Islamic assessments, not a statistical argument from the number of websites carrying the report (Abu Dawud, n.d., report no. 3358; al-Tirmidhi, n.d., report nos. 1239, 1596).

The brief versions in Abu Dawud 3358 and Ahmad 15001 are appropriately treated as related commercial recensions in light of their shared route and the edition’s cross-reference. Their short wording alone cannot establish every detail of the longer story, nor logically exclude the possibility of another similar transaction. Ahmad 15000 has stronger narrative markers linking it to the migration account: the pledge, master’s intervention, purchase and subsequent enquiry. The case for reading it alongside Muslim 1602 rests on that conjunction, not merely on the presence of a purchase.

2e What the text states and what it leaves unstated

The text establishes an existing enslaved status, a pledge connected with migration, a recognised claim by the master, an exchange involving two Black slaves, and a later practice of enquiry. Ahmad 15000 additionally records emancipation. The text does not identify the purchased man’s complexion, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, or precise monetary valuation. It does not identify the religion of the two transferred men or the master, describe their consent, explain why this consideration was agreed, or narrate their subsequent lives.

Consequently, neither side may turn an unreported detail into an established fact. Calling the purchased man White or Arab adds information. Declaring the two transferred men unbelievers, violent criminals, or subsequently freed adds information. Assigning this incident to a particular treaty or battle without evidence adds information. The same applies to the assertion that the Prophet had no money available or that the two men were transferred to a demonstrably kinder household. An interpretation can be plausible without becoming part of the transmitted narrative.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); al-Tirmidhi (n.d., report nos. 1239, 1596); al-Nasa'i (n.d., report no. 4621); Ibn Majah (n.d., report no. 2869); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, report nos. 14772, 15000–15001); Ibn Hibban (n.d., report no. 5027); Abu Dawud (n.d., report no. 3358); al-'Abbad (n.d.-a, lesson 386, explanation and transmitters of report no. 3358).

3 Racial valuation and the allegation of Black inferiority

3a The strongest objection

The most substantial racial objection is not simply that the account mentions Black people. It is that the narrator specifically describes the two transferred men as Black, while the Prophet exchanges both for one person. A critic may infer that racial characteristics affected the transaction and that the two-for-one exchange reflects a hierarchy in which Black lives counted for less.

That is an intelligible hypothesis, but a hypothesis is not an established explanation. Three separate propositions must be distinguished: two of the participants were Black; the agreed consideration consisted of those two people; and their colour caused a judgement that they possessed less intrinsic human worth. The first two propositions occur in the report. The third does not follow from them without additional evidence.

3b The missing racial comparison

The purchased man's colour is not supplied. The formula 'two Black men for one White man' therefore misstates the source. Replacing 'White' with 'Arab' does not repair the inference: Arab identity and Black complexion are not mutually exclusive categories, and neither characteristic is specified for the purchased man. Blackness also does not, by itself, establish a particular African birthplace or a modern national identity.

Even if another reliable source were to establish that the man was not Black, a single exchange would still not establish a universal racial valuation. One negotiated consideration cannot demonstrate that every member of one group was valued at half every member of another. Nor does the text assign equal individual values to the two transferred men. It records an accepted bundle of consideration, not a racial tariff or a division of humanity into numerical units.

The distinction between a transaction and a statement of human worth does not make slavery ethically unproblematic. It identifies the precise inference requiring proof. A critic could independently argue that pricing any human being violates human dignity. That is the ownership objection examined below. It is different from demonstrating that this transaction was caused by racial contempt.

3c A nonracial explanation supported by the narrative

The account itself identifies a particular reason for acquiring this individual: his pledge had already been accepted before his status was known. The Prophet then undertook a transaction that resolved the master's claim. The emancipation wording in Ahmad 15000 makes the outcome particularly significant. Acquiring the man enabled his release; the story is not confined to replacing two labourers with one preferred labourer.

The conclusion should remain proportionate. The narrative supports a connection between the pledge, the purchase, and the release. It does not specify why the agreed price was two people rather than money or another consideration. A willingness to offer two people in order to acquire and release a particular individual is compatible with several nonracial motives. The account does not establish their monetary values or whether the consideration was above the prevailing market rate. Such possibilities defeat a claim of logical necessity; they do not prove that colour had no influence at all or authorise inventing an undocumented motive as historical fact. A probabilistic allegation would require comparative transactions or other independent evidence capable of distinguishing racial preference from alternative explanations.

3d The relevant Sunni Islamic evidence on human standing

The Qur'an places human diversity within shared human origin and makes righteousness, rather than ancestry, the criterion of honour before Allah (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 49:13). Al-Sa'di's explanation identifies obedience and avoidance of wrongdoing, not the prestige of lineage, as the relevant distinction (al-Sa'di, n.d., commentary on 49:13). Muslim 2564c likewise directs attention to hearts and deeds rather than outward appearance and wealth. These are explicit evaluative statements; the exchange report contains no competing statement that complexion determines human dignity.

Ibn Baz applies this principle to distinctions of tribal and nontribal ancestry, freed status, and non-Arab origin, rejecting claims to superior standing on those grounds (Ibn Baz, n.d., ruling 1494). Only his application of Qur'an 49:13 is relied upon here; the additional narrations in that ruling are outside this study's hadith evidence. His answer is not being used to establish that all social or marriage distinctions disappeared. The report about Abu Dharr's disparagement of another man through his mother supplies practical evidence. The Prophet reproved the conduct

and coupled the rebuke with duties towards enslaved people (al-Bukhari, n.d., report no. 30; Muslim, n.d., report no. 1661a). These cited versions should not be embellished by identifying the insulted man as Bilal or inserting an exact insult about Blackness: they do not name him, and Muslim 1661a describes his mother as non-Arab. The evidence directly rebukes contempt expressed through ancestry; its application against racial contempt is an interpretation supported by the wider principles, not an additional quotation from these versions.

Explicit antidiscrimination teaching cannot be used mechanically to prove that every later Muslim institution was free of prejudice. Nor does one benevolent encounter establish everything about an individual's conduct. Here the narrower conclusion is well supported: the racial allegation lacks the necessary facts in this account and conflicts with the tradition's explicit criteria of moral standing. It cannot be established merely by repeating the numbers two and one.

Sources for this section: *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 49:13); al-Sa'di (n.d., commentary on 49:13); Muslim (n.d., report nos. 1602, 1661a, 2564c); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000); al-Bukhari (n.d., report no. 30); Ibn Baz (n.d., ruling 1494).

