

NAZR (VOW, SOLEMN PLEDGE), QASAM (OATH) AND 'AHD (COVENANT, PROMISE)

NAZR (VOW/SOLEMN PLEDGE)

Nazr is a vow, a solemn pledge, of an act of virtue, as binding oneself in gratitude for some special favor prayed for. It is a solemn promise to Allah (SWT). The type of pledge or promise depends upon the intention of the person at the time of making *Nazr*.

TYPES OF NAZR (VOW/SOLEMN PLEDGE)

- ❖ ***Nazr-e-Birr*** - It is called *Nazrul-Mujazat* (Shukr, thanks). If a particular wish is fulfilled, then to undertake to do an act of virtue.
- ❖ ***Nazr-e-Istidfa Li-Balliyyah*** - *Nazr* for removal of hardship or difficulty.
- ❖ ***Nazr-e-Zajr*** - *Nazr* for reprimanding oneself on committing a sin. For example, if he/she backbites someone, then one undertakes as an act of obligation to pray two Rak'ats prayer and seek forgiveness from Allah (SWT).
- ❖ ***Nazr-e-Tabarru*** - *Nazr* without any of the above conditions. For example, *Nazr* to bind oneself to pray *Tahajjud* prayers (*Salatul-Layl*) during the month of Ramadhan, for the sake of Allah (SWT).

RULES REGARDING NAZR (VOW/SOLEMN PLEDGE)

- ❖ Vow means a solemn pledge making it obligatory upon oneself to do some good act, or to refrain from doing an act which it is better to avoid for the sake of, or for the pleasure of Allah (SWT).
- ❖ While making a vow, a solemn declaration should be pronounced. It is not necessary that the declaration should be in Arabic. If a person says: "When the patient recovers from his ailment, it will be obligatory upon me to pay \$10 to a poor man, for the sake of Allah (SWT)", his vow will be in order.

- ❖ It is necessary that the person making a vow is *Baligh* and sane, and makes the vow with free will and intention. If he has been compelled to make a vow, or if he makes it owing to excitement, without any intention or choice, his vow is not in order.
- ❖ If a person makes a vow to pay from the wealth over which he has no right of disposal or discretion, the vow will not be valid.
- ❖ If a wife makes a vow with the permission of her husband, he cannot cancel her vow, or prevent or stop her from fulfilling her vow.
- ❖ If a child (irrespective of gender) makes a vow, with or without the permission of the father, the child should fulfill the vow. However, if the father or mother disallows the child to fulfill the vow, the vow will be deemed void.
- ❖ A person can make a vow only for an act which is possible for him to fulfill. If, for example, a person is not capable of traveling up to Karbala on foot, and he makes a vow that he will go there on foot, his vow will not be in order.
- ❖ If a person makes a vow that he will perform a *Haraam* or *Makrooh* act, or that he would refrain from a *Wajib* or *Mustahab* act, his vow is not valid.
- ❖ A vow should always be performed according to the original intention. For instance, if one keeps a vow to give charity or recite prayers on a particular day, then it should be performed on that particular day. If he performs these acts before or after that day it will not do. Also, if he makes a vow that he will give *Sadaqa* when a patient recovers, but gives away before the recovery of the patient, it will not do.
- ❖ If a person makes a vow that he will observe fast on a particular day, he should observe fast on that very day; and if he does not observe fast on that day intentionally, he should, besides observing the *Qadha* for that fast, also give *Kaffarah* for it. And the *Kaffarah* applicable in this case is he should set a slave free, or should fully feed ten needy persons, or provide them with adequate clothes. And if he is not able to perform these acts, he should fast for three consecutive days. If a

person who made the vow could not fast on that particular day because of being on a journey, illness, or in the case of a woman, being in the state of *Haidh*, or for any other valid excuse, then he will observe only *Qadha* of that fast, and he will not have to give *Kaffarah*.

