46068 - Reasons for the Punishment in the Grave

the question

What are the sins for which people will be punished in the grave?

Summary of answer

Some reasons for the punishment in the grave are: shirk and kufr, hypocrisy, changing the religion of Allah, not taking care to avoid getting urine on oneself, spreading malicious gossip among people, ghibah, lying, forsaking the Quran after having learned it, sleeping and missing an obligatory prayer, consuming riba, zina, enjoining righteousness upon others and forgetting oneself, breaking the fast in Ramadan with no excuse, stealing from the war booty, dragging one's garment out of pride, stealing from the pilgrims, detaining animals and tormenting them, and debt.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

In the answer to question no. 45325 , we have mentioned some of the reasons for punishment in the grave . Here we will list some of these sins, along with evidence from the Quran and Sunnah.

- Shirk (associating others with Allah) and kufr (disbelieving in Him)

Allah says concerning the people of Pharaoh (interpretation of the meaning):

"The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. And on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): 'Cause Fir'awn's (Pharaoh) people to enter the severest torment!'" [Ghafir 40:46]

And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you could but see when the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers) are in the agonies of death, while the angels are stretching forth their hands (saying): ‘Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allah other than the truth. And you used to reject His Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) with disrespect!’” [Al-An’am 6:93]

When death approaches the disbeliever, the angels tell him of what is awaiting him of punishment, chains and fire, and the wrath of Allah; his soul disperses in his body and refuses to leave his body, and the angels beat him until his soul comes out of his body, saying, “Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation” [Al-An’am 6:93].

Evidence that shirk is one of the causes of punishment in the grave is to be found in the hadith of Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was in a garden belonging to Banu’l-Najjar on a mule of his and we were with him, it stumbled and nearly threw him. There he saw some graves, six or five or four. He said: “Who knows the occupants of these graves?” A man said: I do.” He said: “When did these people die?” He said: “They died in shirk.” He said: “This ummah will be punished in their graves . Were it not that you would not bury one another, I would pray to Allah to make you hear what I hear of the torment in the grave.” Then he turned to us and said: “Seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of Hellfire…” (Narrated by Muslim 2867)

The words in this hadith, “They died in shirk,” indicate that shirk is a cause of the punishment in the grave.

- Hypocrisy is one of the causes of the punishment in the grave

The hypocrites are those who most deserve to be punished in the grave. How can it be otherwise when they are the ones who will occupy the lowest level of Hell?

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And among the bedouins around you, some are hypocrites, and so are some among the people of

Al-Madinah who persist in hypocrisy; you (O Muhammad) know them not, We know them. We shall punish them twice, and thereafter they shall be brought back to a great (horrible) torment." [Al-Tawbah 9:101]

Qatadah and al-Rabi' ibn Anas said concerning the phrase "We shall punish them twice": once in this world, and the second is the punishment in the grave .

In the hadith about the questioning of the two angels and the torment of the grave , the word hypocrite (munafiq), or skeptic (murtab) in many reports, is clearly mentioned, as in the report narrated by al-Bukhari, 1374) from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him): "... as for the kafir and the hypocrite, it will be said to him...". And in al-Sahihayn it is narrated from Asma (may Allah be pleased with her): "As for the hypocrite or the skeptic..."

- Changing the religion of Allah, by forbidding that which Allah has permitted or permitting that which He has forbidden

The evidence that this changing of the religion of Allah is one of the causes of punishment in the grave is the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "I saw 'Amr ibn 'Amir al-Khuza'i dragging his intestines in Hell. He was the first one to introduce the institution of al-saibah." (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4623)

The saibah was a she-camel, cow or sheep which they would leave to graze for the sake of the false gods, and it would not be ridden, eaten or used for carrying burdens. Some of them would make vows to make part of their wealth a saibah.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The Arabs, from among the sons of Isma'il and others, who lived in the environs of the Ancient House that had been built by Ibrahim and Isma'il, were hanifs (monotheists) who followed the religion of Ibrahim, until one of the leaders of Khuza'ah, namely 'Amr ibn Luhayy, changed his religion. He was the first one to change the religion of Ibrahim to shirk and forbid things that Allah had not forbidden. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I saw 'Amr ibn Luhayy dragging his intestines." (Daqaiq al-Tafsir, 2/71)