4 Emancipation and the omission that changes the argument

4a The strongest objection

If only Muslim 1602 is quoted, the critic can correctly observe that its wording reports a purchase without expressly saying that the purchased man was freed. It would be methodologically unsound to answer that observation by inserting emancipation into Muslim's wording without identifying another source. However, the stronger assertion that no relevant narration records emancipation is incorrect.

4b The additional evidence in Ahmad 15000

Ahmad 15000 describes a slave's pledge, the master's appearance, the Prophet's purchase, and the later enquiry about whether an applicant was free or enslaved. Between the purchase and the final enquiry, it expressly states that he freed the man. The key clause means 'and he freed him', "fa-a 'taqahu" (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.-b, report no. 15000).

For comparison, a translation of the narrative wording of Ahmad 15000 reads:

An enslaved man came to the Prophet and pledged allegiance to him. His master then came and made him known. Allah's Messenger purchased him from him and freed him. Thereafter, he did not accept anyone's pledge until he asked whether the person was free or enslaved. (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.-b, report no. 15000; translation prepared for this study)

The wording "made him known" concerns the master's identification of the man; it does not itself reproduce Muslim's explicit account of the Prophet's earlier lack of knowledge. The final status question and the intervening emancipation clause are explicit. This translation excludes the chain and accompanying devotional blessings, and supplies neither a price nor a migration clause absent from this version.

This addition corrects an incomplete reading of the report family. Muslim's silence about release and Ahmad's statement of release are not contradictory: omission of an event is not a denial that it occurred. The connection is supported by the common Jabir–Abu al-Zubayr–al-Layth transmission and the distinctive sequence of pledge, master, purchase, and subsequent status enquiry. Ahmad's critical edition cross-references the fuller exchange report at 14772 and assesses the chain of 15000 as sound. That editorial assessment concerns transmission, not a separate theological premise.

The expanded wording must nevertheless be handled accurately. Ahmad 15000 does not itself mention two Black slaves as the consideration. The detailed exchange comes from Muslim 1602 and its parallels; emancipation comes expressly from Ahmad 15000. A composite summary may integrate them, but a quotation must preserve the wording of its identified source. The variant is not a new Companion witness and supplies no positive evidence of a separately documented second purchase.

4c Testing the emancipation addition rather than assuming it

A critic may accept the full exchange narrative yet question a release clause absent from its more numerous versions. That is a more precise objection than denying that Ahmad contains the clause. Two questions require separate answers: whether the clause occurs in the cited text, and whether it should be accepted as a reliable addition to the related account. The first is directly verifiable. For the second, the al-Risalah edition grades the chain of 15000 as sound, links it to 14772, and identifies 15001 with the preceding incident. Those are positive grounds for accepting the connection, although the editorial assessment should be described as such (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, report nos. 14772, 15000–15001 and reproduced editorial notes).

Agreement on the chain's reliability does not mean that every extra clause in every narration is accepted without comparing wording. An addition might conflict with stronger evidence or exhibit a demonstrable transmission error. Here the authorised fuller versions do not say that the man remained enslaved, and 15000 does not deny the exchange price. Their differences are therefore compatible rather than directly contradictory. No contrary textual statement or demonstrated error has been established within the specified corpus. Omission alone supplies no sufficient reason to discard the explicit clause; compatibility alone is also not a

substitute for authentication. The defensible Sunni Islamic reading accepts this authenticated, connected variant while making its particular source visible.

The editor's judgement that a chain is sound should not be inflated into a demonstrated consensus about every word of the text. Shared ancestry in transmission also means that the emancipation version is not an independent confirmation of the entire event. The present positive conclusion rests on the reproduced authentication, the close narrative fit and the absence of an identified conflicting statement. A separate manuscript history of the clause or a full investigation of possible hidden defects has not been undertaken. Those limits qualify the kind of verification claimed; they do not erase the clause actually preserved in the authorised source.

The interpretation is also resilient to a narrower reading. If an interlocutor brackets Ahmad 15000, Muslim 1602 alone leaves subsequent emancipation unstated; it still supplies no evidence that the purchased man was White or that the exchange fixed racial worth. Conversely, accepting 15000 answers the retention allegation but leaves the objection to transferring the other two people for separate examination. No single variant should be made to carry conclusions beyond its wording.

4d What emancipation resolves and what it does not

On the supported identification of the connected accounts, the claim that the purchased man was retained without emancipation is contradicted by this additional wording. The more limited statement that Muslim's individual version does not mention emancipation remains true. A comprehensive treatment must use the fuller evidence rather than build a conclusion upon a selectively isolated omission.

The emancipation does not establish that all three men were freed. It does not establish the subsequent treatment of the two transferred men. It also does not make the consideration paid

morally irrelevant. A critic may accept the release of one man and still object that two others remained subject to transfer. That objection must be answered directly under ownership and consent rather than dismissed by repeating that somebody was freed.

Within the narrated transaction, however, the assertion that two free Black men were newly enslaved to release one other person is unsupported. They are already described as slaves. When the connected emancipation report is taken into account, one existing enslaved person is released while two existing enslaved persons are transferred. This distinction corrects the description of the event; it does not establish a general theory about the long-term effects of slave markets.

Sources for this section: Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, report nos. 14772, 15000–15001 and reproduced editorial note to 15000); Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); al-‘Abbad (n.d.-a, lesson 386, on the common al-Layth–Abu al-Zubayr route).

5 Autonomy migration and access to religious commitment

5a The strongest autonomy objection

The enslaved man acted on a religious intention, yet the master’s claim remained consequential. The objection is therefore stronger than a complaint about an administrative question: why did the man’s own decision not immediately terminate another person’s authority over him? The report undeniably reflects a legal order in which enslaved status restricted independent action. A faithful exposition should acknowledge that restriction.

The Sunni Islamic answer is not that the man’s religious intention lacked value. The Prophet had accepted his pledge and subsequently acquired him; the connected version records his release. Rather, a religious undertaking did not by itself extinguish a recognised ownership claim. The action reconciled the intended commitment with removal of the existing legal

impediment through purchase and emancipation. Describing that legal reasoning explains the action within the tradition. It does not, by itself, persuade a reader who regards every such claim as inherently invalid.

The distinction between explanation and ultimate justification matters here. The critic's stronger moral position is that compensation should never have been necessary because no person should have owned the man. The Sunni Islamic defence rests on the permissibility of the institution under revealed law, subject to its conditions and obligations. It cannot instead claim that the institution already granted the same freedom of exit as ordinary paid employment. It did not.

