



"One Ark, One Humanity"

Clergy Beyond Borders

"Human Rights in Judaism,
Christianity and Islam"

Washington, DC
December 2009

"Slavery and Human Trafficking"

Remarks of Dr. Azizah al-Hibri,
founder of KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights
Professor, University of Richmond Law School

Two video presentations:

Islamic Responses to Trafficking, part 1 -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMRiNthYh4U>

Islamic Responses to Trafficking, part 2 -- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FhV_fCsr3A

More details and full podcast – including presentations of David Batstone, Not for Sale Campaign, and Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, Rabbis for Human Rights-North America -- at ClergyBeyondBorders.org.

Selections from Dr. al-Hibri's "Part 1" remarks:

"How fundamental a moral failure is this? I am talking to you, because in all Abrahamic religions, there is no question that this is a moral failure...."

We were talking in my organization [KARAMAH] -- what can we do about this problem, because we understand as jurists that this is not acceptable in Islam.

"So what we need to worry about is not only putting a stop to sexual trafficking but also to picking up these women who think that their life has ended, who think that God has forsaken them, who think that they are guilty -- they're responsible for what happened to them, not somebody else -- and educate them and help them cross that condition...."

"The Qur'an is very clear that you cannot force people into prostitution."

In her presentation, Dr. al-Hibri discusses implications of the concept of "*wilayah* [taking care of, guardianship]" in Islam. To stop trafficking, we must address the issue both in terms of the "supply" side of trafficking – economic and social conditions forcing women into prostitution – and in terms of the "demand" side.

Selections from Dr. al-Hibri's "Part 2" remarks:

"Part of what brought us to this moment is compartmentalization, separation of who you are Monday through whenever your weekend is and then your religious week... by raising the wall of separation of church and state too high we've made it sort of unacceptable for God to be in the public square with us....[Readers of all see faiths, see: "On Being a Muslim Corporate Lawyer" on www.KARAMAH.org]

You cannot just divide yourself into two entities: an entity which works in the public square Monday through Friday (or whenever your weekend is) and is secular, and a person of faith on the weekend. Because when you do that, you're not going to look at Pirelli [tires-- discussed by fellow panelist David Batstone as a slightly more expensive product from a company with a non-slavery commitment]. You're going to look at the one which is \$5 lower, because what counts is the bottom line..."

"Somehow this community, this society has to come together with religious leaders of all traditions... come together and voice their morality and bring back these issues into the public square."

Regarding Islamic jurisprudential issues, including "temporary marriage," see "The Nature of The Islamic Marriage" on KARAMAH.org

"We should have the moral courage to stand up -- it might not be expedient in terms of the secular world -- but you have to decide where your priorities lie, what is your main allegiance. We in Islam believe in a single God, we believe in *tawhid*, and what *tawhid* means is that we do not associate partners with God. All the Abrahamic religions do this. But when you fail to do something out of expedience, then you're succumbing to another partner with God, another set of values, another force."

Please visit www.ClergyBeyondBorders.org for more materials from the Dec. 2009 conference. Connect with others interested in faith-based approaches to slavery and trafficking issues.

Please visit www.KARAMAH.org for more details on Dr. al-Hibri's work and writing. A host of resources on related topics are available.