- Not taking care to avoid getting urine on oneself , and spreading malicious gossip among people

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbas said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed by two graves and said, “They are being punished, but they are not being punished for something that was difficult to avoid. One of them used to walk about spreading namimah (malicious gossip) and the other used not to take care to avoid getting urine on himself.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 218, and Muslim, 292)

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Most of the torment of the grave is because of urine, so be careful to avoid it.” (Narrated by al-Daaraqutni and classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Targheeb (1/152)

- Ghibah (backbiting)

Based on that, al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him) included a chapter in Kitab al-Janaiz (the Book of Funerals) called: “Punishment of the grave because of backbiting and urine.” Then he narrated therein the hadith about the two graves quoted above, except that the version of al-Bukhari does not mention backbiting, rather it speaks of namimah (malicious gossip), but as was his wont, he referred to what was narrated in some versions of the hadith: “As for the other, he is being punished for backbiting.” (Narrated by Ahmad (5/35); classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih al-Targhib wa’l-Tarhib (1/66)

- Lying

According to the hadith of Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“… We came to a man who was lying flat on his back, with another man standing over him, holding an iron hook. He put the hook in the man's mouth and tore off that side of his face to the back (of his neck), and he tore his nose and his eye from front to back in a similar manner. Then

he turned to the other side of the man's face and did likewise. No sooner had he finished the second side but the first side was restored to its former state, then he went back and did the same thing again. I said to my two companions, 'Subhan Allah! Who are these two persons?'

At the end of the hadith, he said concerning this one who was being punished: "is the man who goes out of his house in the morning and tells a lie that is so serious that it spreads all over the world". (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 7074)

- Forsaking the Quran after having learned it, sleeping and missing an obligatory prayer

In the hadith of Samurah ibn Jundub, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "… we came across a man who was lying down, with another man standing over him, holding a big rock. He threw the rock at the man's head, smashing it. The rock rolled away, and the one who had thrown it followed it, and picked it up. By the time he came back to the man, his head had been restored to its former state. Then he (the one who had thrown the rock) did the same as he had done before. I said to my two companions, 'Subhan Allah! Who are these two persons?' … 'The one whom you saw with his head being smashed with the rock, is the man who studies the Quran then he neither recites it nor acts upon it, and he goes to sleep, neglecting the obligatory prayers.'

According to another version: "As for the man whom you saw with his head being crushed by a rock, he is a man who learned the Quran then abandoned it and he slept and missed the obligatory prayer." (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 7076)

Al-Hafiz ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said that this report is clearer than the first one. The apparent meaning of the first one is that he is being punished for not reading Quran at night, whereas the second report indicates that he is punished for sleeping and missing the obligatory prayer. He said: It may be that the punishment is for both, not reading and not acting upon it.

Ibn Hajar said: "Ibn Hubayrah said: Abandoning the Quran after learning it is a serious crime, because it may imply that he has seen in it something that made him abandon it, and because he has abandoned the noblest of things, namely the Quran, he should be punished in the noblest part

of his body, which is the head. Fath al-Bari, 3/251

- Consuming riba

In the hadith of Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him), it says:

"… So we went on and came to a river – I think he said, red like blood. – In the river there was a man swimming, and on the bank there was a man who had gathered many stones. Whilst the swimmer was swimming, the man who had gathered the stones approached him. The swimmer opened his mouth and the man on the bank threw a stone into it, then the swimmer carried on swimming. Each time he came back, he opened his mouth again, and the man on the bank threw another stone into his mouth. … The man you saw swimming in the river with rocks being thrown into his mouth is the one who consumed riba (usury)."

- Zina (adultery, unlawful sexual relationships)

In the hadith of Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him) it says:

"So we went on, and came to something like a tannur (a kind of oven, lined with clay, usually used for baking bread). – I think the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, in that oven there was much noise and voices. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) added: - We looked into it and saw naked men and women. A flame of fire was reaching them from underneath, and when it reached them, they cried out loudly. I asked them, 'Who are these?' … The naked men and women whom you saw in a structure that resembled an oven are the adulterers and adulteresses."

