175666 - Will Everyone Be Punished in the Grave?

the question

I read in some of your answers regarding torment of the grave that even the believers will be punished in the grave. But there are many Hadiths which are opposite. For example Muslims believe that when a person dies two angels called Nakir and Munkar visit him in his grave. They question him about his Faith, if he is found a believer his tomb is widened 70 cubits square (each cubit is one foot six inches) and it is illumined. Then he is told to go to sleep like a bridegroom until the day of resurrection when Allah raises him up to reward him. But if he is found a "hypocrite" they order the tomb to squeeze him until his ribs are crushed. One more question, there is a mosque 900 meters away from my house. I don't hear the Adhan at all, and I sometimes go there and they follow Abu Hanifa ra and they recite Fatihah too fast. Most of the time I am in 4 or 5th verse of Fatiha, they go to Ruku`. So is it still obligatory for me to attend the prayer there since I don’t hear the Adhan and I can’t finish reciting Fatihah, and the tranquility is also not there because of the quick recitation of the Imam.

Summary of answer

1- Punishment of the grave will be for many of the sinners among those who affirmed the Oneness of Allah, such as those who slept and (intentionally) missed obligatory prayers, or those who committed Zina, consumed Riba (usury/interest) and liars whose lies spread far and wide.
2- The squeezing of the grave will happen to everyone; even the righteous among the believers will experience some of that.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Will everyone be punished in the grave?

There is no contradiction between the texts that speak of the punishment and blessing in the grave ; all of them are true. What has been narrated about the grave of the believer being widened seventy cubits by seventy and illuminated for him, and it being said to him, “Sleep like the bridegroom who will not be wakened except by the dearest of his family to him,” and it being filled with green for him – as was narrated by At-Tirmidhi (1071) and others, and classed as sound by Al-Albani in Mishkat Al-Masabih – this has to do with the perfect believer who would hasten to obey Allah and would be slow to disobey Allah, or is one of those for whom Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, decrees salvation from the punishment and trial of the grave, such as the martyrs.

With regard to what was narrated about the punishment of some Muslims in their graves , this applies to the sinners who mixed righteous deeds with bad deeds. Allah may punish them in their graves for their sins, and in the Fire on the Day of Resurrection until, when they have been cleansed and purified, He will grant permission for them to enter Paradise, as is proven in Al-Bukhari, 7047, from the Hadith of Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him), that the punishment of the grave will be for many of the sinners among those who affirmed the Oneness of Allah, such as those who slept and (intentionally) missed obligatory prayers, or those who committed Zina, consumed Riba (usury/interest) and liars whose lies spread far and wide.

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“This indicates that some sinners will be punished in Al-barzakh (i.e., the grave)." (Fath Al-Bari, 12/445)

The punishment in the grave is also proven for the one who does not take precautions to avoid his urine (getting on his clothes and body), and the one who goes about spreading malicious gossip among people, as it says in Al-Bukhari, 216; and Muslim, 292.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The punishment in the grave is of two types :

- One type that is ongoing , apart from that which is narrated in some Hadiths about it being reduced for them in the period between the two trumpet blasts, then when they rise from their graves they will say: ‘Woe to us, who has raised us up from our resting place?’. The fact that it will be ongoing is indicated by the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon” [Ghafir 40:46].
- The second type will last for a while and then cease. This is the punishment of some sinners whose sins were minor. They will be punished according to their sins, then it will be reduced, as they will be punished in the Fire for a while, then the punishment will cease. The punishment may be stopped for them by virtue of supplication (Du`a), charity, prayers for forgiveness or the reward for Hajj (if these actions are performed on one’s behalf by relatives or others after their death)." (Ar-Ruh, p. 89)

Will the grave squeeze everyone?

There is a difference between the punishment in the grave that will affect the sinners and that with which the believer will be tested in his grave of squeezing and the questions of the two angels . This is not a punishment; the fear and dread of the grave, and the squeezing , are things that will happen to everyone; even the righteous among the believers will experience some of that.

With regard to punishment in a specific sense, this is what we referred to in the first paragraph of this answer; it is a punishment for specific things, and is not something general that applies to everyone.

As-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on An-Nisa’ (4/103):

“An-Nasafi said: The obedient believer will not have any punishment in the grave, but he will experience the squeezing of the grave.”

This is explained further by the report narrated by Ahmad (23762) from `Aishah, from the Prophet

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) who said: “There is squeezing in the grave and if anyone were to be saved from it, Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh would have been saved from it.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in As-Sahihah, 1695)

This squeezing is the first thing experienced by the deceased when he is placed in his grave; it is not part of the punishment of the grave which will happen to the sinners among the Muslims, based on the fact that it happened to Sa‘d ibn Mu‘adh (may Allah be pleased with him) at whose death the Throne of the Most Merciful shook, as is proven in Al-Bukhari, 3803; and Muslim, 2466.

For more details, please see this answer: 71175 .

Life in Al-Barzakh is part of the unseen

The words of the questioner, “each cubit is one foot six inches”, concerning the length of the cubit mentioned in the Hadith, “his grave will be widened for him seventy cubits” is something for which there is no evidence, because the life of Al-barzakh (the grave) is part of the unseen that we believe in, but we cannot measure it by worldly standards. We believe that the grave of the believer will be widened for him seventy cubits, but we do not speak about the length of these cubits, because that is part of the unseen. The Hadith of Al-Bara’ (may Allah be pleased with him) that was narrated by Imam Ahmad (18063) concerning that says: “His grave will be widened for him as far as his eye can see.” (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Al-Jami`, 1676)

And Allah knows best.