Stories from the Qur'an
Series 19

The Keys of the Treasures

The Story of Qarun (Prophet Moses Part 6) According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 19

THE KEYS OF THE TREASURES

The Story of Qarun (Prophet Moses Part 6) According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَٱبْتَغِ فِيمَآ ءَاتَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةَ ۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَأَحْسِن كَمَآ أَحْسَنَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۖ وَلَا تَبْغِ ٱلْفَسَادَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُفْسِدِينَ

"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters."

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:77

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who extends provision to whom He wills and restricts it, who made wealth a trial and the home of the Hereafter for those who do not seek exaltedness upon the earth. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said that true richness is the richness of the soul, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah place wealth in our hands, not in our hearts; grant us richness of the soul and contentment; and protect us from arrogance even of an atom's weight. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows the **scenery** of an **ancient treasury door**, half open, in an old desert city at dusk, with **a ring of large bronze keys** hanging from the door. In front of the door, **the ground has cracked open and collapsed**.

This image is taken from the verse: ***"And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men"*** (28:76), and his end: ***"And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home"*** (28:81).

The cover does not depict Qarun or the punishment that befell him, only its signs: the heavy keys and the split earth. The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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THE KEYS OF THE TREASURES

In Part 5 (Series 18), Prophet Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ taught us the manners of seeking knowledge. This Part 6 tells of a man from the people of Prophet Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself who was tested with ***wealth***, and failed the test: ***Qarun*** (Korah).

The Qur'an mentions Qarun together with two other opponents of Prophet Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"To Pharaoh, Haman and Qarun"*** (40:24). Pharaoh stands for power, Haman for office, and Qarun for wealth. And all three ended in the same way: ***"they were arrogant in the land"*** (29:39).

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:76

۞إِنَّ قَٰرُونَ كَانَ مِن قَوۡمِ مُوسَىٰ فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيۡهِمۡۖ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلۡكُنُوزِ مَآ إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُۥ لَتَنُوٓأُ بِٱلۡعُصۡبَةِ أُوْلِي ٱلۡقُوَّةِ إِذۡ قَالَ لَهُۥ قَوۡمُهُۥ لَا تَفۡرَحۡۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلۡفَرِحِينَ ٧٦

Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, "Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:76

COMMENTARY ON 28:76 — THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

The story of Qarun is told in Surah Al-Qasas, after the story of Prophet Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Pharaoh. It is as if it teaches that the enemies of truth do not only come from outside, but also from within one's own people — and that the trial of wealth is as dangerous as the trial of power. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:76

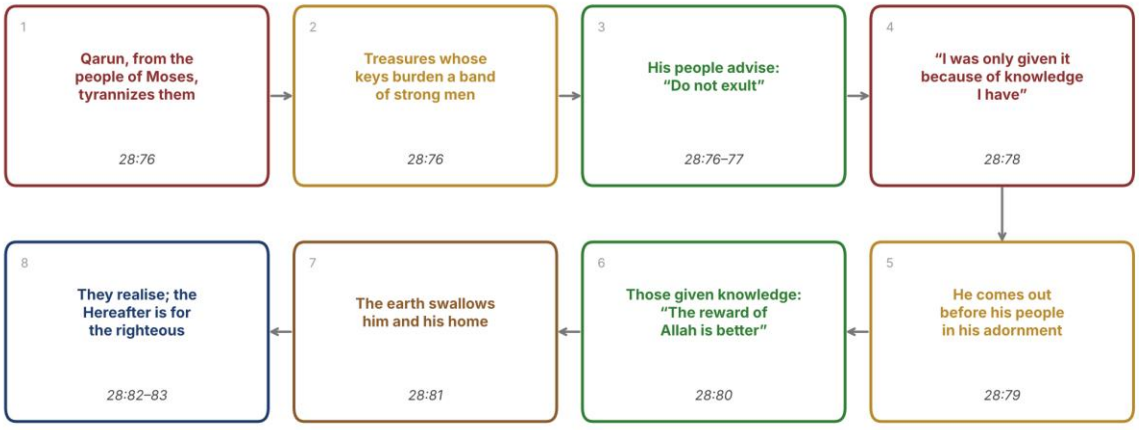


Figure 1: The flow of the story of Qarun — from overflowing wealth to being swallowed by the earth.