- Enjoining righteousness upon others and forgetting oneself

It was narrated that Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "On the night on which I was taken on the Night Journey (Isra'), I saw men whose lips were being cut off with scissors of fire. I said: 'Who are these, O Jibril?' He said: 'These are the khatibs from among your ummah who used to enjoin righteousness on the people and forget themselves, and they used to recite the Book but they did not

understand.’” (Narrated by Ahmad, 3/120; classed as sahih by al-Albani in al-Sahihah (291)

According to al-Bayhaqi: “On the night on which I was taken on the night Journey, I came to some people whose lips were being cut off with scissors of fire. Every time they were cut off, they were restored. I said: ‘O Jibril who are these?’ He said: ‘The khateebs of your ummah who said what they did not do, and they recited the Book of Allah but they did not act upon it.’” Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in Shu’ab al-Iman; classed as hasan by al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami’ (128).

- Breaking the fast in Ramadan with no excuse

It was narrated that Abu Umamah al-Bahili (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: “Whilst I was sleeping, two men came to me and took me by the arms, and they brought me to a mountain and said: ‘Climb up.’ I said: ‘I cannot.’ They said: ‘We will make it easy for you.’ So I climbed up until, when I was at the top of the mountain, I heard loud voices. I said: ‘What are these voices?’ He said: ‘These are the cries of the people of Hell.’ Then they took me on, and I saw some people hanging by their heels, with the sides of their mouths torn, and the sides of their mouths were flowing with blood. I said: ‘Who are these?’ He said: ‘They are the ones who broke the fast before it was permissible for them to do so .’” (Narrated by Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim (1/210, 290); classed as sahih by al-Albani in al-Sahihah (3951)

- Stealing from the war booty

This is indicated by the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) about the man who stole a garment from the war booty, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, the garment that he took from the booty on the day of Khaybar when it had not yet been shared out is burning him with fire.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 4234, and Muslim, 115).

- Dragging one’s garment out of pride

This is indicated by the hadith of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whilst a man was dragging his garment out of pride , he was swallowed up by the earth and he will continue sinking into it until the Day of Resurrection.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 3485, and Muslim, 2088)

- Stealing from the pilgrims

This is indicated by the hadith of Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) about the eclipse prayer, in which it says that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Hell was brought and that is when you saw me moving backwards for fear that its flames might touch me. I saw therein the owner of the curved staff, dragging his intestines in the Fire; he used to steal from the pilgrims with his curved staff, and if he was discovered he would say, ‘It got caught on my curved staff,’ but if he was not noticed then he would take it.” Narrated by Muslim, 904).

- Detaining animals and tormenting them and not being compassionate towards them

According to the hadith of Jabir about the eclipse prayer, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “And I saw therein the woman who had a cat which she tied up and did not feed, and she did not let it eat from the vermin of the earth, until it died of starvation.” (Narrated by Muslim, 904)

Al- Bayhaqi said in his book Ithbat 'Adhab al-Qabr (p. 97):

“When he offered the eclipse prayer, he saw the one who was dragging his intestines in Hell, and the one who was being punished for stealing, and the woman who was being punished for a cat. They had become decayed bones in their graves as far as the people of his time were concerned, but those who were praying with him did not see what he saw.”

- Debt

One of the things that harm the deceased in his grave is debt that he owes. It was narrated that Sa’d ibn al-Atwal said: My brother died and left behind three hundred dinars, and he left behind young children. I wanted to spend on them, but the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to me: “Your brother is being detained by his debt, so go and pay it off.”

So I went and paid it off, then I came and said: O Messenger of Allah, I have paid it off for him, and there is nothing left but a woman who is claiming two dinars, but she does not have any proof. He said: “Give it to her, for she is telling the truth.” (Narrated by Ahmad (16776) and Ibn Majah (2/82); classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami’, 1550)

And Allah knows best.