5b A migration pledge is not admission to Islam

Muslim 1602 specifically identifies a pledge of allegiance, “bay‘ah”, connected with migration, “hijrah”. Acceptance of this undertaking must not be equated with a person's ability to believe, worship, or become Muslim. The concluding statement says that the Prophet thereafter asked about a person's status. It does not say that enslaved people were forbidden to embrace Islam or that every subsequent pledge from an enslaved person was rejected.

The enquiry is compatible with distinguishing the commitments an applicant could undertake and the circumstances that needed resolution. That interpretation is grounded in the problem the narrative has just described. More elaborate claims about particular permissions, military duties, or administrative arrangements require additional evidence and should not be inserted into this incident.

An independent authentic report recognises an enslaved believer's service to Allah and speaks of a double reward for fulfilling the relevant obligations (al-Bukhari, n.d., report no. 97). Its premise is incompatible with the suggestion that enslaved status excluded someone from

religious membership. Religious eligibility and unrestricted civil independence are nevertheless different questions. Establishing the former does not demonstrate the latter.

5c Initial lack of knowledge about the man

The report expressly states that the Prophet initially did not know the man was enslaved. Within Sunni Islamic belief, prophethood does not entail independent knowledge of every concealed worldly circumstance. The Qur'an distinguishes what Allah reveals from knowledge that a messenger does not independently possess (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 7:188). Muslim 1713a similarly distinguishes judgement on the evidence presented from omniscient access to the underlying facts.

The later enquiry therefore need not be represented as a doctrinal reversal or an admission of racial prejudice. It addresses a fact previously unknown in this case. Nor should Muslim 1713a be used to claim that an unjust judgement occurred here: the sources do not state that. Its relevance is the narrower distinction between prophetic authority and unrestricted knowledge of people's circumstances.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report nos. 1602, 1713a); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000); al-Bukhari (n.d., report no. 97); *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 7:188).

6 Religious valuation and the unsupported two unbelievers explanation

6a What the objection requires

A religious valuation objection can take two forms. The first alleges that the Prophet valued one Muslim as equivalent to two non-Muslims. The second accepts that the participants' religions are uncertain but argues that helping one religious adherent through the transfer of others gives his interests priority. These arguments require different answers.

The first formulation supplies information missing from the report. The two transferred men's religion is not stated. Neither is the master's religion. It is therefore unsound for either a critic or a defender to present the transaction as an established exchange of two unbelievers for one believer. The man's pledge explains his connection to the Prophet; it does not identify everyone else's beliefs.

The second formulation is a more serious ethical question. The transaction secured a benefit for the purchased man, while the report does not describe what the two transferred men thought of it. Their perspective cannot be reconstructed from silence. The defensible response is to identify the legal framework and its obligations, not to invent a religious identity that supposedly makes their interests negligible.

6b Religious merit is not a numerical price for human beings

Sunni Islamic teaching does distinguish belief and righteousness in matters of accountability and reward. It would be inaccurate to erase all religious distinctions in order to defend this report. However, a distinction in spiritual standing is not a revealed rule that one Muslim always equals two other people in commercial value. No such rule is stated here.

The Qur'an's requirement of freeing a believing slave in a specified expiation, "kaffarah", for accidental killing concerns the conditions of that particular religious obligation (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 4:92). It does not supply a missing price schedule for this transaction. Similarly, honour before Allah in 49:13 is not an instruction to disregard the treatment of people who do not share a person's faith. The command to act justly and kindly towards non-hostile non-Muslims is relevant to rejecting that broader inference (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 60:8).

The narration supplies no religious exchange ratio. The remaining concern about whose interests were protected is examined under ownership and consent.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 4:92, 49:13, 60:8); al-Sa'di (n.d., commentaries on 49:13 and 60:8).

7 Ownership commodification and the two transferred men

7a What must be conceded

The strongest ownership objection is that a person was acquired by transferring two other people as consideration. This treats human beings as objects of legally recognised proprietary rights, even if their humanity is also recognised in other respects. That descriptive claim is supported by the report. Denying that a sale or exchange occurred would contradict the evidence.

The transaction is not adequately explained away as an exchange of employment contracts. Ordinary employment does not make the worker personally transferable as property. Nor is the objection answered by saying that the word for an enslaved person sometimes has devotional meanings. In this narration, the master's claim, the purchase, and the consideration establish the relevant meaning.

The serious dispute concerns whether this form of ownership can ever be morally legitimate, not whether the source uses commercial language. The Sunni Islamic position adopted here accepts the permissibility of slavery within the historical legal conditions recognised by revelation. It also accepts that ownership is bounded by duties owed to the enslaved person and does not abolish that person's moral accountability or humanity. These propositions belong together; removing either would misrepresent the tradition.

7b Human standing and ownership are distinct in the source system

The Qur'an attributes dignity to the children of Adam and commands good treatment of people under one's ownership (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 17:70, 4:36). Al-Sa'di's commentary on 17:70 explains the honour bestowed upon humanity; it is not restricted to free people. The authentic report associated with Abu Dharr imposes duties concerning food, clothing, burdens, and assistance (al-Bukhari, n.d., report no. 30; Muslim, n.d., report no. 1661a). The report therefore cannot coherently be interpreted as a licence to treat enslaved people as beings without human claims.

These duties do not convert ownership into modern legal equality. They establish a different proposition: the permitted institution was not understood to erase every right of the enslaved person. A critic may argue that these protections are insufficient because the basic relation remains coercive. That criticism is not rebutted simply by listing material benefits. It must be assessed at the level of the institution's claimed legitimacy.

Muslim 1657a provides an especially relevant boundary: release is identified as expiation for slapping or beating an enslaved person in the manner addressed by the report. This gives emancipation a corrective role in response to mistreatment. It should not be misquoted as saying that every blow automatically extinguishes ownership without any further legal question. The evidential point is the condemnation of abuse and the prescribed corrective response, not an invented automatic procedure.

7c Consent and the limits of the defence

Nothing in Muslim 1602 records the two transferred men's consent. Their silence in the narrative is not proof of consent, indifference, or opposition. The safest historical statement is that their views are not reported. Nevertheless, ownership and transfer in this institution cannot

be presumed to depend on the same continuing personal consent required in a freely terminable employment relationship.

The defence therefore rests on the revealed framework examined in Section 7e, rather than on an assertion of documented agreement by all three men. This acknowledges the coercive feature identified by the critic without converting the silence of the report into testimony about any particular person's wishes.

7d What remains unknown about the two men

The record does not tell us whether the transfer separated relatives, improved or worsened living conditions, or was followed by emancipation. None of those outcomes may be asserted as fact. Equally, the absence of a narrated injury does not prove that no injury occurred. The account supplies too little information for a complete assessment of their subsequent welfare.

