

NUH

(NOAH)

AND THE GREAT FLOOD

THE ADVENT OF THE SECOND HUMAN CIVILIZATION



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**In the name of Allah
the most Gracious the most Merciful**

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DR. ALI MOHAMMAD AL-SALLABI

 **ASALET**

Translator's Note

All praise is due to Allah for the completion of the translation of this useful book. This book is part of a series which comprehensively speaks about the lives of five of the most important prophets of Islam. Almost everything that relates to Prophet Nuh (*peace be upon him*) has been discussed in this particular detailed work by prominent historian, Dr. Ali al-Sallabi.

This translation seeks to provide English readers with a work that is easy to read and benefit from. With the consent of the author, it is thus not so strict with translating the original work word for word or sentence by sentence. Instead, I have done my best to convey everything the author wishes to convey using plain English, even if that means that sentence order is sometimes altered for the sake of a better flow. I have also omitted any detailed discussions about Arabic rhetoric and linguistics, although I decided to translate those language related points which I felt were easy to understand for an English speaking audience. In any case, the language element only makes up a small part of the book.

When it comes to the translation of the verses of the Qur'an, I have generally relied upon the Clear Quran by Dr. Mustafa Khattab. However, I have also benefitted from other translations, including the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an by Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani. I have taken the freedom to edit the translation as I see fit after consulting works of *tafsir*, especially when this is needed to reflect the interpretation of the verse that has been adopted by the author.

I ask Allah to reward the author for his efforts and to benefit the author, translator, and reader of this work in this life and the next.

Zahed Fettah

Translator

Nuh and the Great Flood

All praise is due to Allah. We praise him, and we seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and our evil deeds. Whoever Allah guides, there is none to misguide him, and whoever Allah leads astray, there is none to guide him. I testify that there is no true God but Allah alone, without any partners, and that Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is His servant and His messenger.

“O you who believe, fear Allah, as He should be feared, and let not yourself die except as Muslims” [3:102].

“O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah - in Whose Name you appeal to one another - and [honour] family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you” [4:1].

“O believers! Be mindful of Allah and say what is right. He will bless your deeds for you and forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has truly achieved a great triumph” [33:71-72].

O Allah, praise be to you as it befits the majesty of your face and the greatness of your power, and praise be to you until you are satisfied, and praise be to you if you are pleased, and praise be to you after being pleased.

This book is a continuation of a new academic project that relates to the detailed study of *Ulu al-Azm (Messengers*

of Firm Resolve) and the stories of the prophets and messengers in the Qur'an. The book is part of the *Messengers of Firm Resolve* Compilation which I dream of completing. I hope from Allah that it is sincerely for His sake and beneficial for people. Mankind is in real need of knowing the lives of the prophets and messengers, an explanation of their biographies, their character, and the foundations of their message. It is in need of learning these things through the Book of Allah (*the Qur'an*) – that cannot be proven false from any angle, the authentic traditions of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), and the statements of the great scholars, in a contemporary style that suits the phase that humanity is currently facing. A phase in which humanity is searching for convincing answers to major questions about God, the universe, life, Paradise and Hellfire, divine decree, prophets and their messages, ancient human civilizations, when they appeared and what they eventually became, the foundations of noble character, and spiritual morals. Questions about managing the struggle between truth and falsehood; guidance and misguidance; good and evil; and faith and disbelief.

I truly thank Allah the Most High for allowing me to take an interest in these topics, and I thank Him for His blessings that cannot be enumerated. I ask Him to grant me success in writing beneficial and structured material for mankind, grant these writings acceptance amongst people, make them a reason for those searching for the major truths in this world to find the straight path – in company with the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous, those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace. How excellent

these companions are! I sincerely hope from Allah that these works contribute towards enlightening the minds, cleansing the selves, and purifying the souls of humanity, so that they are able to know the truth, hold on to it, and defend it.

This book speaks about Prophet Nuh (*peace be upon him*). I have called it, *Nuh and the Great Flood*. It has been divided into several chapters, as follows:

Section 1:

Here I spoke about the phase before Nuh, clarifying that there was no messenger between Adam and Nuh, and that humanity was still upon the default beliefs of monotheism. I commented on the Quranic verses that emphasised this, such as:

“Humanity had once been one community [of believers before they lost faith]. Then Allah raised prophets as deliverers of good news and as warners and revealed to them the Scriptures in truth to judge among people regarding their disputes. And no one disputed the Scriptures except the very people who received them after clear proofs had come to them - out of jealousy. Then Allah, by His grace, has guided the believers to the truth regarding those disputes. And Allah guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.”
[2:213]

“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness [O Prophet] - the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in [all] people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know.”
[30:30]

“And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. [Allah asked,] “Am I not your Lord?” They replied, “Yes, You are! We testify.” [He cautioned,] “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’” [7:172]

I explained through the Quran that monotheism (*tawhid*) is the core message of all the prophets to their nations. Allah Almighty said:

“He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding:] “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him].” [42:13]

I mentioned the statements of the scholars of tradition and researchers of religion on the original state of monotheism and discussed when idolatry (*shirk*) first occurred in humanity. I relied upon the Quran as a historical reference, considering it a reference above all others, the truth of which is absolute without any doubt. That is because it is the Book of Allah that “cannot be proven false from any angle. A revelation from the [One Who is] All-Wise, Praiseworthy”. For indeed the Quran contains great information relating to the lives of the prophets and their stories. Allah Almighty says:

“And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this [sûrah] the truth, a warning [to the disbelievers], and a reminder to the believers” [11:120]

Section 2:

This section speaks about the call of Nuh (*peace be upon him*), the linguistic and technical definitions of *prophet* and *messenger*, the nature of prophethood, and the wisdom behind sending messengers. It also discusses the distinct features of prophets, such as revelation, not inheriting, their hearts not sleeping while their eyes sleep, the earth being prohibited from eating up their bodies, their infallibility, and the importance of having firm belief in the prophets and messengers. It speaks of Nuh being the first messenger to the people of earth, the second father of humanity, the father of the prophets and messengers, and the fact that he was from Those with Firm Resolve (*Ulu al-Azm*). We look at his description in the Quran as being a “grateful servant” and the period of time that Nuh lived on earth.

I also spoke about *tawhid* in the message of Nuh (*peace be upon him*), his calling of his people to worshipping Allah, being mindful of Him (*taqwa*), obeying Him, and singling Him out in worship. This section establishes that the religion of Nuh and all the messengers is Islam, and that the prophets are brothers: their mothers are different, but their religion is one.

Section 3:

I clarified here the response of Nuh’s people to his call, as explained in *Surat Hud*, *Surat al-A’raf*, *Surat al-*

Mu'minun, and *Surat al-Shu'ara* from the Qur'an, and how Nuh responded to their arguments through the use of logic, proof, and his actions. An example is when he said to his people:

“He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see. Should we [then] force it on you against your will?” [11:28]

I explain how he faced his people with bravery and total reliance upon Allah when they harmed him, accused him of being mad and misguided, mocked him, disrespected him, and threatened to stone him. Allah Almighty said:

“Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Nuh when he said to his people, “O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you, then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay! And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah]. But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark and made them successors and drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!” [10:71-73]

I stopped to ponder and reflect on the verses that explained the characteristics of the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*):

“They were certainly a blind people” [7:64]

“and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!”
[11:44]

“They were truly an evil people, so We drowned them
all” [21:77]

“Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and
rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was
intimidated” [54:9]

“They were truly a rebellious people” [51:46]

“And before [that He destroyed] the people of Nuh, who
were truly far worse in wrongdoing and transgression”
[53:52]

I also mentioned the barriers that prevented the people of
Nuh from accepting his message. These include:

- The First Barrier: Arrogance
- The Second Barrier: Stubbornness
- The Third Barrier: Blind Following
- The Fourth Barrier: Idolatry
- The Fifth Barrier: Their Gang

These have been explained in the book, with a look at
the role of this gang, their conspiracies, and luxury.

Section 4:

In this section I covered how Nuh complained to his Lord
and supplicated against his people when they disobeyed him.
I explained the verses of *Surah Nuh* in a simple, but in-depth

and academic way, while making use of the works of the leading scholars of *tafsir* (***Quran exegesis***). While discussing the verses, we consider his methods in *da'wah* (***calling to God***) privately and publicly, day and night, his showing great concern for their guidance, and encouraging his people to seek and attain God's forgiveness, leading to His blessings.

“So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers” [71:10-12]

He called them ponder and contemplate the world of the human self,

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]?” [71:13-14]

He called them contemplate the skies and earth and what is in them,

“Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp?” [71:15-16]

He also called his people to consider how they will be sent back after death,

“Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again]” [71:17-18]

He reminds them of God's blessings in facilitating life on this earth,

“And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways” [71:19-20]

I then mentioned the verses that speak of Nuh’s complaint that his people disobeying him, his supplication (*du’a*) against them, and the *tafsir* given by the scholars of these verses until the rest of the Chapter of Nuh.

Section 5:

The discussion here is about Nuh’s Ark (*ship*) and the great flood, and explaining the verses that relate to this, starting from,

“And it was revealed to Nuh, “None of your people will believe except those who already have. So do not be distressed by what they have been doing. And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions, and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, “If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” And when Our command came and the oven burst [with water], We said [to Nuh], “Take into the Ark a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed - and those who believe.” But none believed with him except for a few. And he said, “Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [11:36-41]

It speaks about how the flood occurred and how the earth was submerged with water. I clarified this great natural event through the noble verses that Allah mentioned in Surat al-Qamar. Allah Almighty said:

“Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated. So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” So We opened the gates of the sky with pouring rain, and caused the earth to burst with springs, so the waters met for a fate already set. We carried him on that [Ark made] of planks and nails, sailing under Our [watchful] Eyes - a [fair] punishment on behalf of the one [they] denied. We certainly left this as a sign. So is there anyone who will be mindful? Then how [severe] were My punishment and warnings?” [54:9-16]

I spoke about the conversation that Allah mentioned between the believing father – who was so concerned with his son’s religious and worldly safety – and the disobedient son who was far away from guidance stuck in the prison of disbelief and misguidance.

“Nuh called out to his son, who stood apart, “O my dear son! Come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers.” He replied, “I will take refuge on a mountain, which will protect me from the water.” Nuh cried, “Today no one is protected from Allah’s decree except those to whom He shows mercy!” And the waves came between them, and his son was among the drowned.” [11:42-43]

In the midst of these events that the Qur’anic verses

pictured and in the depths of the waves that extend across the sea of this land, this great scene comes to a sudden halt. What comes next is the return of calm to the world and the return of all things to their normal system. The screams have calmed and the storms have quietened. The earth is born once again the way it was created the first time. Let us take a look at how the divine words have described this scene¹. Allah Almighty says:

“And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain].” The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

These incredible Qur’anic verses provide us with a clear picture of what Divine Will and Divine Authority that extends across the whole universe really means. In fact, this Will has a complete grasp of the universe, controlling its heaven, earth, seas, mountains, and everything. In God’s Will there is no consideration given to that which is big or small or great or insignificant. Do you not see how after the waters of the skies and earth met forming an incredible and frightening flood, everything was returned to normal by a small word, “and it was said”? That is to show us how easy the matter is with the command of the Divine Will that is in control of the beginning and end of the universe.

I stopped to think about Nuh asking his Lord about his son

1. Muhammad Saeed Ramadan Al-Bouti, *Min Rawa’i al-Qur’an*, Al-Resalah Foundation, Beirut, Lebanon, 1999, p. 574.

and seeking His forgiveness and mercy. I contemplated and pondered over this in light of the statements of the scholars and experts in the field of *tafsir* (*Qur'anic exegesis*). Allah Almighty said:

“Nuh called out to his Lord, saying, “My Lord! My son is [also] of my family, Your promise is surely true, and You are the most just of all judges!” Allah replied, “O Nuh! He is certainly not of your family - he was entirely of unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me about what you have no knowledge of! I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.” Nuh pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:45-47]

I then considered Nuh's disbelieving wife and what Allah said regarding her, extracting lessons and points of benefit from the noble verses in this regard,

“Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!” [66:10]

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) came towards the end of the first human civilization that started with Adam (*peace be upon him*). A civilization that began to stray from the path of monotheism (*tawhid*) and directing worship to the Almighty Creator alone. Human life continued to develop in its material affairs, but lost sight of its spiritual values and

its understanding of its Almighty Lord. Allah thus sent Nuh (*peace be upon him*) to his people to establish the proof against them. Though Allah's *sunnah* (**way**) ensued in annihilating and eradicating them, with only a few of them believing. It was with this few that a new society of peace and blessing was then established after the great flood.

The end of the first human civilization was due to several factors, the most important of them being:

- Disbelieving in Allah Almighty. The people of Nuh rejected the call of monotheism and the message of Allah, disbelieving in them and fighting against them. All described them with *kufr* (**disbelief**) as stated in the previous verses:

“The disbelieving chiefs of his people said, “We see you only as a human being like ourselves, and we see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us, who do so [hastily] without thinking. We do not see anything that makes [all of] you any better than us. In fact, we think you are liars.” [11:27]

- Associating partners with Allah (**shirk**). The Qur'an has described their final stance towards shirk and idolatry after many reminders and admonishments that were given to them by Nuh (*peace be upon him*). Allah Almighty said:

“They urged [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr.’” [71:23]

- Oppression is one of the major factors that lead to the decline and destruction of nations. Allah Almighty said:

“Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing.” [29:14]

“And do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” [11:37]

“And it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

- Rejecting the noble messenger (*Nuh*). Many verses in the Qur’an mention that rejecting the messengers of God is a major reason for the destruction of the past nations. These verses are quite explicit about the relationship between rejecting the messengers and the consequences of destruction that they faced. Allah Most High says:

“If they deny you [O Prophet], so did the people of Nuh before them, as well as [the tribes of] ’Âd and Thamûd, the people of Abraham, the people of Lot, and the residents of Midian. And Moses was denied [too]. But I delayed [the fate of] the disbelievers [until their appointed time] then seized them. And how severe was My response!” [22:21-44]

“And when the people of Nuh rejected the messengers, We drowned them, making them an example to humanity.” [25:37]

- Harming Nuh with different types of harm and his supplicating against them. Allah Almighty said:

“Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated.” [54:9]

“They threatened, “If you do not desist, O Nuh, you will surely be stoned [to death].” [26:116]

“Indeed, Nuh cried out to Us, and how excellent are We in responding!” [37:75]

“So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” [54:10]

Allah accepted the prayer of His prophet and drowned the oppressive disbelievers in totality.

- Challenging the threats of punishment. One of the reasons behind the Divine punishment that befell the people of Nuh is their challenge to Nuh to send down the punishment that he was claiming. When they lost hope in responding to Nuh’s proof with proof, they became arrogant and refused to submit to the clear proofs of logic and the fitrah (*natural disposition*). They then left arguing and went on to challenging Nuh. Indeed, they were blind to the truth. Allah Almighty said:

“They protested, “O Nuh! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true.” [11:32]

- Arguing in falsehood. Allah Almighty said:

“None disputes the signs of Allah except the disbelievers, so do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land. Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth], as did [other] enemy forces afterwards. Every community plotted against its prophet to seize him, and argued in falsehood, [hoping] to discredit the truth with it. So I seized

them. And how [horrible] was My punishment!” [40:4-5]

- Extravagance is another cause of Divine punishment. Allah Almighty says:

“But the wrongdoers [only] pursued their [worldly] pleasures, becoming wicked. And your Lord [O Prophet] would never destroy a society unjustly while its people were acting rightly.” [11:116-117]

Nuh showed how the majority of his people simply followed their leaders and those amongst them who were wealthy – those whose wealth and children did not increase them except in misguidance in this world and punishment in the afterlife. The Most High said:

“And followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss.” [71:21]

- Transgression. This another crime that nations are punished for. Transgression (*batar*) means to defy, commit shirk, and to not appreciate blessings. Allah Most High said:

“[Consider] how many societies We have destroyed that had been spoiled by their [comfortable] living! Those are their residences, never inhabited after them except passingly. And We [alone] were the Successor.” [28:58]

Nuh continued to remind his people of Allah’s blessings upon them. Allah Most High said:

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]? Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them

as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp? Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again]. And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways.” [71:13-20]

However, the folks were too used to transgression and ungratefulness, so the command of Allah befell them.

- Arrogance was another reason for the destruction of the people of Nuh. Allah Almighty says:

“They persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly.” [71:7]

- Deviousness. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) had to face some major cunning plots of the disbelievers. Allah Almighty says:

“And they devised a mighty plot,” [71:22]

Deviousness was an evident trait in the people of Nuh. They used all cunning means possible to turn people away from the call of *tawhid* (**monotheism**) and the worship of Allah. They instead opted to follow doubts and false accusations, and placed hurdles and barriers in the way of his call. They arranged tricks and plotted against Nuh (*peace be upon him*), but Allah quashed their plots and made this a cause of their destruction, and that is Allah’s *sunnah* (**way**) with those who are devious. Allah Almighty said:

“And so We have placed in every society the most wicked to conspire in it. Yet they plot only against themselves, but they fail to perceive it.” [6:123]

- Sins. One of the causes of the decline and destruction

of the first human civilization is the spread of evil and being engrossed in sins. Allah Almighty said:

“So because of their sins, they were drowned, then admitted into the Fire. And they found none to help them against Allah.” [71:25]

- Being occupied with this life and forgetting the afterlife. The people of Nuh were completely occupied with the worldly life and became deceived by it. They forgot the next life and were pleased with their wealth, offspring, and temporary pleasures, while neglecting to prepare for the Day of Departure. They overstepped their boundaries regarding the people of eman (*faith*) and fell into the reality of divine istidraj (*gradually being draw to destruction*). Their wealth and children became many and caused them to become arrogant, until they faced what Allah described:

“When they became oblivious to warnings, We showered them with everything they desired. But just as they became prideful of what they were given, We seized them by surprise, then they instantly fell into despair! So the wrongdoers were utterly uprooted. And all praise is for Allah - Lord of all worlds.” [6:44-45]

- The sunnah (*consistent rule*) of replacement. Allah Almighty said:

“If you [still] turn away, He will replace you with another people. And they will not be like you.” [47:38]

The *sunnah* of Allah through which He runs the universe in relation to human nations is that one will not be destroyed

except that another nation is brought out to fill the earth. And just as nations have *sunan* (*pl. sunnah*) that relate to rising and falling, there are *sunan* (*consistent ways*) of renewal and replacement. The Qur'an has spoken of the replacement of nations, which is what occurred to the people of Nuh when the causes of destruction were gathered in them. The *sunnah* of Allah thus befell them through the flood. So that humanity could once again continue the message, Allah replaced them with Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and those who believed in his message.

- The sunnah of Allah with the appointed term of nations. Allah Almighty says:

“For each community there is an appointed term. When their time arrives, they can neither delay it for a moment, nor could they advance it.” [7:34]

- Just as Allah has set an appointed term for each individual at which his life ends, Allah Almighty has set appointed terms for nations at which they eventually collapse and cease to exist. Allah Almighty says:

“We have never destroyed a society without a destined term. No people can advance their doom, nor can they delay it.” [15:4-5]

The verse shows that every town that was destroyed had an appointed term at which it would become destroyed. This occurred after Allah had established the proof against them and gave them warnings, opportunities to change, and

gave them plenty of time, as per the *sunnah* of *istidraj*.¹ That which Allah has decreed for a nation is dependent on its actions, beliefs, and practices. Thus, those who rejected the message should never be deceived by the fact that Allah has delayed their punishment for a period of time. It is from Allah's justice that every person faces the consequences of their actions. This *sunnah* (**consistent rule**) of Allah is slowly on its known way towards the appointed time that Allah gives these towns and nations, who when no good remains in them any longer, are brought to their inevitable awaited end.² There is no nation that lived and turned away from the truth except that Allah gives it destroys it before the Day of Judgment or punishes it; this is a matter decreed and decided in the Record. Allah Almighty said:

“There is not a [wicked] society that We will not destroy or punish with a severe torment before the Day of Judgment. That is written in the Record.” [17:58]

This is exactly what happened to the people of Nuh. Allah sent them a messenger to guide them, so they rejected his call out of pride and stubbornness, turned away from it, and even challenged him to send down the punishment that he claimed. They disbelieved, rejected, oppressed, and were boastful, until the divine punishment befell them due to their sins and the decree of Allah that was in line with the *sunnah* (**rule**) of “every nation has an appointed

1. Muhammad Hayshour, *Sunan al-Qur'an fi Qiyam al-Hadarat wa Suqutiha*, Dar Al-Wafaa for Printing and Publishing, 1st Ed., 1997, p. 302.

2. *Ibid*, p.303

term”. The knowledge of Allah does not change and His *sunnah* (**consistent ways**) cannot be altered. Rather, it runs consistently with His divine will, knowledge, and wisdom.

- The sunnah of destruction. Allah Almighty says:

“[Consider] how many peoples We have destroyed after Nuh! And sufficient is your Lord as All-Aware and All-Seeing of the sins of His servants.” [17:17]

We can understand from this verse that the destruction of nations first began with the people of Nuh. It then continued to take place until the period shortly before the sending of the final prophet with the destruction of the People of the Elephant.

Destruction in the terminology of the Qur’an is the punishment and complete annihilation that Allah brings down upon his enemies. This is a theme that recurs in the Qur’an in relation to the downfall of nations that went astray from the straight path, rejected the commands of Allah, and harmed His messengers. Drowning was one type of punishment that befell the people of Nuh, and this led to their destruction.

- The sunnah of loss. The people of Nuh were also afflicted with the sunnah of loss. Allah Almighty says:

“Those who rejected the signs of Allah, it is they who are the [true] losers.” [39:63]

Amongst the consistent rules of Allah is that the disbelievers are in loss, never succeeding. Similarly, victory for the believers is part of this consistent running

sunnah (rule). The people of Nuh faced this *sunnah* when they lost their understanding and insight. They became lost in the depths of doubts and desires and in the valleys of misguidance.

- Negligence is another cause of destruction. One of the reasons that led to the destruction of the people of Nuh is their negligence towards the things that would destroy them. They did not pay heed to the danger of negligence, but rather, their negligence was to be seen at both an individual and collective level.

In the story of Nuh, the Qur'an directs our attention to taking lessons from the previous nations. It is filled with lessons, points of benefit, examples of *sunan (pl. sunnah)*, and Allah's ways and laws that relate to the progress and destruction of civilizations.

These are some of the causes that we could find during our research and study of the things that lead to the falling of the early human nations. What is interesting is that the elements of a new civilization came out of the trial that Nuh faced after the ship landed on Mount *Joudi*. It took off in the name of Allah and with His praise protected from the oppressors, and in supplication that Allah would grant them a blessed landing.

The roots of this civilization existed in the ark of Nuh in the form of humans, animals, birds, plants, along with spiritual principles and noble manners, and an advanced understanding of Allah, life, the universe, existence, Paradise, Hellfire, and prophethood. All this through Allah's revelation to Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

Additionally, I have warned against the danger of fairy-tales, false stories, *isra'iliyyat*, and fabrications that have been attached to the story of Nuh. The *isra'iliyyat* (***transmitted stories from mainly Jewish and Christian sources***) have often played a major role in damaging the purity and authenticity of the story of Nuh. Any honest researcher can appreciate the influence of the *isra'iliyyat* in this regard, some of which are almost imaginary stories, others that contradict the sound Islamic creed, and many others that contradict each other altogether.

An example of such *isra'iliyyat* is that which Ibn Kathir mentioned from the Torah saying:

“It was mentioned that [Ham] – the son of Nuh – had relations with his wife on the ship so Nuh prayed that his child would be born deformed so his child was born black. This son being Canaan the son of Ham, the father of the blacks. Others said that Ham saw his father’s nakedness while he was asleep but did not cover it, while his brother did, which is why Nuh prayed that he would have a deformed child and that his children would be slaves to the children of his brothers.”

This is only an example of such errors, fabrications, and *isra'iliyyat* that contradict sound intellect and authentic transmissions. Unfortunately, such reports have impacted the books of history and also made their way into the books of *tafsir* (***Qur'anic exegesis***). This led to the production of false stories and fairy-tales that damaged traditional Muslim works. This makes it essential to filter them out of traditional works, relying firstly and lastly upon the

Qur'anic explanation and that which is authentically transmitted from the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) regarding the story of Nuh.

In this book, the false things that some of the Israelite scholars attributed to Nuh have been exposed. I also spoke about whether the flood of Nuh encompassed the whole earth. I discussed the scholarly views on this topic that has taken up a decent portion of human thought. I also clarified the interest that scholars of history and religion took in the story of Nuh, clarified some of the weak reports that were attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), and spoke of the views of scholars regarding the eventual abode of the children of the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

Section 6:

Here we speak of the birth of the second human civilization. I also mentioned the opinions of the scholars and experts of *tafsir* on the meaning of the statement of Allah Almighty:

“It was said, “O Nuh! Disembark with Our peace and blessings on you and some of the descendants of those with you. As for the others, We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us. This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous.” [11:48-49]

In this section, I also mention the attributes of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and the character that his noble person

embodied. He was from the prophets of strong resolve (*Ulu al-Azm*) who perfected *tawhid* and the pure worship of Allah alone and called to that. Those who accepted his message and followed him developed virtuous mannerisms and traits that contributed towards establishing the second human civilization. The most important of these traits include sincerity, patience, God-consciousness, seeking forgiveness, prayer, supplication, and servitude to Allah in the form of thanking Him, prostration, reliance upon Him, remembering Him, certainty, excellence, knowledge, purity, honesty, steadfastness, good treatment of parents, and other things that Nuh instilled in his followers leading to the rise of the civilization of peace and blessing. I also clarified how Nuh dealt with Allah's divine ways (*sunan*), such as:

- The way of Allah in relation to change and its relationship with the development of sound creed.
- Allah's way with trials
- Allah's way in taking with necessary means
- Allah's way in alternation
- Allah's way in granting victory and power

I also clarified the distinct attributes of this second human civilization that was built upon the principle of pure monotheism towards Allah Almighty. What also makes it distinct is the fact that it is based on compassion, noble character, respecting the importance of knowledge, and is built upon freedom of belief and the freedom of intellectual, natural, logical, and existential choice. Allah Almighty says:

“He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see. Should we [then] force it on you against your will?” [11:28]

Thus, religion, creed, and illuminated thought is that which is based on conviction and contemplation, not on force and coercion. Freedom of belief was therefore a fundamental part of this second human civilization.

I have listed the core factors that led to the formation of the second human civilization. Some of the most prominent factors being:

- Creed
- Economy
- The environment
- Society
- Morality
- Politics
- Beauty

These then brought about:

- Brotherhood and love
- Compassion and mercy
- Support and collaboration
- Cooperation and solidarity
- Exchange of advice

- Purity and elevation
- Justice and fairness
- Practical, rational, spiritual, psychological, and economic progress

We can also see the achievement of the main objectives of human, such as:

- The worship of Allah. Allah Almighty said:

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.” [51:56]

- The establishment of Allah’s authority on earth. Allah Almighty said:

“But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark and made them successors and drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!” [10:73]

The settlement and establishment of mankind on earth. “He [is the One Who] produced you from the earth and settled you on it.” [11:61], i.e. He commanded you to populate the earth.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was able to establish the second human civilization given the material capabilities that were restricted by the time that he lived and the meanings of faith, spirituality, and noble character that were the true factors behind the greatly creative path of civilization towards divine faith and character.

I explained the Qur’anic verses that spoke of the fully

loaded floating Ark and his honourable mention throughout the ages. Allah Almighty says:

“Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark, so that We may make this a reminder to you, and that attentive ears may grasp it.” [69:10-11]

“Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Nuh] in the fully loaded Ark” [36:41]

“And We blessed him [with honourable mention] among later generations: “Peace be upon Nuh among all peoples.” [37:78-79]

After this we spoke about his bequest and death, peace be upon him.

I completed this book on Saturday the 17th of Dhul Qa'dah 1440 AH (**20th July 2019**) at 2:10pm in the city of Istanbul, and praise is to Allah in the beginning and end. I ask Him to accept this work and to honour me with the company of the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous.

Having completed this book, I can only stand with humility before my Creator and Generous Lord, admitting his virtue and kindness, freeing myself from any control or power, relying totally upon Him in all my movements, actions, life, and death. Allah my creator is the generous one, He is the one who aids and grants success. If He were to leave me to my own self and my own intellect, my mind would have become blank, my memory disappeared, my

fingers frozen, my emotions dried, my feelings blocked, and my pen would have been unable to clarify.

My Lord guide me towards that which pleases you and uplift my chest. O Allah protect me from whatever displeases you and keep it away from my heart and mind. I ask you, O Allah, through your beautiful names and lofty attributes, that you reward me and my brothers who have supported me in completing this work.

O Allah make it an effort that is sincerely for you, beneficial for your servants, and place in it blessing, acceptance, and great benefit for mankind. I also hope that anyone who flicks through this book will not forget to pray for this servant who is in need of his Lord's forgiveness, mercy, and pleasure.

Allah Almighty says: "My Lord! Inspire me to [always] be thankful for Your favours which You have blessed me and my parents with, and to do good deeds that please you. Admit me, by Your mercy, into [the company of] Your righteous servants." [27:19]

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds

The one who is in need of his Lord's forgiveness, mercy, and pleasure,

Ali Muhammad Muhammad al-Sallabi

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all the Muslims



chapter

1

Life
Before
Nuh

(peace be upon him)

Chapter 1: Life Before Nuh (*peace be upon him*)

Let us go back in time and skip a long period, the exact duration which we do not know. We reach a period before the time of Nuh (*peace be upon him*), a time of the coming of Adam (*peace be upon him*). What was the period between Adam and Nuh? Were people upon monotheism? Were there any prophets between Adam and Nuh? When did idolatry (*shirk*) first exist amongst mankind?

There is no doubt that Allah sent Adam (*peace be upon him*) as someone with pure creed, sent down from the world of the divine, the angels, and paradise. Adam was granted noble principled manners, which he then instilled in his children. Those who were guided by Allah followed him, while those who were deceived by Satan went astray.¹

Firstly: The Time Period Between Adam and Nuh (*peace be upon him*)

Ibn Hibban reported in his book *Al-Sahih* from Abu Umamah (*Allah be pleased with him*) who said that a man asked the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) about the period between Adam and Nuh, so he replied: “ten *qurun* (*centuries or generations*)”.²

1. Abdel Halim Mahmoud, *Qasas al-Qur’an fi Rehab al-Kawn*, Dar Al-Rashad for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st Ed., 2010, p. 63.

2. Muhammad ibn Hibban ibn Ahmad ibn Hibban ibn Mu’adh ibn Ma’bad al-Tamimi, Abu Hatim, al-Darimi, al-Busti (*d. 354 H*), *Sahih ibn Hibban*, Tahqiq: Shu’aib al-Arnaut, Resalah Publishers, Beirut, Second Print, 1414 H – 1993 CE, Hadith No. 6296.

Hakim reported with his chain of transmission from Ibn Abbas that he said: “Between Nuh and Adam was a period of ten centuries.” In another narration: “All of them were upon Islam.”¹

Ibn Jarir said: “It is reported from a number of the *salaf* (*scholars of the earliest generations*) that between Adam and Nuh was 10 centuries, all of them upon the religion of truth, and that disbelief in Allah only came about in the generation that Nuh was sent. They said that the first messenger that Allah sent to warn people and to call them to monotheism was Nuh.”²

All this confirms that the period between Adam and Nuh was greater than what some historians claimed about it being 126 years. Their claims were not based on sound chains of transmission, but rather on the reports transmitted from the works of Bani Israel.³ Ibn Kathir said: “According to the historical reports of *Ahl al-Kitab* (*People of the Book*) mentioned, the period between the birth of Nuh and the death of Adam 146 years, but in reality, between them was 10 centuries.”⁴

1. Abu Abdullah Al-Hakim Al-Naysaburi (*d. 405 AH*), Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihain, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st Ed., 1411 AH – 1990 AD, 9/255. Al-Hakim said: “This is correct according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari, and they (*Bukhari and Muslim*) did not narrate it.”

2. Al-Tabari, Tarikh Al-Tabari, Dar Al-Maaref, Egypt, second edition, 1387 AH - 1967 AD, 1/65.

3. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, Qissat Nuh, Cairo, 1st Ed. 2017, p. 10.

4. Qasas al-Anbiya, 1/74

The lineage between Adam and Nuh (*peace be upon them*) consisting of ten father is consistent with the ten centuries mentioned in the previously mentioned narrations. In this case, each father would represent a *qarn* (*pl. qurun, meaning century or generation*), since people at that time would live over a thousand years or slightly less than that. Except that specifying the exact period between Adam and Nuh is dependent on knowing what exactly is meant by the word ‘*qarn*’. Originally, a *qarn* linguistically is the top of a mountain, but is used to mean a period of time or a generation, and according to the later generations it refers to the period of a hundred years.¹

Ibn Kathir said: “If what is meant by a *qarn* is a hundred years – which is what first comes to the mind of most people – then the period between them is clearly a thousand years. However, this does not negate that the period is longer than that bearing in mind what Ibn Abbas mentioned about their following of Islam. It could be that the mention of ten centuries was a reference to the period of time in which Islam existed, with other disbelieving generations before Nuh coming after this. If the meaning of a *qarn* is a generation of people (*not a century*), as Allah said: “[Consider] how many generations We have destroyed after Nuh!” [17:17]. In this case, a generation of people at the time of Nuh would live for long periods of time, which means that the period between Adam and Nuh could be thousands of years, and Allah knows best.”²

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, *Qissat Nuh*, p. 11

2. *Qasas al-Anbiya*, 1/75

This view was supported by Omar Iman Abu Bakr, who said: “What appears to me is that the second suggestion mentioned by Ibn Kathir is closer to the truth, since we know that the generations after Adam were one *ummah* (**nation**) upon one religion from Allah for a long period of time, as we shall see later. The symbols of monotheism disappeared eventually, people then disagreed amongst themselves, with some of them remaining upon monotheism (**tawhid**), while others went astray from it, which is when Allah sent the prophets as deliverers of good news and warners. And such great changes cannot usually occur within a period of a hundred years.”¹

The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Abdel Halim Mahmoud said: “All that is mentioned about this is a form of speculation. The narrations regarding this open to interpretation, so it could mean a thousand years or thousands of years, and there is no certainty in the matter.”²

The first community on earth in between Adam and Nuh was simply an individual one consisting of Prophet Adam and his wife Hawa (**Eve**). This then grew into a family, then a clan, then a larger group of people that continued to develop and learn until it learnt reading, writing, sowing, medicine, and other essential basics needed by individuals to develop their personal lives. If we consider the first

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, *Qissat Nuh*, p. 11.

2. Abdel Halim Mahmoud, *Qasas al-Anbiya fi Rehab al-Kawn*, p. 63.

person to know the trade of carpentry, and thus the building of ships, it would be Prophet Nuh.¹

The society that existed before the great flood did not have the knowledge required to build a ship. Human effort at this phase was not one for a variety of large societies, but rather a human effort suited for one group of people, they are the children of Adam before the flood.² It first received its learning from its father Adam so that it could face the challenges of life on earth, which then contributed to the development of his offspring afterwards.

It is well-known that the lifespan of people at the beginning of humanity was long, such that a person would live hundreds of years. The prophet Nuh himself lived amongst his people as a prophet and messenger before the flood for 950 years. Allah Almighty said:

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty.” [29:14]

This means that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) lived for a thousand years or more, which implies that the average age for people living between the period of Adam and Nuh was around a thousand years. Whereas in our time people live up until around sixty or seventy years, with the minority going beyond eighty years. The average life expectancy

1. Muhammad Rasmi Al-Dakr, *Ta'sil al-Tarikh fi Ma'rifat Usul Bani Israel*, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st Ed., 2019, p. 84.

2. *Ibid*, p. 83

in our time is around seventy years. This means that one generation at that time lasts for a thousand years, while a generation in our time is around seventy years. Hence, the ten *qurun* (**generations**) mentioned by Ibn Abbas is equal to around 10,000 years, and Allah knows best.¹

Secondly: There is no messenger between Adam and Nuh

There is no messenger between Adam and Nuh. Some historians claimed that Prophet Idris came in between them, but there is no substantial proof for this. In fact, there are several proofs that show that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was the first messenger to be sent after Adam (*peace be upon him*). Below are some of these proofs:

Allah Almighty says: “And indeed, We sent Nuh and Abraham and reserved prophethood and revelation for their descendants.” [57:26]

This verse clearly indicates that all the prophets and messengers are from the offspring of Nuh, and Ibrahim (**Abraham**) is from the progeny of Nuh. Since it is proven and agreed upon that Idris is a prophet, as explicitly stated in the verse below, it becomes clear that Idris is from the offspring of Ibrahim, and thus from Nuh.² Allah Almighty says, “And mention in the Book (**the story of**) Idris. He was

1. Salah Al-Khalidi, *Quranic Stories: Presenting Facts and Analysis of Events*, Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus - Al-Dar Al-Shamiya, Beirut, 1, 1419 AH, 1998 AD, 1/159.

