

Sura Qasas, verses 81-82

فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ

And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was no group to help him other than Allah, nor could he defend himself.

وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيَكَانَ اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَوْ لَا أَنْ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا^ط وَيَكَانَهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ

And those who had envied his position the day before began to say: "Ah! it is indeed Allah Who increases sustenance to whom He wills, or restricts it! Had it not been that Allah was gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up! Ah! those who reject Allah will surely never be successful.

Reflections

- how did Qarun feel when he was dying? Was his wealth of any use to him?
- The people's reaction changed completely. What brought about this quick change?
- What is their new attitude towards God?

Tafsir

Qarun and his entire palace were swallowed by the earth. History says that the earth opened up and the entire building, with all that was in it sank inside. Qarun was destroyed, along with the people who were with him, and the possessions he owned. There was nothing that could save them from such an end.

It is the power of God that that which gives life can also give death. Firaun and his army drowned in water - something which gives life to the earth. Qarun and his people sank in mud - the same earth that nurtures growth.

The reaction of the people changes. The same people who envied him and wanted to be in his place now think differently. They realize that it is God who gives and takes away. Human beings have no power of their own. Wealth and comfort are not a sign that God is pleased with the person, nor is poverty and difficulties a sign of God's displeasure. The world does not matter to God

and real reward is for the Hereafter. They understand that Qarun did not have full power and control after all.

Some people have the mistaken idea that if God is pleased with them they will have an easy life and be happy and comfortable. That is a false assumption. Qarun had comfort and wealth but God was not pleased with him. The end of Qarun showed this clearly - Allah was displeased with him and punished him for his arrogance and rejection.

The people also realized how wrong they were to have wished they were in Qarun's place. If God had answered their wish they too would have been destroyed. Human beings are quick to make judgements sometimes and are often mistaken. They ask for things that are not good for them. God does not always answer their prayers or wishes and there is great wisdom in it. Sometimes what people wish for can have very negative results.

We must understand that the story of Qarun is played out all the time, in different times and different societies. Wealthy people become arrogant and intoxicated with their wealth. They reject God and rely on their own assumed smartness. The earth swallows them up - not always literally. Sometimes the wealth they invested on the earth becomes a loss. Sometimes all that they own robs them of real happiness and love, and their wealth becomes a liability. They may spend a lot of money on trivial items of no real value. They ignore the extreme poverty of others. Sometimes Qarun qualities can apply to a country. A rich and developing country can be arrogant and think it is invincible.

The story of Qarun has many lessons for people of all times to come. It is a story found in the old and new Testament also.

Hadith

May Allah have mercy on the servant [of His] who thinks and takes lessons, sees what has passed of history and what will come of the future.

Imam Ali (a)

Biharul Anwar, Vol.73, pg 119

The best intelligence is taking lessons from others

Imam Ali (a)

Ghurarul Hikam, H#3273

Taking lessons from others leads to true guidance

Imam Ali (a)

Biharul Anwar, Vol. 78, pg 92

Focus

Teachers could focus on :

- the result of pride and arrogance

- taking lessons from others

Important Lessons

- 1) The consequences of rejecting God can come in different forms
- 2) Do not be quick to make judgements.
- 3) Not everything that you wish for is good for you.
- 4) Take lessons from the lives of other people.

Practical Implementation

- 1) Every story has lessons in it for us. That is the importance of history.
- 2) Do not be quick to judge other people and think they are very lucky. You don't know the future.

Possible Ideas for activities

- Children can write a poem, spoken word . . . on Qarun
 - A poster with 10 (or less) lessons from the story of Qarun
 - Time permitting, discuss Qarun - Korah in the old and new Testament. See:
http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/246641/jewish/Korahs-Rebellion.htm
<https://www.gotquestions.org/rebellion-of-Korah.html>
- Many other websites also mention his story in the Bible.

Sources:

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