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Figure 1 shows eight main events. The whole story is contained in Surah Al-Qasas (28:76–83).

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The translations of the Hadith are our own, from the Arabic text. The grade of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

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FROM THE PEOPLE OF MOSES

First: One of them. ***"Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Moses"***. Qarun was not an Egyptian; he was one of the Children of Israel, the people oppressed by Pharaoh. Yet when he was given wealth, he himself oppressed his people.

Second: Arrogant and oppressive. ***"but he tyrannized them"***. The phrase ***fa-baghā 'alaihim*** means he transgressed against them. Wealth that should have been a means to help his people became a tool to humiliate them.

Third: A trial from within. The exegetes report that Qarun was a relative of Prophet Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

This report is not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith, but the lesson is clear: closeness to righteous people does not save a person whose own heart is arrogant. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:76

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KEYS THAT BURDEN STRONG MEN

The Qur'an describes Qarun's wealth in a remarkable way — not by stating the amount of his wealth, but by mentioning its ***keys***: ***"treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men"***. If the keys alone needed a group of strong men to carry them, imagine the treasures they locked.

Yet wealth that great never satisfied him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described human nature towards wealth:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6439

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ صَالِحٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « لَوْ أَنَّ لاِبْنِ آدَمَ وَادِيًا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَادِيَانِ، وَلَنْ يَمْلأَ فَاهُ إِلاَّ التُّرَابُ، وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ تَابَ ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"If the son of Adam had a valley of gold, he would love to have two valleys. Nothing will fill his mouth except dust. And Allah turns in forgiveness to whoever repents."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abdillah al-Uwaysi, from Ibrahim ibn Sa'd, from Salih ibn Kaysan, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening of Hearts (Kitab al-Riqaq), chapter on guarding against the trial of wealth, Hadith No. 6439. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1048).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6439

This Hadith explains why Qarun never felt he had enough: ***a greedy heart will never be filled, except by the dust of the grave***. And at its end is hope: ***Allah turns in forgiveness to whoever repents*** — a door that Qarun refused to enter.

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FIVE PIECES OF ADVICE FROM HIS PEOPLE

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:77

وَٱبۡتَغِ فِيمَآ ءَاتَىٰكَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلدَّارَ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةَۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ ٱلدُّنۡيَاۖ وَأَحۡسِن
كَمَآ أَحۡسَنَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيۡكَۖ وَلَا تَبۡغِ ٱلۡفَسَادَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
ٱلۡمُفۡسِدِينَ ٧٧

But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:77

COMMENTARY ON 28:76–77 — BALANCED ADVICE

The righteous among his people did not stay silent. They gave him five pieces of advice that form ***the Islamic guide to managing wealth***:

First: Do not exult. ***"Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant"***. Being happy with a blessing is permitted; what is forbidden is joy that leads to arrogance and self-forgetfulness.

Second: Make wealth a path to the Hereafter. ***"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter"***.

Third: Do not forget your share of this world. ***"do not forget your share of the world"***. Islam does not command abandoning the world; it commands putting the world in its proper place.

Fourth: Do good as Allah has done good to you. ***"And do good as Allah has done good to you"***.

Fifth: Do not cause corruption. ***"And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:77

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"BECAUSE OF KNOWLEDGE I HAVE"

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:78

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أُوتِيتُهُۥ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِندِىٓ ۚ أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِن قَبْلِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا ۚ وَلَا يُسْـَٔلُ عَن ذُنُوبِهِمُ ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

He said, "I was only given it because of knowledge I have." Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of generations those who were greater than him in power and greater in accumulation [of wealth]? But the criminals, about their sins, will not be asked.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:78

COMMENTARY ON 28:78 — AN ARROGANT REPLY

First: Attributing the blessing to himself. ***"I was only given it because of knowledge I have"***. This is the root of Qarun's disease: he saw his wealth as the product of his own effort alone, not a gift from Allah.