2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, *Qissat Nuh*, p. 6.

indeed a Siddiq (*man of truth*), a prophet. And We elevated him to an honourable status.” [19:56-57]

This verse also shows the unity of the message that existed amongst the messengers. They were from the progeny of Ibrahim and Nuh, from one connected tree which contains both prophethood and the divine books. It continued in mankind since Nuh until it ended with Ibrahim, a major point from which prophethood branched out and continued until the final messenger. Despite that, those who were from the offspring of such prophets were not all equal. “Some of them [rightly] guided, while many are rebellious.” [57:26] This is a brief summary of this long line of prophets.¹

Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, We have sent revelation to you [O Prophet] as We sent revelation to Nuh and the prophets after him.” [4:163]

This verse suggests that all the prophets came after Nuh (*peace be upon him*). This way the two verses that establish that all the prophets are from the progeny of Nuh make sense.² The verse says the following:

“Indeed, We have sent revelation to you [O Prophet] as We sent revelation to Nuh and the prophets after him. We also sent revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, [as well as] Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And to David We gave the Psalms. There are

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1. Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Qur’an*, Dar Al-Shorouk for Printing and Publishing, Cairo, 38th edition, 1430 AH, 2009 AD, 6/3495.
 2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 6.

messengers whose stories We have told you already and others We have not. And to Moses Allah spoke directly. [All were] messengers delivering good news and warnings so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] the messengers. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” [4:163-165]

So, it is one procession that connects human history, one message of guidance, and one procession that consists of this group of selected people. The verse began by mentioning Nuh and showed that the prophets came after him. After Nuh came Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon, David, Moses, and other prophets who were mentioned by Allah to His prophet (*peace be upon him*) in the Qur’an and others who were not mentioned.

A procession and series from different nations and races, different lands and locations, and different eras and times. They are not divided by lineage, race, land, time, or environment. They all come from the same noble source, they carry that guiding light, and each of them delivers their warning and good news. They all grab humanity by the collar taking them towards this guiding light. This applies to them all, whether they were sent to a tribe, a nation, a city, a land, and then he who was sent to all of humanity, that is Muhammad, the messenger of Allah and seal of all prophets, peace be upon him.

All the messengers received direct revelation from Allah. None of them produced anything from his own self. Allah speaking directly to Musa is a form of revelation the reality

of which cannot be fully comprehended. That is because the Qur'an – the only source with unquestionable truth and authenticity – did not describe things for us in detail in that regard. We therefore only know that it was a form of speech, not knowing its true nature, how exactly it occurred, and how Musa was able to hear it. These are all areas of the unseen (*ghayb*) that the Qur'an did not discuss. Anything beyond what is mentioned in the Qur'an is nothing but tales not based on sound evidence.

Due to Allah's wisdom and mercy, these messengers – whether they were mentioned in the Qur'an or not – were sent by Allah to His servants to deliver the good news of the bliss and pleasure that Allah has prepared for the obedient believers and to warn them of the punishment and anger that awaits the disobedient disbelievers. All this, “so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] the messengers.”

Allah has the most conclusive argument. He has given humans an intellect through which they contemplate the signs of faith (*eman*) within themselves and in the universe. However, out of his mercy with His servants, and out of knowledge of how the desires within them can overpower this great tool that He has given them – the intellect – He sent messengers to them to remind and enlighten them, and to save their *fitrah* (*pure nature*) and free their minds from the load of desire that can create a barrier between a person and being guided to the path of pure faith. “And Allah is *Aziz* (*Almighty*), *Hakim* (*All-Wise*).”

He is Almighty, meaning that He is capable of holding

His servants to account for their doings. All-Wise, managing everything with wisdom, placing everything in its appropriate place. Might and wisdom play a major role in what Allah decrees and is pleased with.¹

1. Allah has mentioned the stories of several messengers in *Surat Maryam* and mentioned amongst them Idris (*peace be upon him*).

“And mention in the Book [O Prophet, the story of] Enoch. He was surely a man of truth and a prophet. And We elevated him to an honourable status.” [19:56-57]

After this he said:

“Those were [some of] the prophets who Allah has blessed from among the descendants of Adam, and of those We carried with Nuh [in the Ark], and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel, and of those We [rightly] guided and chose. Whenever the revelations of the Most Compassionate were recited to them, they fell down, prostrating and weeping.” [19:58]

This is one of the strongest arguments for the fact that Idris is from the progeny of Nuh. This is indicated in the statement “those were” which points towards the messengers that had just been mentioned in the previous verses, and Idris was the last one mentioned amongst them. This shows that all the prophets mentioned are from the progeny of Nuh, and in fact, even from the progeny of Ibrahim.²

1. Sayyid Qutb, 2/806

2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 7.

We do not know the exact time in which Idris lived, but the strongest of views is that he from the progeny of Nuh and Ibrahim. He was not from the prophets of Bani Israel and he is not mentioned in their books. The Qur'an describes him as being a man of truth, a prophet, and that Allah has elevated him to an honourable status.

In any case, we suffice with what is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and give preference to the view that he existed before the prophets of Bani Israel¹, and that he is from the progeny of Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

This review of the series of prophets can be summarised by looking at the major highlights in the history of humanity, “from among the descendants of Adam”, “and of those We carried with Nuh [in the Ark]”, “and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel”. Adam encompasses them all, Nuh is the father of those who came after him, Ibrahim is the father of the two great branches of prophethood, the lineage of Bani Israel goes back to Jacob, and Ishmael is the father of the Arabs – amongst whom is the final prophet.

Those prophets, along with the righteous amongst their offspring who were guided by Allah, a common trait that we find in them is that “when the revelations of the Most Compassionate are recited to them, they fall down, prostrating and weeping.” They are sensitive in relation to Allah's mention, trembling when His verses are recited to them. Words do not describe the impact that they feel, so

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2313

their eyes shed tears and they fall into prostration.¹

What also confirms that Idris is from the progeny of Nuh is that every time Nuh is mentioned alongside other messengers (*peace be upon them*) in the Qur'an, it is pointed out that he came before them. For example:

In Surat al-An'am: "And We blessed him with Isaac and Jacob. We guided them all as We previously guided Nuh" [6:84]

In Surat al-Tawbah: "Have they not received the stories of those [destroyed] before them: the people of Nuh" [9:70]

Similarly, in Surat Ghafir: "Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth], as did [other] enemy forces afterwards." [40:5]

In Surat al-Dhariyat: "And the people of Nuh [had also been destroyed] earlier. They were truly a rebellious people." [51:46]

In Surat al-Najm: "And before [that He destroyed] the people of Nuh, who were truly far worse in wrongdoing and transgression." [53:52]

Whereas Idris (*peace be upon him*) was not mentioned once as existing before other prophets, so had that been the case, this would have been pointed out as it was with Nuh (*peace be upon him*).²

1. Ibid, 4/2314

2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 7.

2. **Ibn Hibban reported in his *Sahih* from Abu Umamah (*Allah be pleased with him*) who said that a man said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, was Adam a prophet? He replied: ‘Yes, one that Allah spoke to directly’. He said: ‘What is the period between him and Nuh? He said: “ten *qurun* (*centuries or generations*)”.**¹

Hakim reported it with his chain of transmission from Ibn Abbas: “Between Nuh and Adam was a period of ten centuries.”²

These narrations prove that Idris was not around before Nuh, since they mentioned the difference in time between Adam and Nuh, which indicates that there was no other messenger between them. If Idris had come between them, then he would have been mentioned instead of Nuh, which we do not find at all in the mentioned narrations.

3. **People will say to Nuh as they stand awaiting on the Day of Judgment: “you are the first messenger to the people of earth.”**

This authentic Hadith mentioned in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* clearly shows that no messenger was sent before Nuh after Adam.

4. **Ibn Kathir placed Idris before Nuh in his timeline of prophets in his book *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, based on what was commonly accepted by historians. Despite**

1. *Sahih ibn Hibban*, 25/421

2. *Mustadrak*, 8/324. Hakim said: “This Hadith is authentic according to the condition of Bukhari.”

this, he questioned this view and seemed to place doubt on its validity.

As he was mentioning the lineage of Nuh: “Nuh ibn (*the son of*) Lamak (*Lamech*) ibn Mutwashlikh (*Methuselah*) ibn Khanoukh (*Enoch*), who is Prophet Idris (*peace be upon him*) according to what they claim.”¹ His statement, “according to what they claim” (*fi ma yaz’umun*) shows that placing Idris before Nuh according to Ibn Kathir is not more than a mere claim, and mere claims, as they say, are a path to lies.

5. Although Ibn Kathir placed Idris before Nuh in his timeline and spoke about his life first, he explicitly stated otherwise in his *Tafsir* book.

He discussed the Almighty’s statement: “He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding]: “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him].” [42:13]

Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him, said when discussing the above verse: “So he mentioned the first messenger after Adam, who is Nuh (*peace be upon him*), and

1. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Adhim (Tafsir of Ibn Kathir)*, Dar Al-Hadith, Cairo, 1415 AH, 1994 AD, 3/431.

the last of them, who is Muhammad (*peace be upon him*).”¹ This is explicit that he believes that Nuh was the first messenger, contrary to what he did in his history book in which he simply followed the common view amongst the historians.²

6. In Sahih al-Bukhari, in the Hadith of Anas (*Allah be pleased with him*), when the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) passed by Idris in the fourth heaven, Idris said to him: “Welcome to the righteous brother and righteous prophet.”³

He did not say, as Adam and Ibrahim (*peace be upon them*) had said: “Welcome to the righteous prophet and righteous son.” Had Idris been Enoch, the greater grandfather of Nuh, he would also have been grandfather of the Prophet, and he would have greeted the Prophet in the same way Adam and Abraham greeted him.⁴

This way, it becomes clear that those who claimed that Idris was around between Adam and Nuh are mistaken, and that Nuh is the first messenger.⁵ Of course, the difference over whether Nuh came before Idris or vice versa is not one that has any major religious consequences, so long as

1. Ibid, 7/194.

2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 9.

3. Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (*d. 256 AH*), Sahih al-Bukhari, International Ideas House, Riyadh, No. 3598.

4. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 9.

5. Ibid, p. 9.

we believe that they are both prophets and messengers. However, it is not befitting for a scholar to not pay attention to these proofs found in the Islamic texts that place Nuh before Idris, and then instead rely on what the historians say, despite it being known that the historians mostly rely on what is found in biblical works that have been altered.¹

Thirdly: The Origin of Mankind is Monotheism (*Tawhid*)

The origin of mankind is monotheism, while polytheism is something that later came about. This can be proven in a number of ways:

1. The first human being is Adam (*peace be upon him*), a prophet who worshipped Allah alone and did not associate any partners with him, and he taught his children *tawhid*. The Prophet was asked about whether Adam was a prophet. He replied: “Yes. A *Mukallam* (a prophet Allah spoke to directly). Allah created him with his hand and then blew His soul into him.”²

Mankind then fell into *shirk* (*idolatry*) after periods of time from this. This is something affirmed by all those who believe that God is the creator and all those who believe in the three Abrahamic religions, Islam, Christianity, and

1. Ibid, p. 10.

2. Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Tahqiq: Shuaib al-Arnaout and others, Al-Resala Foundation, Beirut, 2nd edition, 2008 AD, 5/265-266, its chain of transmission is authentic.

Judaism, except those of them who have adopted the view of the atheists.¹

Idolatry was not something originally found in humans. Rather, Adam, and all his children who were upon his religion, were upon *tawhid* (***monotheism***). Adam commanded them what Allah commanded him when he said:

“Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows it, there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve. But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs will be the residents of the Fire. They will be there forever.” [2:38-39]

These words that Allah addressed Adam and others with when he brought them down, mentions an obligation upon them to follow His revealed guidance.²

2. Allah Almighty showed that humanity was originally upon *tawhid*

People were initially upon *tawhid* until shirk eventually crept in, and gods became many, as Allah said:

“Humanity had once been one community [of believers before they lost faith]. Then Allah raised prophets as deliverers of good news and as warners, and revealed to them the Scriptures in truth to judge among people regarding

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1. Abu Bakr Muhammad Zakaria, *Shirk in the Past and Present*, Dar Al-Rushd for Printing and Publishing, 1st Ed., 1423 AH - 2001 AD, 1/182.
 2. Ibn Taymiyah: Taqi al-Din Ahmed ibn Abdul Halim ibn Abd al-Salam al-Harani al-Dimashqi (*d. 728 AH*), *Al-Fatawa al-Kubra*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st Ed., 1408 AH - 1987 AD, 20/106-107.

their disputes. And no one disputed the Scriptures except the very people who received them after clear proofs had come to them - out of envy. Then Allah, by His grace, has guided the believers to the truth regarding those disputes. And Allah guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path.” [2:213]

The scholars agree that ‘humanity’ mentioned in the verse refers to those who lived between the time of Adam and Nuh (*peace be upon them both*). In that period, they were all one *ummah* (**community or nation**), as the verse explicitly states. They then differed over the main foundation that had previously united them.

The majority of scholars say that people in that period were all, without exception, upon the religion of truth, the *Shari’ah* of Allah. As time went on, they differed over *tawhid* (**monotheism**), so Allah sent prophets to clarify the truth regarding those things they had differed over. This is the view of Ibn Abbas and Ubay ibn Ka’b, and was the view chosen by Ibn Jarir and Ibn Kathir. Most of the scholars of *tahqiq* (**verification**) are of this view.¹

Hakim narrates with his chain of transmission to Ibn Abbas that he said: “Between Adam and Nuh was ten *qurun* (**centuries or generations**), all of them upon a way of truth. They then differed, so Allah sent prophets as deliverers of good news and warners.” Hakim then said: “That is the recitation of Ibn Abbas: Humanity had once been one community, then they differed.”²

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 12.

2. Mustadrak, 9/25

This opinion is famous from Ibn Abbas, as reported from him by several people. Shawkani said: “Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu Ya’la, and Tabarani, all reported with an authentic chain of transmission, to Ibn Abbas that he said: “Humanity had once been one community, meaning they were all upon Islam.”¹

Ibn Jarir said: “The Qur’an is clear that those who were referred to as being ‘one *ummah*’, were one community upon sound faith and the true religion, away from disbelieving in Allah and idolatry. That is because Allah Almighty says:

“Humanity was once nothing but a single community [of believers], but then they differed. Had it not been for a prior decree from your Lord, their differences would have been settled [at once].” [10:19]

So, Allah Almighty warned them about disunity, not unity or being one community. Had their unity been upon disbelief before they became disunited, their disunity could only have been with some of them becoming believers. If this was the case, then promising them good would have been more consistent with Allah’s wisdom than warning them, because it is a state in which some of them are returning to obeying Allah. It is not possible for them to be warned of punishment when they are in a state of repentance and returning to Him, while not being warned when they are all united upon disbelief and idolatry.”²

1. Al-Shawkani, Fathal-Qadeer, Dar Ibn Kathir, Damascus, 1st Ed. 1414AH, 1/285.

2. Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid, Abu Ja’far al-Tabari (310 AH), Jami’ al-Bayan fi Ta’wil aye al-Qur’an, Tahqiq: Ahmed Muhammad Shakir, Al-Risala Foundation, Beirut, 1st Ed., 2000 AD, 4/280.

What Ibn Jarir means by this is that Allah rebuked them for their disunity after being united. This means that some of them went from a praiseworthy state to a state worthy of being criticised. And this is not possible, except if some of them went from belief to disbelief, which is what required the sending of the messengers to them to show them which of them was upon the truth and which was not.¹

Ibn Kathir said: “The first opinion of Ibn Abbas is more correct in terms of authenticity and meaning. That is because humanity was upon one religion, until they began to worship idols, at which point Allah sent Nuh to them, the first messenger that Allah sent to people of earth.”² He also says: “Allah then says that this idolatry came about amongst people after it had not existed, and that humanity was all upon one religion, that is Islam.”³

3. Allah, the Exalted, told us in His book that the *fitrah* (natural way) that mankind had been created with is the natural way of Islam, pure monotheism.⁴

“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness [O Prophet] - the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in [all] people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know.”
[30:30]

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 15.

2. Tafsir ibn Kathir, 1/569

3. Ibid, 2/411

4. Shirk in the Past and Present, 1/183.

- **“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness.”**

Meaning that this faith protects one from different whims that are not consistent with the truth and sound knowledge, but are rather based on following desires without any restrictions or proof. Be steadfast in faith in all uprightness, turning away from all that which opposes it, keeping firm upon the path of the true faith only.

- **“The natural Way (*fitrah*) of Allah which He has instilled in people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah.”** This connects the *fitrah* of the human being and the nature of this faith. Humans are created by Allah and the religion of Islam that forms the basis of all the divine messages are also from Allah. Both of them are consistent with the laws of the created world and fit together with one another in their nature and direction. Allah who created the human heart is the one who sent down this religion to keep the heart disciplined, protect it from illnesses, and keep it from going astray. He knows His own creation and He is the Most Subtle, All-Aware. The *fitrah* is established and so is the religion. “Let there be no change in this creation of Allah.” So, if the soul strays from the natural *fitrah*, nothing can bring it back to it except this faith which is consistent with the *fitrah*. The *fitrah* of mankind and the *fitrah* of being.

- **“That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know.”** They follow their whims without knowledge and stray from the straight path. The command to turn towards the faith steadfastly, although addressed to the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), actually encompasses all the believers. Hence, the address continues to explain what this means:

“Always turn to Him, be mindful of Him, and establish

prayers. And do not be polytheists [like] those who have divided their faith and split into sects, each rejoicing in what they have.” [30:31-32]

It means turning to Allah and returning to Him in all our affairs. It means to have *taqwa* (***being mindful of Allah***), a living conscious, an awareness of Allah in private and public, and to feel His presence in all our movements and actions. It means to establish prayers purely worshipping Allah. It means pure monotheism that distinguishes the believers from the idolators.

He describes the idolators as “those who have divided their faith and split into sects”. Idolatry (***shirk***) is of many shades and types. There are those whose *shirk* involves the worship of *jinn*, angels, forefathers, kings and leaders, soothsayers and priests, trees and stones, planets and stars, fire, the night and day, and there are those whose *shirk* involves the worship of false values and desires and pleasures. There is no end to the various forms of idolatry and polytheism.

“Each sect rejoicing in what they have.” Whereas as the straight religion is one; it cannot be altered and does not divide. It does not lead its followers, except to the One true God, whose command takes hold of the heavens and the earth, and to Him is everything in the heavens and earth, all things surrender with obedience to Him.¹

Allah Almighty said:

“And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2768.

the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. [Allah asked], “Am I not your Lord?” They replied, “Yes, You are! We testify.” [He cautioned], “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’” [7:172]

This verse discusses the matter of *tawhid* from another deep angle. It discusses the angle of the *fitrah* (**natural way**) upon which Allah created humans and took from them a covenant regarding it before they came into the world of existence.

Admitting the Lordship of Allah alone is part of the human *fitrah*. A *fitrah* that the Creator has placed in human beings. They testified to the truth of that through its existence and through what it feels deep down. As for the messages sent by Allah, then they are a warning to those who stray from their original *fitrah*, and thus are in need of being reminded and warned.

Tawhid is covenant that is held between the human *fitrah* and the Creator of humans since their original existence. They therefore do not have an excuse in breaking this covenant, even if no messenger was sent to them to remind and warn them. However, Allah’s mercy dictated that He does not leave them only to their *fitrah*, because it can easily go astray, nor to leave them to the intellect that He gave them, because it can be misguided. Instead, He sent messengers to them as deliverers of good news and warners, so that humanity should have no

excuse before Allah after the coming of the messengers.¹

The issue of the fitrah and *aqidah* (**faith**) is displayed in the Qur'an in the form of a unique spectacle – as the Qur'an often does. A spectacle of human offspring hidden away in the distant world of the unseen, settled in the loins of the children of Adam before it comes out into the world. It is taken by the grasp of the Lord, the Creator, and He asks: “Am I not your Lord?” So it acknowledges His Lordship, affirms His worship, and testifies that He is one. All this, while it is dispersed like atoms, gathered in the grasp of the Almighty Creator. It truly is an incredible scene. You will not find a comparable kind of spectacle reported in language. It becomes an especially extraordinary spectacle when the human imagination ponders over it deeply. When it ponders how these innumerable cells are gathered, contained, and addressed as though they are living beings, and they acknowledge, affirm, and bear witness, and the covenant is taken from them.

The human entity finds deep shivers as it looks on at this excellent and unique scene that is manifested in an atom with life contained in each cell, each cell having latent potential. Each cell contains a human being with complete attributes waiting for permission to develop and to appear in the form that awaits him in the material world. He imposes a covenant and a contract upon himself, before he emerges into existence.²

The Qur'an has displayed this incredible scene as a

1. Ibid, 3/1391.

2. Ibid, 3/1392

description of that greatly deep reality that settles within the depths of the human *fitrah* and the depths of existence. The Qur'an described this scene before over fourteen centuries, at a time in which humanity did not know the true nature of human development, except baseless imaginations. Then many centuries later, humans are guided towards some understanding of these realities, and "science" confirms that genes – the hereditary cells – contain the characteristics of humans and the distinct features of individuals, while they are still mere cells in the loins of their parents.¹ Allah has spoken the truth:

“We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this [Quran] is the truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a Witness over all things?” [41:53]

Ibn Jarir and other reported from Ibn Abbas that he said: “Your Lord wiped the back of Adam until every being that will be created until the Day of Judgment. He then took from them their covenant and made them testify against themselves. He said: “Am I not your Lord?” They replied: “Indeed you are.” This narration was reported in both *marfu'* (as a **Prophetic statement**) and *mawquf* (as a **statement of a companion**) form. Ibn Kathir said: “The *mawquf* versions are more in number and stronger.”

how did this event take place? How did Allah take the children of Adam in that way and make them testify? How did He address them and how did they respond? The answer

1. Ibid

to these questions is that the true nature of Allah's actions are matters of *ghayb* (**unseen**), just as He Almighty himself is. Human capacities are unable to comprehend the nature and reality of Allah's actions, just as they are unable to comprehend His nature and reality. Since understanding His actions are based on being able to understand His nature.

There is another *tafsir* (**interpretation**) for this verse which says that the covenant that Allah took from the children of Adam is the covenant of the *fitrah*. He created them with the natural inclination to accept Him as the One Lord, so this is how they natural are, until they something corrupts their nature and makes them deviate from their *fitrah*.¹

Ibn Kathir said his *Tafsir*: those early and later scholars who said that the testifying relates to the *fitrah* of monotheism, as earlier stated in the Hadith of Abu Huraira, Iyadh ibn Himar, and from the narration of Hasan al-Basri from Al-Aswad ibn Surai'. Hasan interpreted the verse like this. They said, this is why He said: "when your Lord brought forth from children of Adam", and He did not say: "from Adam". He said: "their loins (**backs**)", not "his back", and He said: "their descendants", generation after generation and century after century.

Allah Almighty says:

"He is the One Who has placed you as successors on earth" [6:165]

1. Ibid, 3/1393.

“[Who] makes you successors in the earth?” [27:62]

“...just as He produced you from the offspring of other people.” [6:133]

“...and had them testify regarding themselves. [Allah asked], “Am I not your Lord?” [7:172]

In other words, He created them in a state in which they witness and testify to this. Bearing witness, sometimes can be done through speech, such as in the verse: “They will say, “We confess against ourselves!” For they have been deluded by [their] worldly life. And they will testify against themselves that they were disbelievers.” [6:130]

Other times, witnessing is done through one’s state, without using words, such as in the statement of Allah Almighty:

“It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah while they openly profess disbelief.” [9:17]

In other words, their state and condition is a witness over them of that, not that they verbally witness.

Also, Allah’s statement: “...and he himself is a witness to this” [100:7]

Just as questions can sometimes be verbal and non-verbal. An example is: “And He has granted you all that you asked Him for” [14:34]

One of the arguments supporting this interpretation, i.e. that the verse refers to the covenant of the natural *fitrah*, is that this covenant and testification was used as a proof

against them in committing *shirk*. If this event had literally taken place, as some of them said, then every person would have remembered it and it would have been a clear proof against him.

If someone were to say in response that the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) informing us is sufficient for us to believe it. They answer to that would be that the polytheists who disbelieve reject everything that the messenger brought, including this. Since this covenant was used as a proof against them, it shows that it is a reference to the fitrah of accepting tawhid that they were created upon. Hence, He said: “Lest you say...”, meaning, now you have no right to say: “on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this’”, i.e. tawhid.¹ “Nor say, ‘It was our forefathers who had associated others [with Allah in worship] and we, as their descendants, followed in their footsteps. Will you then destroy us for the falsehood they invented?’” [7:173]

As for the traditions that were mentioned at the beginning of this section:

- In Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim it is reported that Abu Huraira said that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “Every newborn is born upon the fitrah (*natural disposition*). Its parents then cause it to become Jewish, Christian, or Magian. Just as a camel is born complete. Do you see any deformity in it?”²

1. Ibid, 3/1394.

2. Bukhari, No. 1358.

- In Sahih Muslim the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “Allah says: ‘I have created my servants pure, but the shayatin (*devils*) turned them away from the right religion and made unlawful what has been declared lawful for them.’”¹

“And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. [Allah asked], “Am I not your Lord?” They replied, “Yes, You are! We testify.” [He cautioned], “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’” [7:172]

It is not far-fetched that Allah’s statement above refers to a literal occurrence of such an event since there is no reason why this cannot happen. However, we also think the interpretation adopted by Ibn Kathir, and mentioned by Hasan al-Basri who used the verse to support his view, is also a strong view, and Allah knows best.

Either way, we can conclude that there is a covenant from Allah with the human *fitrah* that it will worship Him alone, and that the reality of *tawhid* is instilled in this *fitrah* that every child is born with. Nothing makes this deviate except external factors. Factors that take advantage of humans being susceptible to both guided and misguided. A susceptibility that becomes manifest at the influence of such factors and circumstances.²

1. Muslim, No. 2865.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 3.1394.

Pure monotheism for Allah is a covenant that is made between the *fitrah* and its creator, a covenant existing inside it, in each one of its cells since its existence. It is a covenant that preceded the prophets and the messages. In it, each cell testifies to the Lordship of Allah, the One, whose Will is one, and whose laws through which He controls things are one. There is therefore no excuse after the covenant of the *fitrah* and its witness. Nobody has the right to then say that they were unaware of the book of Allah that guides to *tawhid* and the messages of Allah that called to *tawhid*. He cannot say, “I was simply born into a family that committed *shirk* and had no way of knowing *tawhid*. I only went astray because my parents went astray. They are the ones responsible for this, not me.” This is why after this testimony was mentioned, this was followed by saying:

“[He cautioned], “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this. Nor say, ‘It was our forefathers who had associated others [with Allah in worship] and we, as their descendants, followed in their footsteps. Will you then destroy us for the falsehood they invented?’”

However, Allah is merciful with His servants, knows that people can easily become misguided, and knows that their *fitrah* is prone to going astray – as the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said – through the actions of the devils of both *jinn* and humans who take advantage of human weakness. Out of His mercy He decided not to hold them to account only on the basis of the covenant of the *fitrah* nor purely on the basis of the intellect that He has given them which

they can use to distinguish. Instead, he sent messengers and detailed verses to save their *fitrah* from misguidance and to protect their intellect from the impact of whims, weakness, and desires.

Had Allah known that the *fitrah* and intellect suffice in guiding a person, even without sending the messengers and messages, without reminders, and without the detailed verses, then Allah would have held them to account for them. Instead, He made the ultimate proof against them sending of the message. “This is how We make our signs clear, so perhaps they will return [to the Right Path].” So that they can return to their *fitrah* and to the insight and understanding that Allah has placed in them. Returning to this inner *fitrah* ensures that true tawhid settles in the hearts and brings people back to their Lord who has created them upon the creed of tawhid. Allah then showed mercy on them by sending messengers with signs to remind and warn them.¹

4. Allah made clear in His Book that the primary message of the Prophets is tawhid and that this is what they called their people to

Allah Almighty said:

“He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding]: “Uphold the faith, and make

1. Ibid, 3/184.

no divisions in it.” What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him].” [42:13]

This verse clarifies the reality of *tawhid* and true origin of it in history, as well as a hint that has a subtle impact on the emotions of the believer as he looks back at his predecessors on this long path: Nuh, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (*peace be upon them all*). He feels that he is a continuation of these noble men and that he is treading their path. Being in the company of such greats, who are noble in the eyes of Allah, will make the path easier for him, regardless of the hardships and challenges that he has to face.

On top of this, there exists a deep type of peace between the believers in Allah’s religion, the followers of his *shari’ah* (*way*); lack of dispute and division, a feeling of closeness that leads to mutual support and understanding should exist. There is also an element of connecting the present with its past, the past with the present, and treading the path collectively. This begs the questions, if the religion that Allah has legislated for the believers through Muhammad is the same as what was decreed for Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa, then:

- Why does fighting exist between the followers of Moses and the followers of Jesus?
- Why do the different denominations amongst the followers of Jesus fight one another?

- Why does fighting exists between the followers of Moses and Jesus, and the followers of Muhammad?
- Why do polytheists who claim to be followers of the religion of Abraham fight with the followers of Muhammad?

All this, despite the collective command being, “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” They are commanded to uphold the faith, follow its teachings, to not stray from it, and to stand united under one flag. A flag that was raised by Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa – peace be upon them – until it ended with Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) in the final era¹ of prophethood calling to *tawhid*, the worship of Allah alone, and obeying and being conscious of Him. Allah Almighty said:

“We never sent a messenger before you [O Prophet] without revealing to him: “There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [21:25]

“We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, “Worship Allah and shun false gods.” [16:36]

“Ask [the followers of] the messengers that We already sent before you if We [ever] appointed [other] gods to be worshipped besides the Most Compassionate.” [43:45]

Every messenger would begin his call by calling to the worship of Allah alone: “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him.” [7:59]

People were followers of *tawhid* and *ikhlas* (*sincere*)

1. Ibid, 5/3148.

worship of Allah alone) after Adam and before Nuh (**peace be upon them**), just as their father Adam was. They then innovated *shirk* and idolatry, an innovation made up by them that Allah had not sent a book or messenger for. They were led to this by doubts beautified by the *shaytan* through false analogies and misguided philosophies. A group of them claimed that these idols were talismans of planets, astrological stations, and heavenly souls. Others directed their *shirk* towards worldly souls from the *jinn* and devils, and others had different beliefs. Allah then sent His prophet Nuh to call them to the worship of Allah alone without any partners and to prohibit them from worshipping anything else. The messengers then followed after him.

The earth was then filled with the religion of the Sabians and idolators, as well as Nimrods and Pharaohs, so Allah sent the leader of the monotheists, the foundation of the pure faith and the lasting word (**that is the testimony of faith**), Ibrahim, the *khalil* (**a close friend**) of Allah. He called people to turn from *shirk* to *ikhlas* (**pure monotheism**), he forbade them from worshipping planets and idols. Allah then made the prophets and messengers from his household and lineage, and sent prophets from Bani Israel, then he sent the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary.¹

Fourthly: The origin of monotheism in the eyes of historians and researchers of religion

Tawhid is the origin in mankind and it is the first faith that it ever knew. People then began to stray gradually until

1. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madarij al-Salikin*, 3/447.

they ended up falling into *shirk*. This is an unquestionable reality consistent with the Qur'an, Sunnah, the fitrah, sound intellect, and authentic traditions. Here we mention some examples of Western historians and scholars of religion who also came to the same conclusion:

1. Anthropologist, Adamson Hoebel, says that gone are the days in which ancient man would be accused of being unable to think about the divine or about God. He says that Edward Burnett Tylor is mistaken in his claim that organised religious thought is the result of social and academic advancement, a development from the worship of souls and spirits, into polytheism, and eventually into monotheism.¹

2. Andrew Lang, a scholar of the last century also argues that the beliefs of people in Australia, Africa, and India, regarding God, did not stem from Christianity. This is a view also confirmed by William Ramsay Smith who presented several arguments in favour of the view that the first type of religion practised by man is that of worshipping God.²

3. Dr. Haj Orang Kaya, a Malayan scholar from Indonesia argues that the existence of the Malay in the lands of Arbil is a strong proof that the people of our lands used to worship God alone, even before Islam or Christianity entered. In the beliefs of people in the Island of Kalimantan in Indonesia, there is an element of Hinduism and Islam,

1. *Shirk in the Past and Present*, 1/199.

2. *ibid*

although monotheism was the form of worship in these lands before Hinduism or Islam entered. He goes on to say that returning to the local language of these lands before the use of Sanskrit, the Hindu migration, and the entering of Islam, gives us a clear idea of the ideological mentality of our forefathers. Since the inherited statements establish that God is one without any partner.¹

These scholars, along with many others, including Lang, Sir James George Frazer, and Schmidt have all come to the conclusion that the origin in man is monotheism, not idolatry. This theory is sometimes referred to as the ‘theory of original monotheism’ and is supported by a large group of scholars who came to this conclusion through various methods of research, including the finding of ancient fossils that suggest that monotheistic nations existed that did not know of polytheism. They thus concluded that monotheism is the oldest faith known to humanity, while polytheism came about later on.

The aforementioned arguments all disprove the claim that religion is a human construct, and that religion started with polytheism, then developed into the belief in two gods, such as the god of light and the god of darkness or the god of good and the god of evil. Then eventually religion developed into monotheism.²

Monotheism is the original faith that is instilled in the

1. Ibid, 1/200.

2. Muhammad Abdul Qadir Abu Faris, *With the Prophets in Calling to God*, Dar Al-Mamoun for Publishing and Distribution, Amman. Jordan, 2013, p. 28.

human *fitrah*. Sound intellect proves this, as do historical reports, led by the leaders of humanity in the form of prophets and messengers. Humanity thus began with *tawhid*, then gradually were led into *shirk* and polytheism. These realities clearly disprove and negate the theories proposed by Auguste Comte who developed his ‘law of three stages’, in which he claims that the three sub-stages of the theological stage began with fetishism (*the worship of inanimate objects believed to contain spirits*), then developed into polytheism, and eventually ended with monotheism. At one point, his theory, along with other theories proposed by Comte, were adopted as mainstream by leading thinker. However, this theory is largely no longer accepted by modern research, but is still taught as a historical view that previously existed.

Nonetheless, when mankind strayed from its original faith, Allah mercifully sent Nuh (*peace be upon him*), bringing the good news of the sound creed, noble character, and just legislation.¹

Fifth: The first *shirk* that existed in mankind

The first shirk to exist in mankind existed in the people of Nuh, who was the first messenger, as shown in the Hadith of *shafa'ah* (*intercession*): “O Nuh you are the first messenger to the people of earth.”² As well as this, the verses that spoke about the messengers would mention him first, such as:

1. Abdel Halim Mahmoud, p. 64.

2. Bukhari, No. 3340.

“Have they not received the stories of those [destroyed] before them: the people of Nuh, ‘Âd, and Thamûd, the people of Abraham, the residents of Midian, and the overturned cities [of Lot]? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” [9:70]

Likewise, he was mentioned first in verses in which Allah Most High praised the prophets and messengers, such as: “And [remember] when We took a covenant from the prophets, as well as from you [O Prophet], and from Nuh, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary. We did take a solemn covenant from [all of] them” [33:7]

Thus, we see that when idols and false gods began to be worshipped, and people fell into misguidance and disbelief, Nuh was sent by Allah, sent as the first messenger, a mercy to mankind.¹ He was sent to them when the people of Nuh fell into idolatry and other actions displeasing to Allah, such as lewdness, drinking alcohol, and being occupied with desires that distract one from obeying Allah.² We can see that the people of Nuh introduced *shirk* and idol worship, as Allah Almighty said:

“[Eventually], Nuh cried, “My Lord! They have certainly persisted in disobeying me, and followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss, and who have devised a tremendous plot, urging [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols -

1. *Shirk in the Past and Present*, 1/241.

2. *Ibid.*

especially Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr.' Those [elite] have already led many astray." [71:21-24]

Imam Bukhari reported from Ibn Abbas that he said: "These were the names of righteous men from the people of Nuh. When they died, Satan inspired them to place marks in the places that these men used to sit and call them by their names, so they did. They were initially not worshipped, but as the years passed and knowledge was lost, they were worshipped."

Ibn Jarir said: "They were righteous people - Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr – between Adam and Nuh, and they had followers. When they died, some of their followers suggested to create images (*or idols*) of them so that this could encourage them to worship each time they remembered them, so they did this. When they died, and others came after them, Iblis deceived them and told them that they actually used to worship these idols and seek rain from them, so they worshipped them."¹

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "A number of the *salaf* (*early scholars*) said that when they died, people would venerate their graves, then idols were made in their images. When a long time passed, they eventually worshipped them."²

This shows us that the first example of idolatry in mankind came about in the people of Nuh due to the excessive veneration of righteous people. Their graves were

1. Tafsir al-Tabari, 12/62

2. Ighathat al-Lahfan, 1/210.

visited regularly, then idols were made in their images, then they eventually were worshipped.

Many lessons and wisdoms can be extracted from the Hadith of Ibn Abbas reported by Imam al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*. The most important of them are:

1. Shaytan beautified venerating righteous people after they had died. He inspired them to make images and to place them where these righteous men would sit. Satan then inspired to the people that followed to worship these images and convinced them that their forefathers also used to worship them, so they worshipped them.

