

2:264. O you who believe, do not nullify your acts of charity with reminders and hurtful words, like the one who spends his wealth to show off before people, but believes neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock, on which there is a little soil; when heavy rain falls it leaves it completely bare. They will gain nothing from their efforts. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

Here Allah forbids His slaves, out of kindness and mercy towards them, to nullify their charity with hurtful reminders. This shows us that hurtful reminders nullify charity, and may be taken as evidence that bad deeds nullify good deeds, as Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...and do not speak loudly to him [the Prophet] as you speak loudly to one another, lest your deeds come to nothing without your realising it.﴾ (al-Hujurat 49: 2)

Just as good deeds erase bad deeds, bad deeds nullify preceding good deeds. This verse, along with the verse:

﴿O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and do not let your deeds go in vain.﴾ (Muhammad 47: 33)

– encourages us to perfect our deeds and protect them from anything that may nullify them, lest the deeds go to waste.

﴿like the one who spends his wealth to show off before people, but believes neither in Allah nor in the Last Day﴾ that is, even though you may initially be doing it for the sake of Allah, reminders and hurtful words render your deeds invalid, thus your deeds become like those of the one who does things in order to show off to people, and he is not seeking Allah and the hereafter thereby. The deeds of such a person are undoubtedly rejected from the outset, because a condition of deeds being acceptable is that they should be for the sake of Allah alone. This person is in fact doing things for people, not for Allah, so his deeds are invalid and his efforts are not appreciated. The exact likeness of such a person is that of a smooth rock, on which there is a little soil;