

Mukarram Advice

Baitul Mukarram

10th Rabiul Akhir 1441

Issue 4

8th December 2019

Taking Oaths

We will give just a very basic explanation of promises, oaths and vows, just to understand the difference between them.

PROMISES

A promise is simply a statement that one will do or refrain from something in the future.

There is no compensation due for breaking it.

Although it is sinful to make a promise with the intention of breaking it.

E.g. "I promise I will buy this car"



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OATHS

An oath is a verbal statement joined with a phrase of swearing, such as "By Allah" or "I swear by Allah."

There are three types of oaths:

1. *The Engulfing Oath (YAMIN GHAMUS),*

Which is to swear by Allah that one did or did not do something in the past, while deliberately lying about it.

This is a major sin, so huge that no compensation is due, since compensation is not enough to lift the sin.

Rather, one must make sincere repentance and seek Allah's forgiveness.

E.g. "Wal lahi, By Allah, I bought this car."

2. *The Enacted Oath (YAMIN MUN`AQIDA),*

Which is to swear to do or not do something in the future.

If one breaks this type of oath, compensation is due.

E.g. "Wal lahi, By Allah, I will buy this car."

The compensation is to

- feed ten poor persons (2 meals each),
- or to clothe them (1 garment each),
- or to give them the equivalent monetary value.

- If one is unable to do that, one must fast three uninterrupted days.

3. *The Mistaken Oath (YAMIN LAGHW),*

Which is to swear about something in the past, thinking that it is as such, while in reality it is not as such.

No compensation is due, and we hope that Allah will not take the person to account for it.

E.g. "Wal lahi, By Allah, that man bought this car."

VOWS

A vow is to verbally swear that if something happens, one will do some act of worship, like praying, fasting, giving charity etc.

E.g. "By Allah, If my son gets well, I will fast 5 days."

If that thing does take place, then it is Wajib for him to fulfil the vow by doing that act of worship.

Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah Radiyallahu Anhu reported that Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

"There are three signs of a hypocrite:

1. whenever he speaks, he lies;
2. whenever he makes a promise, he breaks it;
3. and whenever he is trusted, he betrays his trust."

Sayyidina Ibn Mas'ud Radiyallahu Anhu reported that Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

"Anyone who swears an oath to get hold of some property belonging to a Muslim to which he has no right will meet Allah and find Allah angry with him."

Sayyidina Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As Radiyallahu Anhu reported that Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

"The major sins are,

- associating something else with Allah,
- disobedience to parents,
- murder
- and making false oaths."

In one other report, a Bedouin came to Sayyidina Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam and said,

"O, Messenger of Allah, what are the major sins?"

He Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

- "Associating something else with Allah."

The Bedouin then asked,

"Then what?"

He Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

- "Making false oaths."

The Bedouin asked,

"What is a false oath."

He Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said,

"That by which the property of a Muslim is stolen,"

(Meaning that someone lies in the oath.)

Allah Almighty says,

" Allah does not hold you accountable for your laghw (ineffectual) oaths, but He does hold you accountable for the oath with which you have bound yourself.

Its compensation is to feed ten poor persons at an average of what you feed your family with,

or to clothe them, or to free a slave.

However, if someone cannot afford this, he has to fast for three days.

That is compensation for the oaths that you have sworn.

Take care of your oaths."
