

Islam forbids insulting the dead

Explained by Shaykh Uthaymeen

The following is a summary

Aisha may Allah be pleased with her said the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said:

لَا تَسُبُّوا الْأَمْوَاتَ فَإِنَّهُمْ قَدْ أَفْضَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا قَدَّمُوا

Do not verbally abuse the deceased, for they have reached the consequences of what they put forth¹.

His statement 'do not verbally abuse' pertains to everyone, the companions of the Prophet and those who came after them.

❖ The Prophet peace be upon him did not specific the Muslim or the non-Muslim.

"They have reached the consequences of their actions". The Prophet peace be upon him spoke the truth. They have reached the consequences of their actions because the deeds end at the time of death. Except for an ongoing charity, knowledge left behind which benefits the people, or a righteous child to supplicate on behalf of the parent.

- ❖ This prohibition refers to insulting the individual it does not refer to their statements
- ❖ Incorrect statements must be corrected even if the one who said the statement is deceased.
- ❖ But it is not permissible to insult the actions of the deceased; such as to say about a deceased person 'he did a lot of evil', 'he fornicated', 'he used to steal', 'he used to do drugs'! We do not speak like this.

They have already reached the consequences of their actions so what is the benefit of insulting them? But if he makes an incorrect statement or ruling that is circulated then the incorrectness of his statement must be clarified. For this reason the scholars refute those who error concerning Islamic creed or matters of jurisprudence even if they are deceased.

In another narration it reads: "**It harms the living**"; meaning if you insult the deceased it will harm the living, such as their family and relatives.

¹ Sahih al-Bukhari 6516

Therefore this prohibition is from two standpoints:

1st: There is no benefit in insulting the deceased because they have already reached the consequences of their actions.

2nd: Insulting the deceased harms their family and relatives

If a questioner asks: Is it permissible for me to insult a leader from the leaders of the disbelievers that has died like Abu Lahab for example? The answer: No. This narration indicates you cannot insult them as it relates to their personal actions. But as for their harming the Prophet peace be upon him, in this case it is permissible to mention this, saying this man used to harm the Messenger peace be upon him. This is said to discourage others from harming the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him.

This applies to all deceased non-Muslims. It is prohibited to personally insult them as an individual. But it is permissible to insult their incorrect statements or actions which others may emulate. This insult is upon the statement not the individual.

Translated and summarized by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee