

# Comparative Analysis of Qarun Story in Quran and Bible

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## Abstract

As a symbol of wealth, Qarun life is amalgamated with arrogance and rebellion in three Surahs of Quran: Al-Qasas (Stories), Al-Ankabut (Spider) and Ghafir (Forgiver). In Al-Ankabut and Ghafir just one Ayah (line) is dedicated to Qarun story, but Al-Qasas portrays his pride and intoxication of unlimited wealth which was followed by him forgetting God and kindness with others, and lastly his death in seven ayahs. Based on Quran, Qarun is from Moses (peace be upon him) tribe but he oppressed his own people. He was very wealthy and believed his wealth was just the result of his competency and merit. His people benevolently advised him, and also God reminds him and all those who are like Qarun that there were some even more powerful and avarice people than Qarun him but all died. Yet he again refused to donate his wealth and began to show off, and the worldly minded wished they had been in his place. Then God's torment was descended and he commanded the earth to devour Qarun and his house. Bible, like Quran, describes his fate in "Ishah 16, Journey of Numbers" under the Hebrew name of "Qarun bin Izhar bin Kohath bin Levi": "Qarun is Moses cousin, but as he was jealous of Moses and Aaron, he rebelled against Moses with collaboration of Dathan, Abiram, and Oan and 250 of leaders of Bani Israel. After that earth opened its mouth and devoured Qarun, Dathan and Abiram. Afterward a fire came from Lord and burnt the remaining of his companions. Here in this study we are going to compare these texts as nowadays it is necessary to discuss these matters enabling us to unite followers of holy religions and preventing discord.

**Keywords:** Quran, Qarun, Bible, similarities, differences

## 1. Introduction

Almighty God has stated many events in forms of a story in order to be better penetrated into the heart and soul of his people. In Quran, the story is a tool for inviting people to monotheism and to live a true life. Qarun's story is one of the stories illustrated by Quran. He has been pictured as an arrogant rich person in Bani Israel tribe. Other than Quran, the bible stated such stories. Comparing these stories in Quran and Bible and finding some of their similarities and differences can help us significantly to unite the followers of monotheistic religions which is one of the concerns of religious leaders because despite the differences in these stories, they in some ways lead people to the evolution which is the aim of holy books (R.K: Majid Maaref, discussion about the history and Quranic sciences, journal of looking to stories, the aims and purposes in Quran, pp. 248-255). We hope that such comparative studies will bring us closer to other religions and expand our friendship. The cooperation of Dr. Hamami, the religious consulter of Iranian Jewish Community was very helpful in the present study.

## 2. Methodology

The present study is a fundamental and theoretical research with a practical point of view to bring the divine religions closer which is organized using library research method and reliable resources.

## 3. Research Background

The story of Qarun is mentioned in the Quran, Bible, anecdotal and historical sources and even folk stories however it's not been addressed comparatively.

### 3.1 Qarun in Quran and Commentaries: The Literal Meaning of Qarun

Etymologists did not suggested a definition for Qarun. According to some of them maybe his denomination is because he's one of Pharaoh's relatives (Mostafavi, 9/251).

Quran says: "verily, Qarun was one of the people of Moses" (Al-Qasas, 76). It does not clearly suggest that Qarun was Mose's relatives because the word "Qaum" (people) refers to nation and group not kin and relatives.

However, some commentators believe that he is one of Mose's relatives which is inferred from chronicles and news (Najafi Khomeini, 15/ 208). Some say he's Mose's uncle. The others say he was Moses' nephew. Some like Aboabdellah say he's Mose's cousin. Some say he's Mose's cousin because Qarun's father is Yasreb Ghahe and Mose's father, Omran Bin Ghahe is the son of Levi, son of Jacob. The last assumption was more famous among the commentaries (Alousi, 10/316). He was described as a good looking man that's why he was famous as Monavar (means luminous) (Tabari, 1/356). No one could compete him in knowledge and beauty after Moses and Aaron. He recited the Torah better than anybody else and his voice was nice (Rasouli Mahalati, 464) and because of that he was famous as Monavan (Jazayeri, 411). Nobody excelled him in singing (Majlesi, 546). He was preceded the Israeli in memorizing Torah (belaghi, 161). He read Torah continuously and prayed in solitude and seclusion far from other people. Some said he prayed on mountains for forty years and prevailed over all Israelis in piety (Shamsoddin, 416). He has always been looking for knowledge and finally accomplished it (Faal Eraghi, 264)