The release of the purchased man is relevant evidence of the episode's outcome, but it does not answer every question concerning the consideration used. Conversely, an unresolved question about the transferred men does not establish that the Prophet despised Black people. The precise remaining objection concerns the permissibility of transferring persons already held in slavery. It should be argued under that description.

7e The strongest internal Sunni Islamic justification

The internal argument has a definite structure. First, Allah's justice and the authority of His revelation are established commitments of the faith. Secondly, an authenticated prophetic action can disclose a permitted course of conduct when read with the other relevant sources. Thirdly, this report is understood by the cited Sunni Muslim commentators as a permissible

transaction, while other texts impose duties and prohibit abuses. On those premises, the transaction is not classified as sinful merely because it falls outside a later ethical system's accepted institutions.

This argument is more substantial than an appeal to what was socially normal. Its claim is that moral judgement must account for authoritative revelation. The Qur'an denies injustice on Allah's part and requires believers to submit to decisions of Allah and His Messenger (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 4:40, 33:36). Al-Sa'di's explanations of these verses support those commitments. Nothing in this reasoning authorises an individual to call an act divinely permitted without first establishing the relevant evidence and its scope.

The hardest external reply is that a perfectly just revelation should have prohibited ownership altogether, because control over another person's status and transfer is itself the wrong, independently of food, clothing, or kindness. Material protections do not logically refute that premise. The Sunni Islamic response is that the premise cannot simply override an independently accepted revelation; the disagreement must ultimately concern the grounds for accepting revelation and how its permissions relate to justice.

7f Testing the alleged contradiction between dignity and ownership

An internal objection can be stated more strongly: if the Qur'an honours humanity, and the Prophet calls enslaved people brothers, how can sale be consistent with those principles? Its crucial additional premise is that honour or brotherhood necessarily entails an inalienable right against every recognised form of human ownership. That premise is not expressly stated in Qur'an 17:70, Muslim 2564c or al-Bukhari 30. In al-Bukhari 30, the language of brotherhood occurs within instructions governing an existing relationship of subordination. Within this corpus, therefore, brotherhood imposes obligations without itself announcing universal

emancipation. The claimed contradiction cannot be established by importing a stronger legal definition of brotherhood than the cited text supplies.

This is a response about textual consistency, not an argument that coercion is harmless. The permitted framework must still include the constraints actually revealed: fair treatment, repudiation of ancestral contempt, condemnation of selling a free person and valued routes to release. Divine justice is not being described as arbitrary power or moral indifference. Al-Sa‘di’s explanation of Qur’an 4:40 affirms Allah’s perfect justice and freedom from injustice. The Sunni Islamic argument joins that commitment to the authority of the authenticated action; it does not infer that everything an owner happens to do is just.

A further objection asks why the Prophet did not free all three men or choose money instead. The specified reports do not disclose the available assets, the owner’s other acceptable terms, the three men’s circumstances or any instruction requiring a different resolution at that moment. They therefore cannot establish that this was the only feasible arrangement or the uniquely best outcome for every participant. Equally, the fact that a different beneficial act is imaginable does not by itself demonstrate that the act described was prohibited within the revealed framework. The institutional moral disagreement remains, but an allegation of a specific violated duty requires evidence for that duty and its application to these facts.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report nos. 1602, 1657a, 1661a, 2564c); al-Bukhari (n.d., report nos. 30, 2227); *The Qur’an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 4:36, 4:40, 17:70, 33:36); al-Sa‘di (n.d., commentaries on 4:40, 17:70, and 33:36); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000); al-‘Abbad (n.d.-a, lesson 386).

7g Circularity moral criticism and the limits of conditional justification

The Sunni Islamic argument is conditional on the authority of revelation being established on grounds beyond the disputed transaction. It would be circular to argue that the transaction is just because the Prophet performed it, then use that asserted justice as the sole proof of his authority. This study does not offer that circle as evidence. It examines how the authenticated act is understood within a tradition that already accepts prophetic authority. An external reader is not obliged by that analysis alone to adopt its theological premises.

Nor does the absence of an explicit abolition command, by itself, refute a moral argument against ownership. Such an argument can appeal to domination, vulnerability to transfer and loss of control over one's life without pretending that these ideas are quotations from the narration. Within the specified source system, the response is that dignity and brotherhood are expressly compatible with the regulated status being discussed. Outside that system, the adequacy of those protections and the authority of the permission remain open to argument. This distinction prevents the defence from dismissing substantive ethical reasoning as merely an anachronism.

There is a corresponding distinction about lawful origins. Sunni Islamic confidence in the Prophet's conduct supports an internal judgement of lawful action; it does not provide a separately narrated account of how each of the three men originally became enslaved. The manuscript therefore neither alleges an unlawful origin without evidence nor supplies an invented lawful biography. The theological inference and the documentary gap must both be identified.

Sources for this subsection: Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); al-Bukhari (n.d., report nos. 30, 2227); *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 4:40, 17:70, 33:36); al-Sa'di (n.d., commentaries on those verses). The conditional argument is the study's analysis of these premises.

8 Abolition manumission and historical context

8a The strongest abolition objection

An informed critic need not deny that Islam encourages emancipation. The objection is that encouragement and regulated ownership coexist, whereas a complete prohibition would reject the institution itself. The critic may therefore ask why this event was resolved through a slave transaction rather than an immediate repudiation of all ownership claims.

The textual answer begins with a concession: Muslim 1602 is not an abolition decree. Its legal reasoning presupposes an existing ownership relation, and its resolution does not announce a universal end to slavery. It would be inaccurate to use the incident as proof that the Prophet prohibited every future slave transaction. The Sunni Islamic defence concerns the legitimacy of the revealed framework, including its avenues of liberation; it should not replace that framework with an abolitionist policy absent from the text.

8b What the wider revelation does establish

Emancipation occupies a positive and recurring place in the Qur'an. Freeing a person is commended in 90:13; resources are allocated towards liberation in 9:60; and manumission appears in specified expiations in 4:92, 5:89, and 58:3. These are distinct mechanisms with distinct conditions. They should not be collapsed into a claim that every enslaved person automatically became free when Islam arrived.

The Qur'an also addresses a contractual arrangement for attaining freedom, "mukatabah", and assistance for eligible applicants (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 24:33). Al-Sa'di's explanation treats this as a meaningful route towards release. He interprets suitability in terms of earning capacity and religious uprightness, regards obligation to grant the qualifying

request as the apparent reading, and records the alternative interpretation of recommendation. Describing this mechanism merely as discretionary generosity would understate his explanation; presenting its obligatory character as an uncontested Sunni Islamic consensus would also go beyond it. The provision does not establish that any oral request, regardless of its conditions, instantly nullified ownership. Nor does it prove that every enslaved person in subsequent Muslim history could use the mechanism effectively.

