

Nazr: A Vow with Allah to Be Fulfilled

Imam Hasan (a) and Imam Husain (a) were still very young probably in their fifth to sixth year of age. Once, both of them fell sick and their parents, Imam Ali (a) and Bibi Fatima (a) were grieved to see them in unhealthy condition.

The Holy Prophet Prophet Muhammad (S) came to see them. He loved them very much and on seeing them sick, he also was much grieved. They all prayed for their quick recovery. The Holy Prophet suggested to the parents to keep a Nazr for the restoration of the health of the children. Thereupon, Imam Ali (a) and Bibi Fatima (a) made a Nazr (a vow) that they would fast three days upon the recovery of the children.

Allah accepted their prayers and granted their Nazr. Both the children recovered from their illness. Imam Ali (a) and Bibi Fatima (a) decided to fast in fulfilment of the Nazr. When the two children came to know of this, they too decided to fast. The maid-servant in the house, Bibi Fizza, who loved the children very much also decided to join in the fast on the happy occasion of their recovery.

On the first day of the fasting, Imam Ali (a) went out in the morning and brought 3 sa'a wool for spinning and 3 sa'a barley as its wages. Bibi Fatima (a) spun 1 sa'a wool, then ground 1 sa'a barley, and prepared five loaves of bread. In the evening, all of them gathered to break the fast and each of them had a loaf placed before him.

When they heard the Adhan (call to prayers), they prayed and sat to break the fast. Suddenly, a poor man knocked on their door and asked for something to eat. All of them, one by one, passed their loaves to the beggar. There was no other food in the house, so all of them had to be content with water. They went to bed and slept without food. The next day they fasted again in fulfilment of the Nazr, but yet with almost empty stomach.

Second day, Bibi Fatima (a) again spun 1 sa'a of wool, ground 1 sa'a of barley, and again baked 5 loaves. Again they sat together to break the fast with the usual one loaf of bread for each. As they were about to break the fast, an orphan came all of a sudden to their door and asked for food saying he was very hungry. Although the inmates of the house were themselves hungry for two days, they were happy

to feed the boy. Everyone gave his or her bread to the orphan. They again slept without any food.

On the third day as they sat down to break the fast, a prisoner knocked at their door asking for something to eat. Although the people of the house of the Holy Prophet had been suffering from near starvation for the last three days, they again gave away all the bread to the prisoner and contented themselves only with water for the third day in succession.

It was in appreciation of these sacrifices, that Almighty Allah revealed the whole 'Surah al-Dahr', which contains, among other things, the following Ayat:

***“They (Ahlul Bait) fulfil vow and fear a day the evil of which shall be spreading far and wide”
(Surah Al-Dahr, 76: Verse7)***

This is how Ahlul Bait, the people of the household of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), kept and fulfilled their their Nazr (vow). They also set example of sacrifice by feeding the poor and caring for those who were in need.

The tradition of Nazr is a very old one. During the time of Bani Israel, centuries back, in the name of God, people used to present their sons at Baitul-Muqaddas, in the service of the pious people there, They used to stay within the walls of the mosques.

Once Imran, the father of Hazrat Maryam (Mary) got the good news that Almighty would bless him with a child. The child would be so gifted that with the command of God, he would cure the sick, restore sight to the blind, bring life back unto the dead and he shall also be a Prophet of God. When Bibi Hanna, the mother of Hazrat Maryam, heard this news, she vowed that she would free the child from the worldly attachments (to spend life in the service of Allah). The following Ayat in the Qur'an refers to this event:

***“When said (Hanna) the wife of Imran, 'My Lord! Verily I have vowed to thee what is in my womb to be (dedicated) for Thee (exclusively for Thy service) freed (from all worldly responsibilities), therefore accept (it) from me; Verily Thou Art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing”.* (Sura Ale-Imran, 3:35)**

Over 2000 years ago people worshipped idols in Arabia. There was a King by the name of Hasan who decided to destroy the Holy Ka'aba. Because of this evil intention, he fell sick and ended being a leper. Upon realising his mistake, he begged pardon from God and vowed that if his health was restored, he would place Ghilaf (Covering) over the Holy Ka'aba. This wish of his was fulfilled and he, in turn placed the Ghilaf made of palm leaves, For many years a new black cover made of thick cloth is being placed on Ka'aba every year.

Thus Nazr is a media by which a human being seeks assistance and pleasure of God. Whenever one prays to God for assistance, it is recommended that one uses a media which can take him to God. Nazr is one of such medias.

Whenever a person keeps a Nazr and prays for something from God and upon being granted his wish when he fulfills the Nazr which he had pledged, his faith in Allah is enhanced. As faith increases, one tries to refrain from sins and endeavours to do more virtuous deeds in order to please and be nearer to Allah.

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