### 3.2 Qarun's Massive Wealth

"We had granted him such riches that his treasure-chests alone would surely have been too heavy a burden for a troop of ten men or even more" (Al-Qasas/ 76).

There are many stories told about Qarun's wealth. Despite the apparent differences, all of them indicate that he was very rich and in some of the stories there have been some exaggerations. The following statements prove it:

"God made Qarun very wealthy in a way that many powerful men bow down to keep the keys of his treasures and inventories" (Belaghi, 163). According to Khamiseh, "the Qarun's keys were made of leather and each key was the size of a finger. Each key was designed for a treasure and all were carried on 60 white forehead camels" (Tabari, 1/356). He sat on a white horse with purple accoutrement sewn with gold thread wearing a bright yellow outfit while 300 bondwomen were along with him. They were all sited on horses and went along with 4 thousands of his friends. He built a house for himself and used gold bricks in it and a door made of gold (Bin Asir, 1/232).

Although, his life and wealth has been exaggerated in such stories, but all of them and other reports in Quran and Bible demonstrate the massive and of course ill-gotten wealth of Qarun.

### 3.3 Advice to Qarun

The wise men in his tribe advised him benevolently. For example, they first tried to break his fake pride by saying "Do not rejoice that God does not love arrogant and proud people" (Al-Qasas, 76). In the second phase, they warned him by saying this world is a means not the goal and saying "Seek instead for the afterworld by means of what God has granted thee" (Al-Qasas, 77). Moghatel Bin Soleyman (cited in balkhi, 3/355) said that wealth is not a bad thing as some fools believe. It's important to see in which path it's used. If it's used for the other world, nothing is better than it. This is the same logic Imam Ali, peace be upon him stated about life: "those who see life as a device, it'll open his eyes through the truth and whoever sees it as a purpose, it makes him blind." (Makarem Shirazi, 16/155)

In the third stage, he was warned that he can only use a little part of his whole wealth. "Do not forget your own share of this world" (Al-Qasas, 77). According to Imam Ali (PBUH) quoted in Maani Al Akhbar, "don't forget your health, youth, power and joy and ask the hereafter by these blessings". (Tabresi, 7/416).

In the fourth stage, he was warned to this truth that God had mercy upon you so you should also have mercy on others otherwise He will take them all back "As God has favored you, you do the same." To favor means either to do good things for people in your actions or only to thank Lord for all the blessings you are given and do these all for what you are created for or simply it just means be good! (Zemkhshari, 3/431, Alousi, 10/318).

And in the fifth stage, he was warned to avoid corruption on earth which is the direct consequence of forgetting the previous forth principles. "Seek not to spread corruption on earth: for, verily, God does not love the corrupt!" (Al-Qasas, 77)

### 3.4 Qarun's Arrogant Answer

Qarun considers all these wealth as the result of his own knowledge and responds to them as the arrogant rich people respond: "This wealth has been given to me only by virtue of the knowledge that I myself own! (I t comes from my own creativity and cleverness)" (Al-Qasas/78).

### 3.5 Type of Qarun's Knowledge

Commentaries have different point of views regarding the type of Qarun's Knowledge. Some of them consider it as Torah's knowledge. It means he's Bani Israel's supreme and that's why he's preceded over them. Some

consider it as the knowledge of alchemy and goldsmith. The other knows it as the knowledge of commerce, farming, science, technology and industry. The others said he must have a special management skill by which he could gain all the wealth. Some say it's the science of God as he says this is the wealth God has given to him by the knowledge he has been received from Him (Tabari, Tabari commentary, 5/1319, Meybodi, 7/345). It is not of course unlikely that the concept of this verse has a wide meaning and includes all of them. Qarun answered this question without paying attention to the power of Almighty God without heeding that more powerful and richer people have been perished and will be: "Did he not know that God had destroyed [the arrogant of] the generations that preceded him, people who were much greater than him in power, and richer in what they had amassed?" (Al Qasas, 78).

