Allah says: If My slave intends to do an evil deed, do not write it down until he does it. If he does it, then write it as it is. If he does not do it for My Sake, then write it as a good deed for him

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: “Allah says: 'If My slave intends to do an evil deed, do not write it down until he does it. If he does it, then write it as it is. If he does not do it for My Sake, then write it as a good deed for him. If he intends to do a good deed, but does not do it, then write it as a good deed for him (in reward). If he does it, then write it for him ten times up to seven hundred times (in reward).’”

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

This is Allah, the Almighty, addressing His angels, who are in charge of keeping records of human deeds. This discourse indicates divine generosity and forgiveness toward humans. For example, Allah says: “If My slave intends to do an evil deed, do not write it down until he does it.” Action could be an action of the heart, as it is normally an action of the organs. This is indicated in reports showing that actions of the heart are accounted for. One could be rewarded or punished for them. In this respect, Allah says: {Whoever intends [a deed] therein of deviation [in religion] or wrongdoing – We will make him taste of a painful punishment} [Sūrat al-Hajj: 25]. In an authentic Hadīth, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "If two Muslims meet with their swords, the killer and the one killed are both in Hellfire." The Companions said: "That is (understood regarding) the killer. What about the killed one?" He replied: "He was also eager to kill his brother." These texts specify the general indication of “If he intends to do an evil deed, do not write it down until he does it.” This understanding does not contradict the evil deed being not written against one who commits it, because intention of the heart is an act. The angels' writing of an evil deed “as it is” means as one sin. Allah says: {Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit], and whoever comes with an evil deed will not be recompensed except the like thereof; and they will not be wronged} [Sūrat al-Anʿām: 160]. He also says: {And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer – those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date seed} [Sūrat An-Nisā': 124]. Not doing an evil deed for fearing Allah yields one reward. Not doing it for inability, or fear of people, or any other reason does not bring a reward but may rather bring one misdeed in one's account. Intending to do a good deed but failing to undertake it brings one reward. This is generosity from Allah, the Almighty. Mere intention to do a good deed brings one reward; doing it brings ten up to seven hundred rewards. In this Hadīth, the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) attributed the saying to Allah, the Almighty. The saying of Allah is legislation that

involves divine promises and merits. It is different from the Qur'an. It is not created; the speech of Allah is different from Allah's creation.

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