

CHASTISEMENT IN GRAVE

Question:

Plenty of misconception prevails in the minds of Muslims regarding *Azab-Al-Qabr*. They all firmly believe that there is certainly 'Azab' in the grave before the 'Azab' in the Hereafter ! I want to destroy this belief and disillusion amongst Muslims. An example, I often give, is that when a ship sinks, and the passengers are eaten up by sharks, where is the *QABR* there ? Muslims need to understand the proper connotation and concept of the word 'Qabr'. They commonly visualize 'Qabr' as a six-foot deep hole where people are buried. (ASK Joomal - Johannesburg)

Answer by Dr. Syed Abdul Wadud.

It is more or less a common belief amongst the Muslims that a dead body lying in a grave is subjected to chastisement for his misdeeds during life time, yet no proof is available from the Quran for such punishment in the grave.

- (1) The word *عذاب القبر* is non existent in the holy Quran. However the word for punishment during life in this world and in the hereafter occurs repeatedly.

As for examples: *عذاب* for belief in one part of the book and disbelief in other parts (Reference 2:85, 2:114 & 5:33), Devastations that took place on the past Nations due to their misdeeds. (Reference: 6:42) *عذاب* during the present life time for misdeeds (Reference : 9:55, 9:85, 11:8, 11:39, 13:32, 14:43-45, 16:112, 17:88, 21:11-13) 34:17, 39:51, 41:16. That is not all. The word *عذاب* during this life on the earth occurs at scores of other places.

- (2) The word *عذاب العظیم* in the Quran occurs 9 times,
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| <i>عذاب يوم عظیم</i> (22:55), | <i>عذاب جهنم</i> 3 times, | <i>عذاب حریق</i> 4 times |
| <i>عذاب الیم</i> 7times, | <i>عذاب مغیم</i> 3 times | <i>عذاب عظیم</i> 5 times, |
| <i>عذاب تعین</i> 5times, | <i>عذاب شدید</i> 5times, | <i>عذاب يوم عظیم</i> 3 times |
| <i>عذاب النار</i> 7 times. | | |

In addition to it occur at several other places.

From the above we may conclude that the word *عذاب* is related to this life and to the life hereafter; it occurs nowhere in the Quran as related to a dead body in the grave.

Moreover, multi-million dead bodies have been, are and shall be burnt after death, in Hindi India. In addition to it there are accidental deaths on the Sea and in the Air. Such innumerable dead bodies pass away without graves. Does it mean that *عذاب القبر* is applicable to a part of humanity only ? Yet there is no going away from the fact that Muslims and some other Nations bury their dead.

About such dead bodies the holy Quran says, they are senseless and do not possess the power of perception

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ۝
(١٤/٢١)

"They are dead, lifeless, they have no sense of perception. They even do not know when they shall be raised."

Again it is said: (٢٤:٨٠) ... إِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ ...

"Truly they cannot cause the dead to listen, nor can they cause the deaf to hear the call."

فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ
(٣٠:٥٢)

"Verily they cannot make the dead to hear nor can you make the dead to hear the call"

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَحْيَاءُ وَلَا الْأَمْوَاتُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسْمِعُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ
وَمَا أَنْتَ بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّن فِي الْقُبُورِ ۝ (٣٥:٢٢)

"Neither are the living and dead alike. Allah can make any one He will to hear but you cannot make them to hear who are (buried) in graves."

The above said verses and the one that follow, are related to those who call upon the graves of their dead "peers"

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَن لَّا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ
الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَفْلُونَ ۝ (٣٦:٥)

"And who is more astray than the one who besides Allah, prays such as will not answer him till the day of judgment and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call (to them)"

Inference:

We may thus conclude:-

- (1) After the life in this world there shall be no life except on the day of Judgment.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ ۚ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ
(٢٣:١٥-١٦)

"After that, at length you will die; again on the day of judgment will you be raised up".

Thus we find, in the Quran, nothing to support the belief that a dead body lying in a grave is in the state of consciousness, to receive the chastisement for his misdeeds in his life.

- (2) Life means the possession of consciousness about the surroundings. During sleep one loses such consciousness temporarily which returns after he wakes up. But after death the consciousness does not return, until he is raised up again in the life hereafter.

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا
فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۝ (٣٩:١٣٢)

"It is Allah that takes the souls (of men) at death and those that die not (He takes) during their sleep. He keeps that soul for which He has ordained death and dismisses the rest till an appointed term. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect."

- (3) The word **برزخ** (curtain or partition), in relation to dead bodies, occurs only once in the holy Quran

..... وَ مِنْ دَرَائِبِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ۝ (٢٣:١٠٠)

"Before them is a partition till the day they are raised up"

The verse means that after death a partition occurs in between those who are living and those who are dead. They shall face each other on the day of judgment.

Thus it is abundantly clear from what has been described above that you do not find anything in the text of the Holy Quran which points towards عذاب القبور