### 3.6 Refusing to Pay the Zakat (Religious Taxes)

God sent this command to Moses to get taxes from the rich people. According to Bin Abbas, "when the taxes was ordained, Qarun came to Moses and agreed to pay 1 dinar out of 1 thousand, 1 Dirham out of 1 thousand Dirham and to give 1 thing from thousand things. He went home then and found out it's a large amount of money therefore he refused to pay the taxes." (Tabari, 1/358, Bin Asir, 1/232). Moses insisted on the taxes but Qarun prepared a plot and tried to accuse and dishonor him in his tribe. (Belaghi, 163).

### 3.7 Qarun's Plot

All historical and commentary sources quoted the story of Qarun's conspiracy the same way: "Qarun gathered a group of Bani Israelites and said to them: whatever Moses commanded you on you all obeyed him. Now he wants to take all your money. They answered: we'll do whatever you say. Qarun replied: take that prostitute to me and I give her money to accuse Moses among his tribe of adultery with her. The other day he gathered the Israelite and said to Moses: people are gathered for you to state the religious commands. Moses came and preached to them: anyone who thieves his hands shall be cut off. Anyone who slanders the others, he shall deserve 80 lashes. Anyone who does not have a wife and commits adultery they shall deserve 100 lashes. And whoever fornicates shall be stoned. Qarun stood up and responded: even for yourself? Moses replied: yes even for myself. Qarun said: Bani Israelite say you have committed adultery with that woman. Moses replied: bring her to me. When the woman came, Moses asked her: did I do such thing as they say? And he made her sewer to tell the truth. The woman hesitated and said: No, Qarun gave me money to accuse you."

All the resources confirmed this fact namely: (Balami 1/460 and 461, Tabari 1/358 and 359, Ebn Asir 1/232-233, Majlesi 252-253, Mahalati 465-466, Belaghi 163-164, Faal Eraghi 256)

### 3.8 Qarun's Perish

"And thereupon We commanded the earth to swallow him along with his house; and he had no one and nothing to succour him against divine retribution nor he himself could not save him." (Al Qesas, 81)

In some sources, it's stated that: when the woman scandalized Qarun, Moses bowed down and cried. He said to God: "Oh Lord! Your enemy hurt me and tried to scandalize me. You take my revenge. God said: the earth is in your command. Command and the earth will obey." (Rasouli Mahalati, 466). Moses said: "earth swallow him! The house trembled and swallowed Qarun and his friends. Qarun was continuously saying Moses forgive me! But Moses said: "earth swallow them and they were sunk into the ground up to their knees. Qarun asked for forgiveness but Moses repeated that again and the earth devoured them all." (Bin Asir, 233/1, Tabari 1/361 and 362)

### 3.9 Story of Qarun's Death in Al Ankabut Surah

Another verse that mentioned Qarun's name is verse 39 of Al Ankabut Surah. His name is mentioned along two other bani Israelite (Pharaoh and Haman): "And we also perished Qarun and Pharaoh, and Haman: indeed, to them came Moses with all clear evidence of the truth, but they rebelled against God in that territory however, they could not escape [Us]."

Qarun was the symbol of wealth coupled with vanity, selfishness and neglect. Pharaoh was the symbol of arrogant power along with evil and Haman was a pattern of assisting the cruel oppressors. Qarun relied on his wealth, treasures and knowledge and Pharaoh and Haman relied on their huge army and martial power and great propaganda potential among the ignorant masses (Makarem Shirazi, 16/272). Qarun reflected an embodiment of economic corruption, hoarding, ignoring people payments, accusing leadership and uprising against the society. On the other hand, Pharaoh created political and martial terror in the society but Haman was his confidant and propaganda adviser (Madresi, 9/424). They could not escape from the realm of God's torments even though their own facilities and equipments. But God sent them to the Land of Adam humiliated and with disgrace.

### 3.10 Qarun in Ghafir Surah, Verse 24

The third verse that has spoken about Quaron is Ghafir, verse 24. The name of Qarun is stated along with Pharaoh and Haman: "Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah called [him] a sorcerer, a liar." To interpret this verse, the previous verse must be taken into consideration: "And verily We sent Moses with Our clear Ayat (Verses, Signs) and reasons." (Ghafir: 23).

The reason why the story of Moses and Pharaoh is repeated is to be a lesson for the infidels and atheists who don't believe. This verse suggested this fact: "We indeed sent Moses with Our vivid signs and revelations to offer them a conclusive argument" (Najafi, Khomeini, 17/235). Though Moses was a prophet for all those people but the fact that Pharaoh's name was mentioned alone is because he was their leader, Haman was his minister and Qarun was the owner of his treasures and the rest of people were their obedient (Tabresi, 8/445)

### 3.11 Qarun in the Bible

Korah is the Hebrew name of Qarun and he was introduced in the religious resources by this name. According to the Bible Lexicon, Kurah means pumpkin. It also states that: "Korah was the son of Yashar, the grandson of Kohath, a descendent of Levi, and Moses and Aaron's cousin. He had three sons named Asir and Elkaneh and Abyasaf all of Qurhian tribe leaders. Kurah along with Dathan, Abiram and Oan and 250 leaders of Israel conspired against Moses and Aaron and insulted the Almighty God. On Lord's command, the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up along with their families. And then came out a fire from the Lord and burnt the two hundred and fifty men (Numbers 16: 1,2,32,35, (KJV) cited in Haks, 704).

### 3.12 Introducing Korah

Korah was Mose's cousin. His father's name was Kohath. God commanded Kohath's sons to work together in the tent of meeting. They were responsible for carrying the witnessing arch. They had to be very careful not to touch the sacred objects and they weren't allowed to look at them when they were covering them (Sunday school- the rebellion of Korah).

Korah's name is mentioned in the Bible several times and the most complete story is in the chapter 16 of the Journey of Numbers which explains the rebellion of Korah against Moses and his doom.

### 3.13 The story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in Chapter 16, the Journey of Numbers

One day, Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, Levi's grandson, along with Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and Oan son of Pelet all three from Reuben tribe formed a conspiracy against Moses. With them were 250 of well-known Israeli leaders. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You are not better than any of us, you have gone too far! The whole Israeli tribe is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with us all. Then what gives you the right to put yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"

When Moses heard this, he bowed to the ground. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the Lord will show who is holy and which one of us he has chosen as his priest. You, Korah, and all who are with you are to do this: Take your censers tomorrow morning and put burning coals and incense in them before the LORD. Then we will see whome the Lord has chosen. You Levites have gone too far!"

Moses also said to Korah, "Now listen, you Levites! Isn't it enough for you that God of Israel has chosen you among the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and serve people? Is this task given to you by God is so trivial in your eyes that now you are trying to get the priesthood too. It is against the Lord's will. What has Aaron done that made you grumble against him?"

Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they didn't come and said, "Isn't it enough that you have brought us up out of the fertile and fruitful land of Egypt to eradicate us in such vast arid desert? And now you also intend to lord it over us! Moreover, you haven't taken us to the lush and fecund land you have promised or given us any farms and vineyards. Do you want to treat these men like slaves? No, we will not come!"

Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not accept their offering. I even have not taken a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them."

Moses said to Korah, "You and all your followers are to appear before the LORD tomorrow —Aaron also will be here. Each man is to take his censer and put incense in. Aaron also will attend with his censer." So they did the same and stood with Moses and Aaron next to the entrance of the tent of meeting. When Korah had gathered all Israelites ahead of the tent of meeting to oppose Moses and Aaron. The glory of the LORD appeared to all people of Israel. God said to Moses and Aaron, "Stay away from these people so I could put an end to them at once."

But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and prayed, “O God, the Lord of all human beings, will you be angry with all people when only one man sins?”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘Move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.’”

Moses got up and rushed to Dathan and Abiram and the elders of Israel followed him. He warned the Bani Israel, “Move back from the tents of these wicked men! Do not touch anything that is theirs, or you will be swept away because of all their sins.” So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and stood their with their wives, children and little ones at the entrances to their tents.

Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it was not by my own will: If these men die a natural death or as a result of an accident or illness, then the LORD has not sent me. But if God's miracle happens and the earth opens up its mouth and swallows them with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the death, then you will know that these men have insulted the Lord.”

As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground beneath them split apart and the earth opened up and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. Then a fire came down upon them from God and burned down all of the 250 men who had offered incenses.

The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, to pull the censers out of the fire as they are dedicated to God and are holy — He must throw away the ashes of these censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives. Then he has to hammer the censers into sheets to overlay the altar for the censers were holy. Let them be a sign to the Israelites.”

The next day, the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron again and said: “You have killed the LORD’s people”.

But when the assembly gathered around Moses and Aaron to complain and suddenly the cloud covered the tent and the glory of the LORD appeared. Then, Moses and Aaron went out and stood besides the tent of meeting, and the LORD said to Moses, “Get away from these people so I could put an end to them at once.” And they bowed down before God.

Then Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and take it immediately to the people to make atonement for them, may they be forgiven. Lord's wrath has been kindled against them and the plague has started.” So Aaron did as Moses said and rushed to the people as the plague had already been started so Aaron put fire in the incense and made atonement for them. He stood between the living and the dead and the plague stopped. But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died along with Korah. Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting and this way the plague had stopped (NIV, 16:1-49, the Farsi verses were retrieved from [www.farsicrc.com](http://www.farsicrc.com))

### *3.14 Beginning of the Outburst of Korah*

God revealed to Moses to tell the Israelites to hang a blue strip, the color of sky from the four corners of their cloaks. Moses said: What is the wisdom in this order? God's call came to him: the Israelites are ignoring me and worshiping and I want the strip to be as a sign of me for them; so they remember me when looking at it. So, when Moses brought the message to the Israelites all of them did so, except Korah. Hearing this command, he answered with a mocking tone: I wear blue clothes instead of hanging blue strips to constantly remember God. Moses said: No, you cannot do this, but Korah refused the command. Expressing this story, Dr. Hamami concludes that the philosophy of a sentence may be beyond what we think, and that one cannot ignore the command on the pretext of achieving its philosophy (Dr. Hamami, religious adviser to Iranian Jewish community)

### *3.15 Korah in the Talmud*

#### *3.15.1 The Role of Women in the Story of Korah*

Oan's wife whose name is mentioned in the first verse along with Dathan and Abiram succeeded to prevent his husband joining the dominant wave. She said to his Husband: Keep yourself out of this. There is no difference between the way Moses and Korah rule because you'll always be belittled among people. Oan answered: I do not know what to do because I am part of the plan against Moses, and I have sworn along with other conspirators. His wife said: "I'll save you." Then she made him drunk and cut her own hair. When the conspirators came for him, they see the two of them together. They left them alone and had themselves killed. Oan's wife could save her husband in this way. Sanhedrin treatise stated the story like this: "and that woman opened her hair so anyone who came to see the man returned after seeing the woman. But Korah's wife joined the insurgents and told her

husband: "see what Moses has done. He made himself the king and appointed his brother as the Chief Rabbi, and the sons of his brother as Rabbi's representatives; if chroma is calculated, he will dictate to give it to the rabbi. If decile is calculated, he will order to give a tenth of it to the rabbi. He also cut your hair and mocked you, as if you are a lowly man, but he actually envies your hair. Yes, Moses does so because the greatness entirely belongs to him. He also has said that he wants to die with the Palestinians. In addition, he ordered you to use blue wool on the sidelines of your clothing. If blue wool honors you so decorate your entire house with it now." In fact, Korah's wife played a very important role in instigating his husband to stand against Moses. Sanhedrin continues: Thus, it has been written that every wise woman builds her own house, which refers to the wife of Oan, the son of Laith, and the stupidity of Korah's wife against her husband (Sanhedrin, 110 / A)

