

Question 76: Is The Sincerity of Intention Beneficial To The Deed?

Question: Islamic jurists say that it is necessary for the person who is praying that he must have the sincerity of intention and except for the obeying of divine commands nothing else should be the encouragement of this action.

On the basis of this if one prays for show off and gaining fame is invalid because in this there is absence of sincerity of action. Due to this rule if one prays due to force is also invalid because the reason behind its performance is not the obeying of divine commands. As we see that in Islamic countries people are forcefully made to pray and that too in congregation. What is the nature of such an action?

Answer: Leaving aside the detailed discussions of Islamic scholars regarding the essence of worship acts and according to them force and compulsion is also correct. It is said that this type of force initially makes the person perform it but gradually the effect of compulsion wanes off and repeated performance makes him habitual of it.

Then only the obedience of divine Commands becomes the force behind his performing the worship act. In this condition even if he had performed some prayers under force they would be invalid but from the time the effect of compulsion had worn off he becomes conscious of his religious obligation and the rest of his worship acts shall be based on the sincerity of intention.

In addition to this it can also be said that those people have no other excuse that they reach to the congregation and stand up for prayers. These people can make an intention for prayers due to their own inclination and obtain the rewards of prayers. Otherwise they can also pretend to pray and perform bowing and prostrating like others while they had not made any intention to pray. Thus in such a condition if a person makes an intention to pray his prayer is correct, because he has performed it with sincerity and inclination.

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