The Shaytan fooled the people of Nuh, so they obeyed him, became his soldiers, and members working for him. Hence, it was necessary to warn them against Shaytan, their staunch enemy. Allah Almighty said: “And do not follow Satan’s footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy. He only incites you to commit evil and indecency, and to claim against Allah what you do not know.” [2:168-169]

They should have known that the true worship of Allah means to disobey the Shaytan and oppose his whispers. Allah had taken a covenant from his servants regarding this when He said: “Did I not command you, O Children of Adam, not to follow Satan, for he is truly your sworn enemy, but to worship Me [alone]? This is the Straight Path. Yet he already misled great multitudes of you. Did you not have any sense?” [36:60-62] Allah Almighty also said: “Surely Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy. He only invites his followers to become inmates of the Blaze.” [35:6]

In the Hadith of Ibn Abbas he said: “they were [initially] not worshipped (*i.e. the idols*). When they died and knowledge disappeared (*tanassakha*), they were worshipped.” *Tanassakha* means that it vanished. In the version of Kushmihani¹: “nusikha al-ilm” (*knowledge vanished*).² This means that knowledge disappeared with the death of scholars. Ignorance spread so much that people could no longer distinguish between tawhid and shirk, so they fell into shirk thinking that this would benefit them in the sight of Allah.

Shaytan was thus unable to achieve any of his goals throughout twenty centuries between Adam and Nuh (*peace be upon them*), because his tricks do not deceive the scholars. That is because they filter every new thing through Allah’s *shari’ah*, and they know that worship can only be done the way Allah legislated. When ignorance spread and the scholars died, the orders of the Shaytan become effective and his speech was heard. This is why the first verses to the revealed to the seal of prophets and messengers were:

“Read, [O Prophet], in the Name of your Lord Who created - created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen - taught humanity what they knew not.” [96:1-5]

The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) taught his companions

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1. One of the scholars who narrates Sahih al-Bukhari.
 2. Muhammad Surur Zain al-Abidin, *The Method of the Prophets in Calling to Allah*, Dar Al-Arqam for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Kuwait, 1988 AD, 1/43.

and build them in the ‘school’ of Al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam. This great school was the place from which true men who were scholars graduated. Through the Qur’an and the teachings of the great prophet, they knew how to face the Shaytan and his whispers.¹

2. Shaytan did not try to make the people of Nuh worship other than Allah straight away, because nobody would have accepted that from him. However, he gradually worked on them, first by claiming his love for the righteous men and inspiring the people of Nuh to create idols to remember them. When the scholars died and were no longer around, he inspired those ignorant people who came after them to worship these idols, claiming that the previous nations too had done this, so they accepted his claims.²

The Qur’an spoke of the idols that the people of Nuh worshipped. “Do not abandon your idols - especially dd, Suwâ’, Yaghûth, Ya’ûq, and Nasr.” [71:23] These idols are some of the oldest idols to ever be worshipped, if not the oldest, going back to the time before the flood of Nuh. It was these idols that were worshipped by the people of Nuh after they had been made based on the images of righteous men.

Bukhari reported in his *Sahih* that Ibn Abbas said: “All the idols which were worshiped by the people of Nuh were worshiped by the Arabs later on. As for the idol *Wadd*, it was worshiped by the tribe of Kalb at Dumat-al-Jandal; *Suwa’*

1. Ibid, 1/44.

2. Ibid.

was the idol of the tribe of Hudhail; *Yaghuth* was worshiped by (***the tribe of***) Murad and then by Bani Ghutaif at Al-Jurf near Saba; *Ya'uq* was the idol of Hamdan, and *Nasr* was the idol of Himyar, the branch of Dhi-al-Kala'. The names of these idols formerly belonged to some pious men of the people of Nuh, and when they died Satan inspired their people to prepare and place idols at the places where they used to sit, and to call those idols by their names. The people did so, but the idols were not worshiped until those people (***who initiated them***) died and the origin of the idols had become obscure, whereupon people began worshiping them."¹

As we can see, idol worship was not introduced to people over night. Rather, it took a long period of time since the first step towards deviation was taken. The nature of the material world as well as the influence of Shaytan over humans both played a role in widening the scope of such idolatry. None should think that the development of scientific knowledge will prevent people from idolatry. In fact, we still see many modern forms of idolatry that remind us of the ignorance of the early generations. Many places of worship today are filled with statues and idols that people stand in front of, asking and beseeching them, far from *tawhid* and the pure worship of God alone.

Here we see the greatness of Islam in the way it protected

1. Muhammad Bayoumi Mehran, Historical Studies of the Noble Qur'an, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, second edition, 1408 AH - 1988 AD, 4/13.

the *aqidah* (**creed**) of the Muslim from going astray. This protection is apparent in the way Islam emphasises pure *tawhid* and prohibits anything that could lead a person to deviate it. It is authentically reported in Sahih al-Bukhari and Muslim that when Um Salamah and Um Habibah mentioned a church called ‘Maria’ that they saw in Abyssinia, and they spoke of its beauty and the images inside it, the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “When a pious person amongst them dies they build a place of worship on his grave, and then decorate it with such pictures. They are the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah.”¹

It is also reported in Bukhari and Muslim that Aisha (**Allah be pleased with her**) said that the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) said during the illness from which passed away from: “Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they turned the graves of their prophets into places of worship.” Aisha said: “Had it not been for that the Prophet’s grave would have been made prominent, but he was (**or the people were**) afraid that his grave might be taken as a place of worship.”²

Imam Bukhari reported in his *Sahih* that Mughirah ibn Shu’bah said: “There was a solar eclipse at the time of the Messenger of Allah on the day Ibrahim (**the son of the Prophet**) passed away. People were saying that the eclipse happened due to the death of Ibrahim, so the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “The sun and moon do not eclipse for the

1. Bukhari, No. 427; Muslim, No. 528.

2. Muslim, No. 529; Bukhari, No. 1390.

death or birth of anyone, so if you see an eclipse pray and pray to Allah.”¹

From the words of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) here we can see how Islam dealt with beliefs and practices that creep into people as a result of venerating great people in their life or after their death, and thus leading to deviation in beliefs.² See how Islam called to pure *tawhid* and blocked all the paths leading to *shirk*. Allah Almighty said:

“Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you [O Prophet] in truth, so worship Allah [alone], being sincerely devoted to Him. Indeed, sincere devotion is due [only] to Allah. As for those who take other lords besides Him, [they say], “We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allah,” [39:2-3]

When people forgot the covenant of Allah, left the faith of monotheism that is the *fitrah* of Allah, and none remained on earth who worshipped Allah alone without any partners, Allah sent his prophet Nuh to call them to the pure worship of Allah alone and to warn them against worshipping anything besides Allah, even if they claim that the only reason that they worship them is for them to be intercessors and to bring them closer to Allah.³

1. Bukhari, No. 996.

2. Sheikh Muhammad Dali Balta, *Stories of the Prophets*, Modern Library, Sidon. Beirut, p. 43.

3. *Shirk in the Past and Present*, 1/233.

Sixth: The Holy Quran is a historical source

The Qur'an is the book of Allah that "cannot be proven false from any angle. [It is] a revelation from the [One Who is] All-Wise, Praiseworthy." [41:42] It was revealed to the Messenger of Allah gradually over twenty three years, depending on events and circumstances. The verses and chapters would be compiled and recorded as soon as they are revealed. When a verse or verses were revealed to Al-Mustafa (*the chosen one*), he would tell them, "place them here in so and so chapter (*surah*)."

It is narrated that Jibril (*Gabriel*) would descend with verses of the Qur'an upon the Prophet and say: "O Muhammad, Allah has commanded you to placed them at the beginning of such and such place from such and such chapter." This is why the scholars agree that the compilation of the Qur'an in the order that we see it today in the *mushhaf* (*copies of the Qur'an*) is based on the command and revelation of Allah.¹

Allah has facilitated for this ummah since the time of the messenger (*peace be upon him*) and his noble companions the preservation of His book. Allah Almighty said: "And We have certainly made the Quran easy to remember. So is there anyone who will be mindful?" [54:32] Allah decreed for it to remain, protected it from change and corruption, and saved it from any part of it being lost. This was done through preserving it in the scripts and memorising it in the

1. Historical Studies of the Qur'an, 1/19.

hearts¹, confirming the statements of Allah:

“It is truly a mighty Book. It cannot be approached by falsehood from any angle. A revelation from the [One who is] All-Wise, Praiseworthy.” [41:41-42]

“It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder (*i.e. the Qur’an*), and it is certainly We Who will preserve it.” [15:9]

“It is certainly upon Us to [make you, O Prophet] memorize and recite it. So once We have recited it to you [through Gabriel], follow its recitation [closely]. Then it is upon Us to explain it.” [75:17-19]

The Qur’an is certainly the most truthful and most authentic historical source. There is no scope for doubting it in any way because the authenticity of its historical transmission is beyond doubt. It was recorded at the beginning by the command of the Messenger, it continued to be recited after that, and it was confirmed once again just before his death.² The stories of the Qur’an are historical reports and events, not mixed with fairy-tales or anything but facts. It is Allah Almighty said: “We have sent down the Quran in truth, and with the truth it has come down.” [17:105]

On top of this, as we alluded earlier, Allah has taken it

1. Muhammad Abdullah Draz, *Al-Naba' al-Azim*, Dar Taiba for Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh. Saudi Arabia, 1st Ed., 1417 AH - 1997 AD, p. 12-14.

2. *Ibid*, p. 49.

upon Himself to preserve the Qur'an from any corruption or change. Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Draz argues that the Qur'an is referred to as "the Qur'an" and "the Book", with the first being a reference to its recitation with the tongues, and the second a reference to it being recorded in writing. He says that the Qur'an being given these two names is an indication that Allah shall preserve it in both the hearts and in writing.¹

It is this dual care that Allah placed in the Muslim ummah, following the footsteps of its Prophet (*peace be upon him*) that ensured that the Qur'an remained well-preserved. A confirmation of the promise of Allah who said: "It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder (*i.e. the Qur'an*), and it is certainly We Who will preserve it." [15:9]

The Qur'an did face the corruption, alteration, and lack of continued transmission that the previous books faced. These books were not promised to be preserved by Allah, but rather He left it to the people to preserve them. Allah Almighty said:

"So too did the rabbis and scholars judge according to Allah's Book, with which they were entrusted and of which they were made keepers." [5:44]

This means that they were ordered to take care of preserving it. The wisdom behind this distinction between the Qur'an and the previous books is that the previous books were sent temporarily, not eternally. Whereas this

1. Ibid, p. 12.

Qur'an was revealed as a confirmation of the truth found in the previous scriptures and an authority over them. It contains the guidance found in the previous scriptures, as well as additions that Allah willed. The Qur'an filled a gap that existed, while leaving no gap to be filled after it. Allah thus decreed that it remains as a proof until the Hour; when He decrees something, He facilitates its occurrence, and He is the Most Wise and All-Knowing.¹

Having said that, the Qur'an was not revealed as a history book that speaks of past nations the way historians speak of them. Rather, it is a book of guidance and direction. Allah sent it down as a constitution for the Muslims and a guide that they can follow in their lives. In it, He calls them to *tawhid* and purifying the souls. It teaches essential noble manners, provides a scale of justice, and legislates some rules. If stories and past events are ever mentioned, then they are meant for us to take lessons from.² They are meant to give us an understanding of the ways of Allah in how nations rise and fall, how civilizations succeed and disappear. They explain to us the attributes of successful leaders and their methods in dealing with oppression, evil, misguidance, transgression, crime, and so on.

The stories of the Qur'an focus on providing lessons for individuals, families, and humanity as a whole. They provide a cure for the spiritual illnesses. They guide humans to connecting to their Lord, worshipping Him alone, humbling

1. Historical Studies, 1/39.

2. Ibid, 1/40.

themselves before Him, and sincerely supplicating to Him. They teach us of the various human experiences that we can learn from.

For example, the story of Yusuf (**Joseph**) is the story of a man who faced all sorts of natural human vices and challenges since his childhood: envy, the trial of a woman, unjust imprisonment, and then taking on roles of leadership and responsibility during times of severe famine. The story of Ismail also involves him facing some of these human experiences from a young age. He finds himself alienated and cut off from his family, from general necessities, and from water. Even greater than all that is he was made to face the decree of sacrifice, which is at a crossroads between the savagery of many of the Eastern cultures that would find no problem slaughtering humans, and between a refined humanitarianism that does not reject sacrifice, but does not accept human slaughtering. Then it was decreed for this lonely boy in a barren valley to become the father of a great nation, consisting of communities and tribes that are attributed to him, and at its hands major historical turning points occurred in the world.¹



1. Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, *Islam is a Global Da'wah*, Al-Asriya Library, Beirut. Sidon, Lebanon, 1999, pp. 218-219.

Some important facts about the pre-Islamic eras

In this way, the Book of Allah, through the Qur’anic stories, provides us with important information about the pre-Islamic era and the events of their nations – information that is further supported by recent findings. We learn, for instance, through the story of Musa (*peace be upon him*), much about the divine kingdom of Pharaonic Egypt, as well as its political, economic, and social circumstances.¹ Similarly, the story of Ibrahim provides us with a lot of information about ancient Iraq.

Perhaps it is worth noting that that the most prominent stories of the Qur’an are those of Ibrahim and Musa (*peace be upon them*). They are two detailed stories. Perhaps this is due to them being narratives about two great nations of human civilization: the nation of the Two Rivers and the nation of the Nile. As well as the fact that their revolution related to intellectual misguidance in acts of worship that included most of the corrupt rituals of old times.

Regarding Bani Israel, there is no doubt that no book – not even the Torah itself – that has mentioned exhaustive discussions about Bani Israel, describing the Jews, their affairs, their character, their stances towards the prophets, the way the Qur’an has done. Allah Almighty has spoken the truth when He said: “Indeed, this Quran clarifies for the Children of Israel most of what they differ over.” [27:76]

As for the Arabs, then you will find in the Qur’an a

1. Historical Studies of the Qur’an, 1/41.

chapter named after a kingdom in the south of the Arabian Peninsula that existed before Islam, that is ‘Surah Saba’. The Qur’an is the only holy book that mentioned the stories of ancient Arab nations that no longer exist, such as ‘Aad and Thamud. It also mentions the people of the cave, the flood of the dam (*sayl al-arim*), the people of the Ditch (*ashab al-ukhdud*), the people of the elephant, and the migration of Abraham and his son Ishmael (*peace be upon them*) to the pure land in Hijaz, with Ishmael then residing there.¹

Allah has indeed spoken the truth as He says:

“This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this.” [11:49]

“This is news of the unseen that We reveal to you [O Prophet]. You were not with them when they cast lots to decide who would be Mary’s guardian, nor were you there when they argued [about it].” [3:44]

“You were not there [O Prophet] on the western side of the mountain when We entrusted the Commandments to Moses, nor were you present [in his time]. But We [later] raised [several] generations, and the ages took their toll on them.¹ Nor were you living among the people of Midian, rehearsing Our revelations with them. But it is We Who have sent [this revelation to you]. And you were not at the side of Mount Tûr when We called out [to Moses]. But [you have been sent] as a mercy from your Lord to warn a people

1. Ibid, 1/42

to whom no warner has come before you, so perhaps they may be mindful. [28:44-46]

“And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this [sûrah] the truth, a warning [to the disbelievers], and a reminder to the believers.” [11:120]

“We relate to you [O Prophet] their story in truth.” [18:13]

“In their stories there is truly a lesson for people of reason. This message cannot be a fabrication, rather [it is] a confirmation of previous revelation, a detailed explanation of all things, a guide, and a mercy for people of faith.” [12:111]

The Messenger of Allah too has spoken the truth as he describes the Qur’an as follows:

*“Allah’s book. In it is news for what happened before you, and information about what comes after you, and judgement for what happens between you. It is the Criterion (**between right and wrong**) without jest. Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allah crushes him, and whoever seeks guidance from other than it, then Allah leaves him to stray. It is the firm rope of Allah, it is the wise remembrance, it is the straight path, and it is the one that the desires cannot distort, nor can the tongues twist it, nor can the scholars ever have enough of it, and it shall not become dull from reciting it much, and the amazement of it does not diminish. It is the one that when the Jinns heard it, they did not hesitate to say about it: ‘Indeed, we have heard a wonderful*

Recitation (this Qur'an)! It guides to the right path, and we have believed therein.' Whoever speaks according to it has said the truth, whoever acts according to it is rewarded, whoever judges by it has judged justly, and whoever invites to it guides to the straight path."¹

The aim of the Qur'an in mentioning stories and its incomparable credibility

The aim of the Qur'an with stories is not simply to provide a historical report. Rather, it is for us to benefit from the past, as a rebuttal of the enemies of Islam from Quraish, and also to keep the heart of the Prophet firm in the face of the disbelievers. Allah's mercy with his chosen prophet would ensure to relieve him of the burdens and pains through the stories of the past prophets and messengers. He mentions the hardships that his noble brothers faced at the hands of stubborn oppressors and transgressing disbelievers. Despite that, they did not become weak, nor did they falter or hesitate, but instead remained patient and firm.

In this way, Allah addresses His noble messenger in the Qur'an saying: "And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this [sûrah] the truth, a warning [to the disbelievers], and a reminder to the believers." [11:120] Similarly, these chapters speak of what befell those who

1. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (*d. 911 AH*), *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, General Egyptian Book Organization, 1st Ed., 1974 AD, 2/151; Muhammad Abu Zahra, *The Great Miracle of the Qur'an*, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, Cairo, p. 15; *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*, 1/5.

were strong and arrogant, the tyrants who spread corruption and transgressed on earth, but Allah has encompassed them from all sides.¹

Having said that, we should not forget that what is contained in these stories is the ultimate truth from Allah, since Allah says: “Who is more truthful than Allah in speech?” [4:87]; “Certainly, this is the true narrative.” [3:62]; “These are Allah’s verses which We recite to you [O Prophet] in truth. And you are truly one of the messengers.” [2:252]; “He has revealed to you [O Prophet] the Book in truth.” [3:3]; “The Book We have revealed to you [O Prophet] is the truth.” [35:31]; “Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you [O Prophet] in truth.” [39:2]; “These are Allah’s revelations which We recite to you [O Prophet] in truth. So what message will they believe in after [denying] Allah and His revelations?” [45:6]; and He says: “As for those who believe, do good, and have faith in what has been revealed to Muḥammad - which is the truth from their Lord - He will absolve them of their sins and improve their condition.” [47:2]

Therefore, if you read the stories mentioned in the Qur’an, you will not find any exaggerations similar to those that have reached us through the books of history or the Torah of the Jews that we have today, as well as the fact that what is mentioned in the Qur’an is supported by modern research.² For example, the story of ‘Aad and Thamud that

1. Abu Zahra, p. 203.

2. Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad, *Matali’ al-Nur*, Dar Nahdhat Misr, Cairo, 1955 AD, p. 61.

we find mentioned in the *Geography* of Claudius Ptolemy, as well as many historical texts that speak of Thamud. We also find that Greek and Roman writers mentioned the name of ‘Aad alongside Iram, just as it was mentioned in the Qur’an.

Allah Almighty has spoken the truth as He says: “We have revealed to you [O Prophet] this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them.” [5:48]; “ This is a blessed Book which We have revealed - confirming what came before it.” [6:92]; and He says: “The Book We have revealed to you [O Prophet] is the truth, confirming what came before it.” [35:31]

Some people erroneously claimed that the fact that the Qur’an alluded to many of these stories shows that it was simply repeating stories that were common in Arabia at the time. This is incorrect since the Arabs did not know anything about many of the Qur’anic stories. For instance, Allah ends the story of Nuh by saying: “This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this.” [11:49]

If the Arabs had known this story, for example, because it was a locally circulated fairy tale, would the Arabs – some being the staunchest enemies of the Prophet – have remained silent about Allah’s statement: “Neither you nor your people knew it before this”? Does it not make sense for the enemies of the Prophet to point this out? Bearing in mind that they would always try their best to find any fault in the Prophet to use it against him and make a mockery

out of him. They would have told him that they know the story, and in fact that it is one that they always mention in their gatherings, but history has not reported to us that anyone ever criticised the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) for this verse. This shows us that what the Qur'an mentions about vanished nations was something that the Arabs were almost entirely unaware of, even though some of it was known to the People of the Book who studied the Torah and Injil.¹



1. Historical Studies of the Qur'an, 1/47.

chapter

2

The Call of Nuh

(peace be upon him)

Chapter 2: The Call of Nuh (*peace be upon him*)

Firstly: the *Nabi, Rasul, Nubuwwah, and Risalah*

The *Nabi* linguistically and technically

Linguistically, *Naba* means news, the plural of which is *Anba*. So and so has a *Naba*, meaning he has information or news. The *Nabi* (**prophet**) is the one who delivers information about Allah. *Nabi*' is taken from *Nabawah*, which means something high. Thus, the *Nabi* is greater and more noble than the rest of creation.¹ Fairuzabadi says in his definition of *Nubuwwah*: "An embassy between Allah and people of intellect, to remove their shackles in relation to this life and the next."

Raghib al-Asfahani explains the reason behind the use of the word: "He is called *Nabi* due to his high status above the rest of people, as indicated in the statement of Allah Almighty: "And We elevated him to an honourable status." [19:57]²

Technically, a *Nabi* (**prophet**) is someone who was sent to reaffirm a preceding *Shari'ah*.³

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1. Raja Bint Saleh Muhammad Al-Bahr, *The Diversity of the Discourse of the Noble Qur'an in the Meccan Era, Study of Style and Subject*, Al-Mutanabbi Library, 2016, p. 244.
 2. Al-Ragheb Al-Asfahani, *Mufradat Alfadh al-Qur'an*, Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus - Al-Dar Al-Shamiya, Beirut, fourth edition, 1430 AH - 2009 AD, pg. 790.
 3. Tafsir Al-Alusi, *Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya*, Beirut, 1st Ed., 1415 AH, 17/173.

The *Rasul* linguistically and technically

Linguistically, *Al-Risāl* means to send, which is where *Rasul* comes from, meaning someone who has been sent. Sometimes, this word (*Al-Risāl*) can also mean gentleness. ‘*Ala Rislik*’ is used when you wish to tell someone to be gentle. *Rasul* can be used for one who is carrying anything, and at times one who is carrying words or a message.¹ The word *Rasul* (*messenger*) can be used as both singular and plural. Allah Almighty said: “There certainly has come to you a *Rasul* (*messenger*) from among yourselves.” [9:128], and He said in the story of Moses and Aaron: “And say, ‘We are *Rasul* (*messengers*) from the Lord of all worlds.’ [26:16]²

However, the standard plural for the word *Rasul* is *Rusul*. Sometimes the ‘*Rusul* of Allah’ are a reference to the angels. Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, this [Quran] is the Word of [Allah delivered by Gabriel], a noble *Rasul* (*messenger*)” [81:19]. Other times, it used to refer to the prophets. As Allah says: “O *Rasul* (*Messenger*)! Convey everything revealed to you from your Lord.” [5:67]

The *Rasul* was called this because he holds a message. Though the word *Rasul* can refer to the message itself, as well as the person.

Technically, a *Rasul* is one who has been sent with a

1. Al-Bahr, p. 244.

2. Ibn Mandhur (*d. 711 AH*), *Lisan al-Arab*, Dar Sader for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon, third edition, 1993.

new Shari'ah.¹ Imam al-Shawkani says explaining the difference between a *Nabi* and *Rasul*. The *Rasul* is one who has been sent with a *Shari'ah* (**faith**) that he is commanded to convey. The *Nabi* is someone who is commanded to convey the *Shari'ah* that came before him and no scripture was revealed to him. Although both always come with apparent miracles.² Thus, it becomes clear that there is a difference between a *Nabi* and *Rasul*.

On this topic, some people used a Hadith narrated by Abu Dharr (**Allah be pleased with him**) in which the number of prophets (**Anbiya**) and messengers (**Rusul**) are mentioned. It is narrated that Abu Dharr said: O Messenger of Allah, how many prophets are there? He said: "124,000". He then said: "How many of them are messengers?" He said: "313. A large amount."³ However, this cannot be accepted as a proof due to a weakness in the isnad (**chain of transmission**) of the Hadith.⁴ This mention of exact numbers also contradicts Allah's statement: "We have told you the stories of some of them, while others We have not." [40:78]



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1. Alusi, 17/173.
 2. Fath al-Qadir, 3/461.
 3. Sahih Ibn Hibban, No. 361.
 4. One of the narrators is Ibrahim ibn Hisham al-Ghassani, accused of being a liar by some Hadith critics.

The Reality of Prophethood

Prophethood is an intermediary between the Creator and His creation in conveying His *Shari'ah*. An embassy between the King and His servants. They are a call from the Most Merciful to His creation to take them out of darkness into light, and from the tightness of the *dunya* (**this world**) to the vastness of the *akhirah* (**afterlife**). The sending of the prophets is thus a great blessing from Allah upon mankind.

As for the messenger himself, it is a favour upon him from Allah, a favouring of that messenger over the rest of humanity, and it is a divine choice that He gives to whoever He wills from amongst His creation. Prophethood, unlike what some ignorant people believe, is not achieved through knowledge or training, nor through righteous actions or worship, nor through fasting and starvation. Rather, it is purely a divine grace and choice. As Allah Almighty said about Himself: “Allah selects whoever He wills for His mercy. And Allah is the Lord of infinite bounty.” [2:105]

Prophethood is thus not obtained through the choice of a prophet, nor through requesting it. Hence, when the idolators said: “And they exclaimed, “If only this Quran was revealed to a great man from [one of] the two cities!” [43:31] The Lord responded to them saying: “Is it they who distribute your Lord’s mercy? We [alone] have distributed their [very] livelihood among them in this worldly life and raised some of them in rank above others” [43:32] It is thus Allah who distributes this amongst whoever He wills and

chooses whoever He wants from His creation. There is no choice for anyone except Him.¹

Belief in prophethood is the way to knowing and loving Allah. It is the only path that leads to Allah's pleasure, His paradise, and forgiveness, and protects one from His punishment. Ibn Taymiyah says: "Belief in prophethood is the essence of success and happiness. Whoever does not attain this belief will find confusion with regards to guidance and misguidance, belief and disbelief, and he will not be able to distinguish between what is correct and incorrect."²

Affirming prophethood is a need for humans greater than that of the air that they breathe, the food they eat, and the liquids they drink. That is because whoever misses out on one of these things may lose this life, but the one who fails to affirm prophethood shall face the greatest loss, because he will lose this life and the next. Undoubtedly, every person is in need of knowing Allah, believing in Him, and worshipping Him, as well as believing in His messenger and obeying him. Additionally, it is from Allah's wisdom that whenever people's need for something is greater, the easier and clearer Allah makes that thing. So since people's need for prophethood is, Allah has clarified it in His Book in great detail.³

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1. Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Nubuwwat*, Adwa' al-Salaf, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1st Ed., 1420 AH - 2000 AD, Introduction of the Muhaqqiq, 1/20.
 2. *Al-Nubuwwat*, p. 447.
 3. Ibn Taymiyah, *Dar Ta'arudh al-Aql wa al-Naql*, Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, second edition, 1411 AH - 1991 AD, 9/66, 10/129.

Ibn Taymiyah says: “Establishing prophethood through the Qur’an is too long to be discussed in this place. It is the pillar of the faith, the root of the Prophetic message, the fountain of all forms of goodness, and the essence of all guidance.”¹

Ibn Taymiyah also wonderfully summarises our previous discussion saying: “Allah Almighty has made the messengers intermediaries between Himself and His servants. Their role is to teach mankind about what benefits and harms them in relation to this life and the next. They were all sent to call to Allah, to clarify the path that leads to Him, and what they can expect after they have reached Him.

- The first principle relates to affirming Allah’s attributes, tawhid, and qadar, the mention of Allah’s ways towards His friends and enemies, and these are the stories that Allah mentions and the analogies that he strikes.
- The second principles relates to the detailed rulings, commands, prohibitions, permissions, and a clarification of what Allah loves and hates.
- The third principles relates to belief in the final day, Paradise and Hellfire, and reward and punishment.

Allah’s command and creation revolves around these three key principles. Happiness and success is dependent on these principles, but there is no way of knowing them except through the Messenger because intellect alone

1. Al-Nubuwwat, 1/21.

cannot be guided to the detailed realities of these principles, though it may appreciate the need for them in a general sense. Similar to sick person who understands the need for medication and doctors, but does not know the details of his sickness and the best way to benefit from medicine. The need of humans for prophethood is far greater than his need for medicine. The most that could happen without medicine is the death of our bodies. But if one were deprived of the light of prophethood, this would lead to the death of their heart, making any life after that meaningless, and it would lead to a misery after which there is no happiness. There is certainly no success except in following the Messenger.”¹

He also says: “Prophethood is based on knowledge and action. Every messenger must have both. The most noble of knowledge and most noble of actions, so how can one confuse between the truthful one and the liar?”²

The Wisdom Behind Sending the Messengers

a. The prophets and messengers are the best of creation, chosen by Allah, and humans are in desperate need for them.

Creation need the messengers to inform them of what Allah likes and dislikes. Many people have gone astray and have been overcome by many shades of misguidance, despite the existence of prophet (*peace be upon him*). What would we expect to see if Allah did not send any messengers in the first place?

1. Majmu’ al-Fatawa, 19/96-97.

2. Al-Nubuwwat, 1/22.

Messengers were sent to purify people, to take them out of the worship of creation to the worship of the Lord of all creation, and to free them the shackles of the worship of creation to the freedom of worshipping the Lord of lords who created them after they had not existed, and who will also soon bring their existence to an end, send them back to live, for them to either be from the people of happiness or the people of grief.

If people had been left without any warning or admonishment, they would have lived a miserable life. A life of pure ignorance, blind misguidance, corrupt customs, and evil manners. Life would have turned into a jungle like community. The strong eat the weak, and the noble amongst people would humiliate those lower than them. Allah's wisdom thus dictated that He does not leave people without purpose. Allah Almighty said: "Do people think they will be left without purpose?" [75:36]

From Allah's mercy with His creation, He sent to them messenger as bringers of good news and warners, reciting His verses to them, teaching them what benefits them, and guiding them to the path of success in this life and the next, for before that they had been upon clear misguidance.

b. The greatest objective for which Allah created us is to worship Him alone and to obey Him.

Allah Almighty said: "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me." [51:56]

Man cannot know what true worship is, except through the messengers that Allah sent. Messengers that He

favoured over all mankind, freed from deficiencies, aided with miracles and proofs, revealed clear verses to, He taught them about Him, and commanded them to call people to worshipping Him alone.¹

c. Establishing the Proof Against Mankind Through the Sending the Messengers

Allah Almighty said:

“[All were] messengers delivering good news and warnings so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] the messengers. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” [4:165]

“And We would never punish [a people] until We have sent a messenger [to warn them].” [17:15]

“Had We destroyed them with a torment before this [Prophet came], they would have surely argued, “Our Lord! If only You had sent us a messenger, we would have followed Your revelations before being humiliated and put to shame.” [20:134]

Allah sent messengers in order to cut off the roots of the disbelievers, leaving them with no excuse for their disbelief. They are also sent so that Allah sees and makes apparent in reality who the obedient and disobedient ones are, and to establish the ultimate proof against His servants, and so that those who were to perish and those who were to survive might do so after the truth had been made clear to both.

1. Al-Nubuwat, 1/23.

d. People are unable to understand many matters of the unseen, so they are in need of someone to clarify that to them.

People cannot know or comprehend the unseen, such as the names and attributes of Allah, the angels, the *jinn* and devils, and knowledge of what Allah has prepared for those who obey Him and those who disobey Him. It is therefore necessary for someone to teach them these realities. Allah has praised His servants who believe in the unseen, saying:

“Alif-Lam-Mim. This is the Book! There is no doubt about it - a guide for those mindful [of Allah], who believe in the unseen.” [2:1-3]

Had Allah not sent the messengers, people would have known these matters, nor believed in them. They would have been restricted to the material things that they can sense, so praise be to Creator who blessed His servants with the sending of the prophets and messengers.

e. People are in need of good role models. People who Allah has perfected with noble manners and protected from lowly doubts and desires.

The prophets are lanterns of guidance. People follow their way and take their lives and biographies as an example to adhere to until they settle, by their Lord, in *Dar al-Salam* (*The Home of Peace, i.e. jannah*).¹

Messengers are excellent role models in worship, manners, interaction, and uprightness upon the faith of

1. Fatawa, 19/93.

Allah. “Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often.” [33:21]

f. The messengers came to reform and purify our souls, and to warn us from all that which harms them.

They were sent to guide mankind to the straight path, encouraging noble manners and warning against evil traits. Allah Almighty said:

“He is the One Who raised for the illiterate [people] a messenger from among themselves - reciting to them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, for indeed they had previously been clearly astray” [62:2]

Imam Ibn Taymiyah clarified the need of humans for the messengers in many places in his books. One example is found in the following statement:

“The Risalah (*message*) is a necessity for humans. Their need for it is greater than any other need. It is the spirit and life of this world, with which there is no success. This world is dark and cursed, except that which has the light of prophethood shining over it. Similarly, one whose heart does not contain the light of prophethood is in utter darkness and is counted amongst those who are in fact dead. Allah Almighty said: “Can those who had been dead, to whom We gave life and a light with which they can walk among people, be compared to those in complete darkness from which they can never emerge?” [6:122] This is the description of the believer. He was dead in the darkness

of ignorance, until Allah brought him to life with the light of the *Risalah* and Eman (***faith***), and allowed him to walk amongst people upon guidance. As for the disbeliever, his heart is dead, living in darkness.”¹

Ibn Taymiyah also says:

“The *Risalah* is necessary for the betterment of this life and the next. There can be no success in either of these worlds except through following the *Risalah* (***prophetic message***). Man finds himself between two actions: either bringing about benefit or preventing harm. He is therefore in need of the Shari’ah because it guides him regarding what benefits and harms him. The Shari’ah is Allah’s light on His earth, His justice between creation, and His fortress that one finds safety.

What is not meant by the Shari’ah is the ability to distinguish between what is beneficial and harmful through our senses, since that is something that even animals have the ability to do. Donkeys and camels can distinguish between barley and sand. Rather what is meant is a guide that distinguishes between beneficial and harmful in relation to our worldly lives and our afterlife. The benefit of things such as faith, *tawhid*, justice, piety, giving in charity, *ihsan* (***excellence in all our actions***), honesty, purity, bravery, forbearance, enjoining good, forbidding evil, keeping family ties, treating parents well, showing kindness towards slaves and neighbours, giving people their rights, keeping actions sincere to Allah, relying upon Him, seeking His

1. Ibid, 19/100

help, being pleased with His decree, submitting to His laws and commands, befriending His friends, showing enmity to His enemies, fearing Him in open and in secret, seeking nearness to Him through fulfilling the obligations and avoiding prohibitions, seeking His reward, believing all that He and His messengers say, and obeying all that they have been commanded with. Things that benefit us in this life and the next, while the opposite of these things are a cause for failure in this life and the next.

Had it not been for the *Risalah*, the intellect would not have known the detailed matters that benefit and harm us in both worlds. It is therefore one of Allah's greatest favours upon His servants that He sent them messengers and books, and clarified for them the straight path. If not for that, they would have been like cattle and animals, in fact, even worse. Whoever accepts the *Risalah* and remains steadfast upon it is from the best of creation, while whoever rejects it is from the worst of creation."¹

The need and necessity of humanity for the prophets is greater than any other need or necessity they have.² This is something that Ibn Taymiyah clarified further, saying:

“The human need for messengers is not like their need for the sun, moon, wind, and rain, nor is it like the need of the eyes for light or the body for food and drink. It is a far greater need than all that and greater than anything else that one can imagine. That is because the messengers are

1. Ibid.

2. Al-Nubuwwat, 1/27.

intermediaries between people and their Lord in delivering His commands and prohibitions.”¹

Ibn al-Qayyim says:

“There is no way one can attain happiness and success in this life or the next, except through the hands of the messengers. It is also only through them that one can do the difference between that which is pure and that which is filthy. Allah’s pleasure can only be attained at their hands. Noble actions, words, and manners is nothing but their guidance and that which they brought. They are the proper scale with which words, manners, and actions are weighed. The people of guidance and misguidance are known through the extent they follow the messengers. Our desperate need for them is therefore greater than the body’s need for a soul, the eye for light, and the soul for life. Any need that exists, then the need for the messengers is far greater than that. What do you think of one those who are so important that if you were to be distant from their guidance for the blink of an eye, your heart would be ruined and you would be like a fish that has been taken out of the water and placed on a fryer? The state of a person when distanced from the guidance of the messengers is like this, in fact, even greater, but only those with living hearts will feel this. “A wound will not cause the dead pain.”²

The messengers are the leaders of humanity, leading them to the path of goodness, guiding them to success,

1. Fatawa, 19/101.

2. Zad al-Ma’ad, 1/69.

and protecting them from the paths of misguidance. They are role models for people in their manners, worship, and their way of life, hence Allah has commanded us to follow them and to tread in their footsteps. “These [prophets] were [rightly] guided by Allah, so follow their guidance.” [6:90]¹

The Role of the Messengers

The messengers (*peace be upon them*) have several great objectives, major roles, and lofty goals. I shall summarise these in the following points:

a. Calling people to worship Allah alone and to leave worshipping anything besides Him

Allah Almighty said: “We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, “Worship Allah and shun false gods.” [16:36] And He said: “We never sent a messenger before you [O Prophet] without revealing to him: “There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [21:25]

b. Delivering the divine way (*Shari’ah*) to the people

Allah Almighty said: “O Messenger! Convey everything revealed to you from your Lord. If you do not, then you have not delivered His message. Allah will [certainly] protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the people who disbelieve.” [5:67]

1. Omar Ahmed Omar, *The Message of the Prophets from Shuaib to Jesus*, Dar Al-Hikma, Cairo, 1997, 1/7.

c. To clarify the revealed faith

Allah Almighty said: “And We have sent down to you [O Prophet] the Reminder, so that you may explain to people what has been revealed for them, and perhaps they will reflect.” [16:44]

d. Guiding people towards good, bringing them good news of the reward that awaits them if they do, and warning them of the punishment that is prepared for them of they do not.

