



The first question of Fatwa no. (7150):

Q 1: It is well-known that Islam is revealed to provide freedom and liberty for people. The concept of liberty in Islam was correctly defined by an insightful scholar who said: It is to be a servant to Allah (Exalted be He) and a freeman to other than Him. Please briefly clarify for us the concept of `Ubudiyyah (Worship) in Islam and how the servant can be freed from his master and other relevant issues. Please also clarify the wisdom behind the fact that the Messenger (peace be upon him) took Anas as his servant and `Umar took a servant boy.

A: The meaning of worship in Islam is: "Submission to Allah (Exalted be He) by obeying His Commands, leaving what He has prohibited, abiding by His Limits, seeking His Pleasure, hoping for His Reward and fearing His Anger and Punishment." This is the true meaning of worship and it is never to be for anyone except Allah (Exalted be He). However, slavery is

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a casual matter that may occur due to many reasons related to someone's Kufr (disbelief). Therefore, Muslims could capture the disbelieving slaves during Jihad (striving in the cause of Allah), meaning, through battles fought between them and the disbelievers.

A slave can be freed in many ways and these ways have been explained by scholars in books under the chapter on 'Manumission of Slaves'. Slaves may be set free as an individual's desire to draw closer to Allah (Exalted be He), as an expiation for unintentional killing or Zihar (a man likening his wife to an unmarriageable relative) or the like. However, it is also permissible to have a servant as it was stated in the Hadith narrated on the authority of Anas and others. The wisdom behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) taking servants was to fulfill his needs and to help him with his personal requirements as well as to learn from his subtle morals and ethics, but this does not contradict the necessity of worshipping none but Allah Alone (Exalted be He).

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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