### 3.15.2 Korah's Companions

They stood against Moses along with some of the Israelites (two hundred and fifty people). They were the best men in the tribe. Men of specific occasions; they could calculate the year and correct every month, the men who were famous across the whole world (Sanhedrin 110 / A). Korah's allies who were good friends of him and had accepted gifts from him did not respect him until Korah seduced them to support him in revolt against Moses (Pasahim 119 / A).

### 3.15.3 Accusing Moses

Moses got greatly distressed when he heard this. But what could make Moses such saddened? Nahmani says according to Jonathan: He was accused of adultery with a married woman. As it is written: "In the camp, everybody envied Moses which shows that they warned their wives to stay away from Moses." So, Moses closed down the temporary tabernacle and moved it away from the camp (Sanhedrin, 110 / A).

### 3.15.4 Korah's Wealth

"The wealth of the rich will be used to their own detriment." Rash Lakish says: This verse refers to Korah's wealth. Al-Azar says: This verse refers to human's wealth which will finally doom him. Levy says: although the keys and locks of the Korah's treasures were placed inside the leather sacks, they should have still be loaded on 300 white donkeys (Sanhedrin 110 / A, and Pasahim 119 / A). About the origin of Korah's wealth, it is said that: Joseph gathered all the gold and silver of the world and brought them to Egypt because it was written: "And Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and Canaan, and people from all countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph." (Pasahim 119 / A) Hama the son of Hanina said: Joseph hid three treasures in Egypt. One of them was revealed to Korah and he found it, another one was found by Antonius the son of Soros, and the third one is hidden in a convenient place to be used by righteous people in future (Sanhedrin 110 / A)

### 3.15.5 Death of Korah

Yuhanna says: Korah was not one of those that were swallowed by nor those who were burned. He was not swallowed by earth, because it is written: "And the earth swallowed them." This statement refers to all Korah's men, not he himself. He was not among those who were burnt either as it is written: "the fire burnt down Two hundred and fifty people to ashes not the Korah". In one of his barashits (the religious teachings apart from the ten main commands of Mishna) Etana says that: Korah was one of the people who were burnt down and swallowed by the earth. "He was one of those that earth swallowed; as it is written: earth swallowed them along with Korah, and he was burnt too, because it is written: a fire came from God and burnt two hundred and fifty people (who had revolted) and Korah was one of them (Sanhedrin 110 / A). It is also said: Korah did not die on the first day in order to see all the steps of God's judgment and the greatness of divine wrath, but he died on the second day by a heavenly catastrophe. Rebarhana says: "I once was on a trip, an Arab approached and said: Come, I will show you the place where Korah's companions were swallowed. I followed him and saw two cracks from which smoke were coming out. At this moment, he took out a piece of wool and soaked it in water and then put it on sharp tips of his spears and ten took it above the crack, wool was burnt after a short time. I told him: listen carefully, what can you hear? I've heard that: Moses and his Torah are right but they (Korah and his followers) are liars." (Sanhedrin 110 / A)