Allah Almighty said: “[All were] messengers delivering good news and warnings so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] the messengers. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” [4:165]

e. Reforming people by setting a good example in their words and actions

Allah Almighty said:

“These [prophets] were [rightly] guided by Allah, so follow their guidance. Say, “I ask no reward of you for this [Quran] - it is a reminder to the whole world.” [6:90] He also said: “Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often.” [33:21]

f. Establishing and implementing Allah’s guidance (*Shari’ah*) amongst people

Allah Almighty said: “And judge between them [O Prophet] by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires. And beware, so they do not lure you away

from some of what Allah has revealed to you. If they turn away [from Allah’s judgment], then know that it is Allah’s Will to repay them for some of their sins, and that many people are indeed rebellious.” [5:49]

g. The messengers will testify on the Day of Judgment that they have delivered the message to them as clearly as possible.

Allah Almighty said: “[Consider, O Prophet], the Day We will call against every faith-community a witness of their own. And We will call you to be a witness against these [people of yours]. We have revealed to you the Book as an explanation of all things, a guide, a mercy, and good news for those who [fully] submit.” [16:89]

“And so We have made you [believers] an upright community so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you.” [2:143]

These are some of the roles of the messengers. Roles that only increase them in honour and virtue. It is enough of an esteem that they are delivering the message of the Lord of the worlds. Praise be to Him who has granted them such a high station, given them this noble job, and chosen them from amongst all of mankind to fulfil this righteous duty.¹

Distinct traits of the prophets

a. Revelation

Allah has singled out his prophets from amongst all of

1. Al-Nubuwat, 1/28-29.

mankind by revealing to them. Allah Almighty said: “Say, [O Prophet], “I am only a man like you, [but] it has been revealed to me that your God is only One God.” [18:110]

This revelation implies a number of things that make the prophets distinct. These include Allah speaking directly to some of them, communicating with the angels, and Allah granting them some of the knowledge of the unseen. Allah Almighty said: “[He is the] Knower of the unseen, disclosing none of it to anyone, except messengers of His choice.” [72:26-27] Another example is the Prophet being taken on the Isra (*Journey*) to Bayt al-Maqdis, the descent to the upper heavens, seeing the angels and prophets, witnessing Heaven and Hell, and seeing and hearing those who were being punished in their graves. In a Hadith: “If you were not to abandon burying the dead (*in the grave*), I would have supplicated to Allah to allow you to hear the torment of the grave.”¹

b. The eyes of the prophets sleep, but their hearts do not

One of the things that through which Allah has made the distinct is the fact that their eyes sleep, but their hearts do not. Anas, Allah be pleased with him, said in the Hadith of the Isra: “The Prophet’s eyes were asleep, but his heart does not, as is the case with prophets, their eyes sleep, but their hearts do not.” Even though this is a statement of Anas ibn Malik, not the Prophet, except that something such as this

1. Muslim, No. 2868.

cannot be said based on opinion as stated by Ibn Hajar. The Prophet also said this about himself: “My eyes sleep, but my heart does not.”¹

c. **The Prophets are not inherited from**

The Prophets are also distinct in that they do not leave behind inheritance. Any wealth they leave behind is charity. Aisha, Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “We do not have any heirs; what we leave behind is a charity.”²

Abu Huraira reports that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “Us prophets are not inherited from. Whatever I leave after the wages of my workers and provision of my wives is given in charity.”³

This is why Abu Bakr al-Siddiq did not allow anything the Prophet left behind to be given to any of his inheritors – his daughter Fatima, his wives, and his uncle Abbas (*may Allah be pleaded with them*). Had it not been for this Hadith, they would have inherited, but Abu Bakr used this Hadith as the basis of his decision to not allow them to inherit. Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, Talha, Zubair, Abu Huraira, and other companions all agreed with him regarding this Hadith.⁴

1. Fath al-Bari, 6/670.

2. Bukhari, No. 6730; Muslim, No. 1758.

3. Musnad Ahmad, 5/463. Also see Sahih Muslim, No. 1760.

4. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, Maktabat al-Ma’arif, Beirut, second

The wisdom behind this is that Allah protected the prophets from leaving behind in inheritance anything of this *dunya* (***worldly matters***), so that this cannot be used against them claiming that they were after the *dunya* and were eager to leave it behind for their inheritors.¹

As for Allah's statement, "And David was inherited (***succeeded***) by Solomon" (27:16), then what is meant here is the inheritance of knowledge and prophethood, and other such things, not monetary inheritance. Ibn Kathir says commenting on this verse:

"He inherited him in prophethood and kingship, not financial inheritance, because he had other children besides him, so Solomon could not be singled out with inheriting wealth. As well as this, it is authentically reported from several companions that that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: "We do not have any heirs; what we leave behind is a charity." In another version: "Us prophets are not inherited from." The most truthful thus made it clear that the wealth of the prophets is not inherited from them the way others are, but instead that their wealth is given in charity to the poor and needy, not their relatives. That is because this world is too insignificant for them, just as it is in the eyes of the One who sent them and chose them."²

edition, 1974, 2/45.

1. Ibn Taymiyah, Minhaj al- Sunnah, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia, 1st Ed., 1986, 4/195.
2. Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 2/17.

Similarly, Allah's statement, "...who will inherit [prophethood] from me and the family of Jacob" [19:6]. What is meant once again is not financial inheritance, but the inheritance of knowledge and prophethood. In a Hadith: "The Prophets did not leave behind a Dirham or Dinar in inheritance, but they left behind in inheritance knowledge, so whoever takes it has taken a great portion."¹

d. **Given the choice at the time of death**

From the things that are distinct about the prophets is that they are given the choice between this life and the next. Aisha reported that she heard the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) say: "Every Nabi (**prophet**) is given the choice between the dunya and akhirah at his time of [near-death] illness" She said that during his final illness his voice became very husky and she heard him saying: "in the company of those blessed by Allah: the prophets, the people of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous" [4:69] From this she came to know that he has been given the option.

e. **The earth does not consume their bodies**

Allah has also honoured His prophets and messengers by prohibiting the earth from consuming their bodies. Their bodies remain preserved from decay no matter how long they remain in their graves. In a Hadith: "Allah has prohibited the earth from consuming the bodies of prophets."²

1. Mansour bin Rashid Al-Tamimi, *Infallibility in the Creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, Al-Rushd Library, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1429 AH, p. 42.

2. Bukhari, No. 4586.

f. ‘*Ismah* (infallibility)

This is something else that Allah has granted his prophets and messengers, unlike other humans. Raghīb al-Asfahani in *Al-Mufradat* defined ‘*Ismah* as being: “The pure internal condition that Allah has protected them (***the prophets and messengers***) with, the physical and spiritual abilities they have been granted, as well as victory, firmness, descending tranquility upon them, preserving their hearts, and granting them success in the things that they do.”¹

Ibn Hajar also used the definition of *Raghīb* and summarised it in *Fath al-Bari*: “The ‘*Ismah* of the prophets means protecting them from deficiencies, granting them the most complete spiritual qualities, success and firmness in all affairs, and allowing tranquility to descend upon them.”²

Shaykh Mansur ibn Rashid al-Tamimi defined it, in his academic paper, as follows: “Protecting the messengers from anything that outs people off accepting their prophethood, from lying, hiding the truth that has been revealed to them, as well as being saved from falling into major sins. It also means that Allah grants them the success to repent and seek forgiveness if minor sins are committed, and that mistakes are pointed out by Allah if they ever fall into them.”³

1. *Mufradat al-Qur’an*, p. 337.

2. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, Edited by: Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi and Muhib al-Din al-Khatib, Dar al-Maarifa, Beirut, Lebanon, 1379 AH, 11/51.

3. p. 51.

Belief in the Prophets and Messengers

Belief in the prophets and messengers is one of the pillars of faith (*eman*). One's faith will not be complete until he believes in all the prophets; that Allah sent them to guide mankind and take them out of darkness into light; and that they have delivered Allah's message clearly, fulfilled the trust, advised the *ummah*, and strove in the path of Allah. Allah Almighty said:

“The Messenger [firmly] believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They [all] believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His messengers. [They proclaim], “We make no distinction between any of His messengers.” And they say, “We hear and obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord! And to You [alone] is the final return.” [2:285]

“Rather, the righteous are those who believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books, and the prophets.” [2:177]

The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “Eman (*faith*) is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the final return.”¹

It is necessary for a believer to believe in all the messengers that Allah sent and all the books that He revealed.² One's faith is not complete until he believes in all the prophets without specifying their number; those who

1. Bukhari, No. 48.

2. Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Furqan*, Edited by: Abdul Qadir Al-Arnaout, Dar Al-Bayan Library, Damascus, 1st Ed., 1985, p. 117.

Allah told us about and those He did not, because Allah has told us that there are prophets that he did not relate to us and inform us of. “We already sent messengers before you. We have told you the stories of some of them, while others We have not.” [40:78]

Ibn Taymiyah says: “We believe in the messengers that Allah named in His book and we believe that Allah has other prophets and messengers whose names we do not know. We believe in Muhammad (*peace be upon him*). Though, your belief in Muhammad is not like your belief in the other prophets. Belief in the other prophets means to affirm that they were prophets, while belief in Muhammad means to accept everything that he has brought. If you follow him, then you would fulfil the obligations, permit the permissible, forbid the forbidden, avoid the doubtful matters, and race towards doing good.”¹

He also says: “Whoever obeys one messenger has obeyed them all and whoever truly believes in one of them believes in them all. Just as whoever disobeys one messenger has disobeyed them all and whoever rejects one of them has actually rejected them all. That is because every messenger commands the obedience of other messengers and affirms that they too are messengers. Therefore, whoever rejects a messenger has rejected and belied those messengers who believe in him, and whoever disobeys a messenger has too disobeyed the other messengers who commanded people to obey him.”²

1. Majmu’ al-Fatawa, 7/313.

2. Ibid, 19/180.

Nuh is from *Ulu al-Azm*

As well as being a prophet and messenger, Nuh is one of the messengers of Ulu al-Azm (***Strong Resolve***). This is a high station that only few messengers attained. Even though all the messengers are the best of creation and are Allah's chosen few, Allah has placed some of them above others. Allah Almighty said: "We have chosen some of those messengers above others." [2:253] And He said: "And We have surely favoured some prophets above others." [17:55]

At the forefront of prophets and messengers we find Ulu al-Azm. They are the chosen few of the messengers, men of firm resolve and patience, whose souls are purified through their consciousness of Allah. They are concerned with reforming their nation by guiding them to all that is good and warning them of all that is evil. They remain patient in facing hardships and receiving mistreatment from their people. The messengers of Ulu al-Azm are Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, and Muhammad (***peace be upon them***). They are the ones mentioned in Allah's statement: "And [remember] when We took a covenant from the prophets, as well as from you [O Prophet], and from Nuh, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary. We did take a solemn covenant from [all of] them" [33:7]

These five were specifically mentioned in the verse since they are the messengers of Ulu al-Azm and were given sacred books and law.¹ Regardless of whether

1. Abu Muhammad Husain bin Masud al-Baghawi (*d. 516 AH*), Tafsir al-Baghawi, Dar Taiba, Riyadh, 1411 AH, 6/320.

we think that all the prophets and messengers are from Ulu al-Azm or whether this description is for these five messengers, there is no doubt that these five have some special virtues over other prophets and messengers. We know for sure that some prophets are greater than others, as Allah Almighty said: “We have chosen some of those messengers above others.” [2:253]

The majority of scholars, including the scholars of *tafsir* (*Qur’anic exegesis*), are of the view that the messengers of *Ulu al-Azm* (**Strong Resolve**) are these five. Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Sa’di said when commenting on the verse mentioned above: “The Almighty is informing us that Allah has taken a strong covenant from the prophets generally, and from *Ulu al-Azm* specifically – and they are the five mentioned in the verse – that they would establish the religion of Allah, strive in His path. He tells us that this path is one that has been tread by the previous prophets, ending with the best of them, Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), and that we should follow them in that path.”¹

These five prophets were also mentioned together in the verse of Surah al-Shura: “He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding]: “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” [42:13]

They were specifically named in this verse and were

1. Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman fi Tafsir Kalam al-Mannan, Dar ibn al-Jawzi, 4th Ed. 1435 AH, 1/659.

given this great piece of advice of establishing the faith without being divided regarding it. This itself is a clear proof of their high station that allows them to take on this huge responsibility and fulfil it in the most complete way.¹

Ibn Kathir said in the tafsir of this verse: “He mentioned the first messenger after Adam, Nuh (*peace be upon him*), and the last of them, Muhammad (*peace be upon him*). Then in between he mentioned Ulu al-Azm: Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa ibn Maryam (*peace be upon them*). This verse mentions these five prophets, just as the verse of Surah al-Ahzab mentions them: “And [remember] when We took a covenant from the prophets, as well as from you [O Prophet], and from Nuh, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary. We did take a solemn covenant from [all of] them” [33:7] The faith that all the messengers came with is to worship Allah alone without any partners.”²

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is the first messenger to mankind

In the long Hadith of intercession (*shafa'ah*) reported by Bukhari, the people say to Nuh: “O Nuh you are the first messenger to the people of earth.” The Hadith seems to imply that Adam (*peace be upon him*) was not a messenger (*rasul*), but the correct view is that he was a prophet (*nabi*) and messenger (*rasul*). Nuh is simply the first rasul since humans began to disagree regarding tawhid, with some of them disbelieving and others remaining upon eman. The following verse indicates this: “Humanity had once been

1. Qissat Nuh, p. 28.

2. Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 7/194.

one community [of believers before they lost faith]. Then Allah raised prophets as deliverers of good news and as warners” [2:213]

What is thus meant with Nuh being the first messenger is that he was the first since people differed over monotheism. This does not contradict that Adam was a messenger, as he was sent to his children only, and they did not differ over worshipping Allah alone without any partners.¹

Some people use the Hadith quoted above to claim that Adam was only a prophet who Allah spoke to directly, but not a messenger, except perhaps in the sense that he was sent to his own children. While they claim that Nuh was sent to his people, who at the time made up all of humanity. When the people on the Day of Judgment say, “you are the first messenger to the people of earth”, this is said to prove that his message was for all mankind. However, this contradicts the statement of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*): “I was given five things that nobody was given before me... prophets were sent to their own people specifically, while I was sent to all of mankind.”²

One could respond by saying that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) being sent to the people of earth was in the sense that his people were the only people on earth. This would then not contradict the fact that his message was aimed at his own

1. Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, *Majmu' Fatawa wa Maqalat Mutanawwi'ah*, Dar Al-Qasim Publishing, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1420 AH, 3/32.

2. Bukhari, No. 419.

people as the Qur'an explicitly states: "Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people." [7:59]

Nuh was thus sent to his own people – who at the time were the only people on earth – after *shirk* was introduced. This way, there is no contradiction between this and Adam also being a messenger (*rasul*).

Nuh is the second father of humans

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is the second father of humanity after Adam (*peace be upon him*). There is a scholarly agreement regarding this issue, as Allah states: "And [We] made his descendants the sole survivors" [37:77]. From an Arabic grammar perspective, this verse implies restriction. That is that the verse is quite explicit about no humans remaining on earth after Nuh, except his descendants. This is an honour specific to Nuh after Adam, making him the father of all humans after him until the Day of Judgment.

However, a potentially problematic question is posed here about the claim that Nuh is the second father of humans. That is that Allah Almighty says, "We said [to Nuh], "Take into the Ark a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed - and those who believe" [11:40]

The verse suggests that there were some who believed in Nuh who were not from his family, because "those who believe" were mentioned separately from his "family" as those who he should take with him on the Ark. Since they

were mentioned separately from his family, it means that some of those who believed were not from his family. It is also well-known that a small number of people believed in Nuh who were described by the disbelievers from Nuh's people as "lowly". Allah does not choose as prophets those who are viewed as "lowly" by their people. He chooses those with lineage and character that cannot be questioned. This can only mean that those who were described as such were not from the family of Nuh and that they too were saved from the flood and left behind children who were not from the offspring of Nuh. How then can Nuh be claimed to be the father of all those who remained on earth that time?

The answer to this question can be given from two angles:

The First Response: If we say that all those who were on the Ark were from the children of Nuh, then there is no issue in the claim that Nuh is the father of humanity, and was thus called as the "little Adam". Razi reported from some of the scholars of *tafsir* that only those who were from Nuh's offspring remained on the Ark. In this case, the mention of "those who believe" in the verse after mentioning Nuh's family is merely a general description of his family.¹ However, this view is weak and contradicts the apparent wording of the Qur'an because the fact that they were mentioned separately from his family, it means that they were not from his family. Thus, those who were saved are his family and the believers who were not from

1. Qissat Nuh, p. 23.

his family, and this is the view of most scholars.

The Second Response: Those who were saved included both, but those who remained after and had children were those from his offspring only.¹ Ibn Jarir said: “They said that some of those with him in the Ark were believers who followed him [not from his family], but they ceased to exist and died without leaving any offspring. Those who are thus alive today in the world come from Nuh, not any of the other children of Adam. As Allah said, “And We made his descendants the sole survivors” [37:77]

Nuh is the father of the prophets and messengers

As well as having the honour of being the second father of humanity, Nuh is also the father of the prophets and messengers. Although this comes under being the father of humanity in general, but since the prophets and messengers are the best of creation, we wanted to mention such a virtuous description separately. This is also alluded to in the Qur’an, “We sent Nuh and Abraham and reserved prophethood and revelation for their descendants.” [57:26]

What we have mentioned so far makes it clear that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is an early grandfather of Ibrahim (*peace be upon him*) and those prophets who came after him, just as Ibrahim too is the grandfather of the prophets and messengers. They are descendants of one another. Razi says, “Allah here shows that He has honoured Nuh and Abraham through them being messengers and He put prophethood and revelation in their offspring. Any prophet who came

1. Ibid

after them is from their offspring. The reason He mentioned prophethood before revelation is that prophethood is more complete when there is a revealed book alongside it.”¹

Nuh: His Name and Lineage

From my research, the Qur’an and authentic Sunnah do not mention the lineage of Nuh, nor is there any mention of his father. However, Hafidh Ibn Kathir mentions in his book, *Qasas al-Anbiya (Stories of the Prophets)*, and Allah knows best how true this is, the lineage of Nuh as being:

Nuh son of Lamech son of Methuselah son of Enoch son of Jared son of Mahalalel son of Kenan son of Enos son of Seth son of Adam, the father of humanity.²

Some said, such as Yazid al-Raqashi, that he was called Nuh because of how often he would raise his voice (*in Arabic Naha*) in calling his people to Allah. However, this is questionable because he was called Nuh (*Noah*) before he became a prophet and began calling his people to Allah, and none of his parents or relatives knew that he would become a messenger, unless we say that this is something that Allah inspired and thus his parents chose a name for him that fits what was to come of him. On top of this, Nuh and his people were non-Arabs, so his name at that may not have had the same meaning as it does in the Arabic language. In fact, the word *Nuh* does not have a meaning in Arabic.³

1. Ibid, p. 24.

2. Stories of the Prophets, 1/209.

3. Qissat Nuh, p. 18.

Now that we have established that humanity is from the descendants of Nuh, it is appropriate to mention the names of Nuh's children who were with him on the Ark. The Prophetic narrations agree that he had three children:

- Shem (*the father of the Arabs*)
- Ham (*the father of the Abyssinians*)
- Japheth (*the father of the Romans/Europeans*)

Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Ibn Sa'd, Abu Ya'la, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Tabarani, and Hakim, all reported from Samurah ibn Jundub that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: "Shem is the father of the Arabs, Ham is the father of the Abyssinians, and Japheth is the father of the Romans."¹ This was graded *Hasan* by Tirmidhi and *Sahih* (*authentic*) by Hakim.

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani said that Hakim and others reported from Abu Huraira that the Prophet said: "Nuh had Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From Shem the Arabs, Persians, and Romans were born. From Ham, the Copts, Berbers, and Africans were born. From Japheth, Gog and Magog, the Turks, and the *Saqalibah* were born."²

Ibn Jarir reported a similar narration as Hakim, but he did not report it from the Prophet, but rather as a saying of Wahb ibn Munabbih. So perhaps the details mentioned in this weak Hadith comes from Wahb ibn Munabbih who was known to narrate the traditions of Bani Israel, and Allah

1. Tirmidhi, No. 3931

2. Fath al-Bari, 20/47, Ibn Hajar said that it is weak.

knows best.¹

Nuh was constantly grateful for his Lord's blessings

This is one of the attributes that Nuh had so much that he was known for it and described with it amongst his brothers, the prophets and messengers. Allah Almighty said, “[O] descendants of those We carried with Nuh [in the Ark]! He was indeed a grateful servant.” [17:3]

Allah first described him as being a servant, which is the highest level of closeness to Allah, then He described him as being grateful, which is a result of the first.² Shawkani said: “Allah described him as someone who was constantly thankful. This was mentioned as a reason for that which was stated before that in the verse, suggesting that thankfulness is one of the greatest acts of worship and one of the main causes of goodness, encouraging his children to be thankful to Allah.”³

The reality of *shukr* (**gratitude**) is that the heart admits the blessings given, repeating words of thanks using the tongue, praising Allah for His blessings, and then acting in obedience to Allah to show true gratitude. This shows the importance of *shukr* when it comes to servitude to Allah Almighty.

Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Si'di said: “This shows that Nuh is being praised for his consistent gratitude towards Allah. It encourages his offspring to follow his example

1. Tafsir Tabari, 1/74.

2. Qissat Nuh, p. 19.

3. Fath al-Qadir, 4/282.

in that and to remember Allah's favour upon them for protecting them while everyone else was drowned."¹

In Allah's statement, "[O] descendants of those We carried with Nuh [in the Ark], there is a reminder for nations in general, and Bani Israel specifically, that Allah only saved Nuh and those with him from destruction due to his thankfulness; and encouragement for them to follow him in that.

It is reported from a group of the imams of the *tabi'in* (*students of the companions*), such as Qatadah, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, and others that every time Nuh wore his clothes he would say, "bismillah", and when he took them off, he would say, "alhamdulillah". When he ate, he would say, "bismillah", and when he finished, he would say, "alhamdulillah". When he drank, he would say, "bismillah", and when he finished, he would say, "alhamdulillah; praise to Allah who has given me this to drink upon desire, pleasure, and well-being." He was thus named *shakur* (*thankful*). What has been reported here is only a small part of what it means to be grateful and thankful and only an example of the gratitude shown by Nuh. Otherwise, *shukr* is more encompassing than the examples mentioned here, and it includes the actions of the heart, tongue, and limbs.

In any case, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) has reached the highest level in this regard with Allah praising him for it in His Book, which keeps his good mention amongst the earlier and later generations. This is why people will, as

1. Tafsir al-Sa'di, 1/453.

they await on the Day of Judgment, address him with these traits that he was known for and ask him to intercede for them. They will say, "... and Allah has called you grateful servant."

However, we should know that Nuh being distinctly praised for this quality or any other thing, does not make him better than all the prophets in all aspects. Someone higher may not have some of the qualities that others have, and Allah favours whoever He wishes with whatever He wills.¹

Nuh's Age on Earth

At the time of Nuh, and the period before him, people would live long lives, such that some would live up to a thousand years or more. People's lifespans have since continued to decrease since then.²

Perhaps the wisdom behind this, and Allah knows best, is that people at that time were still at the stage of development and settlement, so longer lives would help for them to have many children. The age of Nuh was thus similar to the ages of people at that time, as Allah mentioned in his Noble Book, "Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty. Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing." [29:14]

This period of Nuh's life – 950 years – is something that

1. Qissat Nuh, p. 30.

2. Ibid

all the scholars agree to as it is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. However, the verse does not suggest that this was how long he lived altogether, but only that this was the time from when he was first sent as a messenger up until the flood. We know with certainty that he lived after the flood, as Allah said, "... he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty. Then the Flood overtook them." However, we do not know the exact period that he lived after the flood.

This is why scholars disagree over the period that Nuh lived before prophethood, as well as the period that he lived after the flood. The strongest thing reported on this matter is narrated from Ibn Abbas (*may Allah be pleased with him*). Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abd ibn Humaid, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Abu al-Shaykh, and Hakim (*who also authenticated the report*) all reported that Ibn Abbas said: "Allah sent Nuh at the age of 40, he remained amongst them for 950 years calling them to Allah, and then lived after the flood for 60 years, until people became many and widespread."¹

In this case, the total life of Nuh, according to Ibn Abbas, would be 1050 years. Though what is reported from Ibn Abbas is not something that all scholars agree with. A group of the *tabi'in* (*students of the companions*) have opposed him in this regard, such as Ka'b al-Ahbar, Qatadah, and Wahb ibn Munabbih. In fact, Ibn Abbas' student, Ikrimah, also disagreed with him. Abd ibn Humaid reported from Ikrimah that he said: "The age of Nuh, before and after he was sent to his people, was 1700 years."

1. Fath al-Qadir, 5/437.

Ibn Jarir also reported from Nasr ibn Ali al-Jahdhami, from Nuh ibn Qais, from Awad ibn Abi Shaddad that he said: “Allah sent Nuh when he was 350 years old, he then remained in his people 950 years, and then lived after the flood for 350 years.”¹

This shows that Nuh’s age before and after the flood is not a point of agreement, because there is no authentic report on the matter from the one who is infallible, our only source of knowing such matters of the unseen. Though perhaps the strongest view on this is the one reported from Ibn Abbas.²

We can see then that Nuh lived for a long time. Despite that, Nuh himself did not view this to be that long. Ibn Abi al-Dunya said that Muhammad ibn ‘Asim reported from Nafi’ Abu Hurmuz, from Anas ibn Malik that he said that the Angel of Death came to Nuh and said, “O longest living prophet, how did you find the world and its pleasures?” He said: “Like a man who entered a house with two doors, stood inside for a short while, then walked out of the other door.”³



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1. Tafsir al-Tabari, 20/17; Tarikh al-Tabari, 1/70.
 2. Qissat Nuh, p. 31.
 3. Ibn Abi al-Dunya, Kitab al-Zuhd, Dar Ibn Kathir, Damascus, 1st Ed., 1999, 1/360, No. 363.

The Da'wah (*Call*) of Nuh

The *da'wah* of all the prophets and messengers throughout the ages is one in its main principles and core teachings. Each of them exerted all his effort to connect people with their creator and guide them to the correct path.¹ Allah Almighty said:

“We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, “Worship Allah and shun false gods.” But some of them were guided by Allah, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!” [16:36]

“We never sent a messenger before you [O Prophet] without revealing to him: “There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [21:25]

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He said, “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.” [7:59]

The Qur'anic verses mentioned and many others all mention that a prophet or messenger would begin his address to his people by emphasising the *tawhid* (**oneness**) of Allah in his worship, lordship, names and attributes, authority, taqwa, and obedience of His messengers. The essence of the call of the prophets is thus for people to be true servants of Allah and to establish *tawhid*. No issue, no

1. Ahmed Suleiman Al-Raqb, The Methodology of Calling to Allah in Surat Nuh, Dar Al-Mamoun for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 1st Ed., 2010, p. 116.

matter how great it is, can be as important as the issue of *tawhid* (**monotheism**).

As well as calling to *tawhid*, the prophets would also call their people to abstain from evils, such as cheating in trade and oppressing people. This is how the callers to Allah should be. They make *tawhid* the essence of their call, while also work towards fixing the ills that are spread in their society.¹

Taking a look at the verses of the Qur'an shows that the call of Nuh revolves around *tawhid*, worshipping Allah, being conscious of Him (*taqwa*), and obeying Him. Allah Almighty says in the following verses:

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He said, “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.” [7:59]

“When their brother Nuh said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]? I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you. So fear Allah, and obey me.” [26:106-108]

“Surely, We sent Nuh to his people. [He said,] “Indeed, I am sent to you with a clear warning that you should worship none but Allah. I truly fear for you the torment of a painful Day.” [11:25-26]

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He declared, “O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him. Will you not then fear [Him]?” [23:23]

1. Ibid, p. 117.

“Nuh proclaimed, “O my people! I am truly sent to you with a clear warning: worship Allah [alone], fear Him, and obey me. He will forgive your sins, and delay your end until the appointed time. Indeed, when the time set by Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if only you knew!” [71:2-4]

These verses, as well as others, show that the *da'wah* of Nuh revolves around tawhid, establishing the worship of Allah alone, *taqwa*, and obedience.

1. **Tawhid in the message of Nuh**

When humanity went astray in its creed, Allah’s mercy dictated that He send Nuh to give good news of true creed, noble manners, and just legislation.

The sound texts and narrations show us that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was a complete man who was sent by Allah to guide his people. We do not know much about his childhood, early years, and his life before prophethood. However, it is from the *sunnah* (**consistent law**) of Allah that he chooses as prophets those who are of noble lineage. Heraclius, the Emperor of Rome, asked Abu Sufyan ibn Harb about the Prophet saying, “What is his status amongst you?” Abu Sufyan replied, “He is from a noble family.” Heraclius then replied, “That is the case with prophets. They are sent from the most noble families.”

Ibn Khaldun explains that the reason for this is to give the messenger a respected family of strength that can protect him from the harm of the disbelievers, so that he can deliver his Lord’s message and establish the will of Allah in completing his religion. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) says

in an authentic Hadith, “No prophet was sent except from a strong family [that was able to protect him].” So despite not having any explicit texts on the matter, we can be certain that Nuh comes from a noble family.¹

As for that which relates to his development, then Allah selects His prophets and prepares them for their mission. He says to Prophet Musa, “And I have selected you for My service.” (20:41). He also said, “[O Moses] so that you would be brought up under My [watchful] Eye.” (20:39). As for Yahya (*John*), he was a pious person, kind to his parents, not a tyrant or disobedient. Prophet Isa was made blessed by Allah wherever he went and our Muhammad was described by Allah, “And you are truly [a man] of outstanding character.” (68:4)

This confirms that Nuh was not any different from the other messengers in that he was a man of noble character. Ibn Khaldun says about the prophets and messengers in general: “One of their signs is that even before receiving revelation, they are people of great character, purity, and avoidance of corrupt actions.” This is the meaning of *‘ismah (infallibility)*. It is as though they are naturally made to avoid evils as these things do not fit with their nature.

Without doubt, Nuh was of such excellent character too, so when his preparation was complete, he received the revelation. This is the case with all the prophets and messengers. When they become ready – through Allah’s preparation – to receive revelation it comes to them

1. Abd al-Halim Mahmoud, p. 65.

suddenly at any time. With Musa (*peace be upon him*), he was walking down the sacred valley as he told his family to stay while he goes towards the light. It is then that he heard the divine call, “It is truly I. I am Allah! There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me. So worship Me, and establish prayer for My remembrance.” [20:14] Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad suddenly received revelation as he is in the cave, with the angel saying, “Read, [O Prophet,] in the Name of your Lord Who created” [96:1]. Nuh also suddenly received the command, “Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people [saying to him], “Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them” [71:1]. What does he warn them of?¹

Allah sent Nuh when corruption became widespread, so that he can give good news of truth, goodness, and justice, so he began by calling to tawhid. “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.” [7:59]

This call of Nuh is the call to tawhid, the essence of the da’wah of all the prophets. Hence, this is something that Allah confirms to the seal of the prophets, Muhammad, saying, “We never sent a messenger before you [O Prophet] without revealing to him: “There is no god [worthy of worship] except Me, so worship Me [alone].” [21:25]

In Islam, this *tawhid* is affirmed by saying *la ilaha illa Allah* (***there is no true god except Allah***). This is the main

1. Ibid, p. 67.

symbol and essence of every truly divine religion.¹ The true meaning of *tawhid* is that us servants know, believe, and affirm that Allah is One in all His perfect attributes, without any partners or equals, that He is the Lord of all creation, and is the only one worthy of worship.²

Just as Allah has no equal in His being and His attributes, there is no partner with Him with regards to worshipping Him. This definition is based on the clear meaning indicated in “*la ilaha illa Allah.*” This statement is explicit regarding God’s oneness in *uluhiyyah*, so worship can only be directed at Him, and this thus implies His oneness in *rububiyyah* (**lordship**) as well as His names and attributes. This word thus summarises the reality of *tawhid* in terms of both knowledge and action.³

Tawhid means complete certainty that everything in the universe, creation, sustenance, giving and preventing, life and death, wealth and poverty, strength and weakness, and honour and humiliation, all stem from Allah Almighty. He alone creates, provides sustenance, and gives and takes away life. He alone is responsible for all other things that occur in the heavens and earth. He alone is the lawgiver and authority. He sent messengers and revealed the books. “The creation and the command belong to Him [alone]. Blessed is Allah - Lord of all worlds!” [7:54]

1. Ibid.

2. Abd al-Rahman al-Sa’di, *Tariq al-Wusul*, Dar Al-Basira, Alexandria, 2000, p. 11; Fawz bint Abdul Latif Al-Kurdi, *Tahqiq al-Ubudiyyah*, Dar Taiba for Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Edition 11, 1421 AH, p. 103.

3. *Tahqiq al-Ubudiyyah*, p. 104.

Allah alone is worthy of worship. None besides Him should be worshipped, supplicated to, or sought for help, and no vow or slaughter should be made except in His Name. Allah Almighty says, “Say, “Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah - Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. So I am commanded, and so I am the first to submit.” [6:162-163]

Similarly, one of the greatest things one needs is to know the names and attributes of Allah, so that he can thank Him, glorify Him, praise Him, seek forgiveness and mercy from Him, and repent to Him. This is what we shall discuss in the appropriate place during the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

When a person truly believes in *tawhid*, he will not look at anything other than Allah. His fear, hope, trust, reliance will only be in Him. True belief in *tawhid* makes him see that everything is only facilitated by Allah, it frees him from the humiliation of slavery to the creation. Many verses of the Qur’an and prophetic teachings call humanity to *tawhid*, so that they can be freed from this slavery.¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*), just as all the messengers, brought *tawhid* to people. When *tawhid* is understood properly and it becomes a symbol for humanity, it would solve a lot of the corruption and violence that we see in our society. Humanity’s fear of death, for instance, leads them to accepting enslavement to the powerful and humiliation in the face of tyrants.

1. Abd al-Halim Mahmoud, p. 68.

However, this reality is inconsistent with the *aqidah* (**creed**) of *tawhid* because *Malik al-Mulk* (**the Owner of the Kingdom**) alone is in control of life and death. He is in control of taking the lives of tyrants or keeping them alive for a wisdom He knows. He has decided the lifespan of all things, so when their time us up, they will not be delayed a single moment. Therefore, being too cautious about life – or cowardice – is not going to lead to a longer life, just as bravery is not a direct cause of a shorter life. This is something Allah has clarified in His Book; a book that represents all the previous messages. And just as every person has a specified lifespan, every nation does too.

When some people said, “If we had any say in the matter, none of us would have been killed here.” [3:154] Allah responded to them by saying, “Say, [O Prophet], “Even if you were to remain in your homes, those among you who were destined to be killed would have met the same fate.” [3:154]

Another verse describes what some people also said: “Those who sat at home, saying about their brothers, “Had they listened to us, they would not have been killed” [3:168] Allah told His messenger to respond to them by saying, “Say, “Then avert death from yourselves if what you say is true.” [3:168]

While those who run away when they face the enemy in battle have been described in the Qur’an as being, “made to slip up by Satan due to their misdeeds” [3:155]

The Muslim then should not know anything called

cowardice, nor can he let Satan deceive him by causing him to fear anyone besides Allah.

If the first pillar of humiliation and enslavement is fear of death, then the second pillar is worrying about rizq (**provision**). People generally stress a lot about their provision. Some people use inappropriate means to attain it, and some may even go to the extent of hypocrisy, deception, cheating, or stealing. Wealth can thus be a cause of enslavement for human beings. But Islam, just as it has freed humans from the fear of death, has freed them from excessively worrying about their provision, since provision is in the hand of Allah. “There is no moving creature on earth whose provision is not guaranteed by Allah. And He knows where it lives and where it is laid to rest.” [11:6]

Allah has informed us that provision is decreed and divided, swearing that this is the ultimate truth, because He knows the weakness of humans and their great concern for wealth and provision. “In heaven is your sustenance and whatever you are promised. Then by the Lord of heaven and earth! [All] this is certainly as true as [the fact that] you can speak!” [51:22-23]

While the one who is rich may spend his wealth without considering the One who gave him his wealth. This can lead to his destruction, as Allah destroyed Qarun (**Korah**), or to cause something to destroy his crops and lands, as Allah did with the people of the garden who He told us of in the Qur’an in Surah al-Qalam.

Sure, there is no doubt that being proactive about seeking provision and serious work is necessary in Islam.

So, wealth is in Allah's hand, but working hard to attain it is also necessary. What is problematic however is this mentality of attaining wealth through unlawful means or to think that a human being has control over wealth. *Tawhid* is thus a cure for cowardice and for being too stressed over provision.¹

Nuh proceeded to call to *tawhid* day and night tirelessly and with unwavering strength. When appropriate he would call them publicly, otherwise he would call them privately, but he would not allow any opportunity pass to explain Allah's message, bringing them good news of Allah's reward and Paradise, and warning them of Allah's punishment.

