

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا يَرُوهُ عَنْ رَبِّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ، ثُمَّ بَيَّنَ ذَلِكَ. فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً، وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى سَبْعِمِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى أَضْعَافٍ كَثِيرَةٍ. وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً، وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ فِي صَحِيحَيْهِمَا بِهَذِهِ الْحُرُوفِ *فَانظُرْ يَا أَخِي وَفَقْنَا اللهُ وَإِيَّاكَ إِلَى عَظِيمٍ لُطْفِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَتَأَمَّلْ هَذِهِ الْأَلْفَافَ. وَقَوْلُهُ (عِنْدَهُ) إِشَارَةٌ إِلَى الْإِعْتِنَاءِ بِهَا. وَقَوْلُهُ (كَامِلَةً) لِلتَّكْوِينِ وَشِدَّةِ الْإِعْتِنَاءِ بِهَا. وَقَالَ فِي السَّيِّئَةِ الَّتِي هَمَّ بِهَا ثُمَّ تَرَكَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً فَأَكَّدَهَا بِكَامِلَةٍ، وَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً فَأَكَّدَ تَقْلِيلَهَا بِوَاحِدَةٍ وَلَمْ يُؤَكِّدَهَا بِكَامِلَةٍ. فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ وَالْمِنَّةُ سُبْحَانَهُ لَأُنْحِصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْهِ. وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيقُ.

Ibn Abbas, (رضي الله عنه), reported that the Messenger of Allah, (ﷺ), related from his Lord (glorified and exalted be He): "Verily Allah has recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds." Then he clarified that: "Whosoever intends to do a good deed but does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it and does it, Allah records it with Himself as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times, or more than that. But if he intends to do an evil deed and does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it and does it, Allah records it down as one single evil deed." [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Each in his Sahih have thus related it in these words: "So look! My brother, may Allah help us, and take note of how great is the kindness of Allah - may He be exalted! Reflect on this, how that His saying "with Himself" points to His great care with regard to it, and His saying "complete" is for emphasis, not to point to the intensity of His care with regard to it. With regard to the evil deed which one intended but then abandoned, He says: "Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed", emphasising this by the word "complete" (kamilah); whereas if he performs it, He records it down as "one evil deed", where by the word "one" He emphasises its being made little of, since He does not emphasise it here by the word "complete". So to Allah be praise and grace. Glory be to Him! Our praises to Him we cannot count. With Allah is success."

Background

This hadith is considered as a Hadith Qudsi even though the text of the hadith does not show that clearly or explicitly. The hadith with this text is a clarification from the part of Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, about the way of recording deeds. There are other versions of this hadith that have been recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the same form of Hadith Qudsi and in a very clear manner. One of these is the following version that has been commented upon by Ibn Rajab:

Allah has said: "If My servant considers doing a sin, do not record it against him. If he acts upon it, record it as one sin. If he considers doing a good deed and does not do it, record it as one good deed, and if he actually does it, record it as 10 good deeds." [Recorded by Imam Muslim]

One may ask how this is considered a Hadith Qudsi where its text does not explicitly show so. The multiplication of good deeds and that the one who commits one sin is recorded as only one sin, is a well-known principle in Islam that has been emphasised in both the Qur'an and sunnah - Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 245 and 261; Surah an-Nisa', Ayah 40; and in Surah al-'An'am, Ayah 160. Allah says:

Whoever shall come before Allah with a good deed will gain 10 times the like thereof, but whoever shall come with an evil deed will be requited with no more than the like thereof.

Lessons

What has been mentioned above is a general rule. However, there are some exceptions because the sin is sometimes considered greater due to certain reasons. One of these reasons is the honour of time or place such as the four months (al-'ashhor al-hurum). This is the view of Ibn Abbas (the narrator of the hadith) and Qutadeh. For the month of Ramadhan there are two claimed hadiths but which are considered not authentic according to Ibn Rajab who states that sins are considered greater during Ramadhan and during the Hajj (pilgrimage). This is stated in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 197.

In terms of place, for example Makkah, Allah says in Surah al-Hajj, Ayah 25:

And whoever is inclined to evil action therein (in Makkah) or to do wrong, him we shall cause to taste from a painful turmoil.

Because of this, a few of the companions of the Prophet, (ﷺ), used to avoid doing certain actions in Makkah.

Another criterion for considering sins as great is the nobility of the person who commits the sin. This is because, as Ibn Rajab says, since he is a person of knowledge of Allah and His attributes, his closeness to Allah should prevent him from committing sins. If he commits sins, his sins will be considered greater than normal people.

The hadith mentioned four types of deeds:

1. Doing good deeds - the result will be a multiplication of rewards.
2. Doing evil acts - this will be recorded as one sin for one sin.
3. The intention of doing good deeds - this will be recorded even if it is not done as one deed. 'Intention' here means that we have a great eagerness and a very strong determination to do a certain deed - and not merely thoughts of doing it.

Some examples of this type, as mentioned by Ibn Rajab, are:

- ? If someone has intended to wake up in the middle of the night to perform the night prayer but he did not do so because he overslept.
- ? If someone intended to pray or fast.
- ? If someone intended to do jihad or umra.
- ? If someone intended to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage).

So if any Muslim intended to do any of the above and had a strong determination to do them, it will be recorded as if he has done them. But this does not compensate the obligation of doing them when there is an opportunity to do so.

4. The intention of doing a bad deed or committing a sin without actually doing it. This means that one has made the decision to do it, as Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo puts it. Other Muslim scholars relate it to the intention (niyyah). And there is an overlap between intention and decision because when we decide, we have the intention.