### 3.15.6 Korah's Jealousy towards Aaron

According to the Bible, the main reason of Korah's death is his jealousy; as in Psalms, chapter 106, verses 16 to 19: "So, they envied Moses and Aaron in the camp, the earth was opened up and swallowed Dathan and dragged Abiram's companions into the depth of ground and fire was kindled among congregation; the flames of fire burned the evils." In this regard, the book of secondary law stated: Aaron was selected, the one who was a saint like Moses; his brother from the tribe of Levi. He was appointed by eternal judgment as the priest of the tribe. He

reached happiness through his own glory. He was covered with full splendor and exquisite ornaments. Pomegranates were hung around his robe along with numerous golden bells, which would tinkle by every step he took in the temple. He was given a sacred garment of gold, azure stone and purple gemstones and a golden crown on top of the turban on which the consecration had been carved. Such adornments have never been seen before him and no stranger had been worn them, only his children and his descendants would have them forever. His offerings would entirely burn down. Moses consecrated him himself and this was an eternal covenant for him as well as any of his descendents. The strangers were allied against him and envied him in the desert (the people of Korah, Dathan and Abiram who were spiteful). God got angry and destroyed them in his wrath, and burned them in the flames of his fire and increased the splendor of Aaron (Sayar, the translation of the books of secondary law, pp. 583-586).

### *3.16 Comparing the Story of Qarun in the Qur'an and the Bible*

Noting the instructive cases to guide and develop the human in the form of story is of the properties of Holy Books. In many cases, God stated his desired moral, religious, economic, and ... issues in the form of stories. This is due to the educational role of stories in human development. That is why there are many stories both in the Quran and the Bible. More interestingly, many of these stories are stated in both books, including the story of Qarun.

First, we discuss the common points of the story in the Quran and the Bible:

- 1) Both have noted Qarun's disobedience against God.
- 2) Both have introduced Qarun as an arrogant person.
- 3) In both, Qarun deserves death and God's wrath.
- 4) In both, Qarun is devoured by the earth and dies.
- 5) In both, Qarun is introduced as one of Moses' relatives.
- 6) The results of both stories are the same; rebellion against God is followed by falling to destruction.
- 7) Both have mentioned the story briefly and discussing the generalities of this event. Perceivable teachings are almost the same in both stories. (like arrogance, resistance against God and His Messenger, illegitimate wealth, etc.)
- 8) Both mentioned the name of Qarun in different places, but at one point, the story was told completely (Quran: in the Surah of Qisas, and Bible: in the travel of numbers).

### *3.17 Differences of the Story in Both Sources*

Differences of the story are, first of all, the overall distinctions between the Holy Book and Quran, in terms of distortion and lack of distortion.

And certain differences of this story are as follows:

- 1) His name is "Qarun" in the Quran, but "Korah" in the Bible.
- 2) Quran puts emphasis on Qarun's illegitimate wealth and false pride; but the Bible emphasizes on his jealousy (Korah knows the priesthood and the presidency of the tribe as his own right).
- 3) In Quran, Only Qarun is mentioned as a person who's devoured by earth but the Bible also notes two others (Dathan and Abiram) who were swallowed by the earth with him.
- 4) The Quran introduces the incidence of being swallowed by the earth as the only punishment, while the Bible refers to two other wraths after that (First, the two hundred and fifty people who were burnt in fire; and the second, the epidemic disease that killed fourteen thousand and seven hundred people).
- 5) Quran over this story only mentions the names of Qarun and Moses in the Surah of Qisas, also his name is mentioned in the Surahs of Ghafir and Ankabout<sup>1</sup> along with the names of Pharaoh and Haman. But the Bible mentions Korah and Moses many times as well as the names of Dathan, Abiram, Oan, and Aaron.
- 6) Quran emphasizes on the instructive tips in this story so it uses preachers' words to give him very beautiful pieces of advice.
- 7) like other stories, Quran does not explain the details when describing Qarun's fate and only considers the generalities. But the Bible explains more details than the Quran (not too detailed though).