Nuh would explain Allah's power and vast knowledge, calling them to ponder themselves, "when He created you in stages [of development]" [71:14]

Do you not see that He has created you in the wombs of your mothers [in stages], one development after another? You were first only dust, then became a sperm-drop, then developed you into a clinging clot of blood, then a lump of flesh, and then a foetus. In all these stages you were under Allah's care and protection. You then became children and then youth. Similarly, you will end up returning to Him at any moment He wills, so return to Him with repentance and obedience before you face Him while He is displeased with you. "Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp?" [71:15-16]

1. Ibid, p. 71.

Do you not see how And Allah has spread out the earth for you and created paths to reside and benefit, while in all that we see not conflict in Allah's creation. Nuh continued to recount Allah's blessings, great and small, apparent and hidden, and Allah's favours are countless. "If you tried to count Allah's blessings, you would never be able to number them" [16:18]

Prophet Nuh was also the first to announce the rule of *istighfar* (*seeking forgiveness*), saying to them, "Seek your Lord's forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving" [71:10]

This is the premise. If they then seek sincere forgiveness and honestly turn to Allah they result will be, "He will shower you with abundant rain" [71:11] He will send down rains that give life to your lands and fill your rivers with blessing. He will also, "supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers" [71:12] The Qur'an thus mentions children, wealth, rivers, and gardens, all as being the result of *istighfar* (*seeking forgiveness*).

This rule is general. It is not specific to any time or place. Therefore, if anyone in our time turned to Allah with sincere *istighfar*, Allah will ensure that he lives with comfortable provision and wealth. This is Allah's promise that He told Nuh to convey to the people, and Allah's promise is never impeded.

Then our prophet (*peace be upon him*) clarified another important element that relates to *istighfar*, and that is that Allah's punishment will not descend upon those who seek

forgiveness sincerely. “Nor would He ever punish them if they prayed for forgiveness” [8:33]

What further proves Nuh’s truthfulness is that he does not ask his people for any reward, nor does he expect it. “O my people! I do not ask you for a payment for this [message]. My reward is only from Allah” [11:29]

If one were to ask him why he is involved with this *da’wah*, his answer would be:

- To deliver my Lord’s message
- To advise you
- To guide you to what I know of Allah, and I know that which you do not about Him.

Is it of any surprise that a reminder of guidance and light comes to you from your Lord at the hands of a man from amongst yourselves, so that he can warn you, so that you may fear Allah, and so that Allah may have mercy on you?

Warnings lead good hearts to *taqwa* (***an awareness of Allah***) and *taqwa* is a cause of Allah’s mercy. Is it then a surprise that Allah, the Most Merciful, sends someone to guide you with his call towards Allah’s mercy? This was the reasoning that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) used and this resulted in some people accepting what he says.¹

Nuh’s call to tawhid was the cornerstone in developing a comprehensive outlook about Allah, the universe, life, humans, and an understanding of the nature and relationship between the creator and creation.

1. Ibid.

Tawhid is the essence of faith (*eman*) and the secret to contentment in this life and the next. The hearts are in need of knowing Him, being attached to Him, fearing Him, and having hope in Him, more than they need food, drink, and other needs.¹ Many Qur’anic verses have come to establish this principle, including Allah’s statements:

“So you may know that Allah is Most Capable of everything and that Allah certainly encompasses all things in [His] knowledge” [65:12]

“All this so you may know that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and that He has [perfect] knowledge of everything. Know that Allah is severe in punishment and that He is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” [5:97-98]

2. Nuh perfects servitude to Allah and calls his people to do the same

The one who contemplates the story of Nuh and his *da’wah* to Allah sees the greatness of this prophet who continued to call them to worshipping Allah alone night and day for 950 years. His call to his people was one of pure *tawhid*, perfecting servitude to Allah, and abandoning the idolatry that they were involved in.²

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1. Walid Khalid Al-Rabee, *The Impact of the Noble Qur’an on Building the Islamic Personality*, Riyadh; Maktabah Imam Al-Dhahabi, Kuwait, 2018, p. 61.
 2. Farid Ismail Al-Tuni, ‘*Ubiyyat al-Ka’inat li Rabb al-Alamin*, Al-Diaa Library, Jeddah, 1st Ed., 1413 AH, p. 168.

Let us consider the following verse. Allah Almighty says, “Surely, We sent Nuh to his people. [He said,] “Indeed, I am sent to you with a clear warning that you should worship none but Allah. I truly fear for you the torment of a painful Day.” [11:25-26]

“We sent Nuh to his people.” We sent the message to Nuh for him to deliver it to the people that he lived amongst; they know him and he knows them. A people that were still in the beginning stage of humanity and the development of communities and nations.

“I am sent to you with a clear warning.” This verse shows the essence of his message. In other words, he says, I am specifically sent to you and you know who I am. I am sent with a warning of the evil end of your actions. I am sent with clear words that are not ambiguous or confusing. This warning is clear and simple about the fact that disbelief and idolatry lead to evil consequences in this life and the next, and that oppression leads to nothing but disasters.¹

In Allah’s statement, “to you”, we learn a beautiful lesson. The caller to Allah and preacher (*da’iyah*) does not live for himself and his own desires, nor is he restricted to his friends and family. But his concern should be to bring happiness to people. He should give his life for the sake of saving people from misguidance, disbelief, and the restrictedness of this worldly life.

1. Ahmad Nawfal, Tafsir Surat Hud, p. 109.

The one who only lives for himself and to fulfil his own pleasures will live small and die small. Whereas the one who lives for the sake of other shall live great and die great, and his name will continue to be mentioned positively by people. This is what we see from Nuh and all the prophets and messengers after him (*peace be upon them*).¹

In these noble verses, Nuh's exceptional character can be seen clearly in the way he deals with this matter.

Introduction: Nuh introduces the topic that he wishes to speak of in a strong way, so that he can create some sort of fear and concern in the hearts of the listeners which prepares them for taking things seriously, saying to them, "I am a clear warner to you." Powerful introductions are often effective in bringing people's attention to a certain topic.

The core of the topic: Effective speech requires that important topics be explained in a clear and simple way, far from ambiguity and obscurity, so that those being addressed, despite their different levels, can all understand. In this way, Nuh chose the clearest of words, so that people are not distracted by anything besides the key topic, leaving them no scope for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. He summarised his message by saying, "do not worship any besides Allah."² This statement is the essence and core of faith: *tawhid* and worshipping Allah alone. A human is a worshipper by nature and has no choice but to worship. He will then either worship the one true God, or worship Satan,

1. Abu Faris, *With the Prophets*, p. 30.

2. Auda Abdullah Auda, *Adab al-Kalam*, p. 308.

desires, idols, wealth, pleasures, or other ‘gods’ that that people worship.

The role of the prophets is thus to bring people back to the worship of the Lord of mankind alone. How beautiful is that statement of the noble companion, Rib’i ibn Amir, to Rustum, the leader of the Persians: “Allah sent us to take people out of the worship of creation to the worship of the Lord of creation.”

Notice how Nuh did not say, “worship Allah.” Instead, he used a statement that is restricted, “do not worship any besides Allah.” Many people believe in Allah and worship Him, but they associate partners with Him at the same time, as Allah tells us in many verses of the Qur’an, including the chapter that follows this one, “And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others with Him [in worship]” [12:106]

Ibadah (**worship**) is a broad concept that organises all matters of life. Every area of life is an area for worship and every action, if done sincerely for Allah, is considered worship. Customary actions become acts of worship when noble intentions are involved, just as acts of worship can end up being merely customary acts, when there is a lack of intention.¹

a. **The trait of *ubudīyah* (servitude)**

The essence of Nuh’s call is to call people to worshipping Allah alone. Nuh is praised by Allah in the Qur’an and is

1. Tafsir Surat Hud, p. 112.

described by Allah with the trait of *ubudiyah* (*servitude*), because he was able to perfect this trait to the highest level. Allah described him as being a “grateful servant. “[O] descendants of those We carried with Nuh [in the Ark]! He was indeed a grateful servant” [17:3]

The mention of gratitude after mentioning *servitude* is an example of mentioning something specific after something general. Since, gratitude is one of the manifestations of true *servitude* to Allah and is an example of worship. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) stood out with this quality of gratitude, as he was constantly grateful in all situations. Allah then made this quality a reason for him and his people to be saved. Gratitude is thus one of the greatest causes of goodness and one of the greatest acts of obedience to Allah. His offspring were therefore encouraged to do the same and to beware of the highest levels of disbelief; *shirk*.¹

This trait of *servitude* describing Nuh (*peace be upon him*) came in the context of concern for him when his people were stubborn and rejected his call. Allah Almighty said, “Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated” [54:9]

His being referred back to the Majestic plural “Our servant” is used to honour the status of Nuh (*peace be upon him*). In this way, he has been honoured in two ways:

1. Firstly, by being described with the trait of *servitude*

1. Abu al-Sa’ud, *Irshad al-Aql al-Salim*, p. 163.

2. Secondly, by being referred to the majestic plural

This trait that he has been described with is a general unrestricted one, as mentioned in the previous verses, as Allah says, “Indeed, this is how We reward the good-doers. He was truly one of Our faithful servants,” (37:80-81). Allah describes him with the trait of *ihsan* (*excellence*), which is the highest levels of servitude, and means, as defined by the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), that one worships their Lord as though they see Him. If not, then they know that Allah sees them. There is no doubt that Nuh is from the people of *ihsan* with his sincere servitude and complete faith.

Allah also mentions Nuh with this trait of *ubudiyah* along with Lut (*peace be upon him*). “Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them” [66:10]. In this verse Allah also describes him with righteousness (*salah*).¹

The Prophetic Sunnah then further affirms this great attribute of *ubudiyah* to Nuh. In the Hadith of intercession it is mentioned that people will go to Nuh and say, “O Nuh, you are the first messenger to the people of earth, and Allah named you a thankful slave. Don’t you see the state we are and to what condition we have reached? Will you not intercede for us with your Lord? Nuh will reply: “Today my Lord has become so angry as he had never been before and will never be in the future. Myself! Myself! Go to the Prophet Muhammad.” The people will come to me, and I

1. Al-Tuni, p. 164.

will prostrate myself underneath Allah's Throne. Then I will be addressed: "O Muhammad! Raise your head; intercede, for your intercession will be accepted, and ask, for you will be given."¹

b. Fulfilment of Ubudiyah

Nuh called people to the servitude of Allah and he fulfilled it in his own self with perfection. He was sincere to Allah and did not direct any worship to other than Allah. His internal and external actions and speech was purely for Allah.

Speech

- Nuh was constantly thankful to Allah in all situations, so much that he was specifically named as being a "grateful servant."

Nuh never called upon or supplicated to anyone besides Allah. the verses in this regard are many. Allah says, "So he cried out to his Lord, "I am helpless, so help [me]!" [54:10]. He also says, "Nuh prayed, "My Lord! My people have truly rejected me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me" [26:117-118]. These, and other verses, show that Nuh would only call upon Allah alone.²

Nuh would seek refuge in Allah and was keen on seeking Allah's forgiveness and mercy. Allah Almighty says about him, "Nuh pleaded, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from

1. Fath al-Bari, Hadith No. 3162.

2. Al-Tuni, p. 165.

asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers” [11:47]. This is an admission from a humble servant who is seeking his Lord’s mercy and forgiveness, despite his high status as a prophet. The more a person humbles themselves before Allah, the more they rise in level and status.¹ The more the heart loves Allah, the more it shows servitude to Him, and the more servitude, the more that leads to a greater love of Allah and greater freedom from anything else.²

He mentioned Allah’s names when he and those with him first boarded the Ark. Allah Almighty said, “And he said, “Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [11:41]

Actions of the Heart

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) relied upon Allah with true reliance (*tawakkul*). The Qur’an quotes him saying, “then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay!” [10:71]

Allah then speaks of Nuh’s strong faith in Allah’s decree: “My advice will not benefit you - no matter how hard I try - if Allah wills [for] you to stray. He is your Lord, and to Him you will [all] be returned” [11:34]

1. Ibid.

2. Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Ubudiyyah*, p. 53.

He was also a firm believer in Allah's promise, saying, "Your promise is surely true, and You are the most just of all judges!" [11:45]

He was a firm believer that provision will come from Allah: "I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds." [26:109]

He had certainty in resurrection and accountability. Allah Almighty said: "And I will never dismiss the believers, for they will surely meet their Lord" [11:29], and He said, "Their judgment is with my Lord, if you had any sense!" [26:113]

Nuh was also a true believer in Allah's names and attributes. He uses, for example, the names Al-Ghafur and Al-Rahim. Allah says, "He is truly Most Forgiving" [71:10], and He says, "Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [11:41]

As for the attributes of Allah, then some examples include:

The attribute of iradah (***Divine will***), as Allah says, "My advice will not benefit you - no matter how hard I try - if Allah wills [for] you to stray." [11:34]

The attribute of 'ilm (***knowledge***). Allah Almighty says, "Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them." [11:31]

The attribute of khalq (***creation***). Allah Almighty says, "What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]? Do you not see how Allah created seven

heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp?” [71: 13-16]

Also from the internal actions of the heart is loving and hating for Allah’s sake, and this is one of the strongest elements of faith. We see Nuh, for example, disassociating himself from his wife and son, the two people who are closest to him. When he became aware that they were oppressors, he abandoned them. His wife would give away his secrets to his enemies, so she was deserving of being punished along with them. As Allah told us, “Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!” [66:10]

As for his son, who did not listen to his father’s advice to not be with the disbelievers. Nuh called out to him, “O my dear son! Come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers” [11:42]. Despite him being warned of drowning in the flood, he instead replied, “I will take refuge on a mountain, which will protect me from the water.” [11:43]¹

External Actions

One of the most obvious external actions that Nuh fulfilled was to obey his Lord’s command to build the

1. Al-Tuni, p. 167.

Ark. “And it was revealed to Nuh, ‘None of your people will believe except those who already have. So do not be distressed by what they have been doing. And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions, and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.’” [11:36-37]

He went ahead, him and his followers, building the ship, while his people would make fun of him. Allah Almighty says, “So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, ‘If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].’” [11:38-39]

As such, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) perfected the servitude of the heart, limbs, and tongue, and also taught this to his followers who believed in him, calling them to this with insight and knowledge from Allah.

3. Those who perfected *ubudiyah* (*servitude*)

People continue to rise in the ranks of servitude to Allah the more they are sincere in that regard and work towards achieving it. The people of excellence have been granted by Allah the highest levels of servitude, due to their effort in knowing Allah more and working towards pleasing Him, applying Allah’s statement, “As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way,” [29:69], and His statement, “As for those who are [rightly] guided, He increases them in guidance and blesses them

with righteousness,” [47:17]. This then increases them in their love for Allah and awe of His greatness.¹

The most complete of servants, the strongest, most guided, and closest to Allah, are those who have perfected their servitude to Allah. They are the true servants and pious *awliya* (**friends**) of Allah. The prophets and messengers of Allah are at the forefront of in this regard, none are able to reach their level of *ubudiyah*.²

The prophets and messengers knew Allah truly through revelation and sound intellect. They thus worshipped Him with excellence. Since Allah has given them the blessing of knowing Him, they exert the most effort to worship Him. Despite their high status, they are thankful and admit their shortcoming in fulfilling Allah’s right.

Allah has described them with *ubudiyah* in the context of praising them.³ He said about Nuh (*peace be upon him*), “he was a grateful servant,” and about Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), “if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to our servant,” [2:23], and he said about other messengers, “And remember Our servants: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - the men of strength and insight.” [38:45]

Though these prophets (***peace be upon them***) have the highest stations of *ubudiyah*, they vary in levels amongst themselves. Allah Almighty says, “We have chosen some

1. Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, 10/210.

2. Ibn Uthaymin, *Al-Qawl al-Mufid ‘ala Kitab al-Tawhid*, 1/36.

3. *Fath al-Bari*, 11/221.

of those messengers above others” [2:253] and He says, “We have chosen some prophets over others” [17:55]. The highest of them are Ulu al-Azm, then come the rest of the messengers and prophets.¹

From Ulu al-Azm, the most complete is our prophet Muhammad who was described by Allah with *ubudiyah* in many verses of the Qur’an. “Blessed is the One Who sent down the Standard to His servant, so that he may be a warner to the whole world” [25:1]. “Glory be to the One Who took His servant [Muhammad] by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed.” [17:1]

The Messenger (*peace be upon him*) would prohibit the Muslims from excessively praising him and he preferred that they refer to him as servant of Allah, saying, “I am only a servant of Allah, so call me the servant of Allah and His messenger.”²

Prophet Muhammad was the most knowledgeable of Allah. he would worship Him through His names and attributes, as we see clearly manifested in his (*sirah*) life. He would humble himself to Allah, show his need for Him, and consistently seek His forgiveness. He said, “By Allah, I seek forgiveness (*istighfar*) and repent (*tawbah*) to Allah more than seventy times per day.”³

1. Al-Kurdi, p. 85.

2. Bukhari, No. 3445.

3. Bukhari, No. 6307

He would always make *du'a* (*supplicate*) and insist on asking His Lord, the Most Kind and Generous. So much that Abu Bakr felt bad for him on the day of Badr from how much he was praying and crying, so he took him by the hand and said, “this is enough for you O messenger of Allah.”

He would also regularly worship and pray during the night. At times, he would stand in prayer for so long that his feet would swell up a little, but he would reply, “should I not be a thankful servant?”¹

He would also fast regularly, constantly praising and thanking his Lord as He deserves, humble in his interaction, and generous in his manners. Upon entering Mecca in the year of *Fath Mecca*, he was described as keeping his head low down on his ride out of humility. His whole life is a proof of this perfect *ubudiyah*. How can this not be when he is the most knowledgeable person of Allah?²

4. Nuh calls his people to have *taqwa* of Allah

Nuh took great care in calling his people to tawhid, singling Him out in worship, and upholding *taqwa* (*consciousness, awareness, and fear*) of Him. That is because *taqwa* is what keeps people upon the right path, protecting them from straying or weakening. Just as *taqwa* is the root of noble manners in which one is sincere to Allah, not looking for praise or anything else

1. Bukhari, No. 1130; Muslim, No. 2819.

2. Al-Kurdi, p. 18.

from people.¹ Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He declared, “O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him. Will you not then fear [Him]?” [23:23]

This verse has summarised the three main elements of his *da'wah* (**call**) as follows:

- “Worship Allah.”
- “You have no god other than Him.”
- “Will you not then fear Him (**have taqwa**)?”

In other words, he is saying if you do not believe in Allah and worship Him alone without any partners, you can expect a punishment to befall you. The wise person should fear this, so I am calling you to fear Allah and His punishment that will befall in this life and the next. All this is understood from his statement, “Will you not then fear Him (**have taqwa**)?” The question here contains the meaning of astonishment, surprise, and rejection, while also intending to encourage them to have *taqwa*, fearing and being aware of Allah.

We notice that these three statements summarise the foundations of Islam:

- Belief in the oneness of Allah.
- Obedience and worship of Allah alone in all that He commands and prohibits, and to come closer to Him through those things that He loves.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3711.

- Being wary of His punishment in this life and the next, while seeking out whatever protects from it. This also necessitates that the one who has believed and submitted will seek His reward and work towards attaining it.¹

Allah Almighty said in Surah al-Shu'ara:

“The people of Nuh rejected the messengers. When their brother Nuh said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]? I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you. So fear Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds. So fear Allah, and obey me.” [26:105-110]

After Nuh presented Allah’s call of truth to them, from tawhid to the worship of Allah alone, he then said to them, “will you not fear Allah?” We are able to extract this from the various verses in the Qur’an. Nuh showed them that he was a messenger sent to them by Allah, entrusted with delivering His message without adding or subtracting anything from it. This is shown in the verses, “I am truly a trustworthy (*amin*) messenger to you.” In other words, that he has specifically been sent to them by Allah to deliver the message in the most complete way. Being a messenger from Allah to them therefore implies that they are obliged to obey him.

“So fear Allah and obey me.” Fear Allah’s punishment

1. Abd al-Rahman Hassan Habannakah al-Maidani, Nuh and his people in the Glorious Qur’an, Dar al-Qalam, Damascus and al-Dar al-Shamiya, Beirut, 2006, p. 64.

and obey me in that which I am calling you to, because not doing so will lead to His punishment. I am a messenger delivering Allah's message, so it is not my cause that I am calling to, but Allah's.

When people are invited to certain values, action, or group, one of the first things that often crosses their minds is that the person inviting will probably come away with some personal gain if they listen to him. It was therefore wise of Nuh to announce clearly that he is not gaining any personal worldly benefit from inviting them to Allah, his Lord and theirs. It is known that the least of gains is to request some payment for what he is providing them in terms of advice, guidance, being keen on bringing them what benefits them, teaching and training their children to have faith, keep up noble manners, and worship Allah according to Allah's guidance. Thus, if he makes it clear that he is in no need of the least of gains (*payment*), then even more so those gains that are much greater and more difficult for them to accept.¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) made it clear that he does not seek anything from them, no matter how little, in return for what he is inviting them to. "I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]." However, this does not mean that he is not seeking any reward at all for this. That would be an unrealistic state for humans that he does not claim. He is seeking a reward from Allah the Lord of the world who has promised a great reward for those who call to Him. Nuh says, "My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds." In

1. Ibid, p. 65.

other words, my reward is reserved by Allah alone. He is the only one who I can guarantee will grant me my reward. Since, my reward is with Allah and I am not seeking anything from you, I am objectively reminding you of what I have said to you before, “fear Allah and obey me.”

Taqwa entails keeping a *wiqayah* (**protection or barrier**) from Allah’s punishment by doing good and avoiding sin. It is also worth noting that *taqwa* being mentioned alongside obedience in so many verses implies that the true *taqwa* that we have been commanded with can only exist with obeying the messenger and following him.¹

The Levels of Taqwa

The one who ponders the Book of Allah Almighty finds that *taqwa* is from the things that the Qur’an has given so much attention, encouraging people to give it importance. *Taqwa* comes in levels.

- Avoiding shirk
- Abstaining from major sins
- Keeping far away from minor sins

By achieving this third level, one has perfected *taqwa*. This is proven by what is reported from the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) that he said: “One will not attain the level of the *muttaqin* (**people of complete taqwa**) until he leaves that which is not sinful (**but perhaps doubtful**), for fear of

1. Qissat Nuh, p. 38.

falling into that which is sinful.”¹

Taqwa is thus the highest level that the believer should seek to rise to, no matter how hard he must work to attain it.

The Definitions of Taqwa

Various definitions have been given for *taqwa*, but I will mention some definitions as a guide:

- Some said that *taqwa* is to obey Allah without disobeying Him, remember Him without forgetting Him, and thank Him without being ungrateful.

- Others said that *taqwa* means to abstain from insisting on sins and to abstain from being proud by doing good. The person of *taqwa* then does not insist on sinning, even if it is a minor sin, nor does he become proud and deluded when doing good, even if it is a great action.

- Some said that *taqwa* means to choose nothing else over Allah and to know that all matters are in the hands of Allah.

- While some others said that *taqwa* means that Allah does not see you involved in that which He has prohibited for you.

These definitions revolve around three main things:

- **Firstly:** To keep away from sins, both major and minor, since insistence upon minor sins can lead to major sins.

1. Tirmidhi, No. 2451.

- **Secondly:** To be aware of anything that you say or do, just like the one who walks on a path full of thorns is cautious about every step that he takes. This analogy was drawn by some of the companions (***may Allah be pleased with them***). It is said that Umar ibn al-Khattab asked Ubay ibn Ka'b about taqwa, so he replied: "Have you not treaded a path that is full of thorns?" He said, "I have." So he asked: "What did you do then?" He said: "I gathered myself and took great care." He replied: "That is what taqwa is."

- **Thirdly:** To not belittle any minor sin. it is reported that the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) passed by a date that was lying around, so he said: "I would have eaten it if I did not fear that it may be a sadaqah (***charity***)."¹ It is also reported that some of them said: "Whoever wishes to be the most noble of people should have taqwa in Allah, whoever wishes to be the strongest of people should rely upon Allah, and whoever wishes to be the richest should have more trust in that which is in the hands of Allah than that which is in his own hand."²

The difference between *'ibadah* and *taqwa*

The aforementioned shows us the importance and seriousness of *taqwa*. We can also understand that to attain *taqwa*, five things are required: *eman* (***faith***), obedience, avoiding sins, *tawbah* (***repentance***), and *ikhlas* (***sincerity***). If one of these five is missing, then *taqwa* is incomplete.

1. Bukhari, No. 950.

2. Fadl Hassan Abbas, *Khumasiyat Mukhtarah*, Dar Al-Nafais for Publishing, Amman, Jordan, 1st edition 2011, p. 28.

From this we see that *taqwa* is not ‘*ibadah* (**worship**), unlike what many people think. A person can worship a lot, but his worship does not raise him to the level of *taqwa*. In the Qur’an and Sunnah there are many proofs for this. Allah Almighty says:

And [remember] when Abraham said to his people, “Worship Allah, and fear Him.” [29:16]

Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people [saying to him], “Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them.” Nuh proclaimed, “O my people! I am truly sent to you with a clear warning: worship Allah [alone], fear Him, and obey me.” [71:1-3]

O humanity! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those before you, so that you may become mindful [of Him]. [2:21]

Look then, may Allah grant you guidance, how these noble verses have distinguished between ‘*ibadah* and *taqwa*. Nuh and Ibrahim both commanded their people with both ‘*ibadah* and *taqwa*. In the third verse Allah commands people to worship the One who created them and those before them, so that their ‘*ibadah* can allow them to reach the level of *taqwa*.¹

In the purified Sunnah, the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) says,

Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales. Do not look for the faults of others. Do not spy on

1. Ibid, p. 29.

one another, and do not practise najsh (this means to be deceptive in trade, such as to offer a high price for something in order to allure another customer who is interested in the thing). Do not be jealous of one another and do not nurse enmity against one another. Do not sever ties with one another. Be, O slaves of Allah, brothers to one another. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He should neither oppress him nor humiliate him. It is enough evil for a Muslim to look down upon his Muslim brother. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in Faith: his blood, his wealth and his honour. Verily, Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces but He looks to your hearts and your deeds. Piety is here! Piety is here! While saying so he pointed towards his chest.¹

From this honourable Hadith we understand that *taqwa* requires us to keep away from all the actions mentioned in the Hadith. Secondly, we understand that *taqwa* is a secret between a person and His Lord, which is why the Prophet pointed to his chest. This is further supported by the Qur'an in Allah's statement, "So do not claim purity for yourselves. He knows best who is truly righteous."

One of the most comprehensive verses that showed the reality of *taqwa* and showed that one cannot truly reap the fruits of *taqwa* until he upholds virtuous conduct and acts of worship, is the following verse:

Righteousness is not in turning your faces towards the east or the west. Rather, the righteous are those who

1. Muslim, No. 2564.

believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books, and the prophets; who give charity out of their cherished wealth to relatives, orphans, the poor, [needy] travellers, beggars, and for freeing captives; who establish prayer, pay alms-tax (*zakat*), and keep the pledges they make; and who are patient in times of suffering, adversity, and in [the heat of] battle. It is they who are true [in faith], and it is they who are *muttaqun* (*mindful of Allah*). [2:177]

Look at the noble traits and praiseworthy characteristics that the verses speaks of, and how it mentions the three foundations of the Shari'ah (*Islam*): *aqidah* (*creed*), *'ibadah* (*worship*), and *akhlak* (*conduct*). It then detailed fifteen qualities and made *taqwa* the result of it as we see at the end of the verse, "It is they who are true [in faith], and it is they who are *muttaqun* (*mindful of Allah*)."

We now can understand the secret, the wisdom for which Allah mentioned *taqwa* at the beginning of His Book, "Alif-Lam-Mim. This is the Book! There is no doubt about it - a guide for the *muttaqin* (*those mindful of Allah*)." [2:1-2]

O Allah, make use from the *muttaqin* who you described saying, "That is Paradise, which We will grant to whoever is *taqi* (*devout*) among Our servants." [19:63]

The Book of Allah explains the traits of the *muttaqin*

This verse (*the second verse of the second chapter*) deserves our attention. It mentions the traits that every Muslim should aim to have, especially since it is the first verse in the Qur'an that explains the traits of the people of *taqwa*, which shows that it has a special significance. Its

importance also stems from its description of the people who truly benefit from the Qur'an and are guided by it, reciting and pondering it.¹

Allah Almighty says:

Alif-Lam-Mim. This is the Book! There is no doubt about it - a guide for the muttaqin (***those mindful of Allah***), who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and donate from what We have provided for them. Those who believe in what has been revealed to you [O Prophet] and what was revealed before you, and have sure faith in the Hereafter. It is they who are [truly] guided by their Lord, and it is they who will be successful. [2: 1-5]

- **The First Trait: “Those who believe in the unseen”**

The first thing that the muttaqin were praised for is their firm belief in the metaphysical unseen (***ghayb***) that Allah has told them about. Their belief in the *ghayb* is just as strong as that which they experience with their senses, perhaps even stronger. This is true whether this belief in the *ghayb* can be proven rationally, such as belief in Allah and His attributes, or it cannot be proven rationally, such as belief in Allah's *qadar* (***decree***). Whether this *ghayb* could be seen by some people, such as the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) who was seen by the companions who were honoured to see and speak to him directly, while those who came after them did not see him physically. Whether it is this type or otherwise, it is still considered a praiseworthy

1. Khumasiyat Mukhtarah, p. 25.

belief in the ghayb. Part of belief in the ghayb is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the final day, and qadar (*decree*), its good and bad, as reported in the authentic Hadith.¹ Allah Almighty says, “Indeed, those in awe of their Lord without seeing Him will have forgiveness and a mighty reward.” [67:12]

- **The Second Trait: “establish prayer”**

Establishing the prayer is the first pillar of the physical acts that the people of *taqwa* are tested with. To establish (*iqamah*) the prayer means to perform it in its complete form, including its pillars and etiquettes, and to properly perform it consistently. It also means to keep focus during the prayer and to approach it with keenness and seriousness without being lazy.

This prayer gives one strength upon the truth, firmness upon goodness, and greater *yaqin* (*certainty*). It removes agitation, anxiety, and distress, making one stable in their thinking, respected, upright in their path, not shaken by events, not becoming arrogant when blessed, nor weak during times of hardship.

This prayer is what causes a person to be successful. If the only thing it led to was to be entered into Firdaus (*the highest levels in Paradise*), that would be enough of a victory and benefit. The proof for this in the Qur’an is Our Lord’s statement, “Indeed, humankind was created impatient: distressed when touched with evil, and withholding when

1. Bukhari, No. 869.

touched with good - except those who pray, consistently performing their prayers.” [70: 19-23]

He then says at the end of these verses, “... and who are properly observant of their prayers. These will be in Gardens, held in honour.” [70: 34-35]

In Surah al-Mu’minun, Allah Almighty says, “Successful indeed are the believers: those who humble themselves in prayer” [23: 1-2]. After mentioning the traits of the believers in these verses, He then says, “... and those who are properly observant of their prayers. These are the ones who will be awarded Paradise as their own. They will be there forever.” [23: 9-11]

So look – may Allah grant you guidance – at how significant the prayer is in the way it is mentioned in these two places in the Qur’an. In the first place, in Surah al-Ma’arij, Allah mentioned the prayer twice and clarified that it helps to rid us of the negative characteristics of impatience, distress, and greed. In the second chapter, Surah al-Mu’minun, Allah tells us the traits of those who are successful, and prayer was also mentioned in it twice.¹

• **The Third Trait: “donate from what We have provided for them”**

Allah the Most Wise does not burden people with more than they can bear, which is why the verse describes that these people of piety, “donate from what We have provided for them.” In other words, their donations are not more than

1. Fadh Hasan, p. 33.

a mere portion of what Allah has given them. The same is to be said for the obligatory zakat. It differs depending on the item of wealth. At times one portion out forty must be given, if the wealth is money, gold, or silver, as well as some cattle, like sheep. Other times, a tenth is to be given, like the case with crops that are grown through natural water sources (*such as rain*), and at times a twentieth of it is obligated. Allah has thus not commanded people to give all or most of their wealth, for had they been expected to do that, this would have burdened them and they would have refrained from doing so. Allah therefore did not require them to give all their wealth, nor did He burden them. This wisdom in which He has commanded them is in reality a blessing from Allah. “Say [to them, O Prophet], “Even if you were to possess the [infinite] treasuries of my Lord’s mercy, then you would certainly withhold [them], fearing they would run out”, for humankind is ever stingy!” [17:100]¹

- **The Fourth Trait: “Those who believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you”**

This attribute shows the unity of the message that Allah has sent all his prophets and messengers with, regardless of the difference in era. “Surely this religion of yours is [only] one, and I am your Lord, so fear Me [alone]” (23:52). The essence of the message of the prophets (*peace be upon them*) is establishing the oneness of Allah Most High. “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” [42:13]

The prophets are thus brothers, just as the believers are

1. Ibid, p. 35.

brothers. This attribute praises those believers from the people of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*), but also praises the believers who believe in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers, without distinguishing between any of the messengers in faith, saying, “we hear and obey, our Lord, we seek your forgiveness, and our return is to you.”

Belief in what was revealed to the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) and upon other prophets, necessitates belief in those prophets themselves. Belief in all the prophets is from the basic tenets of Islam. As for those who believe in some prophets and reject others, desiring to forge a compromise, the noble Qur’an says about them:

Surely those who deny Allah and His messengers and wish to make a distinction between Allah and His messengers, saying, “We believe in some and disbelieve in others,” desiring to forge a compromise, they are indeed the true disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. [4: 150-151]

• **The Fifth Trait: “have sure faith (*yaqin*) in the hereafter”**

Yaqin (certainty) is to have certain knowledge of something without any uncertainty or doubt. At times this could be simple and at times it requires research and contemplation. Your *yaqin* in something is incomplete until your intellect and own self participate in affirming it, such that it becomes from those things that control your feelings and thoughts, and you have no single doubt about. This attribute was mentioned after Allah mentioned belief

in the *ghayb*, even though belief in the hereafter is part of the *ghayb*. This is to emphasise the importance of belief in the hereafter in particular. True certainty leaves no room for negligence and heedlessness. We ask Allah to grant us *yaqin*, because the one who has certainty in the hereafter (*akhirah*) will certainly work for it.

After mentioning these traits, Allah mentions the reward of these people of taqwa. “They are upon guidance from their Lord and they are successful.” So firstly they are firmly upon guidance, and guidance is one of the greatest blessings Allah gives. “As for those who are [rightly] guided, He increases them in guidance and blesses them with righteousness” [47:17]. This is the first part of their reward. The second part is success. These people of taqwa have attained complete happiness in the means, the results, the beginning, and the end.¹ The Qur’an has clarified the value of taqwa and made it a goal worth aiming for. Many scholars² have also written about taqwa, showing its reality, consequences, and the traits of the people of taqwa that relate to both worship and manners, and all that which relates to this great divine value.

The tafsir of some verses from Surah Nuh

Surah Nuh specifically speaks of Nuh’s call to his people. In the first verses there is a clear indication that Allah has given Nuh the task of delivering the message, Nuh abiding,

1. Ibid, p. 37.

2. Among them: Ahmed Farid, Mahmoud Ahmed Saeed Al-Atrash, and Ahmed Khalil Jumu’ah and Haitham Hilal Hamza.

a clarification of its content, and the great widespread consequences of accepting it. Allah Almighty says,

Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people [saying to him], “Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them.” Nuh proclaimed, “O my people! I am truly sent to you with a clear warning: worship Allah [alone], fear Him, and obey me. He will forgive your sins, and delay your end until the appointed time. Indeed, when the time set by Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if only you knew! [71:1-4]

Nuh is given the task of delivering the message

Allah Almighty says, “Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people.” In this verse Allah confirms to all people that the original source of the message is – and always has been for all the prophets and messengers since the time of Nuh until Muhammad, the seal of prophets and messengers – Allah Almighty, the creator and originator of all things. He created the creation and sent messengers to them to guide them to the straight path. He gave all his messengers the responsibility of calling to the worship of Allah, to be mindful of Him, and to obey the messengers in all that they deliver from Allah.¹

A clear emphasis is shown throughout the chapter regarding Nuh’s call to his people. This is seen right from the beginning with the word “*inna*” (**Indeed, We**). The majestic ‘We’ is also used bearing in mind the state of the earliest people being addressed with this chapter, the disbelievers

1. Al-Raqb, p. 127.

who rejected the message of Muhammad (*peace be upon him*). For them, terms that imply majesty, honour, and authority are more appropriate. Similarly, the majestic plural ‘We’ is also appropriate when the topic seeks to be a reminder of Allah’s authority, His power, honour, and greatness.

This sentence, “Indeed, We have sent Nuh to his people”, clarifies the following:

- The message and the sender “We sent”
- The messenger “Nuh”
- The recipients of the message “his people”

What remains is to clarify the message itself, which was clarified in Allah’s statement, “Warn your people before a painful punishment comes to them.” *Indhar* (**warning**) means to warn of falling into something that is feared by taking the necessary precautions to be protected from it. “A painful punishment” for those who do not abide by the Divine command.¹

Nuh delivers the message

The Almighty said: “He said, “O my people, I am a clear warner to you” [71:2]. He clarifies his warning and clearly explains his argument. He does not mumble, does not hold back, does not stumble in his call, and he does not leave any confusion or ambiguity regarding the reality of what he is calling to and the reality that awaits those

1. Habannakah, p. 167.

who reject his call.¹ The warner is himself clear and open. He does not have an interior that contradicts his outward appearance. He clarifies the truths of the faith and its laws (*Shari'ah*), explaining truth and falsehood, good and evil, the permissible and forbidden, and other things that the faith has brought. This is what distinguishes God's messages to people, and what distinguishes all the messengers of God. This is in contrast with the values and doctrines made by people, that are mere displays to deceive the public, behind which hidden intents lie to serve those who seek benefit from them and those who are complicit in their formation and ornament of these deceptive values.²

As for what Nuh (*peace be upon him*) calls for, it is simple, clear, and straightforward: to “worship Allah, to fear Him, and to obey me.” The worship of God alone without a partner, *taqwa* (*awareness of Allah*) that directs their feelings and behaviours, and obedience to His Messenger that makes his command the source from which they derive their way of life and the principles of their behaviour.

