

Is Dead Punished Because of the Wailing of Relatives?

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A. Introduction

Sadiq was disturbed by a *hadees* he came to know through his friend. As per this hadees if relatives wail / weep / lament for a dead person then the dead person is punished because of this act.

He thought, "Why should the dead person be punished for his relative's wailings"?

He found this theory absurd, but he lacked the courage to come in open and discuss genuineness of this *hadees* with anyone.

Suddenly, one day Sadiq came across the Quranic ayah:

"Whoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his ownself. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden. .." Quran 17:15

He jumped from his bed reading this ayah because this ayah confirmed his belief. How can someone be punished because of wrong doings of others? He cheered and told himself, "I have got proof for my understanding. Earlier it was common sense and rationality that made me believe that a dead person should NOT be punished because of the wailing of his relatives; but now Quranic Ayah is supporting my view".

So, he went to his friend and told that Quran contradicts the message conveyed through that *hadees*. We need to follow Quranic principle of Surah 17: Ayah 15 that a dead person **cannot** get punishment for the wailing of his relatives.

His friend screamed, "*Hadees Rejector!!* You are Ahle Quran!! You are *ahlul-rai!!* You are not from *Ahle Sunnah*, you have deviated from Deen. How dare you tell that *hadees* conveys incorrect information?"

Sadiq was bewildered!! He was thinking that his friend would be happy to know about Quranic instruction on this topic, but got further confused and disturbed by his friend's reaction. He ran away, cried, wept, his self confidence shattered, his belief in Quran shaken!!

B. The human error

'Abdullah b. 'Umar reported that Hafsa wept for 'Umar (when he was about to die). He ('Umar) said: Be quiet, my daughter. Don't you know that the Messenger of Allaah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) had said: "**The dead is punished because of his family's weeping over it**"? *Sahih Muslim, Chapter: the dead body is punished for the lamentation of his family, No. 2015*

As per Sahih Muslim, Chapter: The dead person is punished for the lamentation of his family; hadees no 2016-2019, 2021

Hadees No 2015 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2016 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2017 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2018 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2019 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2021 - Hazrat Umar told that the dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

Hadees No 2026 - Hazrat Ibn Umar told that the dead is punished because of the weeping of his family. This *hadees* gives the complete picture. When this information reached to Hazrat Ayesha then she said that:

- Ibn Umar could not have remembered well what Prophet had said.
- When a Jew died and his family members were wailing then prophet told that he is being punished (because of his kufr and not because of wailing relatives)

Hadees number 2026- Hisham b. 'Urwa narrated on the authority of his father that the saying of Ibn 'Umar, viz." The dead would be punished because of the lamentation of his family over him" was mentioned to 'A'isha. **Upon this she said: May Allah have mercy upon Abu 'Abd al-Rahman (the kunya of Ibn 'Umar) that he heard something but could not retain it (well). (The fact is) that the bier of a Jew passed before the Messenger of Allah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) and (the members of his family) were wailing over him. Upon this he said: You are wailing and he is being punished.**

Hence in this example we see that due to human error people misunderstood what the prophet had said.

C. Quran and other hadees correct this mistake

Hadees No 2020 - Hazrat Umar told that dead is punished because of weeping of his family.

When Abu Musa made a mention of it to Musa b. Talha, and he said that 'A'isha told that it concerned the Jew (only).

Hadees No 2022 and Hadees no 2023 - These ahadees give the complete picture. This is a very long hadees. Hazrat Umar told that dead is punished because of weeping of his family. When this information reached to Hazrat Ayesha then she said that:

- Prophet NEVER meant that dead would be punished because of weeping of his family.
- Prophet meant that due to KUFRA of the dead person he (dead) will get punishment and wailing of the relatives is of no use.
- She immediately Quoted the ayah of Quran "*No bearer of a burden will bear another's burden*" 6:164 and proves that the said statement -that dead is punished because of weeping of his family- contradicts the Quran.

- She told that Hazrat Umar would have misheard this hadees. He did not lie. It would have been human error.

Hadees No 2027 also clarifies this issue: Hisham narrated on the authority of his father that it was mentioned to 'A'isha that Ibn 'Umar had narrated as marfu' hadith from the Prophet of Allah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) that the dead would be punished in the grave because of the lamentation of his family for him. Upon this she said: He (Ibn 'Umar) missed (the point). The Messenger of Allaah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) had (in fact) said: He (the dead) is punished for his faults or for his sins, and the members of his family are wailing for him now. (This misunderstanding of Ibn 'Umar is similar to his saying:) **The Messenger of Allah (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) stood by the well in which were lying the dead bodies of those polytheists who had been killed on the Day of Badr, and he said to them what he had to say, i. e.: They hear what I say. But he (Ibn 'Umar) misunderstood. The Prophet (sallAllaahu alayhi wa sallam) had only said: They (the dead) understand that what I used to say to them was truth.** She then recited:" Certainly, thou canst not make the dead hear the call" (xxvii. 80), nor can you make those hear who are in the graves, nor can you inform them when they have taken their seats in Hell.

D. Conclusion

1. it's a common misunderstanding among Muslims that when relatives lament for the dead then due to this the dead person is punished.
2. This erroneous understanding is because of some hadees.
3. Actually it was human error in transmission of this hadees that lead to this belief. However, when this information reached Hazrat Ayesha then she presented the correct understanding. Actually Prophet had spoken of punishment to a person because of his own sins. Wailing of the relatives does not result in punishment of the dead.
4. Other hadees and Quran make it clear that no bearer of burden will bear the burden of others.
