

Sura Qasas, verse 80

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيَلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَن آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا وَلَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ

Those who were given knowledge said [to them], 'Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for one who has faith and acts righteously, and no one will receive it except the patient ones..'

Reflections

- how different was the reaction of this group from the previous group! What made it so different?
- What knowledge did these people have?
- Patience is necessary for faith and good deeds. Why?

Tafsir

The other group that witnessed Qarun's finery was a small group who saw beyond the shallowness of his outer glitter. These people were not swayed by the flaunting of Qarun. They did not judge according to wealth and possessions but rather according to principles and integrity. Character and values are important, not things.

Note that in the previous verse God described the people who envied Qarun as those who desired the world. But in this verse the people who did not envy Qarun are not described as those who desired the Hereafter - although that would have been a logical opposite. Instead it is a people who have been granted knowledge. This shows the importance of knowledge in helping people understand things correctly. It gives a true perspective of things and leads a person towards God. Without knowledge it is easy to be blinded and misjudge what we see.

It is also an answer to Qarun who had said he had knowledge and that was why he had his wealth. Allah wishes to show him that true knowledge is what this group had. They had awareness and wisdom, which are fruits of knowledge.

The group with knowledge reproaches the other group. 'Woe be to you' was used at that time to say 'how can you be so mistaken', or 'you are so wrong'. They are not intimidated by the other group and perform their duty of telling them what they think is right.

The reward from Allah and His pleasure should be the goal of life. That is much more precious than wealth of this world. It is ever lasting and is the main purpose of life. It can be attained by faith and good deeds but to be steadfast on it requires patience. It is easy to go off the straight path. Only those who are patient can be firm and not give in to temporary pleasures and desires.

The wise people of that time realize that and explained it to the people who were impressed with Qarun's outward glitter.

Hadith

If a person acquires a branch of knowledge, it is better for him than possessing as much gold as the height of Mt. Abu Qubais [a Mt. in Makkah] which he would distribute in the way of Allah.
Holy Prophet (s)
Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol.1, p.184

Imam Ali said: Knowledge is better than Wealth because of 7 Reasons:

1. Knowledge is the inheritance of Prophets while wealth is the inheritance of Pharaohs.
2. Knowledge does not decrease with spending (it actually increases) while wealth decreases with spending.
3. Wealth requires to be protected while knowledge protects its owner.
4. Knowledge will enter the grave while wealth will be prevented from doing so.
5. Wealth reaches both believers and unbelievers while (true) knowledge is reserved only for those who are worthy of it.
6. Knowledge will facilitate passing over the Siraat (on the Day of Judgement) while wealth will be an obstacle.
7. People are always in need of scholars while they might not be in need of those possessing wealth.

Imam Ali (a)

Al Amali, Shaykh Mufid

(see <http://www.aimislam.com/what-imam-ali-a-said-to-kumail/>)

Focus

Teachers could focus on :

- importance of knowledge.
- and/or necessity of patience while on the right path.

Important Lessons

- 1) The people with knowledge see things very differently from people who don't have knowledge.
- 2) True knowledge is that which leads the human being to fulfill the purpose of life - to serve God.
- 3) Faith and good deeds requires strength and patience.

Practical Implementation

- 1) How does your knowledge help you to see things correctly?
- 2) What can you do to increase that type of knowledge?

Story

- short youtube video on importance of knowledge (for younger children): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZW2-oEIQWI>

Possible Ideas for activities

- Children can make a poster with the hadith of Imam Ali (a). See online for examples.
- Make a fictional biography of Qarun. Children can use the verses and notes for details and then add some fictional details. This can be a creative activity. Check online. Example: <https://www.pinterest.com/jennyannedavis/biography-project/>.

Sources:

Āytaullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzī (ed), *Tafsīr-e Namūneh*;
Aghae Muhsin Qaraati, *Tafsire Nur*