The divine faith of all the prophets can be summarised in these broad teachings. Then each religion differs in its details and branches, in the extent of its perception, its magnitude, depth, breadth, comprehensiveness, and its treatment of the different aspects of existence, and of human existence in terms of detail.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3711.

2. Habannakah, p. 169.

The worship of Allah alone: a complete approach to life that includes man's perception of the reality of divinity, the reality of servitude, the reality of the relationship between creation and the Creator, and the reality of the powers and values in the universe and in the lives of people. From this a system for human life based on this perception emerges, and a special approach to life is established. A divine approach that is based on the reality of the connection between servitude and divinity, and to the values that Allah establishes for the living and for all things.

Taqwa of Allah: This is the real guarantee for people's steadfastness upon the path, without turning away from it this way or that way, and without cheating or bending in its application. It is also creation's source of virtue in which is concerned with Allah alone, without insincerity, pretension or self-righteousness.

Obedience to the Messenger: It is the means of steadfastness upon the path, receiving guidance from a source that connects it to the original source of creation and guidance, and maintaining contact with the heavens through a direct, sound, and guaranteed reception station (*i.e. the messengers*).¹

The word "worship" (*'ibadah*) was mentioned in the context of the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) four times. While the word "obedience" (*ta'ah*), appears in three places, two of them in Surat Al-Shu'ara, and the other in

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3711.

Surat Nuh. The word “*taqwa*” was mentioned five times, three of them in Surat Al-Shu’ara.¹

Surat Nuh (*upon him be peace*) is unique in combining worship, *taqwa*, and obedience: these three words were not found together except in Surat Nuh. Since it is the last of the noble chapters speaking about him in terms of the order of the Qur’an, it was appropriate for it to summarise his call into these three strongly connected words. In it there is a wonderful secret that is unique about this *surah*. Many think that worship and *taqwa* are one thing, but there is a major difference between them. How many worshippers are not elevated to the level of *taqwa* with their worship?²

We notice that the most mentioned of these terms in the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is “*taqwa*,” as it was mentioned five times. There is no surprise in that, as this is the commandment of Allah to all his servants: “Indeed, We have commanded those given the Scripture before you, as well as you, to be mindful of Allah.” [4:131]

Al-Fairuzabadi commented on this verse saying: “It is understood from it that if there was a trait in the world that is more beneficial for people, more encompassing in goodness, greater in reward and a terms of servitude, greater in virtue, more needed in the short and long term than this quality, then Allah Almighty would have commanded it and advised His chosen servants with it due to His perfect wisdom and mercy. Therefore, when He commanded this

1. Al-Raqb, p. 122.

2. Ibid, p. 183-184.

one trait specifically to all His servants, past and present, we knew that it is the ultimate goal that cannot be overlooked, nor be neglected, and that the Almighty has encompassed all pure advice, indication, guidance, Sunnah, discipline, teaching and purity in this one piece of advice. Allah Almighty's statement, "Allah only accepts [the offering] of the sincerely devout" [5:27], suggests that everything goes back to *taqwa*.¹

These are the broad outlines that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) called upon his people at the dawn of humanity. They summarise Allah's call (*da'wah*) in every generation after him.²

- "Worship God"
- "and fear him"
- "and obey me"

If you do so, "He will forgive your sins, and delay your end until the appointed time. Indeed, when the time set by Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if only you knew!"

The reward for responding to the call to worship Allah, to uphold *taqwa*, and obey His Messenger, is forgiveness, redemption of the sins that preceded, and delaying accountability to the time set for a person in the knowledge of Allah, which is the Last Day. Not to be punished in this worldly life with annihilation. It will be mentioned in the account that Nuh presented to his Lord that he promised them other things during this life.

1. Ibid, p. 123.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3712.

Then he explained to them that the set period is inevitable and that it comes at its set time, and it is not delayed the same way worldly torment can be delayed. That is to confirm this great reality of faith: “Indeed, when the time set by Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if only you knew!” The verse could also be a reference for every deadline set by Allah, so that this truth settles in their hearts in a general sense, when mentioning the promise to delay their accountability - if they obey and turn away - until the Day of Judgment.¹

The noble verses emphasised that Nuh was the Messenger of God and a warner to his people, who commanded them to worship God, be conscious of Him, and to obey him as a messenger sent by God.

These issues were repeated in the Noble Qur’an during the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and the content of his *da’wah*. The verses in Surat Nuh indicated that if his people revisit themselves and believe, and they worship Allah alone, fear him, and obey the Messenger, then they will be forgiven for their past sins, which they fell into due to their insistence on disbelief, immorality and disobedience.²

Islam is the religion of Nuh and all the messengers

The religion that Allah Almighty has legislated is Islam, while all other religions are not recognised nor true. This matter is beyond doubt or ambiguity, because all religions other than Islam are from the invention of humans, whether

1. Ibid, 6/3712.

2. Habannakah, p. 179.

paganism in its various forms, or after divine religions after being distorted, such as Judaism and Christianity.

As for the faith with which Allah Almighty sent all the Messengers (*may blessings and peace be upon them*), it is Islam: the worship of Allah alone¹ and rejecting the worship of anything else. Every one of the prophets and messengers says to his people: “Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him” [23:23]. They are agreed upon calling to pure monotheism and forbidding polytheism. The purpose for which they were sent is singling out worship of Allah Almighty, and forbidding all forms of transgression, including disbelief, immorality, and disobedience. All the divine religions call to this great purpose, as it is the task of all the messengers, from Nuh (*peace be upon him*) to our Messenger Muhammad (*peace be upon him*).²

Ibn Taymiyah says: “This is the religion of the first and the last among the prophets and their followers, the religion of Islam. It is the worship of God alone with no partner, and the worship of God Almighty in every time and place is through obeying His Messengers (*peace be upon them*). Thus, the one who worships Him in a way that is contrary to what his messengers brought, is not really worshipping Him. Such as those of whom he said about: “Or do they have associate-gods who have ordained for them some [polytheistic] beliefs, which Allah has not authorized?”

1. Abdul Aziz Al-Humaidi, *Al-Rasa'il al-Shumuliyyah*, Dar Al-Da'wah and Dar Uyun Al-Ma'rifa, 1st Ed., 2000 p. 471.

2. *Al-Nubuwwat*, 1/39.

[42:21]. One has not truly believed in Him then, except if he believes in all his messengers and obeys the messenger that is sent to him. Every messenger is to be obeyed until the next messenger is sent, in which case he is the one that must be obeyed.”¹

The messengers (*peace be upon them all*) are unanimous in calling to the root of the faith, which is submission to Allah Almighty through obedience and worship.

Allah Almighty says about Nuh: “And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah].” [10:72]

And He said about Ibrahim: “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he submitted in all uprightness and was not a polytheist.” [3:67]

And He Almighty said about Ibrahim and Ya’qub: “And who would reject the faith of Abraham except a fool! We certainly chose him in this life, and in the Hereafter, he will surely be among the righteous. When his Lord ordered him, “Submit [to My Will],” he responded, “I submit to the Lord of all worlds.” This was the advice of Abraham - as well as Jacob - to his children, [saying], “Indeed, Allah has chosen for you this faith; so do not die except in [a state of full] submission.” [2:130-132]

1. Ibn Taymiyah, *Al-Jawab al-Sahih li man Baddala Din al-Masih*, Dar Al-Assimah, Saudi Arabia, second edition, 1999, 1/ 83-84.

And He said about Yusuf: “You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Allow me to die as one who submits and join me with the righteous.” [12:101]

And He said about Musa: “Moses said, “O my people! If you do believe in Allah and submit [to His Will], then put your trust in Him.” [10:84]

Allah Almighty said about the prophets of Bani Israel: “Indeed, We revealed the Torah, containing guidance and light, by which the prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah, made judgments for Jews. So too did the rabbis and scholars judge according to Allah’s Book” [5:44]

And He said about the magicians of the Pharoah who believed in Musa: “Your rage towards us is only because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord! Shower us with perseverance, and let us die while submitting [to You].” [7:126]

They understood that the faith that Musa called to is Islam, which shows how clear this matter is.¹

Allah Almighty said about Sulaiman’s letter to Belqis: “Do not be arrogant with me, but come to me, fully submitting [to Allah].” [27:31]

And He said about the nation of Isa: “And how I inspired the disciples, “Believe in Me and My messenger!” They declared, “We believe and bear witness that we fully submit [to Allah].” [5:111]

1. Al-Rasa’il al-Shumuliyyah, p. 482.

And He said about Lut: “But We only found one family that had submitted [to Allah].” [51:36]

And He said about the People of the Book from the Jews and Christians: “[As for] those [faithful] to whom We had given the Scripture before this [Quran], they do believe in it. When it is recited to them, they declare, “We believe in it. This is definitely the truth from our Lord. We had already submitted [even] before this.” [28:52-53]

Meaning that those who truly believed amongst them say, we were Muslims (*submitters*) before the Qur’an was revealed. They did not say that they were Jews or Christians.¹

The union of faith (*dīn*) and the plurality of laws (*shara’i*)

Allah Almighty said, “He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding:] “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” [42:13]

Allah, glorified and exalted, mentioned that He has prescribed for this nation the faith that He has legislated for the previous nations, as Allah Almighty commanded the Prophets (*peace be upon them*) to establish a single faith, and forbade them from disunity and disagreement. This faith is the Islam that was clarified by the previous verses, which is the worship of God alone. He singled out the mention of the messengers of Ulu al-Azm, starting with

1. Ibid.

Nuh and ending with Muhammad, for their virtue and their leadership. As for the subsidiary laws of the prophets, then they are many and varied according to the needs of each nation. Allah Almighty said: “To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life.” [5:48]¹

This verse means that, to you, O Muhammad, and to the messengers before you, there is a law (*Shari’ah*) and a method (*Minhaj*), that comes under the religion that God chose for the people and is pleased with for them. While each of the parties of disbelief and polytheism too have a *Shari’ah* and a *Minhaj* in their lives, that are a religion for them invented by its leaders and adopted by its followers.

As for the Shari’ah: It is a set of foundations, core beliefs, and general principles that are like a source that you drink from. It is a path taken by a nation that has a common direction, whether upon true or false. That is, they come to it and drink from it their values, principles, beliefs and the general guidance of the faith that they are committed to.

As for the Minhaj: It is that part of the faith that relates to the detailed rulings and various etiquettes for the actions of daily life. These rulings are based on the broad foundations, core beliefs, and general principles, that are referred to in Islam as the *Shari’ah*. On this basis, we can understand the following from the statement of Allah Almighty:

“He has ordained for you [believers] of the Way”, shows that He has clarified for us the Shari’ah part of the religion

1. Ibid.

that He has chosen for His servants. That is, the foundations, core beliefs, and general principles. The letter “min” (*of*) implies that it is a part of something larger.

- “The Way which He decreed for Nuh”, means everything of the Shari’ah that Nuh was commanded with, such as monotheism, obedience, worship, belief in the Day of Judgment, and taqwa and submission to Allah.

- “and what We have revealed to you”, that is, what we revealed to you from the Shari’ah that is in addition to what we commanded Nuh.

- “and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus”, that is, all that we commanded Abraham, Moses, and Jesus of the Shari’ah, what We have already informed you of in my Qur’an, and what you will learn from what We will reveal in the Qur’an. This then shows that the foundations, core beliefs, and general principles – i.e. the Shari’ah in the terminology of the Qur’an – that Allah commanded Nuh with and was revealed to Muhammad, Ibrahim, Musa, and Isa, have all been legislated for us as part of the general teachings of the religion.¹

Therefore, whatever is proven from their Shari’ah is also a Shari’ah for us, because they are beliefs, facts, and principles that cannot be abrogated or modified, but there may be scope for further clarifications and detailed additions regarding them. The verses above were limited to the mention of Nuh, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (*peace*

1. Habannakah, p. 160.

be upon them), because the detailed explanation of the Shari'ah that was revealed to them encompasses what was revealed to all the messengers.¹

- “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” What is meant by upholding the religion is to always fulfil its rights, and sticking to it with uprightness in carrying its burdens and duties. Allah has prohibited division in the religion that He legislated. In other words, differing in its principles, core beliefs, and general values. That is because difference in these matters leads to this united divine ummah becoming divided into groups and nations that are hostile and far apart from one another. This division can even lead to them excommunicating and fighting one another.

Upon tracking the content of the messages of all the messengers, represented in the old by Nuh, then by Abraham, who is one of his followers. Then from Bani Israel it was represented by Moses and Jesus, with the most complete version of it being represented by Muhammad (*peace be upon them all*). We notice that its values, ideology, general principles, and intellectual foundations are the same. If the followers of all the messengers do not differ regarding what the messengers of their Lord brought, and follow it as God revealed it, not distorting, altering, adding or subtracting from it, then they are one nation, from Adam (*peace be upon him*) until the Seal of the Prophets.

After this, the text in the verse moved to dealing with the polytheists who disbelieved the Prophet Muhammad (*peace*

1. Ibid.

be upon him). Allah Almighty said addressing him: “What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them” [42:13]. Meaning that it is difficult for them to accept what you are calling them to, as they see it as greater than what their souls can bear. The word “kibar” (*greatness*) is used as a metaphor for something difficult on the self, because the bigger something is the heavier it is, and if it is heavy, it becomes difficult for the one being called to carry it.

The use of the verb “*kabur*” (*grown/become great*) implies that what the Messenger calls them to is heavy on their souls, and if they had any intellectual or scientific objection, then a different metaphor would have been more appropriate to use. This indicates their uncertainty and their lack of conviction that the Prophet’s message is false. It appears that, at this stage, their motive for not accepting was not their lack of being convinced about what the messenger is calling them to, but rather that it was too heavy and burdensome for them to accept.¹

Upon reflection, we note the following as reasons for them finding the message too heavy for them to accept:

- He is calling them to believe that he is the Messenger of God and to following him, which are two great matters that are heavy for their leaders, as they feel that they are more entitled to be messengers who are followed, not to be followers.
- He invites them to abandon their idolatry and customs, and this implies that they are misguided. If they accept what

1. Ibid, p. 163.

the messenger invites them to, then they are admitting that they were ignorant and misguided, and that is too difficult for them to accept.

- He calls them to abandon many of their practices that are forbidden by Islam, and this is a heavy matter for them, because their desires and passions are so deeply attached to these practises.

- He invites them to undertake religious obligations that they have not previously undertaken, which is heavy on their souls because it requires them to do that which they find difficult do.

God has convinced them to accept using two main points:

Firstly: that the message and prophethood is chosen by Allah, and that He alone, Glory be to Him, chooses whom He wills with His wisdom, since He is All-Knowing about where to keep His message. “Allah chooses (*yajtabi*) for Himself whoever He wills” [42:13]. *Yajtabi* means that He gives preference and chooses one of the foundations of faith in Allah is that He is All-Wise and All-Knowing. If He wants to send a messenger, He does not follow the desires of people, nor does He consult them on this matter, but rather with His wisdom and knowledge, He chooses whoever He wants among his servants. And those He chooses are only the best of them, the most perfect, the best of them intellectually, morally, spiritually and in *taqwa*, those furthest away from any deficiency. In other words, it is better for you and it is in your interest that you follow those chosen by Allah through His wisdom, even if it is a burden upon you.

Secondly: people are tested in this world, and the one who is tested must believe in the truth, and he must obey God in his commands and prohibitions, so that he is considered to be upon guidance, and made amongst the guided and blessed ones in the House of Bliss (*Jannah*) on the Day of Judgment. Whoever is not like this, it is better for him to go back to his Lord and return to him with honest faith and sincere obedience, so that Allah guides him to Him. Whoever is guided by Allah and is judged by Him as being guided, He will be pleased with him, and will make him among the people of the House of Bliss. This return to Allah is thus in your own interest even if you find it burdensome. Allah Almighty said, "... and He guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him]" [42:13]. That is, he rules and decides that whoever returns to Him repentantly with faith and righteous actions has been guided. He thus increases him in aid so that he draws nearer to the Almighty with obedience and righteousness. If one is judged by Allah as being guided, this necessitates that He is pleased with him, and will make him of the blessed people of Paradise on the Day of Judgment. That truly is the greatest blessing and eternal happiness.¹



1. Ibid.

The Prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one, and the Islamic Shari'ah is the seal of all messages

The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one.”¹

This hadith clearly indicates that the origin of the religion of the prophets is one, which is monotheism, and that their detailed laws are numerous in those things that are suitable for the previous religions that were revealed to certain people in specific places on earth. Not all those laws may be suitable as a general Shari'ah that is revealed to all people until the Day of Judgment. Allah sometimes forbids for some nations what He has permitted for others, due to their intransigence, such as the Jews, for example, but then permits it for those who come after them. As for the foundations of the religion, it does not change as nations, places and times change. Islam is thus the religion of all the Prophets, may peace and blessings be upon them all. If the word ‘Islam’ is used in a general sense, then previous laws before Islam are included in this broad meaning of Islam, because the religious obligations are the applied principles of Islam, as they are from the commands and prohibitions of God Almighty. One’s Islam is not completed without obedience to God in what He commands and avoiding what He forbade. If the religious laws differ in some details, then ultimately, they are all from the command of Allah, the Exalted.²

1. Bukhari, No. 3443.

2. Al-Rasa'il al-Shumuliyah, p. 483.

The word ‘*dīn*’ (**religion**) was used in this Hadith to mean *tawhid* (**monotheism**), because the word ‘*dīn*’ comes in contrast to ‘Shari’ah’, and the general rule is that whenever ‘religion’ or ‘Islam’ are used, the Shari’ah is included as part of them, and this is understood from external factors. As such, there is no such thing as ‘divine religions’, but the religion with Allah is one, that is Islam. Allah has legislated this religion since the descent of Adam (*peace be upon him*) to this earth, but whenever the children of Adam deviated from this religion, Allah sent messengers to guide them back to it.¹

So the first messenger to humanity after Adam (*peace be upon him*) was Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and their seal was Muhammad. Every prophet was sent specifically to his own people, until Allah Almighty authorised that one ummah be formed from all of humanity, so He sent Muhammad to all people, and made him the seal of the messengers. Thus, there is no revealed book after the Qur’an, nor any messenger after Muhammad (*peace be upon him*). His message is the seal of messages. Allah Almighty said, “Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets.” [33:40]

With the Messenger of Allah (*peace be upon him*), the building of Islam became complete. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “My similitude in comparison with the other prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a

1. Ibid, p. 484.

corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: “If only this brick be put in its place!” So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets.”¹

The prophets, may blessings and peace be upon them, guided their people towards guidance, with each one of them contributing by placing a brick in this building of Allah’s call. Then when revelation from the heaven stopped after Jesus (*peace be upon him*), ignorance spread, darkness pervaded, and humanity became in need of someone who takes them towards the light of guidance, God, the Exalted, completed that building through Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), so he sent him to all of mankind. The Messenger of Allah was not sent to build a new palace, but only to complete the palace that was built by the prophets before him. He was not sent with a new religion, but rather sent with the monotheism of Allah Almighty that all the prophets before him called to, and this is explicit in indicating the unity of the religion of all the prophets, may peace and blessings be upon them.²

With the message of Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), Allah completed the religion for all people. He Almighty says, “Today I have perfected your faith for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen Islam as your way” [5:3]. The Shari’ah of Islam that was revealed to Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) became a complementary heir to the Shari’ah of the messengers, starting with Nuh (*peace be upon him*), and it

1. Bukhari, No. 3535.

2. Al-Rasa’il al-Shumuliyah, p. 486.

is what Allah prescribed for his servants in beliefs, worship, morals and personal dealings. It was called Shari'ah, because it is something that is sought and resorted to, as one would resort to water when they are thirsty, or because it has a known source and clear boundaries. This is shown in Allah's statement, "Now We have set you [O Prophet] on the [clear] Way of faith. So follow it" [45:18]; and His statement, "To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life." [5:48]

Its essence is to live life in light of the religion, so that a person lives in accordance with the view of the Almighty, and His objective behind the creation of people, "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me" [51:56]. Ihsan (*excellence*), as the Messenger of Allah said, is: "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then [know that] He sees you." Your life, worship, and habits are all according to what God Almighty wills and pleases. Allah Almighty said: "Say, "Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah - Lord of all worlds. He has no partner. So I am commanded." [6:162-163]

The Shari'ah is divided into two parts: revelation and general life. To live life through the religion, the religion must be in harmony with this worldly life, otherwise it would not be suitable to live by and not fit for all times and places. The Shari'ah is thus the general laws and principles that unite the servants of God in all times and places.¹

1. Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Kettani, *Al-Da'wah ila Istiqlal al-Fikr fi al-Islam*, Dar Al-Hadith, 1st Ed. 2014, p. 36.

Allah made Muhammad, the messenger of Allah and seal of prophets. In fact, the prophet of all prophets and messenger of all messengers, as per the Qur'anic verse: “[Remember] when Allah made a covenant with the prophets, [saying,] “Now that I have given you the Book and wisdom, if there comes to you a messenger confirming what you have, you must believe in him and support him.” He added, “Do you affirm this covenant and accept this commitment?” They said, “Yes, we do.” Allah said, “Then bear witness, and I too am a Witness.” [3:81]

Allah Almighty revealed to the Messenger the revelation with its two components: the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. This necessitated that he be knowledgeable of the Holy Qur'an, knows the Sunnah, and knows what the revelation contains in terms of historical reports, knowledge, laws and secrets. That is why when Aisha, may God be pleased with her, was asked about the character of the Prophet, she said: “His character was the Qur'an.”¹

The Qur'an says: “And you are truly [a man] of outstanding character” [68:4]. It also follows that he cannot be a messenger, a legislator and a ruler when he does not understand the other part of the Sharia, which is the reality of the ummah, the customs and traditions of people, their history and their philosophies of their lives. These things are mandatory, because without it the Sharia would be a purely theoretical message that is not applied by anyone in reality. If the practitioner of Islam misapplies it due to

1. Musnad Ahmad, No. 25341.

his ignorance of the reality of life, it loses its authority and revokes its validity for all times and places, which is not legally or rationally acceptable.

It is not legally (*Islamically*) acceptable due to the many verses that prove the suitability of Islam for all times and places, and that Allah has commanded us to follow it in the following verses:

“Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatever he forbids you from, leave it. And fear Allah.” [59:7]

“Say, [O Prophet,] “If you [sincerely] love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. For Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [3:31]

“But no! By your Lord, they will never be [true] believers until they accept you [O Prophet] as the judge in their disputes, and find no resistance within themselves against your decision and submit wholeheartedly.” [4:65]

It is also rationally unacceptable because this would otherwise lead to contradiction, as a suitable Shari’ah can only be one that is reasonably applicable in reality.¹



1. Al-Kettani, p. 37.

chapter

3

The
Attitudes
of the
People of
Nuh

(peace be upon him)

Towards
His Call

Chapter 3: The Attitudes of the People of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) Towards His Call

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) appears in the Qur'an by name forty-three times. He is mentioned in the Qur'an in two ways:

The first way: his name is mentioned alone, or in reference to his people, as part of the conversation about his own story. This occurs eleven times.

The second way: his name is mentioned alone, or in reference to his people, but not as part of the discussion on his story, but rather as a brief reference to him, his message, his Sharia, or to the disbelief and denial of his people. That is in a way that accords with the subject of the *surah* or with the section that it was mentioned in. This occurs twenty-two times.

The chapters in which the name of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was mentioned either alone or along with his people, but not as part of his story are: Al-Imran, Al-Nisa, Al-Anam, Al-Araf, Al-Tawbah, Hud, Ibrahim, Al-Isra, Maryam, Al-Hajj, Al-Furqan, Al-Ahzab, Sād, Al-Shura, Qaf, Al-Dhairat, Al-Najm, Al-Hadid, and Al-Tahrim.

And the chapters in which scenes and parts from the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) are mentioned are: Al-A'raf, Yunus, Al-Anbiya, Al-Mu'minun, Al-Shu'ara, Al-Ankabut, Al-Saffat, Al-Qamar, and Nuh. The length presented in these chapters varies, and the scenes and parts of the story are presented in an amount consistent with the topic and context of the Surah, its general theme, and the lessons

intended to be taken from it. Surat Nuh talks about his story with his people, Surat Hud presents scenes and long sections of his story, Surat Yunus and Al-Shu'ara present shorter sections, while reference to the story was made in Surat al-Ankabut in two verses that include some important information not mentioned in the other chapters.¹

It is striking that the previous ten chapters that spoke about his story are Meccan chapters (*revealed before the Hijrah*), and this is consistent with the nature of the Meccan Qur'an, which uses “stories” to establish the prophethood of Muhammad, to show that the Noble Qur'an is the word of God, and to offer lessons and reminders to the vulnerable believers in Mecca.

The story of the struggle of Nuh with his people was told by Allah in Mecca to his prophet, in order to keep his heart firm and to clarify that the stubbornness, denial, rejection, and torture he encounters were also faced by the prophets before him. Mentioning the story was also important for the believers so that their faith would strengthen on top of the faith they already had. Likewise, it is important for the disbelievers so that they would re-consider and turn back from their misguidance if they know the consequences faced by those disbelievers who came before them.²

Since most of the elements of Nuh's biography were mentioned in detail in the chapters of “The Meccan

1. Al-Khalidi, 1/152.

2. Taha Wadi, *Ulu Al-Azm min al-Rusul*, Dar al-Nashr lil Jami'at, Cairo, 1998, p. 22.

Phase” during the Prophet’s presence in Meccan before the emigration to Medina, there was not much need to talk about it again in the Medinan chapters that were revealed to the Messenger during his stay in Medina. What is mentioned of Nuh in the Medinan chapters are generally only a passing reference. We therefore find his mention in any Medinan chapters being no more than one verse. Accordingly the detailed story in the Meccan chapters turns into a mere brief references in the verses of the Medinan phase.

Hence, we find that the mention of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was mentioned in the Medinan phase in seven places, each mostly consisting of only one verse.¹

Dr. Taha Wadi stated in his book (*Ulu al-Azm among the Messengers*) that:

- 94.54% of the verses on the story of Nuh are in the Meccan phase.
- 5.46% of the verses on the story of Nuh are in the Medinan phase.

The Qur’an’s attention to the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) in this detailed manner in several places, illustrates the extent of effort and striving that this noble messenger exerted, both psychological and material, in order to elevate the word of God and spread his worship among polytheists, especially being the first messenger from the descendants of Adam (*peace be upon him*).²

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

The attitude of the people of Nuh regarding his call in Surat Hud

The story of Nuh is mentioned in twenty-five verses from verse (25) to verse (49) in Surat Hud, and the scenes and parts presented from the story in them are among the longest scenes, almost longer than the scenes presented in Surat Nuh itself which is specific to talking about his story.

The verses of Surat Hud talked about sending Nuh to his people; calling them to worship Allah alone; the way the disbelievers of his people responded to him, stirring up suspicions about him, his message, and his followers; the way Nuh (*peace be upon him*) countered those suspicions and rejected the suggestion made to him by the disbelievers to expel his believing followers; and his people's request to bring down the torment upon them, and his response to their request.

The verses also talked about God telling him that the rest of his people would not believe, except those who had believed, ordering him to build the ship. The verses show some of what happened between him and the disbelievers of his people during his making of the ship, showing the scene of the beginning of the flood, and the oven bursting with water, Nuh loading into his ship two pairs of every living creature, along with the believers, and the running of the ship in the name of God in the waves of the flood. The verses depict the conversation that occurred between Nuh and his disbelieving son who eventually also drowned, as well as the end of the flood and the demise of the water, and the stability of the ship with its passengers upon Mount Judi.

The verses record Nuh's question to his Lord about his son's drowning and God's reprimand and explanation that he is not from his family, because of his evil deed, and Nuh's respect with his Lord and his request to him for forgiveness and mercy. The verses conclude the story with the scene of Nuh and his faithful followers descending from the ark to the earth and the resumption of regular life again on earth. The verses of the story of Nuh in the Qur'an are used as evidence of Muhammad's prophethood.¹

In this paragraph, God willing, we will pay attention to the dialogue and controversy that occurred between Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and the leaders of his people up until the building of the ship. With regard to boarding the ship and its aftermath, we will talk about that, God willing, in the fourth section related to the Great Flood.

1. The doubts of the leaders of Nuh's people in rejecting his call

Allah Almighty says, "The disbelieving chiefs of his people said, "We see you only as a human being like ourselves, and we see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us, who do so [hastily] without thinking. We do not see anything that makes [all of] you any better than us. In fact, we think you are liars." [11:27]

This is the response of the leaders of Nuh's people when he called his people to worship Allah. he explanation of the verse:

1. Al-Khalidi, 1/154.

- The *mala'* (**chiefs**) said:

The letter faa (ف) is used indicating that their response was quick and immediate, that is, they did not consider what he said, did not contemplate, did not reason, did not think, but instead replied immediately in order to cut off the path for the rest of the people who may be influenced into believing.

The chiefs are those in society who are leaders, wealthy, and holding high and important positions. The word used is interesting. If such people have existed since the dawn of history, then this is a matter that should draw the attention of researchers in social, mental, psychological, anthropological and political studies. This word being used in this situation in this story at this early time in the history of mankind is interesting. The most dangerous phenomena today arose very early on. It is as if there is nothing new to humanity except the level of domination, its tools and methods, with the oppression and hegemony of the powerful remaining the same. The principle is the same, but the approaches may vary.¹

Referring to them with the name of *al-mala'* (**chiefs**) points towards something. Imam Raghīb said regarding the meaning of this word: “a group that agrees to a certain opinion, and they fill people’s with splendour and majesty. The Arabs say, “so and so has filled people’s eyes”, to mean that he is highly respected.”²

1. Nawfal, p. 114.

2. Al-Khalidi, 1/170.

The disbelievers from the people of Nuh had a chiefs, just as all the disbelievers had a chiefs, that lead them against truth. This chiefs used to meet upon their disbelief and meet to plot and conspire against Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and his message, and agree on methods to confront him, wage war against him, and develop a media plan that they can push on their followers, their soldiers, and their aides.

These people were called *al-mala'* because they filled the eyes of their masses and followers with intimidation and fear, and filled the souls of their soldiers with awe and reverence. This is why they were afraid and terrified of them, and thus followed them, carried out their order, and recruited agents for them to reject the truth and confront Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

These are the dangerous effects of the phenomenon of chiefs that we observe in the stories of the prophets in the Qur'an, which represented the ignorant satanic leadership of the Devil's party in the face of truth and its soldiers. The verses of the Qur'an tell us in the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) that these chiefs are the ones who led their people against him, raised suspicions (*shubuhah*) against him and his followers, presented their requests to him, and directed their threats to him. Nuh (*peace be upon him*), however, confronted these chiefs, refuted their suspicions, did not respond to their requests and did not succumb to their threats, but instead challenged them, fought them, and overcame them with his faith, relying on Allah, his Lord.¹

1. Ibid, 1/171.

- “Those who disbelieved from his people”:

The description here used for them is “disbelievers”, making it appear that all the people were described as such. However, it seems that these specific people were the theorists of disbelief, beautifying and promoting it, as well as being beneficiaries of it. They are its investors, leaders, guards, and “from his people”, i.e. the people of Nuh.

- “We see you only as a human being like ourselves”:

They answered Nuh that we only see you as a complete human being like us, so why should we follow you and why should you lead us? They forgot that they themselves are leaders of their society while being human beings, in fact, the worst of human beings.¹

It is the doubt that settled in the hearts of ignorant people: that the human race is too insignificant to carry the message of God, and if there was going to be a message then it should be carried by an angel or other creature. It is a doubt of ignorance based on a lack of confidence in this being that God has entrusted on His earth, entrusted with an incredibly important job. The Creator must then have deposited in this person an appropriate level of willingness and energy, and placed around him individuals, chosen by Allah, prepared to carry the message. He is most knowledgeable of the qualities he has placed in them compared to other humans.

Another one of their ignorant arguments says that if God chooses a messenger, then why is he not one of them, the great leaders and tyrannical rulers of their people.

1. Nawfal, p. 114.

This shows ignorance of the valuable qualities of humankind, for which he deserved to be chosen as a caliphate on earth and deserved to carry the message of God. These values have nothing to do with money, prestige, or authority on the earth, but rather they are qualities found in the heart of the soul, and its readiness to communicate with the heavenly world, as well as purity, the ability to receive and carry the trust, patience in fulfilling it, and an ability to deliver it, along with the other noble traits of prophethood. They are qualities that have nothing to do with money, prestige, or power, but the leaders of the people of Nuh, like those of every prophet whose worldly status blinds them from seeing these superior characteristics, so they do not understand why the messengers were chosen to receive and deliver the message. In fact, they claim that it is not a role fitting for human beings, and if it ever was, then it should be granted to notables like themselves. “We see you only as a human being like ourselves.” This is one argument and the other is even worse.¹

“We see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us, who do so [hastily] without thinking.”

The is the second time in this verse restriction is used. That is that he is only a human being and that he is only being followed by the lowliest of people. What they intend by that is simply objection, rejection, and belittling. The sight being referred to is both one of literal eyesight and one of insight, meaning that we think about you and see with

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1872.

our eyes that your followers are the poorest of people, so how can we enter into a religion whose followers are such people.

It seems that class prejudice is an early concept in societies and that such deep racism is old, and that looking at others with inferiority has been carved into a rock of social reality since ancient times. We are now, in the interpretation of this verse, talking about the dawn of humanity and its earliest stages. According to them, those with Nuh are the lowliest ones in terms of class, though morally superior. So even if those in the upper class are morally bankrupt, they are still considered part of a sacred and honoured race, and from the upper class. What is important in their view is their measure, not the measure of truth and reality, and the measure of religion and the divine messages.¹

Describing the followers of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) as being “the lowliest amongst us”, shows the extent of the hatred and contempt that the chiefs and the nobles had for the weak among them. There is no value given to the actions or spiritual orientations of these weak people, so their decision, according to the chiefs, stems from a lack of contemplation and thinking about the message of Nuh.²

“Who do so [hastily] without thinking.” They criticise the believers for how quickly they accepted Nuh’s message,

1. Nawfal, p. 115.

2. Zahiah Al-Dajani, *Ahsan al-Qasas bayn I’jaz al-Qur’an wa Tahrif al-Tawrah*, Dar Al-Taqrib Bayn al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah, third edition, 2001, p. 31.

considering it naive, crude, hasty, and a lack of depth in thinking about the matter. They see it as a dangerous and immature opinion, not based on deep pondering and contemplation. As though they are the wise and sensible ones at that time. In reality, they are nothing but fools with empty minds and hearts, and full stomachs and pockets. In fact, they practiced exactly what they criticised others for, by rejecting Nuh's call hastily without thinking, so think about that.¹

“We do not see anything that makes [all of] you any better than us.”

This is the third time that the chiefs used the verb ‘seeing’. First, they said that they “see him as only human”, then they said that they “see that only the lowliest have followed you”, and now they say, “We do not see anything that makes you any better than us.”

What matters to them is their own selves, their outlook, their visions, their superior genius, and their perfectly balanced views. The truth itself does not matter so much, but what is important is that we see that you have no merit, no value, no honour over us, nor are you more advanced than us. Of course, they have already dropped any religious or moral considerations, so what remains is nothing but material wealth, social status, and class.

They used “you” before “over us” to emphasise that the believers are stripped of the qualities that they attribute

1. Nawfal, p. 115.

to themselves. Every word is a manifestation of the deep thoughts within a person, and their intellectual and cultural internal. As the Qur'an conveys to us their words, it also conveys to us the emotional and intellectual charge that accompanied their words. All you have to do is scrutinise, contemplate, and investigate, and those deep emotions in the souls of these people become evident to you. Oh, the endless amazement at those who do not obtain all the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an.¹

- “In fact, we think you are liars.”

The word “in fact” is used as if they want to say, there is no need to elaborate, let us keep it short and get straight to the root of the matter, you are liars in our view so there is no point in prolonging this discussion.

One of the amazing things that you notice in the Qur'an's approach is that the *mala'* in all the stories of the Qur'an were never certain of the falsehood of the believers. God forbid, of course that is the case, as the first quality of the prophets is their absolute truthfulness, as far as human powers go. The *mala'* would always express conjecture and doubt “we think”, and this does indicate some intelligence, because this way their claim is not immediately rejected. The accusation of lying was directed since early times at the prophets, but in the form of conjecture, not certainty.²

This accusation makes people feel that they are fools, deprived of reason and insight, if they believed Nuh,

1. Ibid, p. 116.

2. Ibid.

submitted to him, and followed him. As well as this, is the accusation that they are doing this to gain some personal interests.¹

This last accusation mentioned in Surat Hud, they hurl in the face of the Messenger and his followers. However, they do so in their “aristocratic” way, conservatively saying, “in fact, we think are.” That is because an assertive and unhesitant approach is from the nature of the impulsive masses, who act “hastily, without thinking”; something that these “respected intellectuals” rise above doing. History has been repeating itself since the era of Nuh with this class of empty hearted egotistic imposters whose pockets are full.² We notice in the Qur’anic speech that:

- There are many psychological and social implications in the Qur’anic stories.