These passages establish that release was a religiously valued act and, in specified circumstances, part of an obligation. Ahmad 15000 provides direct evidence of emancipation in the episode under examination. Together they rebut a claim that the tradition had no interest in liberation. They do not prove that the system contained an explicit date for universal abolition or that demographic decline in slavery was inevitable.

8c Why familiar necessity arguments should be restrained

It is often suggested that immediate abolition would necessarily have caused economic collapse, starvation, or a military disaster. Such counterfactual claims require evidence about the particular society, feasible alternatives, and the policy being proposed. The present narration provides none of that evidence. The report should not be defended by declaring an undocumented alternative impossible.

Historical scholarship does establish that slavery was deeply embedded in societies preceding and surrounding the emergence of Islam. Harper's study documents its substantial role in the late Roman world of AD 275–425; Glancy examines its place in early Christianity (Glancy, 2002; Harper, 2011). Their geographical and chronological limits matter. Neither work is evidence that this particular seventh-century Arabian exchange was unavoidable or that every feature of Roman slavery applied in Arabia.

The historical point is contextual, not exculpatory: the institution did not originate with this report, and its vocabulary was intelligible within a wider world of enslavement and manumission. The moral proposition that a widespread institution is therefore right does not follow. A prophetic defence must supply its own theological grounds; prevalence alone is insufficient.

The longer history also prevents an exaggerated claim that encouragement of manumission automatically achieved universal abolition. Scholarship on Islam and abolition treats abolition as a later, historically complex development, not an immediate effect of this single incident (Clarence-Smith, 2006). Historical persistence does not refute the existence of Islamic incentives to release people, but it does refute a simplistic equation between such incentives and a completed abolition programme.

8d The possible market incentive objection

A critic can reasonably observe that purchasing people for release may compensate owners and, under some conditions, sustain demand. That is a general question about incentives. The narration does not provide market volumes, prices, replacement behaviour, or evidence that this transaction caused further enslavement. A claim of demonstrated market expansion would exceed the evidence.

The inverse claim would also exceed it: one cannot prove from this purchase alone that slave markets were steadily disappearing. At the level of the connected account, a particular man was emancipated. At the level of a whole economy, the long-term effects of purchases, transfers, manumission, and new enslavement require additional historical evidence. Keeping these levels separate avoids turning a single episode into an unsupported economic model.

Sources for this section: *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 4:92, 5:89, 9:60, 24:33, 58:3, 90:13); al-Sa'di (n.d., commentaries on 24:33 and 90:13); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000); Harper (2011); Glancy (2002); Clarence-Smith (2006).

9 Prophetic precedent and the limits of the commercial ruling

9a The legal precedent is real but specific

The strongest precedent objection is that a prophetic purchase supplies authoritative support for slave transactions rather than merely documenting an unrelated social practice. That observation is correct within Sunni Islamic interpretation. Al-Tirmidhi's discussion after 1239 and al-ʿAbbad's explanation of Abu Dawud 3358 draw a commercial lesson from exchanging one for two. The report was not preserved only as a condemnation of someone else's sale.

However, permission for a particular class of transaction is not a universal command to perform it. The report does not require Muslims to own slaves, demand that enslaved people be Black, establish a compulsory two-for-one price, or authorise any seller to transfer any person. The legal issue concerns an exchange under a recognised ownership relation; it is not a licence to disregard how that relation arose or what duties accompany it.

Al-ʿAbbad discusses the exchange as evidence that unequal numbers in an immediate exchange of this kind are permissible. That commercial conclusion must not be expanded into a doctrine that different people have unequal intrinsic humanity. Equally, it should not be concealed merely because it makes the institution's proprietary character explicit.

9b Selling a free person is a different and condemned act

An authentic report identifies selling a free person and consuming the proceeds as conduct against which Allah will stand as an adversary (al-Bukhari, n.d., report no. 2227). This

condemns selling someone who has the legal status of a free person. It cannot be used as a complete account of every historical rule governing captivity or the acquisition of enslaved status. In particular, the report supplies no authorisation for kidnapping free people for private sale.

The distinction does not, on its own, establish the legitimate origin of each person's status in Muslim 1602: those origins are not narrated. It does establish that the source tradition distinguishes recognised ownership from the criminal sale of a free person. A defence should therefore neither assume that every historical market transaction was lawful nor claim that the report validates kidnapping.

The Qur'an's requirements concerning covenants and undertakings also prevent a free-standing appeal to this incident from resolving questions governed by additional obligations (*The Qur'an: English Meanings*, 1997/2004, 5:1, 16:91). Applying historical legal material to a contemporary situation requires those other sources and the actual circumstances. This study does not manufacture a modern authorisation from a seventh-century narrative.

The focused conclusion is that the hadith provides a real but bounded commercial precedent within its source system. It does not establish an unrestricted, racially defined, or universally obligatory programme of enslavement. The broader objection to the permissibility of any human ownership remains the moral dispute already identified in Section 7.

Sources for this section: Al-Tirmidhi (n.d., report no. 1239 and its accompanying legal discussion); Abu Dawud (n.d., report no. 3358); al-'Abbad (n.d.-a, lesson 386); al-Bukhari (n.d., report no. 2227); *The Qur'an: English Meanings* (1997/2004, 5:1, 16:91).

10 The chapter about animals

10a The objection should not be dismissed without explanation

The consulted presentation of Muslim 1602 places the report under a chapter concerning the sale of animals for animals of the same kind in unequal exchange. The chapter classification accompanies the narration; it is not an utterance attributed to the Prophet. A critic may reasonably ask whether this placement classifies enslaved people, particularly the two Black men, as animals and therefore reveals a denial of their humanity. The proximity is real enough to require explanation; pretending that no such heading exists is not an adequate answer.

Three questions must be separated: who supplied a heading, what legal subject it organises, and whether it expresses a moral judgement about a race. These are not the same question.

10b Headings are not automatically prophetic speech

The chapter headings familiar from many printed editions of Muslim are not all headings authored by Muslim, still less spoken by the Prophet. Al-‘Abbad explains the distinction between Muslim’s organisation of his collection and the more detailed headings supplied by later scholars, including those commonly reproduced from al-Nawawi (al-‘Abbad, n.d.-b). Mentioning that editorial history does not adopt the later commentator as a theological authority.