- ❖ If a person makes a vow that he will give *Sadaqa* to a particular poor person, he cannot give it to another poor person, and if that poor person dies, he should on the basis of recommended precaution, give the *Sadaqa* to the deceased's heirs.
- ❖ A vow made by a person should be such that it is possible for him to fulfill when making the vow. However, when the person becomes incapable of acting upon it at the time of fulfilling it will become null and void from the time the person became incapable of acting upon it, provided that he has not disabled himself deliberately.

QASAM (OATH)

RULES REGARDING QASAM (OATH)

01. The conditions for validity of an oath are:-
 - a) A person who takes an oath should be *Baligh* and sane, and should do so with free will and clear intention. Hence, an oath by a minor, an insane person, a drunk person, or by a person who has been forced to take an oath, will not be valid. Similarly, if he takes an oath involuntarily, or unintentionally, in a state of excitement, the oath will be void.
 - b) An oath taken for the performance of a *Haraam* or *Makrooh* act is not valid. Similarly, an oath for renouncing (giving up) a *Wajib* or *Mustahab* act is also void.
 - c) The oath must be sworn by one of those names of the Almighty Allah which are exclusively used for Him, such as 'Allah'. And even if he swears by a name which is used for other beings also,

but is used so extensively for Him, that when any person utters that name one is reminded of Him Alone, for example, if he swears by the name *Khaliq* (the Creator) and *Raziq* (the Bestower), the oath will be in order. In fact, if he uses other names or attributes of Allah, which do not remind of Him, but give that connotation when used during an oath, like *Samee* ' (All Hearing) or *Baseer* (All Seeing), even then the oath will be valid.

- d) The oath should be uttered in words. For example, if he says "By Allah, when the patient recovers from his ailment, I will pay \$10 to a poor man, for the sake of Allah (SWT)", his oath will be in order.
 - e) It should be possible for the person taking an oath to fulfill it. And if he was able to fulfill the oath when he took it, but became incapable of fulfilling it later, the oath is voided from the time he became incapable of fulfilling it, provided that he did not disable himself deliberately. And the same rule applies if fulfilling one's vow, oath, or covenant, involves unbearable hardship.
02. If a person does not intentionally fulfill his oath, he should give *Kaffara* for it. The *Kaffarah* applicable in this case is he should free a slave, or feed ten needy persons satisfactorily, or provide them with adequate clothes. And if he is not able to perform any of these acts, he should fast for three consecutive days.
 03. If the father forbids his son to take an oath, or the husband forbids his wife to take an oath, their respective oath will not be valid.
 04. If a son takes an oath without the permission of his father, or a wife takes an oath without the permission of her husband, the father or the husband can nullify the oath.
 05. If a person does not fulfill his oath because of forgetfulness or helplessness, he is not liable for *Kaffarah*.

06. It is *Makrooh* to take an oath to affirm that what one is telling is the truth when actually it is the truth. It is *Haraam* and greatly sinful to take an oath on a lie. However, it is not objectionable to do so to save oneself or another Muslim from torture and oppression. In fact, it is obligatory to do so in certain extreme cases.
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'AHD (COVENANT, PLEDGE, PROMISE)

RULES REGARDING 'AHD (COVENANT, PLEDGE, PROMISE)

- When a person makes a covenant with Allah, that if his particular lawful need is fulfilled, he will perform a good act, it is necessary for him to fulfill the covenant. Similarly, if he makes a covenant without any need only just to perform a good act, it is obligatory upon him to fulfill the covenant.
 - As in the case of vow, a formal declaration should be pronounced in the case of covenant (*'Ahd*) as well. All covenants which fall within the category specified in Rule No. 1 (a to e) related to oath, are applied here and ought to be fulfilled.
 - If a person does not fulfill the covenant made by him, he should give a *Kaffarah* of either feeding sixty poor persons, or fasting consecutively for two months, or freeing a slave.
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