- If only those who were occupied transmitting israiliyyat (*biblical narrations*) put some effort into extracting the lessons that can be learned from the stories, and thus come up with something of value.

- Class discrimination is old in humanity, but continuous.

- This sort of thinking serves the interest of bullies and oppressors.

- Religion is a revolution against corrupt values, in addition to, of course, its eradication of polytheism.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 91.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1873.

- The messengers and those who believed with them were not belied with certainty, but rather, as per the incredible Quranic methodology, the chiefs always confronted the messengers with the accusation of lying in the form of uncertainty, because they knew that the prophets had a reputation for outstanding honesty.

- The corrupt ones and those who resist calls for reform and change (*which is the natural way of the universe*) claim that they base their views on mature thought, are not closed minded with opinions, but also do not embrace them so easily.

- The messages of tawhid are the true liberation movements of humanity, at every stage and in every place.¹

2. Nuh’s response to the arguments of the chiefs of his people

Allah Almighty said:

“He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see. Should we [then] force it on you against your will? O my people! I do not ask you for a payment for this [message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I will never dismiss the believers, for they will surely meet their Lord. But I can see that you are a people acting ignorantly. O my people! Who would protect me from Allah if I were to dismiss them? Will you not then be mindful? I do not say to you that I possess Allah’s treasures

1. Nawfal, p. 118.

or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel, nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon. Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them. [If I did,] then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.” [11:28-31]

The previous verses included the response of the chiefs to the call of Nuh to worship God alone. Now, in these verses, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) responds to them, and to their turning away and arrogance. He does so with tolerance, superiority, confidence in the truth that he has brought, and an assurance with his Lord who sent him. We see the clarity of his way and the integrity of his approach in his feelings. He does not curse the way they cursed, he does not accuse as they accused, and he does not make false claims the way they did. He does not try to present himself as something he is not, nor his message as something other than its true nature.

- “He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord”

“O my people!” He uses a tone of tolerance and affection when addressing them¹, attributing them to himself, and attributing himself to them. “Do you see (*consider*)?” That is, have you thought about the possibility that I stand on a clear proof from my Lord attesting to me that I am truthful in what I deliver, would you then believe me? Think and tell me.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1873.

“If I stand on a clear proof from my Lord.” That is, I was able to prove that I am upon the clear truth and an unquestionable argument. There is no doubt that this proof is from Allah. We know this from its clarity and the inability of mankind to bring something like it. So Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is showing his readiness to present a miraculous proof through which Allah bears witness to him that he is a truly sincere messenger, delivering on behalf of his Lord. This would then debunk any accusations of him being deluded or lying, for a miracle is a conclusive argument and a compelling sign.

- “He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see.”

“He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself.” Perhaps mercy here is referring to prophethood or prophethood as well as Allah’s other blessings to him.

Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Habannaka al-Maidani said regarding the “mercy” mentioned in this verse: “It is the religion, its teachings, and its commandments, which contain your happiness and your salvation.” That is indeed a great mercy for you. Have you thought about the content of this message that I brought you, this great mercy? Think and tell me.¹

“Which you fail to see.” This mercy was hidden from you and made unclear to you. This happens to the followers

1. Al-Maidani, p. 91.

due to the influence of their misguided leaders.¹ While this happens to the misguided leaders due to emotional factors, such as arrogance, immoral desires, following passions, love of immediate reward, along with the whispers and misleading of the devils of mankind and the *jinn*. In this, Nuh rebukes their accusation towards the believers, that they followed him and accepted Islam hastily without thinking it through, as he encouraged them to think and to ponder his message.² That is, the proof and this mercy were hidden from you, so you could not see that it is from Allah.

This verse, “He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see”, indicates the clarity of the message that Nuh came with. A message that all minds can comprehend, had it not been for a barrier that prevented their minds from comprehending it. This is an example of excellent kindness, an appreciation of their feelings, and keenness to bring them closer. It is as if he is saying to them: I do not accuse you of not understanding my prophethood, but I accuse that which stands between you and it, leading you to not understand. This then automatically prompts them to think and search for this barrier.

In his saying, “you were blinded” or “which you fail to see”, there is an incredible use of metaphor, as it corresponds with their arguments, “we see you only as a human being”, “we see only the lowly have followed you”, and “we do not see that you are any better than us”. Nuh’s

1. Ibid, p. 92.

2. Adab al-Kalam, p. 311.

reply corresponded to this in both meaning and wording, as he made their lack of “seeing” the result of blindness to the truth.¹

“Should we [then] force it on you against your will?”

The Arabic word *anulzimukumuha* (**meaning, should we then force it on you**) is considered one of the longest words in the Qur’an, containing a question, a verb, a subject, and two objects. Look at this incredible language and contemplate the crown of eloquence; the Qur’an, in which the most beautiful of eloquence is contained. “Against your will”, that is, you dislike and turn away from this proof. How can we then do this, when religion is based on choice, not force. This shows that the principle of, “there is no compulsion in the religion”, is a stable principle in all divine messages.²

In other words, should we impose it on you by force when you do not want it? Of course not, because faith for a person must be voluntary and out of choice. If God Almighty wanted all his creation to be compelled, then they would be, but God Almighty wants man to do so out of love and choice, not out of force. God wants sincerely fearful hearts, not hearts that are subjugated. Had Allah willed to subject us by force, He would have done so, just as He subjugated the whole universe to his command.³

The religion thus did not come with force, but rather it

1. Nawfal, p. 120.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 92.

3. Ibid.

came for us to believe in it wilfully and voluntarily.¹ Allah says: “Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood.” [2:256]

This is a great principle, the principle of choice in creed, and conviction through consideration and contemplation, not through oppression, force, and domination.

From this it becomes clear that:

- Religion is persuasion, not subjugation.
- The prophets use arguments to convince people, and do not compel.
- Debate is an art that requires skill and training, and the prophets are the masters of this art.
- Evidence is a rational argument and proof that may be hidden from the one with material thinking and the one who is trapped in the shell of his own familiarity.

“O my people! I do not ask you for a payment for this [message]. My reward is only from Allah.”

“O my people!” Nuh was gentle with his people in directing their attention and touching their souls, and this shows us to the necessity of kindness.²

The verse continues to speak of the refutation of the noble Prophet Nuh (*peace be upon him*) the claims of his people. In the previous verse, he showed what Allah has granted him

1. Muhammad Mutawalli Al-Sha’rawi, Qasas al-Anbiya, Dar Al-Qalam for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 1st Ed., 2011, 1/45.

2. Nawfal, p. 121.

of proofs and mercy, and in this one he shows that he does not ask for any compensation for his call. Two things that are complementary and lead on from one another. In his saying, “I do not ask you for a payment for this message”, I do not ask you money or a wage for inviting and guiding you. The wording he uses suggests that this includes any form of payment or compensation.

“My reward is only upon (*from*) Allah.” When he negated seeking any payment from them, “I do not ask you for any money”, he used the word “reward” (*ajr*) and said, “My reward is only from Allah.” The reward of God Almighty is more greater more vast, and more important than money. The money that people glorify is only one of the doors of divine provision, and perhaps it is the last thing that occupies the believer’s mind. The Qur’anic text used the preposition “upon” (*‘ala*) and did not say “from” (*min*) Allah, to indicate that Allah has obligated upon Himself – and nobody can force anything upon Him – that He will reward those who work for His sake and for His religion.¹

This is a response from Nuh (*peace be upon him*) to what his people claimed by saying, “in fact, we think you are liars”, accusing him of seeking some personal gains. He thus explains to them that he is not asking them for any financial reward for what he is striving for, and so they have no reason to think that he is lying and to be prevented from believing in what he has brought them from Allah. This does not mean that he does not seek or get any reward

1. Ibid, p. 122.

from anyone, but his reward comes from Allah who sent him. Not seeking any reward whatsoever is more of an imaginary ideal that is not so consistent with the nature and needs of man.

- “And I will never dismiss the believers, for they will surely meet their Lord.”

This statement indicates that the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) asked him to expel from his gatherings or from his group those they referred to as “the lowly ones”, so that they would be more likely to accept his call, and so that this lowly class from their people are not an obstacle to that. Nuh responded by refusing to expel them and he described them as “believers”, not with the description that their people described them with. This generalises his position to all those who believe and explains the reason for not expelling them, which is the fact that they are believers.

It appears that the reason for repeating these words to his people, “I will not expel those who believe” is two things:

1. The first is that they reiterated their demand to expel those they described as lowly.

2. The second is to convince them that these people are human beings like them, they are in this life to be tested, are responsible for faith, obedience, Islam and righteous deeds just like them, that they will be sent for reckoning and compensation, that they will meet their Lord on the Day of Judgment like them, and that He will hold them accountable. This persuasion is not found in the previous text.

In other words, how can I expel them when I am responsible for calling them to Allah's religion, delivering His Shari'ah to them, and commanding them to follow me. All these meanings can be understood from his statement, "they will surely meet their Lord." This implication becomes clear in the following way:

- Why will they meet their Lord?
- For Him to hold them to account and compensate them.
- What shall He account them for?
- For what they were required to believe in and act upon in this life.

In this way, these implications continue on to the remaining topics that relate to testing people in this worldly life.¹

- "But I can see that you are a people acting ignorantly."

This is a response to what his people claimed that they are people of sound opinion, thought, reason, and insight into the depths and realities of matters. That is, you claim that you are like this, and accuse those who followed me that they followed me hastily, without any insight or proper thought, "but I see that you are people acting ignorantly." He tells them that their thinking leads them to places of ignorance, not places of knowledge and understanding. Each

1. Al-Maidani, p. 94.

time they arrive at a new opinion they propose it, making this new hastily concluded opinion one of ignorance.

This interpretation is proven by his saying to them: “you are acting ignorantly” using the present tense that indicates repetition and continuation. If he meant to merely describe them as having ignorance, it would have been more appropriate say, I see that you are ignorant people.

Acting ignorantly in what? They act ignorantly towards many issues:

- Refusing to accept Nuh’s call
- They are ignorant of Allah’s attributes of Lordship
- They are ignorant of Allah’s ability to reveal to a human like them and to send him as a messenger to mankind.
- They are ignorant of their role in this life.
- They are ignorant of their responsibility towards Allah, their Creator.
- They are ignorant of the fact that the messenger is accountable just like them. He delivers what he is commanded to deliver from Allah, while also being required to believe and act righteously like them.
- They are ignorant of the reality that these people they refer to as “lowly” are human beings like them.
- They are ignorant of the fact that everyone who has intellect and will is tested in this life and is responsible before his Lord.
- They are ignorant of the fact that the Messenger does

not have the right to select his followers freely¹, as well as other examples of their ignorance.

From the previous verse, the following things are evident:

- The religion is based on equality of all people, so they vary only in the extent of their taqwa and their closeness to God.

- People are not measured by their income, consumption, and lifestyle, but by their values and morals.

- The request to expel the believers was repeated with the prophets from Nuh to Muhammad (*peace be upon them*) and hence God said to the Seal of the Messengers:

“And patiently stick with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure. Do not let your eyes look beyond them, desiring the luxuries of this worldly life. And do not obey those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follow [only] their desires and whose state is [total] loss.” [18:28]

- All creation is accountable to God, and no one is accountable to anyone else.

- Ignorance is mankind’s most dangerous enemy.²

- “O my people! Who would protect me from Allah if I were to dismiss them? Will you not then be mindful?”

This verse is a continuation of Nuh’s plea, in which he elaborates on their request to expel the believers by saying:

1. Ibid, p. 95.

2. Nawfal, p. 124.

“O my people! Who would protect me from Allah if I were to dismiss them?” Who will defend me against the wrath of God if I expel His servants? Meaning, who would protect me from His punishment, indicating that expelling the believers is worthy of punishment, which I am not ready to face, and no one would be able to prevent me from suffering such punishment if I did.

O people who will support me, protect me, and save me from the punishment of God if I expel those whom you consider lowly, when I am responsible to God for calling them to His religion, for informing them of the teachings of this religion, and for including them among the followers of this religion. They too are responsible for belief and righteous deeds. The answer to this question is that no one will save or protect from the punishment of God if God wishes to punish anyone.¹

The verse was concluded with a question, “will you not then be mindful?” The Arabic word used (*tadhakkur*) is used for simple logical matters that do not require the application of deep reasoning. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) reprimands his people for not being mindful of the facts that he had previously shown them in his debates with them, when they should have always remembered them to avoid being deceived by the arguments that Nuh had already refuted and to protect them from rejecting the truth out of pride or any other motive. This way they would save themselves from the punishment of God.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 96.

Through his condemnation of them for not remembering what was previously explained to them, despite disproving all their arguments and excuses, he intends to urge them to always remember and be mindful. For remembrance leads to insight into matters, and to benefit from advice and from events that serve as lessons. This is why you commonly find in the sayings of *tafsir* commentators that they interpret a lack of remembrance as a lack of use of intellect, since the aim of remembering and being mindful is to benefit from advice and to act accordingly.¹

It is clear from the verse:

- That reason and the Shari’ah agree to glorifying the pious believer and belittling the immoral person.
- That venerating the disbeliever, and expelling the believer and humiliating him, is against the religion of God and leads to God’s wrath, punishment and torment.
- That the prophets are keen to guide all humankind, the poor and the rich, the noble and the average, and that the measure in the sight of God is taqwa.²

Allah Almighty says,

“I do not say to you that I possess Allah’s treasures or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel, nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon. Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them. [If I did,] then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.” [11:31]

1. Ibid, p. 97.

2. Nawfal, p. 126.

Continuing the words of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) in responding to his people. Here he explains to them that he does not claim to own God's treasures and that he does not know the unseen, confirming his humanity. He also continues his response to their contempt towards the 'simple' believers.

- "I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasures"

I never claimed and never have I told you that I own the treasures of God, or that I had direct access to. The treasures of God are either His treasures of wealth and provision or His treasures of the knowledge of the unseen.¹

It is understood from his saying that he does not possess the treasures of God, that he does not have any control over them to use as he wishes or as his people wish. It appears that his people tried to lure him with questions to lead him to claim that he does have the treasures of God and that he can use them in a supernatural and miraculous way.

However, he answered them with the truthfulness of prophethood and the honest limits of its powers, saying to them: "I do not say to you that I possess Allah's treasures."

This sentence is connected to the previous sentences that summarised his response to his people, which began by him saying: "O my people." Likewise, they tried to draw him into claiming that he knows all the unseen, so that they can exploit that in matters of their trade, agriculture, or other worldly matters, but he replied to them by saying:

1. Ibid, p. 127.

- “nor do I know the unseen.”

That is I do not know all the unseen, but I only know of it that which Allah has taught me. This way he cuts off their desires so that they do not ask him about matters of the unseen that he does not know them, such as when the Hour will come. Nor that they ask about their worldly matters related to wealth, children, or anything else, out of a desire to increase in good and not be touched by anything bad in this life.

Since one of their objections to him was their objection to him being a human messenger, he could easily have claimed that he is an angel in the form of a human being to deceive them. But the truthfulness of prophethood and the message prevents him from doing that, because it is not befitting of a prophet to lie regarding anything small or large.

- “nor do I claim to be an angel”

That is, if I told you that I am an angel, I would have been able to confuse and deceive you with that, but I am a messenger from God, and it is not befitting of a messenger to lie, even to support the religion of God. So, I do not tell you that I am an angel. I am only a human being like you, but I receive revelation.

We know that they demanded that he expel from being his followers those they described as lowly. It appears that they tried to lure him to say about them that these are a class outside the fold of the advanced and responsible class of humans. Rather, they were created to be servants and slaves

for humans, and though they appear in the image of human beings, they can never be above that in the sight of God.¹

This abhorrent class racism is consistently found in human societies and appears every now and then in all people. Therefore, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) responded to his people by saying:

- “nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon.”

That is, I do not say to those whom you despise, reproach, and belittle, and those who your corrupt scales undermine, I will not say that God will not give them any good as you claim.

“Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them.”

Meaning: How can I say that to them and transgress in their regard, when sincere faith, obedience, and righteous deeds are actions of the heart and soul, and what is in hearts and souls is entrusted to God? He alone “knows best what is hidden within them.” He is the one who holds them accountable and rewards them for whatever is within them of good or otherwise.

How can I judge that God will not give them goodness, when this is one of the characteristics of God Almighty alone? He knows what good or evil is in the souls, and he is rewards according to the what is in them of that, if good then good, and if evil then evil. I only judge according to their outward appearance, and what appears from them

1. Al-Maidani, p. 99.

makes them deserving honour and for the hope that God will bestow them with good.

“[If I did,] then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.”

If I accepted your wish to expel those you described as being the lowliest amongst you; or said that I have Allah’s treasures; or said that I know the unseen; or said that I am an angel; or said that those who you belittle shall not be granted any good from Allah; the consequence would be that “I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.” We find in this sentence a series of methods of emphasis. In other words, I would truly be one of the wrongdoers who deserve Allah’s punishment if I claimed these things. I would be wronging the truth, wronging myself, and wronging people by not judging them fairly.¹

Thus, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) denies for himself and his message any false claim sought by the leaders of his people for the messenger and the message. He presents it to them in its pure and true form free of any superficial additions. He responds to them with the sincerity and power of the truth, with tolerance in his speech, having them face the reality, so that they can take steps to follow its guidance, without any impurity, falsehood, or an attempt to please people at the expense of the message and its simple reality. This provides preachers with a model and a lesson on how to face people of authority with the pure truth, without appeasing their views or desires, without indulging them, while also maintaining an affection that does not lead the heads to bow out of weakness.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1875.

And at this point, Nuh's people had given up on facing his arguments with proper arguments, but they were overtaken by pride that carried them to sin, were too arrogant to accept being overcome by sound arguments, and to submit to the rational and innate proof, so they abandoned arguing and now decided to resort to challenging Nuh.¹

Having tired them out and overcome them with his clear arguments and words, while they insisted on their disbelief, they had no choice but to tell him that he is simply an argumentative person, to make him feel that they are not ready to accept any of his proofs or arguments no matter what. They evaded any intellectual debate, and instead challenged him to bring them the punishment of Allah that he promised them if he is indeed truthful.²

3. The inability of Nuh's people to respond to his logical and rational arguments

The public among the people of Nuh had despaired of responding to arguments with similar arguments and refused to submit to clear rational proofs. When they were overcome by that, they chose to leave arguing and resort to challenging and defiance. Allah Almighty said:

“They protested, “O Nuh! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true.” [11:32]

It is helplessness sugar-coated with a display of power,

1. Ibid.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 101.

weakness wearing the robe of strength, and fear of the prevalence of truth taking the form of belittlement and defiance. “So bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true,” and inflict upon us the painful torment that you have warned us of. We do not believe you and we do not care about your threats.

As for Nuh, denial and defiance do not take him away from the character of a noble Prophet, nor do they dissuade him from explaining the truth to them and guiding them to the truth that they were heedless and ignorant of when they requested to him to bring them what he promised them. He brought them back to the truth, which is that he is only a messenger responsible for conveying Allah’s message. As for punishment, then it is from Allah’s command, He is the one who manages all affairs, and dictates with His wisdom whether to hasten or delay torment. Allah’s way is the one that is carried out, and Nuh does not have the power to repel or change it. He is a merely a messenger required to reveal the truth until his last moment. He will not stop informing and explaining the truth even if his people belie or defy him.¹

“He responded, “It is Allah Who can bring it upon you if He wills, and then you will have no escape!”” [11:33]

That is, I am not the one who will bring you what I have warned you about, but rather Allah brings you, if He wills, not if I will, nor if you wish. I have a limited role from God, I am a messenger who communicates on the authority of

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1875.

God. Then in response to the denial and defiance that they felt about Nuh being unable to fulfil what he promised them, he said to them: “and then you will have no escape!” That is, you are not able to protect yourselves from the torment of God if He wills to inflict it upon you, nor to run away from it, nor to stop His soldiers from encompassing you with the torment. When God Almighty decides to inflict the punishment upon them, will Nuh be able to ward off the torment of God from them, and will Nuh’s advice benefit them then? The answer is: No! It will be of no benefit, which is what Nuh clarified when he said:

“My advice will not benefit you - no matter how hard I try - if Allah wills [for] you to stray. He is your Lord, and to Him you will [all] be returned.” [11:34]

In other words, the will of God prevails. If he wants to misguide you due to your rejection of the truth, then even if I take great care and advise you in the best way possible – and he had done so, peace be upon him – then that will not benefit you in any way.¹

“He is your Lord, and to Him you shall return.” He is the one who created you within the system of *tarbiyah*, He is your examiner in this worldly life, He is the One who has provided for you, He is the One who has given you life and shall cause you to die, and He is the one who will hold you accountable and reward you for your deeds. He is your master, your owner, and to Him are all your affairs. I am nothing but an informing messenger.

1. Tafsir al-Sa’di, 2/749.

“And to Him you will be returned.” That is, to your Lord, you shall return on the Day of Judgment, to hold you accountable and reward you for your deeds. These are the main discussions held between Nuh and his people in Surat Hud (*peace be upon him*).¹

“Or do they say, “He has fabricated this!”? Say, [O Prophet,] “If I have done so, then I bear the burden of that sin! But I am free from your sinful accusation.” [11:35]

“Or do they say, “He has fabricated this!”? It is possible that this is a reference to Nuh, since it has come in the context of his story with his people. The meaning would thus be that his people claim that he has lied about Allah in his claim that this revelation is from God. Allah thus ordered him to reply: “If I have done so, then I bear the burden of that sin! But I am free from your sinful accusation.” Each person is responsible for their sin. “No soul burdened with sin will bear the burden of another.”

It is also possible that it is a reference to the Prophet Muhammad, and that this was mentioned during the story of Nuh and his people. Since it is one of the matters that only the prophets know about, when Allah told His messenger about the story, and this being one of the signs of his truthfulness and prophethood, He mentioned how his people denied him. “Or do they say, “He has fabricated this!”? They claim that this Qur’an was fabricated by Muhammad himself. This really is one of the strangest and falsest of claims, because they know that he did not read or write, nor did he travel to study with the people of the Book.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 103.

If, despite all this, they still claim that he has fabricated it, then it becomes clear that they are merely being stubborn and that there is no benefit in debating them. What is more appropriate in this case is simply to turn away from them. This is why he said, “If I have done so, then I bear the burden of that sin!” The sin of lying. “But I am free from your sinful accusation.”¹

This is called *iltifat* (**turning**) in the science of *balaghah* (**Arabic rhetoric**). While in the midst of the story of Nuh, God Almighty turns to the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) to entertain and relieve him, when he felt saddened at his people’s denial of him. This is in order to relieve him, strengthen his resolve, and remind him that those who accuse him of lying are but criminals against him, and he is innocent of this crime.²

An interesting turn is taken at this stage of Nuh’s story, with the polytheists of Quraysh being faced with such a story, similar to their own story with the Messenger (*peace be upon him*), when they claimed that Muhammad is fabricating these stories. The response immediately comes in before continuing with the story: “Or do they say, “He has fabricated this!”? Say, [O Prophet,] “If I have done so, then I bear the burden of that sin! But I am free from your sinful accusation.” This intervention does not contradict the

1. Tafsir al-Sa’di, 2/749.

2. Muhammad Ratib Al-Nabulsi, Tafsir Al-Nabulsi, Al-Fursan Foundation for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 2016, 6/51.

context of the story in the Qur'an, because it came to fulfil a purpose relevant to the context.¹

Several things become clear from previous verse:

- Fairness between the caller and those being called helps to reduce their boisterousness in standing up against the call.
- The honourable messengers are models of wisdom in da'wah, argumentation and persuasion.
- Simple but deep logic, along with sincerity, influence those being called, and are a reason for success in da'wah.
- Organising the thoughts of those being called helps us determine their stance, and even win them over if done well.
- It is very important to awaken the minds of those we invite, so that they understand us and respond to us.
- Neglecting and disrupting the intellect is a loss for the caller, the one being invited, and the call (*da'wah*) itself.²



1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1876.

2. Nawfal, p. 141.

The attitude of the chiefs of the people of Nuh regarding his call in Surat al-A'raf

Surat Al-A'raf speaks about Allah Almighty sending Nuh to his people, him calling them to worship God alone, the chiefs of his people accusing him of being misguided, his response to their accusations, presenting himself and calling them to Islam, removing their surprise about a human messenger being sent, their denial of him, their destruction, and those who believe with him being saved.¹

Allah Almighty summarised in Surat Al-A'raf the stories of the messengers calling their people to Allah, beginning with the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) calling his people to the religion of God and delivering his Lord's messages to them. Allah Almighty said:

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He said, “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.” But the chiefs of his people said, “We surely see that you are clearly misguided.” He replied, “O my people! I am not misguided! But I am a messenger from the Lord of all worlds, conveying to you my Lord's messages and giving you [sincere] advice. And I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you find it astonishing that a reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own, warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?” But they rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and drowned those who rejected Our signs. They were certainly a blind people.” [7:59-64]

1. Al-Khalidi, 1/153.

1. Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people.

This is the *sunnah* (**way**) of God in sending every messenger from his people, speaking their language, to reconcile the hearts of those whose *fitrah* has not been corrupted, and to facilitate human understanding and acquaintance. Although those whose *fitrah* has been corrupted are surprised at this *sunnah*, do not respond, and are too arrogant to believe in a human being like them. They instead request that the angels deliver to them, but in reality, they would not respond to the guidance, no matter how it reaches them. Nuh was sent to his people, so he addressed them with that one word that every messenger brought.¹

2. He said, “O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him.”

Worship is an act of obedience, mixed with heartfelt love. Its basis is certain knowledge that leads to eternal happiness. The One who deserves to be worshipped is the One who created us, alone deserving to be worshipped, the provider, the One who gives and takes life, the Almighty, glory be to Him. There is none who raises, lowers, honours, humiliates, gives, withholds, provides, and none mighty, except God.

There is nothing greater that people can learn than monotheism (*tawhid*).² It is the unchanging word, the basis of this creed (*aqidah*) that does not exist except

1. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1308.

2. Al-Nabulsi, 4/554.

with it, and the pillar of human life that is not based on any other pillar. It is what guarantees unity of direction, unity of purpose, and a united bond. It is the guarantor of liberating human beings from slavery to whims and desires, and slavery to others who are slaves like them, and it guarantees overcoming all desires.¹

Tawhid is to affirm the oneness of God, to rely on Him, to please Him by obeying Him, and to be wary of His anger. There is nothing in the universe worthy of being worshiped but God, there is no provider but God, and none gives and takes but God. When you know that everything is in the hand of God, you turn to God alone, and do not turn to anyone but Him.²

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) called his people to the oneness of God, the Exalted, and to devote their worship to Him alone, and he warned them of the consequences of denying it, doing so with the compassion of a brother who is advising his brothers, and with the sincerity of one who is advising his family.³

3. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.

We see here that the religion of Nuh (*peace be upon him*), the oldest religion, contains the doctrine of the Hereafter and the doctrine of accountability on the Day of Resurrection, was present. This statement indicates that Nuh (*peace be*

1. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1308.

2. Al-Nabulsi, 4/555.

3. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1308.

upon him) had informed them of the realities of resurrection on the Day of Judgment, and of what that day includes of reckoning, judgment, recompense and punishment in the house of torment prepared for the oppressive denying disbelievers, and the blessing and reward for the pious believers in the gardens of bliss. That is because he would not tell them that he fear for them the torment of such a day, unless he has told them about it, that they are indebted, accountable and compensated for their deeds. It is only logical for there to be reward, along with punishment, so he necessarily would have told them of the abode of torment and the abode of bliss. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) made them feel his mercy and compassion for them when he said: “I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.” For this reason, he invites them to believe in God alone, and worship Him alone with no partner.¹

4. *But the chiefs of his people said, “We surely see that you are clearly misguided.”*

Just as the polytheists of the Arabs said to Muhammad that he has left the religion of Ibrahim. This is how delusion goes so far as to think that the one who invites you to guidance is misguided. In fact, this is how far impudent arrogance goes when one’s *fitrah* becomes corrupt. Thus the scales are turned upside down, rules are nullified, and whims rule, as long as the scale is not the scale of God which does not deviate or tilt.

What do the deviated people say about divine guidance

1. Al-Maidani, p. 45.

and about those who are guided by Allah’s guidance? They call them the misguided. What do perverted people say about the girl that does not reveal her flesh? And about the boy who scolds cheap meat? This elatedness, cleanliness, and purification, they call backwardness and rural stagnation.¹

“We surely see that you are clearly misguided.” We believe with certainty that is based on contemplative insight, that you are astray from the truth, clearly astray. They replied to him by claiming that he is astray, and emphasised that, without providing a single proof. “Clearly”, meaning that it is so obvious that it does not even need to be proven. It is clear that this allegation of theirs is nothing but an insult, and it is known that every allegation that involves insult and accusation, but is not based on any proof, is merely an insult. They responded to his gentle invitation, his mercy, and his concern, with insults and criticisms.

5. He replied, “O my people! I am not misguided!”

I am not at all misguided, but you have insulted me and accused me of drowning in misguidance. I say to you in defence of myself that I not upon any misguidance, small or large, but I am free of any misguidance. An answer saturated with the politeness of the callers to God, those surrounded by Allah’s care, and committed to wisdom in *da’wah*.

The categorical denial came in the Noble Qur’an when it says, “He replied, “O my people! I am not misguided!” Because the path of Allah is not something Nuh brought

1. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1309.

himself, such that we can claim that desires have overtaken him, even if in one matter of misguidance, or that there is something he has missed. But this path came from Allah Almighty, and as long as Nuh is only a messenger, and the path is from Allah, there cannot be a single misguidance, nor a suspicion of misguidance.¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) responded to the accusation in denial only and did not respond to their insults in the same way, but instead addressed them by saying: “O my people,” so attributing them to himself. After he denied what they accused him of, he clarified to them that he did not call them to something that he himself came up with, but that he is only a messenger sent by the Lord of the worlds, responsible for delivering His messages and advising his people.² He said to them:

“But I am a messenger from the Lord of all worlds, conveying to you my Lord’s messages and giving you [sincere] advice. And I know from Allah what you do not know.”

He is a messenger sent by the Lord of the worlds, and he is responsible for carrying out tasks related to his role:

- **The first task:** that he delivers according to the messages of His Lord.

“Conveying to you my Lord’s messages.” The plural form of *risalat* (**messages**) implies that the divine guidance

1. Al-Maidani, p.46.

2. Al-Sha’rawi, 1/20.

would be revealed to him in accordance with the *Sunnah* of Allah in the gradual revelation of His guidance. So what was revealed to Nuh to communicate to his people, were scattered statements at various times, each statement is like a message. After all these messages are gathered together, and God completes the religion for his servants, they are all brought together as part of one message. The plural is thus in the sense that this guidance would be revealed to them at different times, almost like separate messages, while the singular (**message**) is used in the sense that this collection of separate messages are gathered in one complete book that makes up the message that Allah sent His messenger with.¹ Communicating the messages of God is then Nuh's first task of and it is the first task of all messengers (*peace be upon them*).

- **The second task:** advising his people

This includes the use of all persuasive and educational methods in their various forms. Advice (***nasihah***) is a manifestation of sincerity to God in *da'wah*, a manifestation of mercy and compassion, and shows the advisor's keenness for what is in the best interest of the one being advised without expecting any reward from him. Nuh said to his people: "and giving you advice." All the messengers are sincere advisors to their people, and this is how all callers to Allah should be. Similarly, the believers are loving advisors to one another, and the true and sincere religion is *nasihah* to God, His Messenger, the leaders of Muslims and their general masses.

1. Al-Maidani, p.49.

After Nuh (*peace be upon him*) demonstrated to his people these two duties that God had entrusted him with, he mentioned to them that what he communicates to them and what he advises them with is based on knowledge, and knowledge is the opposite of ignorance, which also leads to misguidance, so he said to them: “And I know from Allah what you do not know.”

He responds to his people accusing him of being upon clear misguidance, by proving that he has knowledge from Allah that they do not know. This is a response containing total politeness, while also directing them to benefit from the knowledge that he teaches them, because it is a revelation from God, not from myself, my personal opinions, and my thoughts, but from God, inspired by God. “What you do not know”, from the matters of the unseen that cannot be known except through revelation or from what you did not put an effort into contemplating and learning.

- **The third task:** convincing debate in the best manner

This task is proven by the Qur’anic text’s description of him debating them to establish the proof against them. Allah Almighty said:

6. Do you find it astonishing that a reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own, warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?”

Do you hate to leave what you are upon and to follow what I brought to you, and are you astonished that a *dhikr* (***remembrance***) from your Lord came to at the hands of a

man from amongst yourselves? Their surprise is thus about two issues:

- The first issue: that a dhikr (*remembrance*) comes to them from their Lord.
- The second issue: that this dhikr descends upon a human being who is one of them, who is a messenger of God, delivering the dhikr that God has revealed to him to his people.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) did not raise the issue of his prophethood and his message, before raising the issue of the *dhikr* that he brought to them from their Lord, but first raised the issue of this *dhikr*, providing an open intellectual arena to debate and discuss its elements.

Since the *dhikr* with which God sends His messengers includes issues that can be proven with convincing evidence, presenting it first was the most appropriate method of persuasion. His Lordship, His Oneness, the attributes of Allah which include His *qada* and *qadar* (*decree*), His power to do all things, His creation of all things, His care for His servants, and His justice, are all matters that can be proven through rational evidence, and are attested to by the phenomena of the universe and the course of events.¹

When it appears to them that what he calls them to is unquestionably and undoubtedly true, then the matter of proving his prophethood and his message, proving that

1. Ibid, p. 52.

he communicates this remembrance from his Lord, and proving that God reveals it to him, is an easy and ready matter. We benefit from this that the wise thing to do with those who have not had any prophets and messengers sent in the recent era, is to first convince them of the content of the message itself, and this is the method that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) adopted with his people.

Two things were mentioned regarding the content of the message:

- The first thing: Some of the elements of the messages of the messengers are facts that are embedded in people's minds, souls, and consciences, so little more is needed than revealing them and reminding people of them.

- The second thing: All the elements of the messages of the messengers are divine truths and teachings, which should first be learned and understood. They should then be recalled from time to time, over the course of days and years, and at every appropriate instance, so that its elements of faith remain present in the memory, thus pushing the believers to obeying God and adhering to His Shari'ah. This way its provisions and commandments become a consistent programme, a clear light, and a guide through the darkness of passions, desires, the whispers and deceptions of the devils, and the delusions of deceivers. They guide us through the obstacles of passions, life challenges, its tests of good and evil, benefit and harm, and all that involves fitnah (*trials*), guiding us to choosing the path of patience and gratitude.

The lengthy statement in this text relates to the elements of persuasion regarding the two things that caused them to be amazed, namely:

- “Remembrance from your Lord”: revealed from your Lord.
- “Through one of your own”: revealed upon a man of your own.

The first element: “warning you.” That is, to warn you of Allah’s immediate and deferred punishment if you do not believe. Warning only come after adopting educational and persuasive means first, and only accompanied by good news for those who believe and obey.

The second element: “so you may beware (*have taqwa*).” That is, to realise the danger of God’s punishment, and thus to find in yourselves a motive to beware of Him through faith and righteous deeds, arising from your free choice.¹

The third element: “and perhaps be shown mercy.” So that you may expect Allah’s mercy in entering you into the Gardens of Bliss, if you fear Him, and thus believe and obey.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) revealed to them the goal of the message: (***warning you, so you may beware, and perhaps be shown mercy***). A warning that moves the hearts towards *taqwa*, so that in the end they may attain the mercy of God. There is nothing beyond that in it for Nuh, and there is no interest or goal but this noble and esteemed goal.²

1. Al-Maidani, p.53.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1309.

This now is a general summary of the duties of the *dhikr* that was revealed to Nuh, and the role of Nuh among his people:

- Warning and good tidings in the revealed remembrance, and in the statements of the messenger who reports on behalf of his Lord.
- The *dhikr* and *tarbiyah* of the messenger brought about feelings of being wary of the punishment, and the request for reward from the people.
- The hope of attaining the mercy of God in the gardens of bliss and a happy worldly life, for those who respond to God and His messenger.¹

However, when the *fitrah* reaches a certain level of corruption, it does not think, it does not ponder, nor can any warning or reminder benefit it.²

7. But they rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and drowned those who rejected Our signs. They were certainly a blind people.”

“But they rejected him.” This a summary of what they did. Some people of strength and resilience belied their messenger, and they continued to deny him for many years. Many things must also have come from them, including harming the messenger and those who believed in him, resisting his call, and insistence upon injustice, tyranny, immorality, and transgression.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 54.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1309.

The consequence was thus: “so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and drowned those who rejected Our signs.” This is a summary of the last event in the story of Nuh with his people alluding towards the general flood, in which God drowned the deniers, and towards the events that resulted from Nuh and those with him boarding the Ark, and its running to safety under God’s care and protection.

“They were certainly a blind people.” Finally, the permanent attribute that caused the people of Nuh to show denial, obstinacy, insistence on disbelief, and injustice and tyranny, until being completely destroyed by the flood. Allah Almighty said: “They were certainly a blind people.” Blind from seeing the truth, from being guided by its signs and proofs, and from seeing its oratorical, intellectual and emotional lights. Blindness is of various types. Some relates to literal blindness of the eyes, and some relates to the blindness of the hearts and insights. We have seen that they were blind to guidance, to sincere advice, and to the warnings. This blindness led them to rejecting the truth and caused them to meet this fate.¹

The attitude of the chiefs in Surat al-Mu’minun

Surat al-Mu’minun shows excerpts of the discussions of the chiefs (*mala’*) of the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) with his people, to discourage them from the call of monotheism, the worship of God alone, and *taqwa*. Allah Almighty said:

1. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1310.