A qualification is necessary: similar commercial classification also occurs in other collections, including al-Nasa’i 4621 and the heading attached to Ibn Hibban 5027. It would therefore be inadequate to attribute the entire issue to one modern website or one later heading in Muslim. The more substantial answer concerns the legal function of the category.

10c A shared commercial category is not a racial statement

The discussion concerns whether the number of items exchanged must be equal in transactions involving living beings. The juristic category groups cases for a particular commercial question. It does not state that an enslaved human has no soul, moral agency, religious standing, or enforceable claim to proper treatment.

The grouping also does not single out the two Black men. The purchased man is part of the same transaction and commercial analysis, while his colour is unspecified. Consequently, the heading cannot establish that Black people alone were placed outside humanity. The explicit source material on the moral standing of enslaved believers and duties towards them contradicts that reading.

There remains a legitimate descriptive point: placing the transaction in commercial law reflects the proprietary status of enslaved people. That feature cannot be removed through a purely linguistic explanation. It is already the ownership issue addressed in Section 7. The additional allegation that the Prophet verbally called Black people animals is unsupported: the report contains no such utterance, and a chapter heading is not part of his quoted speech.

Sources for this section: Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602 and its collection placement); al-Nasa'i (n.d., report no. 4621 and its chapter context); Ibn Hibban (n.d., report no. 5027); al-'Abbad (n.d.-a, lesson 386; n.d.-b, answer concerning headings in Muslim); al-Bukhari (n.d., report nos. 30, 97).

11 Biblical evidence and a consistent comparative method

11a What comparison can establish

Biblical evidence is relevant when an objection invokes Christian or Jewish scripture as its moral standard, or alleges that the Islamic report is uniquely incompatible with religious

dignity. It is not a substitute for Islamic evidence and cannot, by itself, prove a transaction morally right. An atheist critic is not answered by showing that the Bible also discusses slavery. A Christian critic may also have a developed argument that distinguishes earlier permissions from the ethical implications of the Gospel. Such an argument deserves examination rather than an accusation of hypocrisy based solely on religious identity.

The comparison below uses the Authorised King James Version. Its word ‘servants’ must be interpreted in context: passages expressly referring to ownership, bondage, masters, and release concern slavery, not merely modern employment. At the same time, texts from different periods and legal settings should not be flattened into one undifferentiated system. The purpose is to test particular claims with comparable evidence, especially the distinction between spiritual standing and legal status.

Sources for this subsection: *King James Bible* (n.d.); Glancy (2002); Barclay (1991).

11b Philemon and the strongest Christian response

Philemon provides a particularly relevant New Testament comparison because it concerns a named individual, an apostolic intervention and the language of brotherhood. Paul appeals on behalf of Onesimus, whom he describes as having become dear to him. He speaks of sending him back, asks Philemon to receive him as a beloved brother, offers to account for any debt, and expresses confidence that Philemon will do more than requested (*King James Bible*, n.d., Philemon 1:10–21).

A strong Christian reading is that this language presses towards emancipation, even though it does not contain an unambiguous general command abolishing slavery. The appeal to brotherhood can be understood as placing serious moral pressure on the ownership relation. It

would be unfair to ignore that reading and portray the letter as nothing but an endorsement of permanent bondage.

The limits should be applied symmetrically. Philemon's reception of Onesimus as a brother is not, by itself, documentary proof that a legal act of emancipation occurred. Nor does the letter expressly identify Onesimus as a thief or establish every detail of the familiar runaway-slave reconstruction. Paul's offer concerning any wrong or debt is conditional; it should not be converted into a proven criminal biography.

Barclay's peer-reviewed study examines precisely the difficulty of inferring Paul's position on slave ownership from this short letter (Barclay, 1991). Its interpretative complexity is a reason for care, not a reason to suppress the text. The fair comparison is that both discussions must distinguish stated actions from inferred intentions. In the Islamic report family, emancipation is expressly stated in Ahmad 15000. In Philemon, the implications of Paul's appeal and what happened afterwards must be distinguished from the letter's actual wording.

A contrasting scholarly reconstruction demonstrates why the emancipation reading cannot simply be called unanimous. Roth (2014, pp. 102–105, 128–130) interprets the letter through a proposed practical partnership between Paul and Philemon that would make Paul a co-owner of Onesimus. This is a historical interpretation, not an explicit statement of co-ownership in the letter. The present argument does not adopt it as established fact. Its relevance is methodological: language of fellowship has been read in sharply different ways, and the preferred interpretation must be argued rather than inferred from its religious attractiveness.

This comparison answers a narrow inconsistency: an interpreter should not grant generous implications to Philemon while insisting that Muslim 1602 must be isolated from an explicit connected emancipation report. It does not establish that Paul's situation and the

Prophet's exchange were identical. In particular, Philemon does not describe the transfer of two other enslaved people as consideration, so it cannot settle that objection to the Islamic episode.

Sources for this subsection: *King James Bible* (n.d., Philemon 1:8–21); Barclay (1991, opening discussion); Roth (2014, pp. 102–105, 128–130); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000).

11c Spiritual equality and continuing slavery in the New Testament

Galatians 3:28 gives a powerful statement of unity that includes slave and free.

Nevertheless, other New Testament passages address people as continuing to occupy those statuses. Ephesians 6:5–9 instructs enslaved people and masters, while also restraining masters and affirming divine impartiality. First Timothy 6:1–2 explicitly contemplates believing masters and continued service. First Peter 2:18–20 addresses suffering under harsh masters (*King James Bible*, n.d.).

These texts cannot accurately be described as a universal legal emancipation decree. Conversely, instructions to endure injustice should not automatically be paraphrased as a command to masters to perpetrate injustice. The perspective and imperative of each passage matter. The New Testament material combines religious fellowship, moral restraints, and an existing relation of bondage; a careful reading must preserve all three features.

The comparison is particularly relevant to the allegation that recognising an enslaved believer is internally contradictory. Both traditions contain texts in which religious standing and unfree civil status coexist. This does not prove that such coexistence is morally satisfactory. It shows that spiritual equality cannot be equated, without further argument, with an already enacted abolition of legal status.

First Corinthians 7:21–23 also requires care. Its wording about the opportunity for freedom and its theological claim about belonging to Christ have generated interpretative debate.

The passage should neither be suppressed because it can favour obtaining freedom nor presented as a straightforward historical record that all Christian slaves were released. The strongest comparative argument acknowledges the impulse towards freedom while distinguishing it from a universal rule already implemented.

Sources for this subsection: *King James Bible* (n.d., Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 6:5–9; 1 Timothy 6:1–2; 1 Peter 2:18–20; 1 Corinthians 7:21–23); Barclay (1991); Glancy (2002).

