

131627 - Will anyone be spared from the squeezing in the grave?

the question

Whilst reading about religious topics, I came across this sentence: “The grave will squeeze its occupant; if anyone were to be spared from that, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh would have been spared from it.” According to another report: “This is the one at whose death the Throne shook, the gates of heaven were opened for him and seventy thousand of the angels attended his funeral. He was squeezed once, then released.” Does this mean that Sa`d ibn Mu`adh was the only one among humanity who was spared from the squeezing of the grave? In other words, is the squeezing of the grave inevitable for every Muslim, even if he took measures to be spared from the punishment of the grave?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The squeezing of the grave is the first thing that the deceased will experience in the realm of al-barzakh. This is affirmed in clear, authentic reports from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), including the following:

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It was narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

“The grave will squeeze its occupant once, and if anyone were to be spared from it, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh would have been spared from it.”

Narrated by Ahmad, 6/55, 98. Al-`Iraqi said in *Takhrij al-Ihya*, 5/259: Its isnad is good (jayyid). Adh-Dhahabi said in *as-Siyar*, 1/291: Its isnad is reliable. Al-Albani said in *as-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, 1695: To sum up, when all its isnads and corroborating reports are taken into account, the hadith is undoubtedly authentic. (End quote).

The commentators on *Musnad Ahmad* classed it as authentic (Mu'sasat ar-Risalah edn., 40/327)

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It was narrated from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said regarding Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (may Allah be pleased with him) when he died:

"This is the one at whose death the Throne shook, the gates of heaven were opened for him and seventy thousand of the angels attended his funeral. He was squeezed once, then released."

Narrated by an-Nasa'i in *as-Sunan*, 2055, 4/100. He said nothing about its isnad, and included it in a chapter entitled The squeezing and pressure of the grave. Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *Sahih an-Nasa'i*.

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It was narrated from Abu Ayyub (may Allah be pleased with him) that a child was buried, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

"If anyone was to be spared from the squeezing of the grave, this child would be spared."

Narrated by at-Tabarani in *al-Mu`jam al-Kabir*, 4/121. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar classed a similar report as authentic in *al-Matalib al-'Aliyah*, 13/44. Al-Haythami classed it as authentic in *Majma` az-Zawa'id*, 3/47. Al-Albani classed it as authentic in *as-Silsilah as-Sahihah*, no. 2164.

In *at-Tadhkirah fi Ahwal al-Mawta wa Umur al-Akhirah*, p. 323, under the chapter heading: What was narrated concerning the grave squeezing its occupant even if he was righteous, al-Qurtubi quoted other texts on this topic, but most of them are unreliable and odd.

Similarly, in *al-Mawdu`at*, 3/231, Ibn al-Jawzi narrated many of these reports under the chapter heading, The squeezing of the grave. But what we have mentioned of authentic reports is sufficient, in sha Allah.

Secondly:

The scholars differed as to whether the believer will be subjected to the squeezing of the grave, and in what state he will be at that time. There are two views:

The first view:

The squeezing of the grave will happen to every believer and it will be intense, but the righteous believer will be released quickly and his grave will be made spacious for him, so this torment will not last for a long time. As for the evildoer, the squeezing will be intense in his case and the constriction of his grave will last longer, commensurate with his sin and disobedience.

Abu'l-Qasim as-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

No one, whether he was righteous or an evildoer, will be spared from the squeezing of the grave, but the difference between the Muslim and the disbeliever in this regard is how long the squeezing will last. It will last for a long time in the case of the disbeliever, whereas for the believer, this squeezing will happen when he is first placed in his grave, then his grave will become spacious again. (End quote)

Al-Hakim at-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The reason for this squeezing is that there is no one who did not commit sin, so this squeezing will be like a punishment for his sin, then the Mercy of Allah will save him from it. (End quote from *Hashiyat as-Suyuti 'ala Sunan an-Nasa'i*, 3/292. Ar-Ramli quoted it in his *Fatawa*, 4/210)

The second view: The squeezing of the grave will happen to righteous Muslims, but it will be a gentle and compassionate squeezing, with no pain or suffering. As for the sinful Muslims, the squeezing will be intense in their case, by way of wrath, commensurate with their sins and bad deeds.

It was narrated that Muhammad at-Taymi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He used to say that the squeezing of the grave happens because the earth is like their mother and from it they were created, then they were away from it for a long time. So when its children return to it, it embraces them like a compassionate mother whose children were away from her,

then they returned to her. Whoever was obedient to Allah, it will squeeze him with gentleness and kindness, but whoever was disobedient to Allah, it will squeeze him with force, because it is angry with him.

