



Riyaa' and Its Types

Its meaning:

It is derived from ar-Ru'yah (a vision, sight, observation). It's foundation is doing actions of goodness and piety so that people see them or hear of them, in order to win their praise and admiration, to gain position and status amongst them and to obtain the goals and objectives of this world.

Its ruling:

It is haraam due to the clear texts of the Book and the Sunnah. Allaah, the Exalted said:

And they were not commanded except to worship Allaah making the Deen sincerely for Him and being upright and true (in faith), to establish regular prayer and to practise regular charity. That is the right and straight Deen.¹

Allaah the Exalted also said:

And whether you hide what is in your souls or make it manifest Allaah knows it.²

Allaah the Exalted has already warned against riyaa' when he said:

And if you associate (partners with Allaah) vain and useless will be your work.³

Abu Hurairah also reports: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) say: "Allah (glorified and exalted be He) said: I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate. Thus he who does an action for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action renounced by Me to him whom he associated with Me."⁴

The Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) also said: "Whoever learnt knowledge by which the Face of Allaah Azzawajall should be sought, and did not learn it except to gain a portion of the world will not find the fragrance of Paradise on the Day of Judgement."⁵

¹ Soorah Bayyinah 98:5

² Soorah Aali Imraan 3:29

³ Soorah Zumar 39:65

⁴ Reported by Muslim

⁵ Reported by Abu Daawood with a Saheeh isnaad.

Its Types:**1. Riyaa' of the Body**

This occurs by appearing to be emaciated and pale so that others may see the intensity of his striving and the abundant fear of the hereafter. Also included in this is lowering the voice and sinking of the eyes, showing that one has a weak and feeble body in order to show others that he is diligent in observing fast.

2. Riyaa' of the outward appearance

Such as the effects of prostration on the face or wearing a specific type of clothing which only a few people wear and whom people consider to be scholars. So he wears this apparel so that it may be said: He is a scholar.

3. Riyaa' by ones speech

This occurs mostly by admonitioning others, reminding them, memorising details and narrations for the sake of argumentation, making it open and known that one has copious and abundant knowledge, moving ones lips for the remembrance of Allaah in the presence of others, becoming angry when evil occurs between people, lowering the voice and making it soft and tender when reciting the Qur'aan so as to show others his fear, sadness and other such things.

4. Riyaa' with ones actions

Like the showing off of the worshipper by lengthening the standing and prolonging the rukoo' and sujood. Outwardly displaying khushoo' and showing off due to fasting, going on military expeditions, pilgrimage, charity and other such things.

5. Riyaa' on account of ones friends and visitors

Like the one who burdens himself in order to visit a scholar or a pious worshipper so that it may be said: So and so visited so and so. This also occurs by inviting people to ones house so that it may be said: The people of the Deen frequently visit him.

Should the Muslim abandon an action due to fear of riyaa'?

Leaving an action out of fear of falling into riyaa' is one of the biggest mistakes and ways of falling into the trap of Shaytaan.

If the intent and motive for an action is correct and righteous and if it is in agreement with what has been legislated then the action should never be abandoned due to the presence of the danger of riyaa'. Rather it is obligatory upon the muslim to strive against this threat and danger. This is achieved by making his heart cling to modesty in front of Allaah and fear of Him, and changing the praise and admiration of creation for His praise and admiration.

Fudayl ibn Ayyaad (rh) said: Doing an action for the sake of people is shirk and leaving an action for the sake of people is riyaa'. Ikhlâas is when Allaah saves you from them both.

Extracted from "The Book of Sincerity" by Hussain al-Awaa'ishah