Second: A recurring disease. The Qur'an mentions the same words about people in general: when given a blessing, ***"he says, "I have only been given it because of [my] knowledge.""*** — ***"Rather, it is a trial"*** (39:49). And ***"indeed, man transgresses"***, ***"Because he sees himself self-sufficient"*** (96:6–7).

Third: The lesson of history ignored. ***"Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him of generations those who were greater than him in power and greater in accumulation [of wealth]?"*** Qarun claimed to have knowledge, but did not take the most important knowledge of all.

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COMING OUT IN HIS ADORNMENT

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:79–80

فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ فِى زِينَتِهِۦ ۖ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا يَٰلَيْتَ لَنَا
مِثْلَ مَآ أُوتِىَ قَٰرُونُ إِنَّهُۥ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, "Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune."

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ ٱللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا ۚ
وَلَا يُلَقَّىٰهَآ إِلَّا ٱلصَّٰبِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

But those who had been given knowledge said, "Woe to you! The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness. And none are granted it except the patient."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:79-80

COMMENTARY ON 28:79–80 — TWO GROUPS WATCHING

First: A display of wealth. ***"So he came out before his people in his adornment"***. He wanted to be seen, admired and envied.

Second: Those who were dazzled. ***"Those who desired the worldly life said"***: ***"Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune"***.

Third: Those given knowledge. ***"But those who had been given knowledge said"***: ***"The reward of Allah is better for he who believes and does righteousness"***, and ***"none are granted it except the patient"***. Notice: true knowledge is not the knowledge of amassing wealth as Qarun claimed, but the knowledge that makes a person see the value of the Hereafter.

	Those Who Desired the Worldly Life	Those Given Knowledge
What they see	The glittering adornment and wealth of Qarun	The unseen reward of Allah
What they say	*"Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun"*	*"The reward of Allah is better for he who believes"*
Measure of success	Abundance of wealth	Faith, righteous deeds and patience
Outcome	Realise after Qarun is swallowed: "If not that Allah had conferred favor..."	Firm upon the truth from the start

Figure 2: Two groups watching Qarun's adornment — those who desired the worldly life, and those given knowledge.

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 91

وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، وَإِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ دِينَارٍ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَمَّادٍ، - قَالَ ابْنُ الْمُثَنَّى حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى بْنُ حَمَّادٍ، - أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَبَانَ بْنِ تَغْلِبَ، عَنْ فُضَيْلٍ الْفُقَيْمِيِّ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ النَّخَعِيِّ، عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « لاَ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبْرٍ ». قَالَ رَجُلٌ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ ثَوْبُهُ حَسَنًا وَنَعْلُهُ حَسَنَةً. قَالَ « إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ الْكِبْرُ بَطَرُ الْحَقِّ وَغَمْطُ النَّاسِ ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“No one will enter Paradise who has in his heart an atom’s weight of arrogance.”** A man said: “A man likes his clothes to be beautiful and his sandals to be beautiful.” He said: **“Indeed, Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on people.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, Muhammad ibn Bashshar and Ibrahim ibn Dinar, from Yahya ibn Hammad, from Shu‘bah, from Aban ibn Taghlib, from Fudayl al-Fuqaymi, from Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i, from ‘Alqamah, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith (Kitab al-Iman), chapter on the prohibition of arrogance and its explanation, Hadith No. 91.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:91a

This Hadith distinguishes between ***beauty*** and ***arrogance***. Wearing beautiful clothes is not arrogance, for ***Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty***. Arrogance is ***rejecting the truth and looking down on people*** — which is exactly what Qarun did when he rejected his people’s advice and came out to be admired.

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SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:81

فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِۦ وَبِدَارِهِ ٱلْأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُۥ مِن فِئَةٍ يَنصُرُونَهُۥ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُنتَصِرِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:81

COMMENTARY ON 28:81 — THE END OF AN ARROGANT MAN

First: A fitting punishment. ***"And We caused the earth to swallow him and his home"***. The one who raised himself above people was sunk beneath the earth; and the wealth he boasted of was swallowed with him.

Second: No helper. ***"And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah"*** — not his wealth, not his followers, ***"nor was he of those who [could] defend themselves"***.