Wherever we have an issue or principle where there are many versions of the hadith, scholars compare the text of the hadith. In another version that is narrated by Abu Hurairah, Allah says: "He gave up committing the sin for the cause and sake of Allah." Ibn Rajab says this implies that the interpretation of

this portion of hadith is that the one who has the intention to do the evil act and is able to do it, refrained from doing so for the sake and fear of Allah. Ibn Rajab says this person will be rewarded for that. It will be considered a hasanah (a good deed) because refraining from doing that evil act with this good intention is really a good deed by itself.

Consequently, Ibn Rajab mentions other different situations:

- a. The one who decides or just has the intention to do the evil act but then he refrains from doing it because of his fear of the people or does not like to be blamed by them. Ibn Rajab says that some scholars say this person will be punished.
- b. The person decides to do the evil act but was not able to perform it because of external factors (qadar). For example, a person decides to break into a house to steal, but he does not succeed and runs away because a police car is driving around the area. Some scholars say that he will be punished though he did not steal.
- c. Someone who decides and has the intention to do the evil act makes the effort but is not able to perform it because of his lack of strength or capabilities. Scholars say this person will be punished. For instance, if two Muslims fight each other with the intention of killing each other, as stated in the well-known hadith, both the killer and the one who has been killed will be in the Hellfire. The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, this is the killer - what about the poor person who has been killed?" The Prophet, (ﷺ), said he had the intention to kill his friend or brother but was not able to because he was killed himself.
- d. Someone has the intention to do an evil act and talks to others about it but does not do it. Some scholars say that he will be punished just because of his bad intention. Other scholars say he will not be punished unless the sin itself is the impermissible kind of speech like slander, backbiting or lying.
- e. Someone who has the intention to do an evil act but later on changes his mind because his eagerness to do the evil act has weakened and decreased.

One may ask whether this person is subject to punishment or not. Ibn Rajab says this situation can be classified into two categories:

- i. The intention to commit the sin was just a thought - it has not been placed or committed in the person's heart - and he dislikes or regrets the thought straightaway. Ibn Rajab says this person will be excused. For instance, if a person sees cool water during the hot month of Ramadhan and he simply has a thought of drinking but then refrains himself. This person will be forgiven because the place of the sin is not in his heart.
- ii. The evil thought has been placed in the heart and the person keeps thinking about it. Scholars say that this can be classified into two categories:
 - o The action of the heart involves doubts about Allah's Oneness, the Prophethood or the Day of Resurrection. Scholars say this person will be punished. Ibn Rajab also says that there are other sins which are related to the heart such as loving what Allah hates or hating what Allah loves,

- arrogance, envy, and suspicions for no valid reason. All these are punishable.
 - The actions of the limbs such as adultery, stealing, drinking wine, killing etc. Ibn Rajab says in this category, if the person persists on doing such an act and has the eagerness and willingness, he will be punished. There is another view that says he will be excused because he has not actually done it. The third view is the same as the second view in that he is excused, but with one exception and that is if it is done in the al-Haram Mosque in Makkah.
- f. Someone committed a sin once and then has the intention of repeating it whenever possible. That is this person is persisting on disobedience and is subject to punishment because of his bad intention even if he does it years later.

In one version of the hadith, Allah says that for the one who commits a sin, Allah might record it merely as one sin, or He might omit the sin because of repentance by the sinner, or because of the sinner performing good deeds - as mentioned in Hadith 18: "Fear Allah wherever you may be; follow up an evil deed with a good one which will wipe (the former) out, and behave good-naturedly towards people."

Conclusion

In one of the versions of this hadith it says that the one who fails to be saved is of great loss. This means that the one whose bad deeds outweigh the good deeds is a failure. Why? After all this mercy and grace from Allah where Allah multiplies good deeds up to 700 times, after all the chances and opportunities that Allah gives us, if a person still persists on disobedience and commits evil acts and in the end his bad deeds outweighs his good ones, then he is truly a big sinner and transgressor. He has no intention of doing good deeds. He has no one to blame but himself.

There is a saying for Ibn Mas'oud: "Woe to the one whose sins outweigh his good deeds". The Prophet, (ﷺ), said to his Companions: "Whom do you consider as a bankrupt?" They said: "The one who does not have a dinar or derham (money)." The Prophet, (ﷺ), said: "The real bankrupt is the one who comes with mountains of good deeds but he also comes with many bad deeds that are related to attacking and harming the people." In this case, the bad deeds are not easily omitted because they are related to the rights of human beings. This person may wrong others by slander, backbiting, killing, etc. As a result, his good deeds will be taken from him in the Hereafter as a matter of just. In addition to that, the Prophet, (ﷺ), says part of the bad deeds of the people whom he has wronged will be added to his record and the result would be that he will be thrown into the Hellfire.

We need to imagine just how horrible the situation is. We need to reflect on this hadith and not to wrong, belittle or fail other Muslims or non-Muslims in the same way. We should also be kind to animals as the Prophet, sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, said that a woman will enter Hellfire because of her mistreatment of a cat. The Prophet, (ﷺ), also mentions about a woman who is very pious and did good deeds but she annoyed and bothered her neighbours - she too is in the Hellfire.

Muslims need to be careful when it comes to dealing with other people. Unless we receive forgiveness from others, we will be held responsible for wrongdoings towards others. This has to do with our akhlaq and values as Muslims. We need to be concerned about this if we want to achieve any success in this life or the Hereafter.