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<sup>1</sup> Spider

According to the investigations conducted it was concluded that there were common points between this story told in the Quran and the Bible, but their differences could be due to several reasons:

- 1) The first reason may be that some items are remained unresolved in the Qur'an and expressing them in the Bible may not be really a difference. For example, it is stated in the Old Testament that Qaran and his companions were swallowed by the earth, but the Quran only mentions the name of Qaran; this cannot be a real difference.
- 2) The second reason can be the discussion of distortion in the Bible and that they were written long after their revelation. This has made the human authors write them affected by their human characteristics and desires and their own literature style. It is obvious that some false contents could be added to the books deliberately or inadvertently which completely undermines the authenticity of these resources. And all said above lead to the skepticism of researchers.
- 3) Some differences may be due to the evolution of religions and consequently the evolution of celestial books. It means that at any time, God speaks to people according to the level of their understanding, and it is natural that human mental capacity at the time of Prophet Moses (PBUH) is different from their mental capacity at the era of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and this difference demands different ways of speaking.

### *3.18 The Effect of the Bible on Interpretations of the Quran*

In many interpretations, there are many stories of prophets' lives and history mostly originated from the stories told by the followers of the book. These narratives known as "Israelites" have mostly entered to the interpretations area by new Muslim scholars. Many commentators have quoted these narratives without criticism. In the last century, with the spread of rationalism in the interpretation, a critical approach to these narratives has been grown among commentators and scholars (Diari, 120). Qaran's story is no exception and there has been a lot written about this story in commentaries inspired by the Bible and its descriptions. It should be noted that whatever has entered our sources from un-Islamic and especially Jewish sources is not voided and we reject only those that are contrary to the Quran, the certain Sunnah of the Masoum (PBUH) (definite way of life of the infallible Imams), infallibility of prophets and reason. Otherwise, they can be used, because their sources are naturally older than Islamic sources, so taking them into consideration with a critical viewpoint is necessary for researchers.

Some items that have been derived from Jewish sources and the Bible interpretations include: the story of Moses' commanding the Israelites to hang blue strips from their clothes to remember God by seeing them is described in *Kashf al-Asrar va Ed al-Abrar* interpretation (Meibodi, 348/7) as well as *AlNour al-Mobin* (Jazayeri, 414). The story of Qaran's jealousy to Moses and Aaron which is stated in the Jewish sources (as mentioned before) is expressed in some interpretations; for example, *Kashf al-Asrar va Ed al-Abrar* interpretation (Meibodi, 348/7), *Rouh Al-ma'ani* (Alusi, 316/10), *Kashaf* (430/3), *Surabadi* interpretation (1836/3), *Hayat al-Qolub* (Majlesi, 551) and *AlNour al-Mobin* (Jazayeri, 414). According to the story told in Quran, only Qaran was devoured by the earth while some have said that he and his followers went down into the earth, like *Tarikh Tabari* (Tabari, 364/1) and *Tarikh Kamel* (Ibn al-Athir, 233/1). Others have said that when Moses came to Qaran with torment he said to the people to get away from him. "All moved away but two of them" these exact words are stated in the Bible. Sources that have stated this include *Hayat al-Qolub* (Majlesi, 551), *Kashaf* (Zamakhshari, 433/3), *Kashf al-Asrar va Ed al-Abrar* interpretation (Meibodi, 349/7). Some commentators have mentioned the story of Aaron's stick flowering in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the journey of Numbers (for Aaron's vindication against the plaintiffs like Korah) including *Kashaf* (Zamakhshari, 430/3), *Rouh Al-ma'ani* (Alusi, 316/10), *Hayat al-Qolub* (Majlesi, 551), *AlNour al-Mobin* (Jazayeri, 415), and *Mkhzan al-Erfan* (Banoo Amin 452/9).

## **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Both sources have special attention to the story as one of the efficient methods in human education and development.

The story of Qaran has been presented in both sources as a selfish rich man who stands against Moses.

Both sources emphasize that the arrogant who disobeys God and His prophet deserves death.

Qaran was doomed in the same way in both sources.

In all, the similarities of the story told in both sources were more than the differences.

According to Quran, the reason of Qaran's death was his illegitimate wealth and false pride, but the Bible defines jealousy as the main reason. Furthermore, Quran states the story less detailed than the Bible.



It is recommended that this review be conducted again on other stories common between the Holy Books to help the followers of divine religions to empathize with each other more and make them closer.

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