Third: One of four kinds of punishment. Allah mentions the destruction of the arrogant nations: ***"and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned"*** (29:40). Qarun was swallowed; Pharaoh was drowned.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3485

حَدَّثَنَا بِشْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا يُونُسُ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، أَخْبَرَنِي سَالِمٌ، أَنَّ ابْنَ عُمَرَ، حَدَّثَهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَجُرُّ إِزَارَهُ مِنَ الْخُيَلاَءِ خُسِفَ بِهِ، فَهْوَ يَتَجَلْجَلُ فِي الأَرْضِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ». تَابَعَهُ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ خَالِدٍ عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"While a man was dragging his garment out of arrogance, the earth swallowed him, and he will keep sinking into the earth until the Day of Resurrection."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Bishr ibn Muhammad, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, from Yunus ibn Yazid, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Salim ibn 'Abdillah, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets (Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya'), Hadith No. 3485. Also narrated as No. 5790, and by Muslim (No. 2088) from Abu Hurayrah.

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3485

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told of a man from an earlier nation who was swallowed by the earth because of arrogance. The Hadith does not name the man, so we do not claim that he was Qarun. The lesson is the same: ***arrogance displayed upon the earth can end with being sunk into the earth***.

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THOSE WHO CAME TO REALISE

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:82

وَأَصۡبَحَ ٱلَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوۡاْ مَكَانَهُۥ بِٱلۡأَمۡسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيۡكَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُۖ لَوۡلَآ أَن مَّنَّ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيۡنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَاۖ وَيۡكَأَنَّهُۥ لَا يُفۡلِحُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ ٨٢

And those who had wished for his position the previous day began to say, "Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it! If not that Allah had conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us. Oh, how the disbelievers do not succeed."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:82

COMMENTARY ON 28:82 — YESTERDAY'S WISH, TODAY'S REALISATION

First: A change in one night. ***"And those who had wished for his position the previous day"*** — only yesterday they envied him; today they are grateful not to be like him.

Second: Provision is in Allah's hand. ***"Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it!"*** Abundant or little provision is not a sign of Allah's love or anger.

Third: Gratitude for being saved. ***"If not that Allah had conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us"***. There is mercy in prayers not answered, and in wishes not fulfilled.

Fourth: Their conclusion. ***"Oh, how the disbelievers do not succeed"***.

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THE HOME OF THE HEREAFTER

SURAH AL-QASAS 28:83–84

تِلْكَ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۚ وَٱلْعَٰقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.

مَن جَآءَ بِٱلْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُۥ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا ۖ وَمَن جَآءَ بِٱلسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى ٱلَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا۟ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgement] with a good deed will have better than it; and whoever comes with an evil deed - then those who did evil deeds will not be recompensed except [as much as] what they used to do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/28:83-84

COMMENTARY ON 28:83–84 — FOR WHOM THE HEREAFTER IS PREPARED

After the story of Qarun, Allah closes with a great principle: ***"That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption"***. Two of Qarun's traits are mentioned here: ***wanting to be exalted*** and ***causing corruption***. The Hereafter is prepared for those who leave both.

The exegetes mention that this verse does not forbid a person from owning wealth or status, but forbids ***the desire to rise above people*** by them. ***"And the [best] outcome is for the righteous"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 28:83

And Allah's recompense is just and generous: ***"Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgement] with a good deed will have better than it"***.

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TRUE RICHNESS

Qarun owned treasures whose keys burdened strong men, yet his heart was poor — always wanting more, and always wanting to be seen. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained the measure of true richness:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6446

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو حَصِينٍ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « لَيْسَ الْغِنَى عَنْ كَثْرَةِ الْعَرَضِ، وَلَكِنَّ الْغِنَى غِنَى النَّفْسِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Richness is not having many possessions; rather, true richness is the richness of the soul."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Ahmad ibn Yunus, from Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash, from Abu Hasin 'Uthman ibn 'Asim, from Abu Salih Dhakwan, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening of Hearts (Kitab al-Riqaq), chapter: richness is the richness of the soul, Hadith No. 6446. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1051).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6446

The Qur'an reminds us that ***"Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and Allah has with Him a great reward"*** (64:15), and in the same surah as the story of Qarun: ***"And what is with Allah is better and more lasting"*** (28:60).