As-Suyuti narrated it in *Hashiyat as-Suyuti 'ala Sunan an-Nasa'i*, 3/292, from the report of Ibn Abi Dunya. He [as-Suyuti] also quoted it in *Bushra al-Ka'ib bi Liqa' al-Habib*, p. 5, under the chapter heading: The squeezing of the earth will be gentle for the believer.

A marfu` hadith regarding this matter was narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), in which she said: O Messenger of Allah, yesterday you told me about the voices of Munkar and Nakir and the squeezing of the grave, and it upset me greatly.

He said: "O `A'ishah, the voices of Munkar and Nakir in the ears of the believers are like antimony in the eye, and the squeezing of the grave for the believer is like the compassionate embrace of a mother whose child complains of a headache, so she presses his head gently. But, O `A'ishah, woe to those who doubt Allah, for they will be squeezed in their graves like an egg on a rock."

Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in *Ithbat `Adhab al-Qabr*, p. 85, no. 116, and by ad-Daylami in *Musnad al-Firdaws*, no. 3776. Its isnad includes al-Hasan ibn Abi Ja'far and `Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jad'an, both of whom are unreliable, so it is an unreliable hadith. Some of them attributed it to Ibn Mandah and Ibn an-Najjar, but I have not come across it.

Al-Hafiz adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This squeezing has nothing to do with the torment of the grave; rather it is something that the believer will feel, just as a person feels the pain of losing his child or his close friend in this world, and as he feels pain when he is sick, pain when his soul is taken, pain when he is being questioned and tested in his grave, pain when hearing his family weep for him, pain when being resurrected from his grave, pain and horror in the place of standing, pain when passing over hell, and so on. He may suffer from all of these frightening things, but they are not the torment of the grave or the torment of hell at all. Rather Allah will alleviate some or all of that for the

righteous person, but the believer will have no rest until he meets his Lord. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And warn them, [O Muhammad], of the Day of Regret}

[Maryam 19:39]

{And warn them, [O Muhammad], of the Approaching Day, when hearts will be at the throats}

[Ghafir 40:18].

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to forgive us and care for us. Yet despite all these difficult experiences, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh is one of those who we know to be one of the people of Paradise, and we know that he is one of the highest in status of the martyrs (may Allah be pleased with them). It is as if you think that the victorious one will not go through any trials in this world or the hereafter, and he will not go through any terror, pain or fear! Ask your Lord for well-being, and ask Him to gather us with the group in which Sa`d will be. (End quote from *A`lam an-Nubala'*, 1/290-292)

Shaykh an-Nafrawi al-Maliki said:

With regard to the squeezing of the grave, it is inevitable, but it will vary according to the differences in people's status. (End quote from *al-Fawakih ad-Dawani*, 2/688)

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This hadith – the hadith “The grave squeezed Sa`d once” – is well known to the scholars. Assuming it is authentic, the earth's squeezing of the believer will be an embrace of mercy and compassion, like a mother embracing her child. As for its squeezing of the disbeliever, it will be a squeezing of pain and torment – Allah forbid. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told us that when a person is buried, two angels come to him and ask him about three fundamental matters: Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your prophet? The believer says: My Lord is Allah, my religion is Islam and my prophet is Muhammad. I ask Allah to make this my answer and your answer. As for the hypocrite or the apostate – may Allah

protect us and you from that – he will say: Oh, oh, I do not know; I heard the people say something so I said it too. Then the grave will squeeze him until his ribs interlock – Allah forbid – due to the severity of the squeezing. So there is a difference between the way in which the earth will squeeze the disbeliever or apostate and the way in which it will squeeze the believer. (End quote from *Liqa'at al-Bab al-Maftuh*, no. 161, question no. 17).

What appears to be the case – and Allah knows best – is that the first view is the more likely to be correct regarding this issue, because of what is clearly indicated by the hadith, and that no one among the believers, let alone others, will be spared from the squeezing of the grave. This is indicative of how difficult this squeezing will be, and that it will cause pain to the one who is squeezed in his grave, even though people will vary in that, each according to his deeds and his situation. Because of that, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) described the squeezing of the grave as one of the means of attaining forgiveness of sins. He said: ... The eighth means is what will happen in the grave of testing, squeezing and terror, for these are things that bring about expiation of sins. (End quote from *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, 7/500).

However, the hadith mentioned in the question does not indicate that Sa'd is the only one who was spared from the squeezing of the grave, as the questioner thinks. Rather it says that Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) was not spared from the squeezing of the grave, although he was the most deserving of being spared, if anyone was to be spared.

See also the answer to question no. [71175](#).

And Allah knows best.