11d The Old Testament includes both permission and protection

Leviticus 25 distinguishes the treatment of impoverished Israelites from the acquisition and inheritance of slaves from surrounding peoples. The relevant passage cannot be reduced to a claim that every form of Biblical servitude lasted only a short fixed term (*King James Bible*, n.d., Leviticus 25:39–46). This matters when a critique alleges that religiously regulated, continuing human ownership was unique to Islamic sources.

The strongest comparison must also include provisions that complicate a simple proslavery portrait. Deuteronomy 23:15–16 prohibits handing over an escaped slave in the situation it addresses and allows the person to dwell without oppression. Whatever further contextual interpretation is adopted, this passage cannot simply be omitted when discussing refuge and return. It raises a genuine comparative question about the treatment of an escaping person; it is not equivalent to the purchase and emancipation sequence in the Islamic account.

The New Testament's condemnation of "menstealers" in the King James wording of 1 Timothy 1:10 must likewise be considered alongside its references to continuing slave ownership. The King James rendering also reflects a translation decision; the broader rendering "slave dealers" raises a question of lexical scope. Neither English expression is a substitute for a full lexical study. The wording cited here should not silently be made to settle the full scope of

the condemned category. A prohibition of acquiring people through condemned practices is not automatically identical to a prohibition of every recognised ownership relation. The same distinction is necessary when reading the Islamic condemnation of selling a free person in Bukhari 2227.

The relevant conclusion is neither that the legal systems are identical nor that one passage disposes of the other tradition. It is that comparison must use the full relevant evidence and distinguish acquisition, ownership, treatment, refuge, and release. A critique that collapses these distinct questions will misread both corpora.

Sources for this subsection: *King James Bible* (n.d., Leviticus 25:39–46; Deuteronomy 23:15–16; 1 Timothy 1:9–10); al-Bukhari (n.d., report no. 2227).

11e The proper interfaith conclusion

Biblical comparison weakens an allegation that the mere presence of regulated slavery uniquely discredits Islam while leaving analogous scriptural material exempt from examination. It does not answer the independent proposition that all traditions should be criticised wherever they permitted slavery. That objection remains logically available to a secular critic and to religious interpreters who argue for a morally authoritative trajectory beyond earlier institutions.

Within the Sunni Islamic method adopted here, the decisive doctrinal authorities remain the Qur'an and authentic prophetic practice. The comparative evidence contributes consistency and historical perspective. It should not be represented as revelation governing Islamic law, as an excuse for mistreatment, or as a judgement about the moral character of present-day Christians or Jews.

Sources for this subsection: *King James Bible* (n.d., the passages analysed above); Muslim (n.d., report no. 1602); Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-b, report no. 15000).

12 Findings and the limits of a conclusive refutation

The findings can be stated without either rejecting the narration or overstating its implications. The table distinguishes factual errors, unsupported inferences, and substantive moral disagreements. Its order is alphabetical by the objection label.

Table 3

Findings on the nine principal objections

Objection	Finding	Decisive evidence or limit
(a) Abolition was not proclaimed.	Correct as a description of this incident; incorrect if expanded into a denial of Islamic encouragement of release.	Qur'an 24:33 and 90:13; Ahmad 15000. Neither this incident nor these verses announce a dated universal abolition programme.
(b) Autonomy was restricted.	Correct within the recognised slave status. The man's intention was nevertheless followed by purchase and emancipation.	Muslim 1602; Ahmad 15000. A defence of the legal framework requires its theological premises.
(c) Commodification occurred.	Correct in the sense of a proprietary transaction; it does not establish that the people lacked recognised humanity or every personal claim.	Muslim 1602; Qur'an 17:70; Bukhari 30. The objection to ownership itself remains substantive.
(d) Emancipation was absent from the report family.	Incorrect. Ahmad 15000 expressly records the purchased man's release.	Ahmad 15000. The release of the two transferred men is not established.
(e) Enslaved people were excluded from faith or every pledge.	Not established. The report concerns a migration pledge and a later enquiry, not a ban on belief or an explicit universal rejection.	Muslim 1602; Bukhari 97.
(f) Human beings were called animals by the Prophet.	Not stated. The allegation confuses collection classification with prophetic speech and does not establish a specifically racial judgement.	The report's wording; al-'Abbad on headings and the commercial issue. Proprietary classification remains real.

Objection	Finding	Decisive evidence or limit
(g) Racial inferiority determined a two-for-one human value.	Unsupported. The purchased man's colour and the price rationale are unknown; a negotiated exchange is not a universal racial tariff.	Muslim 1602; Qur'an 49:13; Muslim 2564c.
(h) Religious identity fixed a two-for-one human value.	Unsupported. The transferred men's religion is not supplied and no numerical spiritual valuation is announced.	Muslim 1602.
(i) Slave trading received a prophetic precedent.	A bounded commercial precedent is recognised in Sunni Islamic interpretation. An unrestricted duty or licence to kidnap does not follow.	Tirmidhi 1239; Abu Dawud 3358; Bukhari 2227; al-'Abbad's commentary.

The strongest source-based defence is therefore precise rather than absolute. It rejects racial arithmetic unsupported by the account, distinguishes religious commitment from freedom of migration, restores the explicit emancipation evidence, and separates chapter headings from prophetic speech. It also recognises what the account actually contains: a transaction within an institution of slavery.

The remaining disagreement concerns whether a divinely authorised system may recognise that institution under specified conditions. The Sunni Islamic affirmative answer is theological and normative. A critic's categorical rejection of human ownership is also normative. Historical evidence can clarify the actions and remove false premises, but it cannot make the foundational disagreement disappear by changing the wording of the source. An academically credible refutation is strongest when it establishes exactly what has been refuted and does not claim victory over an objection it has merely redescribed.

Sources for this section: The primary references identified in the table and the preceding analyses. The table consolidates findings rather than introducing additional evidence.

Appendix A Verification record and research limitations

A1 Source access and the status of the evidence

The study uses the canonical Arabic texts as reproduced in the identified electronic sources. For al-Bukhari, Muslim and the four other collections available on Sunnah.com, Table 1 and Table 2 use the site's main reference identifiers. For Ahmad, the inspected reproductions of 14772, 15000 and 15001 retain the al-Risalah numbering; the latter two reproduce the relevant chains and editorial annotations. Ibn Hibban 5027 is identified in the arranged collection, with its edition locator of Volume 11, page 401. The published edition descriptions identify the numbering system; they are not a claim that every relevant printed page or manuscript was personally inspected.