And Luqman advised his son: ***"do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful"*** (31:18).

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of Qarun is also found in the Book of Numbers in the Bible (under the name ***Korah***), and is expanded by many Israiliyyat reports. Guided by the Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not make outside details part of the story we believe in.

POPULAR STORIES AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

THE POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
Qarun was a cousin or uncle of Prophet Moses.	The Qur'an only says "from the people of Moses" (28:76). The family relationship is an exegetes' report, not an authentic text.
Qarun's keys were carried by sixty mules, each key for one storehouse.	The Qur'an only says his keys would burden a band of strong men (28:76). That number is not established.
Qarun hired a woman to accuse Prophet Moses of adultery in public.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. This report must be avoided, as it defames the honour of a prophet.
Qarun's "knowledge" was alchemy, turning metal into gold.	Not established. The Qur'an only mentions Qarun's claim that his wealth was due to his knowledge (28:78), and Allah rejects that claim.
Qarun rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron with 250 leaders (Numbers 16).	The Qur'an mentions his arrogance and oppression of his people (28:76), not the details of that rebellion.
The man swallowed by the earth in the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari 3485 was Qarun.	The Hadith does not name him. Some scholars linked them, but it cannot be confirmed.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: LAKE QARUN IN EGYPT

In the **Faiyum** region of Egypt there is a brackish lake named **Lake Qarun (Birket Qarun)**. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, this lake is the **remnant of the ancient Lake Moeris**, which once covered a much larger area.

Claim not included. Local folklore links this lake with the place where Qarun was swallowed, and there are claims on the internet about "Qarun's treasure" at its bottom. However, there is **no archaeological evidence** linking this lake, or any site, with the Qarun of the Qur'an. A place name alone is not evidence, so this claim is **not included** as fact.

The Qur'an itself does not mention where Qarun was swallowed, because its lesson lies in arrogance and its end, not in a location.

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Encyclopaedia Britannica. Lake Moeris. https://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Moeris

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WEALTH IN THE HAND, NOT IN THE HEART

Qarun had everything except one thing: a heart that knew the Giver of blessings. His story does not teach that wealth is bad, but that ***wealth that enters the heart will sink its owner***. Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ such as 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf رضى الله عنهما were wealthy, but their wealth was in their hands, and was spent in the way of Allah.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

PARTY	ATTITUDE AND LESSON
Qarun	Arrogant, oppressive, attributed blessings to himself, rejected advice — swallowed with his wealth (28:76–81)
His people who advised him	Gave five balanced pieces of advice about this world and the Hereafter (28:76–77)
Those who desired the worldly life	Dazzled by his adornment, then came to realise after seeing his end (28:79, 82)
Those given knowledge	Saw the value of the Hereafter from the start; called to faith, righteous deeds and patience (28:80)

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: The trial of wealth is as heavy as the trial of hardship. (28:76; 64:15).

Second: Closeness to the righteous does not save an arrogant heart. (28:76).

Third: Use wealth for the Hereafter without forgetting your share of this world. (28:77).

Fourth: Do good as Allah has done good to you. (28:77).

Fifth: Blessings are gifts from Allah, not merely the product of our cleverness. (28:78; 39:49).

Sixth: Do not envy the wealth of others; the reward of Allah is better. (28:79–80).

Seventh: Arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on people. (Sahih Muslim 91).

Eighth: The Hereafter is for those who do not seek exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. (28:83).

Ninth: True richness is the richness of the soul. (Sahih al-Bukhari 6446).

CONCLUSION

Each of us holds "keys" — the keys to a house, a car, an account, a position. The story of Qarun asks us: are those keys in our hands, or have they locked our hearts?

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May Allah make us rich in soul, grateful for His blessings, and among those promised the home of the Hereafter. ***Allāhumma innī as'aluka al-hudā wa al-tuqā wa al-'afāfa wa al-ghinā.*** Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** will continue with the next story — with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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Al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an. https://tafsir.app/qurtubi/28/83

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ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

Sahih Muslim 2721 (the supplication "Allāhumma innī as'aluka al-hudā wa al-tuqā wa al-'afāfa wa al-ghinā"). https://sunnah.com/muslim:2721

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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