440985 - Are good deeds and bad deeds multiplied during the sacred months?

the question

Is sin multiplied during Rajab and the other sacred months? And are good deeds multiplied too?

Summary of answer

1.The sacred months are four: Rajab, Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram.
2.What appears to be the case is that reward and punishment are multiplied during the sacred months in quality, but not in quantity, because a good deed done during the sacred months is greater than a good deed done at other times that are not sacred, and a bad deed done during the sacred months is more grievous than a bad deed done at other times that are not sacred.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What are the sacred months?

Allah, may He be Exalted, has mentioned the sacred months in His Book, where He says: {Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve, as ordained by Allah on the day He created the heavens and the earth, of which four are sacred. This is the correct calculation. So do not wrong yourselves during them, and fight the polytheists all together, as they fight you all together. And know that Allah is with those who fear Him.} [At-Tawbah 9:36].

The sacred months are: Rajab, and three consecutive months: Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram. This is what is indicated by many reports from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). See: *Tafsir at-Tabari*, 11/440.

Al-Bukhari (4406) and Muslim (1679) narrated from Abu Bakrah, from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: “Time has returned to its original order as it was on the day when Allah created the heavens and the earth. The year is twelve months, of which four are sacred: three consecutive months, Dhul-Qa`dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab, the month of Mudar, which comes between Jumada and Sha`ban.”

Why is Rajab called by this name (“Rajab of Mudar”)?

It is called “Rajab of Mudar” because the tribe of Mudar never changed its time; rather they would recognise it at the correct time, unlike the rest of the Arabs, who used to change the order of the months depending on the state of war among them. This is the “postponing” that is mentioned in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says: {Verily, the postponing of sacred months is but another act of disbelief, because of which those who disbelieve are led further astray. They regard it as profane one year and as sacred the next, so as to match the number of months that Allah has made sacred, thus making lawful what Allah has forbidden. The evil of their actions has been made fair-seeming to them. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people} [At-Tawbah 9:37].

And it was said that the reason why it was attributed to Mudar is that they used to respect it and venerate it greatly, so it was attributed to them because of that.

Al-Wahidi said in *Al-Basit* (10/409): What is meant by “sacred (months)” is that it is regarded as worse to transgress the limits during these months than in any other months. The Arabs used to venerate these months to the extent that if a man met his father’s killer (during a sacred month), he would not touch him.

The commentators said: in making some months more sacred than others there were some benefits, such as restraining oppression and wrongdoing, because of the high status of these months in the sight of their Creator, so perhaps that would lead to giving up oppression and wrongdoing altogether, because anger and grudges could subside during that time. End quote.

Are bad deeds multiplied during the sacred months?

There is no proven, authentic, clear hadith to indicate that reward and punishment are multiplied during the sacred months, apart from the fact that some of the scholars stated that reward and punishment are multiplied during them, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {so do not wrong yourselves during them} [At-Tawbah 9:36].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafsir (4/128): {so do not wrong yourselves during them} means: during these sacred months, because sins incur a greater burden at that time than in other months, just as sins in the sacred land are multiplied, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{and any who intend to profane it [the Sacred Mosque] by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty} [Al-Hajj 22:25].

Similarly, committing sins during a sacred month is more serious, therefore the diyah [blood money for killing or injuring someone] at that time will be greater according to the Shafa`i madhhab and a number of other scholars. Likewise, the diyah is greater for one who kills or injures another person in the Haram zone, or kills a mahram. Then he quoted Qatadah as saying: Oppression and wrongdoing during the sacred month are more serious in nature and incur a greater burden of sin than oppression and wrongdoing at other times, even though wrongdoing in all situations is grievous, but Allah decides what is more serious as He wills. End quote.

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: {so do not wrong yourselves during them [the sacred months]} by committing sins, because if Allah, may He be Glorified, decides that something is of great significance for one reason, then it will become sacred at one level, but if he decides that it is significant for two or more reasons, then it becomes more sacred accordingly. Thus He multiplies the punishment for a bad deed done during the sacred months, just as He multiplies the reward for a righteous deed done during them. So whoever does an act of worship during the sacred month in the sacred land, his reward will not be like that of one who does an act of worship in an ordinary month in the sacred land; and whoever does an act of worship in an

ordinary month in the sacred land, his reward will not be like that of one who does an act of worship in an ordinary month in an ordinary land.

End quote from *Al-Jami` li Ahkam il-Quran*, 8/134.

Thus the reward for good deeds and the punishment for bad deeds is multiplied in virtuous times and places.

It is also proven in more than one religious text that the reward for good deeds is multiplied at virtuous times, such as Ramadan and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and also in virtuous places, such as al-Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah) and al-Masjid an-Nabawi (in Madinah).

As it says in the authentic hadith that was narrated by Ahmad (4646) and Ibn Majah (1406) from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “One prayer in my mosque is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except al-Masjid al-Haram, and one prayer in al-Masjid al-Haram is better than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere.”