The electronic access entries are Ahmad ibn Hanbal (n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c) and Ibn Hibban (n.d.). A shared electronic ancestor remains possible: agreement between online reproductions is not automatically independent manuscript corroboration. The authentication of the emancipation variant is attributed to the reproduced editorial assessment, rather than represented as a newly completed specialist investigation. Section 4 states the positive grounds for the reading and the limit of this verification.

The doctrinal commentary is confined to the relevant explanations by al-‘Abbad, Ibn Baz and al-Sa‘di, together with the identified compiler assessments and the attributed al-Albani grading. A hosting website supplies access; its unrelated content is not adopted as evidence. Other narrations appearing within a consulted lecture, ruling or editorial note are excluded from the argument. Bibliographical metadata and religious authentication are different categories of evidence.

Biblical passages were checked in the King James text reproduced by Bible Gateway. The reference list now identifies that consulted text rather than retaining an Oxford print edition merely because the earlier document listed it. The particular electronic text's publication date is not supplied; its citation therefore uses n.d. This avoids confusing the first publication of the translation with the date or textual form of the consulted electronic version.

The historical works are used for their stated scope and broad contextual findings. Publisher descriptions, accessible extracts and bibliographical records do not amount to complete examination of every book. Accordingly, no detailed demographic estimate or contested page-specific finding is asserted on that basis. Barclay's opening discussion supports the limited claim that interpreting Philemon is contested. Roth's accessible published article supplies a specifically identified alternative reconstruction; its introductory and concluding argument is cited by printed page. No source's availability or prestige substitutes for direct support of the proposition attributed to it.

A2 Substantive corrections in this review

The revision separates the study's theological premises from historical corroboration and from external ethical evaluation. It adds explicit research questions, definitions, corpus-selection limits and tests of inference. The numerical exchange is not treated as proof of either racial contempt or its complete absence. The status of the emancipation variant is qualified without suppressing its express wording. The argument now directly addresses circularity and distinguishes an internal inference of lawful prophetic conduct from an unrecorded history of each person's enslavement.

The Muslim 1602 translation now follows its Arabic concluding question without silently adding the free-or-enslaved alternative stated in Ahmad 15000. Both translations are identified as

prepared for this study, and neither incorporates wording from the other. References to electronic reproductions replace citations that could suggest direct consultation of a print volume. The earlier expression “Muslim (2007, Hadith 1602)” identified a publication year and an authorised report; it was not evidence from an additional hadith. No unauthorised hadith has been added to remedy a gap.

A3 Limits

The closed corpus does not recover the two transferred men’s consent, origins, household circumstances or subsequent welfare. It does not identify the purchased man’s colour, a cash valuation, a racial tariff or the available alternatives to the transaction. No independent contemporary external account of the exchange has been established here. The theological defence is explicitly conditional on its stated premises and does not purport to prove those premises from this transaction alone.

The manuscript was developed with generative AI assistance for substantive drafting, source finding, comparison, editing and document preparation. It is not certified as independently peer reviewed, and no statement is made that the named author has personally inspected every source. These disclosures identify the work actually undertaken.

Sources for this appendix: The primary-text access entries and scholarly works in the reference list; the specific findings and locators in Sections 2, 4 and 11. This appendix describes the verification undertaken, not additional historical evidence.

References

Reference conventions: Entries use APA author–date conventions and identifiable primary-text locators. Dates identify the edition or electronic source consulted, not the date of the narrated event. The online King James text is cited as undated; no unverified original-edition date is assigned to that particular electronic text. Undated electronic collections are cited as n.d. Arabic titles are presented with an English meaning immediately before the quoted transliteration. This is an explicitly declared English-first adaptation to standard APA title presentation; author–date citations, source identification and reference-list structure otherwise follow APA 7 conventions. The English meaning is descriptive where no published English title is being quoted. URLs and DOIs below are plain text, without embedded hyperlink fields. Numbering follows Section 2a; alternate report identifiers are not introduced. The cited classical books and scriptural passages are the primary sources. Websites hosting their texts, and repositories hosting scholars’ lectures, are access locations. The scholarly historical works are secondary sources. References to a critical edition’s annotations identify editorial judgements, not a separate doctrinal authority.

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A Sunni Islamic Refutation of Objections to the Slave Exchange Narration: Race, Slavery, Emancipation and Human Dignity

Dangers of Sufism

Demolishing the Delusions of Intermediaries Between the Servant and His Lord: A

Refutation of the Doctrine of Seeking Rescue “al-istighathah” from the Dead and a Response to the Doubts of Extremist Sufis

Ten signs of goodness for which it may be hoped that their possessor is close to Allah despite shortcomings and sins.

Clarifying the Distinction Between the Four Sunni Islamic Legal Schools of Thought

(“Madhhabs”) and Deviant Sects: A Necessary Theological Delineation in an Age of Confusion

Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him) – Dead or Alive in the Worldly Sense?

Refuting the lies and responding to the slanders of the Sufis, polytheists, and grave worshippers against Imam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, may Allah have mercy upon him.

A quick comparison between the corrupt Shiite religion “Shiism” and the corrupt Sufi religion “Sufism”

Setting Up Intermediaries is a Form of Shirk by Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan

Permissible and prohibited Tawassul=Supplication in Islam- Protect your faith from shirk (Polytheism)

Tawassul: Seeking help from prophets and saints?

Idol Worship, the Unforgivable Sin in Islam (if maintained until death)

Wrongdoings Of the Deviant Sect of Sufi Tijaniyyah

Who was Ibn Arabi?

Understanding Sufism in Islam

Jalaluddin Rumi (died 672H) was one of the famous Sufis who followed the path of

Muhiuddin Ibn ‘Arabi – the Sufi – in his belief of Wahdat Al-Wujood (i.e. Allah and His creation are one being)

Asking about Sufism and the Jamaa’at al-Tablighi.

Lightning Strike on Sufis and Shi’as

The Raafidis=Shi'a are undoubtedly kuffaar=non-Muslims=Out of the fold of Islam for
four reasons

Ruling on Rejecting a verse in the Quran or Rejects an Authentic hadith

Temporary fixed-time Mut'ah marriage and refutation of those Shi'a=Raafidis who permit
it

Beating female slave for covering up Umar ibn Al-Khattab RA?

Catastrophes in the books of Shia

Why confessions are not allowed in Islam?

Do I confess?

5 Conditions to Get Your Repentance Accepted

Are the Sufi shaykhs really in contact with Allah?

Warning Disbeliever Kafir Sheikh Imran Hosein deceives Muslims claiming to be
Muslim