



19- Clarification of the ruling on vows

Q: Is it lawful to ask Allah to grant the reward of a vow to Imams? For example, is it permissible to say: "I make this vow for the sake of Allah Whom I ask to give its reward to so-and- so?"

A: This is a broad question. Vows are of two types: The first type is the Shar'y (Islamically lawful) vow which is made with the intention of getting closer to Allah. Making vows is basically commanded against. This is based on the reported Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: *(Anyone who makes a vow by which they intend to obey Allah, must obey Him (i.e., fulfill their vow), and anyone who makes a vow by which they intend to disobey Allah, must not disobey Him (i.e., must not fulfill their vow).)* Thus, the act itself of making vows must be abandoned by a Mu'min (believer). When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked about vow-making, he replied: *(Do not make vows, for a vow prevent nothing from the Decree of Allah. Rather, they merely cause a miser to give)* (Agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) According to another Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade making vows and said: *(It (a vow) does not bring about good, but only causes a miser to give)* This indicates that the act of binding oneself by a vow must not be done, because once a vow is made, it becomes an obligation which must be fulfilled. It may be difficult for a Muslim to fulfill it; therefore, they must refrain from making vows. If, however, a Muslim makes a vow by which they intend to obey Allah, they must fulfill it.

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Allah (Glorified be He) highly praises those who fulfill their vows in the Qur'an, saying: *(They (are those who) fulfil (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil will be wide-spreading.)* In another Ayah (Qur'anic verse), Allah (Glorified be He) says: *(And whatever you spend for spendings (e.g., in Sadaqah - charity for Allâh's Cause) or whatever vow you make, be sure Allâh knows it all. And for the Zâlimûn (wrong-doers) there are no helpers.)* The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated: *(Anyone who makes a vow by which they intend to obey Allah, must obey Him (i.e., fulfill their vow), and anyone who makes a vow by which they intend to disobey Allah, must not disobey Him (i.e., must not fulfill their vow).)* For example, a Muslim who vows to fast three days for the sake of Allah, or to fast the month of Sha'ban, or Mondays and Thursdays of every week, must fulfill such vows of obedience. The same applies if a Muslim vows to offer Salat-ul-Duha (supererogatory Prayer after sunrise), or to offer two or four Rak'ahs (units of Prayer) on a particular night. The same also holds true with regard to vowing to give charity to the poor or the needy. They all come under vows of obedience. If a Muslim intends to make a vow as a form of charity on behalf of one's father or mother, it will be according to their intention. The same applies to making a vow on behalf of Imam Malik, or any other scholar; it will be according to the intention made. However, something must be carefully considered here. It is prohibited to make a vow for the sake of other than Allah, a custom which is practiced by worshippers of the graves or the dead. Therefore, it is prohibited to make any vow on condition that Allah cures a patient, and in return the vow-taker shall offer a certain portion of food dedicated to Shaykh Al-Badawy; or a certain amount of money or candles dedicated to Shaykh `Abdul-Qadir Al-

Jilany. This is an act of Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) because vows are acts of worship which must be directed to Allah alone.

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Allah (Glorified be He) says: [﴿And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.﴾](#) And: [﴿And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone \(abstaining from ascribing partners to Him\)﴾](#) Allah also says: [﴿And I \(Allâh\) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me \(Alone\).﴾](#) It is prohibited to make vows to, or intend to draw near to shaykhs, occupants of graves, jinn, or planets. This is a form of worshipping other than Allah. Scholars have stated that this is considered an act of Shirk, because the person seeks through it to draw close to other than Allah, like dead people, jinn, dead shaykhs or others, which is impermissible. However, there is nothing wrong if a person intends to draw close to Allah by vowing to donate food as charity from oneself, or on behalf of parents, or other loved ones, for the sake of Allah Alone (Exalted be He). Nevertheless, it is best to refrain from making vows because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) forbade it. It is also disliked to make vows, even though one's intention is to offer an act of obedience for the sake of Allah. However, if one dedicates their vow to other than Allah in the belief that a particular shaykh will heal a person, or bring back an absent person because of the status of honor Allah has conferred on him, this is an act of Shirk. Similarly, a vow made to distribute food or slaughter a calf or a sheep for the sake of Shaykh Al-Badawy, or `Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilany, or Al-Disoky, or any other whom Sufis venerate, is prohibited. It is also prohibited to make vows to the jinn, or seek their help or the help of the dead.

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It is prohibited to say: "O master so and so, support me, cure my sick child, return my loved one, or you are sufficient for me, I am in your protection." Such are practices of grave worshippers which are null and void. It is also prohibited to vow to drink alcohol or commit Zina (premarital sexual intercourse and/or adultery) or conduct Riba (usury/interest) based-transactions. These vows are intended to disobey Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: [﴿...anyone who makes a vow by which they intend to disobey Allah, must not disobey Him \(i.e., must not fulfill their vow\).﴾](#) Scholars held two divergent opinions as to whether a Kaffarah (expiation) is required for making these vows. The most preponderant opinion is that a Kaffarah is required for vows made with the intention of disobeying Allah. Therefore, one who vows to commit an act of disobedience must not fulfill their vow and instead must offer Kaffarah for breaking an oath. Some Hadiths have been reported to the effect that one must not fulfill a vow by which they intend to commit an act of disobedience. Instead one must offer Kaffarah. Those who make such prohibited vows must turn to Allah in repentance. Thus, one is required to offer Kaffarah for that oath if they vow to drink alcohol, commit Zina or beat someone unjustly. These vows are condemned as invalid and sinful. They must not be fulfilled. The most correct opinion is that a Kaffarah for an oath is required in similar circumstances.

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Source: Fatwas of Nur `Ala Al-Darb