This hadith was classed as authentic (sahih) by al-Mundhiri and al-Busayri. Al-Albani said: Its isnad is sound according to the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

End quote from *Irwa’ al-Ghalil*, 4/146.

As for bad deeds, the view of the scholars who examined the issue is that they are not multiplied in terms of quantity, but they are multiplied in terms of quality, meaning that they are regarded as more grievous, because Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Whoever comes [on the Day of Resurrection] with a good deed will be repaid tenfold, but whoever comes with an evil deed will be recompensed only with the like thereof; and no one will be wronged }[Al-An`am 6:160].

Hence bad deeds are not multiplied in terms of quantity, neither during Ramadan nor in the Haram zone nor otherwise; rather a bad deed is always one in terms of number, and this is by the grace and kindness of Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

But a bad deed committed in the Haram zone, a bad deed committed in Ramadan and a bad deed committed in Dhul-Hijjah is regarded as a more grievous sin than one that is committed at other times. So a bad deed committed in Makkah is more grievous, more serious and incurs a greater burden of sin than a bad deed committed in Jeddah or at-Ta'if, for example, and a bad deed committed in Ramadan and a bad deed committed in Dhul-Hijjah are worse and more grievous than a bad deed committed in Sha`ban, and so on.

Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Thus we learn that what the ordinary people say, that bad deeds committed in Makkah will be multiplied as good deeds are multiplied, is not correct, because multiplication of bad deeds is not possible at all, because Allah says: {but whoever comes [on the Day of Resurrection] with an evil deed will be recompensed only with the like thereof} [Al-An`am 6:160]. This is a clear Quranic text which states that bad deeds cannot be multiplied.

But a bad deed committed in the Haram of Makkah, for example, is more grievous, because the bad deed becomes more grievous depending on the significance of the time or place in which it is done. And when the sin is more grievous, the punishment for it will be more severe, because the punishment matches the sin; if the sin is more grievous, the punishment will be greater, and if the sin is less grievous, then the punishment will be less. Thus the more severe punishment is because the sin is more grievous, and the severity of the punishment is connected to how grievous the sin is; it is not because of the sin being multiplied, because bad deeds cannot be multiplied, but they may be more grievous and more serious in some times than others, and in some places than others. Hence Allah says regarding the Haram of Makkah: {and any who intend to profane it [the Sacred Mosque] by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty } [Al-Hajj 22:25]. And He says regarding the sacred months: {so do not wrong yourselves during them} [At-Tawbah 9:36], even though wronging oneself at other times is also prohibited.

End quote from *Al-`Adhb al-Munir*, 2/612.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The multiplication of a sin committed in Makkah is not in terms of quantity; rather it is multiplied in terms of quality, meaning that the punishment will be more severe and painful. The evidence that they cannot be multiplied in quantity is the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Whoever comes [on the Day of Resurrection] with a good deed will be repaid tenfold, but whoever comes with an evil deed will be recompensed only with the like thereof; and no one will be wronged} [Al-An`am 6:160].

This verse is Makkan [revealed before the Hijrah], because it is in Surat al-An`am, but as Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {As for those who disbelieve and bar [people] from the path of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque – which We have made for all people, residents and visitors alike – and any who intend to profane it by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty} [Al-Hajj 22:25].

What is meant is that the punishment for the sin committed in Makkah will be more severe and painful than the punishment if this sin is committed outside Makkah. This is a stern warning against committing sins in Makkah.

End quote from *Majmu` Fatawa ash-Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin*, 20/169.

What reinforces this stern warning against committing bad deeds in the Haram zone, and confirms that committing bad deeds in the Haram zone is grievous and very serious, is the words of Allah, may He be Exalted: {and any who intend to profane it [the Sacred Mosque] by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty} [Al-Hajj 22:25].

So this indicates that committing a bad deed in the Haram zone is grievous, to the extent that even thinking of committing a bad deed in the Haram zone is included in this warning.

As-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Tafsir* (p. 536):

“Merely intending to do wrong or commit profane acts in the sanctuary makes punishment inevitable, although in other cases a person will not be punished unless he actually does the wrong deed.” End quote.

If the one who merely thinks of profaning the Haram is given a warning of a painful punishment, then how about the one who actually does profane the Haram by committing bad and evil deeds? His sin will surely be greater than merely thinking of doing such a deed. All of this indicates that doing bad deeds in the Haram zone is a very serious matter.

See: *Majmu` Fatawa wa Maqalat ash-Shaykh Ibn Baz*, 3/388.

Conclusion: based on the verse which speaks about the sacred months, and the evidence which speaks of reward and punishment being multiplied if committed in times and places that are more virtuous than others, what appears to be the case is that reward and punishment are multiplied during the sacred months in quality, but not in quantity, because a good deed done during the sacred months is greater than a good deed done at other times that are not sacred, and a bad deed done during the sacred months is more grievous than a bad deed done at other times that are not sacred.

For more information, please see the following answers: 204142, 332295, 97216, 75394, 109361, 21311, 193281, 171509.

And Allah knows best.