

WHAT'S WRONG WITH SLAVERY AND RAPE?

Bill Donohue comments on media reaction to a speech given by Georgetown professor Jonathan Brown on February 7:

Two weeks ago today, a professor from Georgetown University publicly rose to the defense of slavery and rape, and not a single major media outlet—with the exception of a blogger on the Washington Post website and a brief posting on foxnews.com—has said a word about it. The absence of outrage is not hard to figure out: Jonathan Brown's defense was limited to Islam.

Brown, a convert to Islam, holds an endowed chair in Islamic studies at Georgetown. The Jesuit-run institution has a wealthy benefactor in Saudi Arabia, a nation which bans Christianity. How sweet.

What did Georgetown get from this arrangement? Money, and a lot of it. Twelve years ago, Saudi Arabia wrote a check to the Jesuit-run institution for \$20 million; it went to support the school's Center for Muslim Christian Understanding, run by Brown. And what did Saudi Arabia get from this peculiar "understanding"? Legitimacy.

The fruit from this decayed tree is now apparent. Georgetown now employs a tenured professor who defends slavery and rape, provided the slavemasters and rapists are Muslims. This is apparently Georgetown's idea of diversity. It also shows how phony the school is. Why all the handwringing about Georgetown's ownership of American slaves in the 19th century when it employs defenders of slavery today?

Brown's position was not made in the heat of debate. If anything his comments were well prepared: they were delivered at the Islamic Institute for Islamic Thought. After being

criticized by some, he tried to walk it back, offering a lame Tweet that meant nothing.

“As a category, as a conceptual category that exists throughout states and trans-historically,” Brown said clumsily, “there’s no such thing as slavery.” It gets better. “I don’t think you can talk about slavery in Islam until you realize that there is no such thing as slavery.”

It is not certain what Brown would say to slaves in Mauritania and Somalia today—they are owned by their Muslim masters. Would he tell them to stop promoting fake news? Would he tell them that slavery is a mirage? Would he tell them that they are delusional? Better yet, would he switch places with them?

Brown is also incompetent. If slavery doesn’t exist in Muslim-run nations, why the need to justify it? “Slavery cannot just be treated as a moral evil in and of itself,” he opined. He really means it. “I don’t think it’s morally evil to own somebody because we own lots of people all around us.”

(Who he owns he did not say, but perhaps the Southern Poverty Law Center will look into it. Maybe I’ll convert to Islam and see if I can buy him. I’ll use my credit card—Mastercard for the Master.)

When someone in the audience challenged Brown, he became indignant, as well as inconsistent. “The fact that there was slavery is wrong [thus did he contradict his remark that there was no such thing in Islam]. Okay. If you’re a Muslim, the prophet of God...had slaves. He had slaves. There’s no denying that. Are you more morally mature than the prophet of God? No, you are not.”

One would hope that all of us are more morally mature than Muhammad. After all, he was not only a slavemaster and an advocate of violence, he consummated his marriage with his bride Aisha when she was nine years old. That’s what we call rape.

Speaking of which, Brown went on to say that non-consensual sex—it's called rape—is okay with him, at least if the offenders are adherents to Islam. He took aim at the Western notion of "consent," maintaining that "It's very hard to have this discussion because we think of, let's say in the modern United States, the *sine qua non* of morally correct sex is consent."

Continuing his defense of rape, Brown criticized Americans for making a big deal about individual rights. "We fetishize the idea of autonomy to the extent that we forget, again who's really free? Are we really autonomous people?" In other words, since none of us is really autonomous, the difference between us and a rape victim is more contrived than real.

Brown and Georgetown would be on the front page of every newspaper in the nation if he had justified Christians enslaving and raping Muslims. It would be the lead news story of the night on television, and the Internet would explode. But because Brown was justifying slavery and rape committed by Muslims—whose real life victims are Christians and Jews—there's hardly a peep.

This is moral relativism gone off the cliff. It is a direct consequence of multiculturalism run amuck. On campuses and newsrooms across the country, the Judeo-Christian ethos and heritage has been slashed and burned beyond belief, the rubble of which is Professor Jonathan Brown, Georgetown University, and the media.