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He declared, “O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him. Will you not then fear [Him]?” But the disbelieving chiefs of his people said [to the masses], “This is only a human like you, who wants to be superior to you. Had Allah willed, He could have easily sent down angels [instead]. We have never heard of this in [the history of] our forefathers. He is simply insane, so bear with him for a while.” Nuh prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” [23:23-26]

O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him.

The word of truth that does not change, upon which existence is based, and is attested to by all that exists, “will you not then fear?” Will you not fear the consequences of denying the first truth upon which all truths are based? Will you not realise that denying it is a transgression against the clear truth? Will you not realise the painful torment that results from such transgression?

But the disbelieving chiefs of his people do not bother discussing this word, nor ponder its signs, and they cannot get rid of the narrow outlook that relates to themselves and the man calling them as individuals. They do not rise to the vast horizon from which they can view this major truth, devoid of people and the self. They thus neglect this great truth upon which existence is based, attested to by everything in existence, and instead speak about Nuh as a person.¹

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2464.

1. *Will you not then fear Him?*

If you do not believe in God and worship Him alone with no partner, then His punishment and torment will befall you. Rationality and reason therefore dictate that you fear that, and therefore, I encourage you to fear the punishment and torment of God, which I have warned you of, in your immediate life and in the long-term. All these things are implied through logical necessity from the statement, “Will you not then fear Him?” The question contains an element of surprise and disapproval of the fact that they do not fear, as well as an element of urging and exhorting them to have *taqwa*.¹

We notice that the beginning of the discussion on Nuh Surat al-Mu’minun that the foundations of the religion are summarised:

- Belief in the oneness of God Almighty.
- Obeying God, worshiping Him alone, doing what He commanded, avoiding what He forbade, and coming closer to Him through what pleases Him.
- Being wary of His immediate and long-term punishment, and taking measures to protect from it. This necessitates that those who believe and submit should hope for His reward and act accordingly.²

But the disbelieving mala’ (*chiefs*) of his people said [to the masses], “This is only a human like you, who wants to

1. Al-Maidani, p. 252.

2. Ibid.

be superior to you. Had Allah willed, He could have easily sent down angels [instead]. We have never heard of this in [the history of] our forefathers. He is simply insane, so bear with him for a while.”

The *mala'* are the chiefs of the people, their dignitaries, and their notables. Their statement here comes immediately after the words of Nuh in which he explained his message that God sent him with to his people.

We note that this passage in Surat al-Mu'minin has described the chiefs of the people of Nuh as disbelievers, and explains what they did to persuade their masses that Nuh was not a messenger from God.

However, they were not described with disbelief in Surat Al-A'raf, where it says, “But the chiefs of his people said, “We surely see that you are clearly misguided.” [7:60]

We also notice that the passage of Surat Hud describes what they faced Nuh with: “The disbelieving chiefs of his people said, “We see you only as a human being like ourselves”” [11:27]

This indicates that this statement of theirs was made at the beginning of the *da'wah*, and that they were in the process of establishing proofs and arguing. In this case they are not yet to be described as disbelievers. However, when the proofs became clear to them and overcame them, Allah described them with *kufir* (**disbelief**). In Surat Hud and Surat al-Mu'minin, He said: “The disbelieving chiefs of his people said.”

We also notice how the three passages complement one another:

- The first is an address to Nuh: “We see that you are clearly misguided.” However, this statement is not an explicit accusation of slandering and lying against God, since there is a possibility that his misguidance is due to circumstances that arose.
- The second is also an address to Nuh: “We see you only as a human being like ourselves.”
- The third came as an address to the wider public, with the aim of discouraging them from believing and following Nuh: “This is nothing but a human like you”, along with their other statements to them.

This third passage contains six statements that the chiefs of the people of Nuh made addressing their masses with the aim of discouraging them from believing and following Nuh.¹

- **The first statement:** “This is only a human like you.

The chiefs of the people of Nuh tried to convince their masses – to discourage them from believing in him and following him – that humans are not fit to be messengers sent by God Almighty. They deceptively claimed that being human makes it impossible to contact the Lord of the worlds or the angels, to receive a message from Him.

They referred to Nuh (*peace be upon him*) with *hadha*

1. Ibid, p. 254.

“this”, implying that he is a man who does not deserve to be given any respect or admiration. They intended by that to demean him in front of their masses to turn them away from respecting him at all, or to arouse the small minded of them into disdain and ridiculing him for being a human claiming to be a messenger from Allah and one who communicates with Him; a claim that can only be made by someone who is mentally unstable or somewhat insane.

After probing the Qur’anic texts, it appeared to us that it is a repeated phenomenon that nations reject their messengers using the excuse that they are only being human beings. The people of Nuh were at the forefront of those whom God told us about, and the last of them was the Arabs who denied the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*).¹

- **The second statement:** “who wants to be superior to you.”

The chiefs of Nuh’s people claimed to their masses that Nuh is claiming to be a messenger of God so that he could claim a trait that makes him superior to them in a way that they could never match. A trait that would make him a master over them, a leader to be obeyed in all his commands, deriving his authority over them from God, and imposing on them all his wishes. He is not sincere with this message of his, but a liar.

- **The third statement:** “Had Allah willed, He could have sent down angels instead.”

1. Ibid, p. 255.

That is, if God wanted to send messengers to people informing them about His religion, He would send angels, not human messengers. By this they deceptively claim that this is what divine wisdom dictates and that this is the only logical conclusion. For God to send a human messenger is unreasonable and unacceptable, and the person claiming to be a messenger is clearly deluded, either doing so for some reason or simply being an outright liar who is making things up about God.¹

Their deluded imagination led them to thinking that human beings are not fit to receive revelation from God Almighty. Upon analysing this delusion it becomes clear to us that those who thought this did not appreciate the greatness of God. It is based on doubting Allah's power to facilitate for a human being the ability to receive revelation from his Lord directly, indirectly, or by sending a messenger from the angels who informs him of the message of his Lord.

In reality, they contradict themselves, because they have no problem accepting that an angel can receive revelation from God, even though angels from God's creation. If God can create angels who are able to receive revelation from Him, then how is He unable to create such an ability in some of His creation from human beings, choosing them to be prophets and entrusting them to be messengers to their people.

That is if this matter is based on misunderstanding.

1. Ibid.

However, if it is merely a stubbornness that leads to arguing for the sake of it, then they deny prophethood in the first place, despite knowing its truth, and knowing the truthfulness of the messenger. Their denial is due to arrogance, following their whims and desires, giving preference to the temporary life over the hereafter, and doubting the punishment that will soon befall them, deceiving the masses with their false arguments.

- **The fourth statement:** “We have never heard of this in the history of our forefathers.”

Our forefathers who were leaders of our tribes. “We have never heard of this.” That is, we have not heard any news informing us that in the history of our ancestors there were human messengers who came to them conveying something from God, like what Nuh had done. Through this saying they are trying to add some historical evidence to testify to their claim that humans are not fit to be messengers of God and that God did not want to send messengers to people.

The argument can be broken down in the following way:

- If God wanted to send messengers to inform them of a religion, he would have sent messengers to our first forefathers, just as idolatry is from the things that we inherited from our fathers.

- But he did not send any messengers throughout the history of our forefathers.

- This is proven by the fact that we have not heard any news of this.

- Therefore, God did not want to send any messengers, and Nuh's claim that he is the messenger of God is false.

This argument does not stand, because it is based on their claim that they had not heard of previous messengers being sent, and on their claim that idols were among the gods of their ancestors.

As for them not hearing about it, then, even if they are honest, it would not have been a proof that no messengers were sent before Nuh¹, because so much news was lost in history, especially in the first centuries when news was not recorded in books.

Allah has confirmed in the Qur'an that no nation has deviated from the religion of God except that God has sent a warning messenger to it. So the least that would have occurred is that prophets or those who deliver the message of a previous messenger or divine teachings that humanity received from Adam (*peace be upon him*), the father of mankind, who received the religion from his Lord. Their early forefathers were also followers of monotheism, as taught and called to by Adam (*peace be upon him*), then paganism crept in after that, which required sending a messenger to them.

Not hearing of something does not mean that it is not present in reality. Their proof for this issue is based on this rejected argument that no sane person would accept. But the chiefs of the people of Nuh tried to mislead their masses

1. *ibid*, p. 256

through it, and followers tend to accept the views of their masters and seniors without testing them against the scales of sound thought and common sense.¹

- **The fifth statement:** “He is simply insane.”

That is, he is nothing but a man with some sort of insanity, indicating that they did not mean to say that he is a complete madman, but rather that he is acting insanely.

In this phase, the chiefs of his people conceded in their accusations of madness, unlike in the earlier phases in which they accused him of madness, as explained in Surat Al-Qamar: “Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated” [54:9]. He proved with his long patience and arguments with them, that he is sane and not crazy, and this became evident to the masses of his people. Their leaders and masters could therefore no longer insist on accusing him of being crazy, especially after they accused him of having the desire to be superior to them and to become their leader, and such a desire does not come from one who is completely insane. However, it may come about from someone who has some sort of madness, such as megalomania, love of authority, having supremacy over people, and such as mad lust and a mad love of money that disrupts a person’s balance and disturbs his behaviour.

The words of Nuh’s people to their masses came as a response to his insistence on his call, his long patience upon

1. Ibid, p. 258

it, his strength in debating them to prove its truths, and to show the corruption of their polytheism and idolatry, their injustice and tyranny, their corruption on the earth, and their sinful actions.

It is as if their masses asked their masters: what is the reason for such patience from Nuh if he is not a true messenger but only a liar in his claim as you say? So they said to them: He is nothing but a man with a sort of madness, seeking leadership and supremacy, fascinated by his love for them. To achieve that, he decided to claim and insist that he is the messenger of God, but he will never reach what he is hoping for, so his insistence is driven by some kind of madness. This is the only reason he is so insistent with his call.¹

- **The sixth statement:** “so bear with him for a while.”

Bear with him until death comes and allows you to take a break from him, his call, and his insistence upon these new claims of his.²

As such, we have contemplated and studied, these six statements that the chiefs of the Nuh’s people directed to their masses with the intention to discourage them from following Nuh.

Note that the passage does not mention the responses to these statements, nor try to show how deviated they are. That is because they were not aimed directly at Nuh (*peace*

1. Ibid, p. 259

2. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2465.

be upon him), but were directed to the masses of their people to convince them that Nuh is not a messenger from God, but a false claimant who seeks leadership and authority over his people. This is contrary to their statements that they addressed to Nuh, in which the texts mentioned decisive responses to them, such as the verses in Surat al-A'raf, Hud, and Al-Shu'ara.¹

2. Nuh prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied me.”

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) called upon his Lord and asked him for victory over his enemies when he could not find a way into those rigid, hardened hearts. He did not find refuge from being ridiculed and harmed, except in his Lord alone, complaining to Him of the belying that he faced and asking Him for aid. He said: “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied me.” When people become fossilised in this way, and life seeks to move forward towards the path of perfection, but finds them an obstacle in the path, then these fossils must either be destroyed or life leaves them in their place and moves on. The first thing is what happened to the people of Nuh, because they were at the dawn of mankind and at the beginning of the path, so the will of God decided to remove them from the path², and this is discussed in detail later insha'Allah.

“So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help me!” [54:10]. This supplication shows that he has reached the

1. Al-Maidani, p. 261.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2465.

stage of being overcome by those in authority. However, he was not overcome intellectually, as Nuh (*peace be upon them*) triumphed over them in the field of thought, argument, and proof. But he was overcome physically and materially, as he knew of their plots to get rid of him and those with him, while not having the material force equivalent to their strength. Although the mistreatment of his people would justify that he pray against them and ask Allah to take revenge, but instead he delegated this to his Lord for Him to decide in what way Nuh is to be granted victory. “So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help me!”

In Surat al-Anbiya, it was mentioned that Nuh prayed to his Lord with an urgent supplication that made him raise his voice to the point of calling upon Him. This was due to the intense distress that he and his family were in, with his people on the verge of implementing their threats upon them. It seems like these severe threats of harm were only directed to him and his family, not all his believing followers.¹

Allah Almighty said: “And [remember] when Nuh had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him and delivered him and his family from the great distress. And We made him prevail over those who had rejected Our signs. They were truly an evil people, so We drowned them all.” [21:76-77]

Allah answered him with two things:

1. Al-Maidani, p. 271.

Firstly: He and his family were saved from great distress before the flood, by means that the texts did not detail, and that was by hindering the implementation of what they had planned until the flood came.

Secondly: He granted him victory, taking revenge against his people who disbelieved, and drowning them all. He also granted him a victory of salvation on the ark until it settled on Mount Judi and arrived at dry land. The logical arrangement indicates that the supplication mentioned in Surat al-Mu'minun was made first, that the supplication mentioned in Surat al-Qamar came long after it, and that the call mentioned in Surat al-Anbiya came in the final stages when distress intensified. The three texts thus complete one another in explaining the reality, with each text being revealed at a time appropriate to the situation of the people who would receive Qur'anic verses gradually to solve their problems.

The attitude of the people of Nuh regarding his call in Surat al-Shu'ara

Allah Almighty says:

“The people of Nuh rejected the messengers when their brother Nuh said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]? I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you. So fear Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds. So fear Allah, and obey me.” They argued, “How can we believe in you, when you are followed [only] by the lowest of the low?” He responded, “And what knowledge do I have of

what they do? Their judgment is with my Lord, if you had any sense! I am not going to expel the believers. I am only sent with a clear warning.” They threatened, “If you do not desist, O Nuh, you will surely be stoned [to death].” Nuh prayed, “My Lord! My people have truly rejected me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” So We saved him and those with him in the fully loaded Ark. Then afterwards We drowned the rest. Surely in this is a sign. Yet most of them would not believe. And your Lord is certainly the Almighty, Most Merciful.” [26:105-122]

1. “The people of Nuh rejected the messengers.”

This is the end. The end of the story. However, it is highlighted first before then going into the details. The people of Nuh only belied Nuh, but He mentions here that they have rejected the messengers. That is because the message is one, it is a call to the oneness of God and the devotion of servitude to Him. This is the message of all the messengers, so whoever rejects it has belied all the messengers.

The Qur’an confirms this meaning in many places, in multiple ways, because it is one of the foundations of the Islamic faith. It embraces all the messages and divides humanity into two categories: believers and disbelievers. Over the course of these messages throughout the centuries, the Muslim sees that the believing nation of every religion and every creed that is from Allah is also his nation, from the dawn of history to the brightness of Islam, the last religion of monotheism. While the other rank is that of the disbelievers, in their various religions and sects. The believer believes in

all the messengers and respects them all, because they are all carriers of one message, the message of *tawhid*.¹ And any nation that rejects its messenger, has rejected all the messengers.

“when their brother Nuh said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]?”

“When their brother Nuh said to them.” The Noble Qur’an states explicitly that Nuh is a brother to his disbelieving people, in the sense of the brotherhood of humanity. The scholars of tafsir said that he the son of their forefathers and hence are brothers by lineage, not brothers in faith. “We have not sent a messenger except in the language of his people” [14:4]. Some said that the Arabs say, “O brother of Bani Tamim,” to mean that he is one of them. Brother is thus used to refer to a relative from the tribe.²

Brotherhood in its linguistic and Islamic meanings are of various levels, the first of which is the brotherhood of humanity with which the prophets were described in relation to their people. Allah Almighty said:

“And to the people of ‘d We sent their brother Hûd” [7:65]

“And to the people of Thamûd We sent their brother Şâlih” [7:73]

“And to the people of Midian We sent their brother Shu’aib” [7:85]

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2607.

2. Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 16/50.

“When their brother Hûd said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]?” [26:124]

“When their brother Şâlih said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]?” [26:142]

“When their brother Lot said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]?” [26:161]

This repeated in the Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah. In the hadith of the *Isra* (***night ascent***) each prophet at each sky would say: “Welcome, our righteous brother, the righteous prophet.”¹

The highest level of brotherhood is the brotherhood of faith. Allah Almighty said: “The believers are but one brotherhood” [49:10]. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “A believer is the brother of a believer.”²

It is the one that deserves its full rights and is the most important. However, some fanatics have restricted brotherhood to this type, rejecting other levels of brotherhood, and thus opposing the Qur’an and Sunnah. The word “brother” has typically always been used in relation to lineage, tribe, custom, and religion, and this has been consistently practised throughout history when people meet one another, regardless of their traits or conditions.

It is reported in the *sirah* of the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) that he said to someone: “O brother of the Arabs.” A gentle and kind words used by them.

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1. Muhammad Mustafa Al-Zuhaili, Allah’s Shari’ah for the Prophets, Dar Ibn Kathir, Damascus, 1st Ed., 2018, p. 94.
 2. Abu Dawud, 2/576.

“Will you not fear?” Will you not fear the consequence of what you are upon? Will your hearts not fear God? This guidance towards *taqwa* is consistent in this *surah*.¹

2. “I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you.”

He does not betray or deceive, nor does he add or take away from anything that he has been told to deliver. I am a messenger sent to you from God, entrusted with the messages of my Lord. I communicate them to you exactly as they are revealed to me from Him, without adding or subtracting. Him being a messenger of God, delivering His messages on behalf of his Lord, implies that they are commanded by God to obey Him, so He said to them:

3. “So fear Allah, and obey me.”

That is, fear the torment of God, and obey me in what I call you to, because if you do not, when I am a messenger of God, then you deserve His punishment and torment. So this is not about me, but about God, my Lord and yours.²

“I do not ask you for any reward for this [message].”

When people are invited to certain values, actions, or groups, one of the first things that often crosses their minds is that the person inviting them probably has some personal gain out of them following him. It was therefore wise of the prophet to announce clearly that he is not gaining any personal worldly benefit from inviting them to Allah, his

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2607.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 64.

Lord and theirs. It is known that the least of gains is to request some payment for what he is providing them in terms of advice, guidance, being keen on bringing them what benefits them, teaching and training their children to have faith, keep up noble manners, and worship Allah according to Allah's guidance. Thus, if he makes it clear that he is in no need of the least of gains (*payment*), then even more so those gains that are much greater and more difficult for them to accept.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) thus made it clear to them that he does not seek anything from them, no matter how little, in return for what he is inviting them to. "I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]."¹

4. *"My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds."*

However, this does not mean that he is not seeking any reward at all for this. That would be an unrealistic state for humans that he does not claim. He is seeking a reward from Allah the Lord of the world who has promised a great reward for those who call to Him. Nuh says, "My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds." In other words, my reward is reserved by Allah alone. He is the only one who I can guarantee will grant me my reward. Since, my reward is with Allah and I am not seeking anything from you, I am objectively reminding you of what I have said to you before:²

1. Ibid, p. 65.

2. Ibid.

5. “So fear Allah, and obey me.”

Here he repeats his advice for them to maintain taqwa and to obey him. After he settled the issue of making it clear that he is not seeking any personal gain, he says: “So fear Allah, and obey me.” However, they replied with an incredible response, a response that seems to be consistently repeated by humans against every messenger.¹

They argued, “How can we believe in you, when you are followed [only] by the lowest of the low?”

The people of Nuh were too arrogant to follow him, justifying it by saying that the lowly ones are the ones that followed him, and we will not follow a religion that is filled with such lowly followers. The word *arthalun* (**lowly**) may also mean those accused of committing vices, as well as those of a lower class and those with lowly professions.²

The poor are the ones who precede in following the messengers and the messages, and to accepting faith and submission. They are not prevented from guidance by empty pride, nor fear for any gain, status, or position, and hence they are the first to accept. As for the chiefs, their pride keeps them seated, and they are slowed down by their personal interests that are based on false circumstances and are in a religious dress. They refuse to allow *tawhid* to equate them with the masses of people, where all false values fall, and the one true value is raised, the value of

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2607.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 66.

faith and righteous deeds. One value that raises some people and lowers others, using one scale, the scale of pure creed and upright character. Nuh then responds to them with an answer that determines stable values, determines the role of the messenger, and leaves people and their judgment to God, based on what they do.¹

6. He responded, “And what knowledge do I have of what they do? Their judgment is with my Lord, if you had any sense! I am not going to expel the believers. I am only sent with a clear warning.”

“And what knowledge do I have of what they do?” They said to him, should we believe in you and follow you, even though the lowly have followed you, and you know that they are clearly lowly. He answered them by saying: “And what knowledge do I have of what they do?” That is, what is the effect of my knowledge on a divine call that God has commanded me to convey to all my people without exception? Are they not human beings who are also required to believe and do righteous deeds, regardless of their social class in your opinion? Do they not deserve, like others, the reward of God and paradise, if they believe and do good? Do they not deserve, like others, the punishment of God and hell, if they disbelieve and act evil? Are they not human beings capable of repentance and reform, regardless of the sins they committed before believing and following the messenger?

Even if I do know what bad deeds they were doing, is it

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2608.

my job to hold them accountable? I am only a messenger who communicates the message of my Lord. As for accountability for their deeds, then that is left to my Lord. He will judge them on the Day of Judgment. “Their judgment is with my Lord, if you had any sense.” My knowledge of what they used to do will therefore not stop me from calling them, when they are humans, like other human beings, responsible for keeping faith and acting righteously. They are tested like others in this life, held accountable on the Day of Judgment, and will be rewarded for their deeds like everyone else.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) thus made it clear to them that those who they saw as lowly are human beings like them, responsible before their Lord, and that he has been sent by his Lord to call them and others from his people. He is not a messenger to any specific social class.

After Nuh (*peace be upon him*) demonstrated this, he gently announced to them that he wished they would appreciate these facts, so he said to them: “if you had any sense.” The literal word used in Arabic is *tash’urun* (***if only you could feel that***). Feeling something is the first stage of perception. Then after lightly feeling something, stronger perceptions may appear, reaching the stage of knowledge and certainty.

Despite this wish, he hints that they are still in complete ignorance, as they have not yet even reached the stage of feeling or having a basic appreciation of the simple realities that he is calling them to.¹

1. Al-Maidani, p. 68.

They demanded that he expel those who followed him, believing in him and what he brought. Those who they described as lowly. They considered their expulsion a condition for accepting to follow him and submitting to him.

This is evidenced by his response to them: “I am not going to expel the believers.” I am not expelling any individual or group that has entered into the congregation of believers. Faith makes them part of this divine *ummah*, regardless of their previous social status, and whatever their behaviour was before, since Islam wipes one’s past clean.

Finally, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) demonstrated to his people the response that God had commanded him to give to those who denied and rejected, saying to them: ‘I am no more than a plain warner.’ That is, after delivering the clear message, I am only a plain warner to those who do not respond to my call.

He thus warns them of the punishment of God if they insist on their disbelief, stubbornness, and arrogance. He is very clear in his message, calling all classes of society and all its members who are able to understand the call, to believe and submit. He is not the leader of some secret organisation in which he conceals some of his principles and objectives, only revealing them to some people. Rather he is clear, plain, and apparent. Clear about all the aspects of his *da’wah*, without concealing any part of it.

This is the case with all the messengers sent by Allah and all of Allah’s messages to people. They are clear plain

messages to be conveyed to all people equally.

The trait *nathir* (**warner**) is mentioned here specifically, because the addressees of his people did not respond to him and did not believe in him and what he came with. He is therefore a warner to them.¹

When Nuh (*peace be upon him*) confronted them with his clear argument and straightforward logic, and they were unable to proceed with arguments based on evidence and proof, they resorted to what tyranny resorts to whenever proof is no longer an option for it. They resorted to serious physical threats. What tyrants resort to at every time and place, when they run out of arguments and become incapable of providing any proof.²

They threatened, “If you do not desist, O Nuh, you will surely be stoned [to death].” Nuh prayed, “My Lord! My people have truly rejected me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.”

The people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) were unable to defend their falsehood in the face of the proofs and arguments made by Nuh. Their minds even failed to think of a weak argument that they can cling to in order to remain steadfast upon. Their falsehood was thus overcome by the light of truth, their efforts overwhelmed by Nuh’s steadfastness, their resolve deteriorated in the face of his patience, and their strength weakened by the power of the truth. They

1. Ibid, p. 69.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2608.

then asked him to stop calling them to his religion and to stop pointing to their misguidance of idolatry, the religion of their fathers and grandfathers.

Of course Nuh did not accept this request. How could he stop calling them when God has sent him to them? Should he please them in God's wrath? That is an impossibility for a prophet chosen by Allah to carry His message, no matter how intense the challenges and how great the sacrifice. When their pleas for him to stop exposing their ignorance misguidance did not work, they resorted to using force and death threats, thinking that this would relieve them of inconvenience and save them from repeated defeat. The Qur'an narrates them saying: "If you do not desist, O Nuh, you will surely be stoned." Stoning means to be killed with stones, one of the most severe types of killing, and it shows the extent of their hatred towards Nuh (*peace be upon him*).¹

This is how tyrants resort to force, threats and intimidation, when they find themselves besieged from all angles by the clear arguments and a sound opinions of the people of truth.² Tyranny thus exposed its dark side, delusion revealed its harsh ways, and Nuh (*peace be upon him*) knew that hard hearts would not soften. Here, he turned to the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, the Helper, the Guardian, the only refuge for the believers: "My Lord! My people have truly rejected me.

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 56.

2. Muhammad Sayed Tantawi, *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit*, Dar Nahdat Misr, Cairo, 1st Ed., 1997, 1/3172.

So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” His Lord knows that his people have belied him, but this is his complaint to the Guardian, the Helper. He referred the matter to the One who controls all matters. “So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” Judge between me and my people, granting victory to your friends over your enemies, for my people have reached a stage at which there is no hope of them responding to the call of truth. What remains is for you to judge between us, O Lord, with your wisdom, “and save me and the believers with me.” God answered his prophet, who was threatened to be stoned by the tyrants only because he calls people to fear God and obey His messenger, not seeking any compensation for that, nor status or money.¹

7. “So We saved him and those with him in the fully loaded Ark.”

We answered his prayer directly, flooding the earth with water, and saving Nuh and those who believed with him in the loaded ark. Allah ordered for it to be built, for Nuh to board the ship and to carry with him a pair from every species along with the believers and his family, except those against whom the decree to drown has already been passed. They boarded the Ark and the water raised it at its height, carrying them, and Allah saved him and those who were with him.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2608.

8. “Then afterwards We drowned the rest.”

After a period of time from the escape of Nuh and those who believed with him, we drowned the rest of them. The verses imply that the people were rushing to the mountains and other high places trying to get away from the flooding waters falling from the sky and bursting from the earth. Those who were most able to ascend to the heights of the mountains and take refuge in them, were able to delay their drowning for a while. However, the water was catching up with them little by little, until the tops of the high mountains were flooded and the rest of the people of Nuh on earth were drowned, and they were the ones who did not board the Ark with him. Using the word “the rest” indicates that the drowning encompassed all of Nuh’s people, except for those who were carried by the Ark.¹

This brief summary depicts the final end of the battle between faith and tyranny at the dawn of mankind. It shows the fate of each subsequent battle in the long history of mankind. This is then followed by a reminder of the lesson that should be taken from this story while linking this to the attributes of God Almighty appropriate to the context.²

“Surely in this is a sign. Yet most of them would not believe. And your Lord is certainly the Almighty, Most Merciful.” [26:105-122]

“Surely in this is a sign.” That is, in this comprehensive divine punishment of the people of Nuh, there is a sign that

1. Al-Maidani, p. 73.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2608.

benefits the one who contemplates and ponders, the one not overwhelmed by his whims, and whose insight is not blinded by his desires and by the whispers of the devils.

“Yet most of them would not believe.” Most of those who drowned did not believe that God would inflict His punishment upon them and that Nuh’s warnings would befall them.

“Most of them,” indicates that some of them, though few, somewhat feared this consequence. Except that their blind subordination to their people made them follow them, despite their fear that what Nuh had warned them would be fulfilled. We can infer from this that a social phenomenon in human society is that many people are simply blind followers of what others do, even giving up their own personal convictions due to the influence of society.

The story includes two opposite events:

- **The first:** the encompassing flooding of Nuh’s people, which is a manifestation of God’s might and overriding power.
- **The second:** Nuh and his companions being saved in the loaded ark, preserved with great care, which is a manifestation of God’s mercy.

Allah Almighty therefore said at the end of the story: “And your Lord is certainly the Almighty, Most Merciful.” How perfect and great the rhetoric accuracy is in the speech of Allah Almighty!¹

1. Al-Maidani, p. 76.

Nuh: The Great Challenge

When Nuh's confronted him, accused him of insanity and delusion, mocked him, and disrespected him, and threatened to stone him, he directed the greatest challenge to them. Some scholars even said that the miracle of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is that challenge that he gave to his people.¹ Allah Almighty said:

“Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Nuh when he said to his people, “O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you, then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay! And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah].” But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark and made them successors, and drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!” [10:71-73]

We can see from the Qur’anic text that God Almighty instructed the Prophet Muhammad to recite this story to the disbelievers of Mecca during the Meccan phase. Implying that they have reached a stage with their actions against the messenger and those who believed with him for such

1. Uthman Al-Khamis, Fabi Hudahum Iqtadi, Elaf International Publishing House, Kuwait, 1st Ed. 2010, p. 65.

a challenge to be presented to them, like the one Nuh presented to his people. If this implication does not suffice them, then the messenger would challenge them in a more explicit way. Let us now ponder over each section of this passage.

“Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Nuh when he said to his people, “O my People!”

That is, after presenting the debates mentioned in Surat Yunus, before this passage, O Muhammad, recite to them the story of Nuh, when he said to his people: “O my people.”

1. “If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you”

God commanded our Prophet to recite this scene from the story of Nuh to his stubborn people, whose condition resembles that of Nuh’s people in stubbornness, persistence, and arrogance. To inform them of Nuh saying to his people, if my presence amongst you as a preacher, reminder, advisor, and one who relays Allah’s revelations to you, whether the teachings revealed in His book or natural signs that remind of Him and warn of His punishment. If that is too heavy on yourselves to take:

“then [know that] in Allah I have put my trust.”

Then I tell you that I have put my trust in God alone, none other, in thwarting what you plot and plan, and He will save me from you. He will bring His punishment down on you and inflict His torment upon you. Mentioning “in Allah” first indicates that he is restricting his trust to Allah alone.

2. ***“So devise a plot along with your associate-gods”***

Devise all your affairs that you are able to manage, with a consensus that you can agree on, and invite all your partners besides God to come together and strengthen you, and to provide you with powers from the *jinn*, mankind, and idols that you call upon besides God.¹

3. ***“and you do not have to be secretive (or obscure) about your plot”***

That is, do not make your plot against me a vague one that you do not know how to implement properly, nor let it be something that brings you distress. I am announcing this challenge to you so that you confront me with your plot openly and explicitly, and thus you will come out from the distress of confusion and hesitation.²

4. ***“then carry it out against me”***

That is, after you have devised your plot and made sure that you are able to get rid of me without facing any problems, go ahead and carry out what you have planned, whether that is to execute or stone me. Do whatever you want.³

5. ***“without delay!”***

That is, do not delay me for a single moment, no matter what excuses may appear to you to delay. This is as far as

1. Ibid.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 78.

3. Al-Khamis, p. 65.

challenges go, but someone like Nuh (*peace be upon him*) who has put his complete trust in God alone, guarantees that his Lord will support him and not let him down, and that He will annul the plot of his enemies and protect him from their evils.¹

It is this belief in God alone that connects one with God Almighty. This challenge is not one of rebellion, nor recklessness. Rather it is a challenge of trusting in God, His protection, victory, and help, the One in control of this universe and all that is in it. Where are the weak mortal powers in the face of the power and might of God that Nuh is holding on to?

“And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah].”

If you turn away from what I have been calling you from devising a plot to get rid of me, then know that I have never asked you for a reward or payment for this great good that I have brought you. Your turning away cannot therefore be an accusation against me of seeking some personal gains and a way to avoid paying me. You should know that my reward that I await is only from God, the One who sent me to you to convey His messages to you. Know, also, that I am like you, commanded by my Lord to be one of the Muslims.

After Nuh (*peace be upon him*) presented this challenge to

1. Al-Maidani, p. 79.

his people, as the stage in which Surat Yunus was revealed necessitated mentioning this challenge in a manner alluding to the idolators of Makkah, Allah showed the end of the people of Nuh so that it acts as a reminder for the idolators.¹

6. “But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark”

They belied him and warned him that he and those who believed with him would be stoned, if he did not stop with his call, so We decreed for them to be drowned and ordered Nuh to build the ark, which he did. The flooding then began and we ordered him to carry with him a pair from every species along with his family and the believers. They boarded the Ark and Allah saved him and those who were with him.

7. “and made them successors”

We made them successors who inherited the earth, leaving behind those who were destroyed, so they were the best successors to the worst predecessors.

“and [We] drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!”

What was the end fate of the disbelievers? These noble words clarified what happened to the deniers. God drowned them and described their drowning using the majestic “We”. The drowned were then described as “those who rejected Our signs”, to indicate towards their crime that caused them to be drowned. The majestic “We” was used

1. Ibid, p. 80.

throughout these verses to demonstrate their greatness and the greatness of the One who revealed these verses and caused the drowning and destruction of the disbelievers.¹

In this verse, there is a clear reminder found in the prophet's challenge. Whoever ponders over it will benefit from it and fear the consequences of wronging them. The one who contemplates this verse will discover that it aims at several goals: in it there is a warning to the disbelievers from falling into what the people of Nuh fell into; it informs the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) that he can, if he wants to, challenge the polytheists like Nuh did with his people, and to put his trust in God, for God will support him just as He supported Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and the believers with him; it also gives comfort to the believers with the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) that victory will eventually be for them and that He will take revenge from their oppressors.²

The Attributes of the People of Nuh

The Noble Qur'an mentions the traits of the people of Nuh, the most important of which are:

1. "They were certainly a blind people."

The word 'amin (*blind*) is only mentioned in two places in the Qur'an. Once in His statement, "But they rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark, and drowned those who rejected Our signs. They were certainly a blind people" [7:64]. The second place states: "No! Their

1. Nawfal, p. 251.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 81.

knowledge of the Hereafter amounts to ignorance. In fact, they are in doubt about it. In truth, they are [totally] blind to it.” [27:66]¹

This blindness is the blindness of the hearts that are blinded from insight. Allah has confirmed their misguidance due to their insight being removed. It is not the eyes that go blind, but it is the hearts that are in the chest that become blind.²

2. Oppression

It is interesting how the trait of *dhulm* (***oppression and injustice***) is repeated seven times in the Qur’an in relation to the people of Nuh. Allah Almighty said:

“Have they not received the stories of those [destroyed] before them: the people of Nuh, ‘Ad, and Thamud, the people of Abraham, the residents of Midian, and the overturned cities [of Lot]? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” [9:70]

In this verse, Allah first reminds of the people of Nuh and what occurred to them. He then mentioned the people of ‘Ad, Thamud, Ibrahim, the residents of Midian, and the *mu’tafikat* (***overturned cities***).³

The *mu’tafikat* are the villages of the people of Lut that

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1. Al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Beirut, third edition, 1407 AH, 2/109.
 2. Abu Zahra, Zahrat al-Tafasir, 6/2882.
 3. Al-Maidani, p. 313.

were overturned during their destruction. “Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” That is, they disbelieved, denied their messengers, oppressed, and transgressed, so God decreed their punishment, punishing them with an immediate punishment in this life, so that they would be an example for those who contemplate. God did not oppress them with the punishment that He inflicted on them, nor would Allah have wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves. The present tense verb is used in this verse to suggest that their oppression to themselves continued until their demise, and to evoke an unpleasant image of their oppression, so that the pure souls would be put off them and the people of truth after them would condemn them.¹

In Surat al-Furqan, Allah Almighty said: “And when the people of Nuh rejected the messengers, We drowned them, making them an example to humanity. And We have prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers” [25:37]. In His statement, “We have prepared for the wrongdoers”, i.e. the polytheists from the people of Nuh. “A painful punishment,” in the afterlife. Others said it mean that this is My way with all wrongdoers.² Allah Almighty said:

“Surely they were more unjust and more rebellious.”
[53:52]

“It was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!”
[11:44]

1. Al-Raqb, p. 188.

2. Mustafa Al-Adawi, Al-Tashil li Ta'wil al-Tanzil, p. 123.

“Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing.” [29:14]

Injustice (*dhulm*) among the people of Nuh has become a phenomenon, not at an individual level only, but on a societal level. On one hand, *dhulm* can be used to mean shirk: “Indeed, ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*) is a grave transgression” [31:13]. On the other, it can also mean to wrong and transgress against the people of truth, because the disbelievers used to harm Nuh (*peace be upon him*) in various ways, or that they wronged themselves with disbelief, denial, not being thankful to Allah Almighty, and by referring blessings to other than the One who granted them, so they deserved to be punished for that.¹

Here is a glamorous point made by Raghīb, as he so often does, in which he says: “*Dhulm (injustice and transgression)* is placing a thing in a place other than its proper place, either by decrease, increase, or by a departure from its appropriate time or place. It is used whether the transgression is great or small.”²

It is understood from the words of Raghīb that *dhulm* is a broad term that includes - in addition to the above - many meanings, such as ingratitude, causing harm to oneself, haste, lying, betrayal, backbiting, gossip, and other vile manners. Hence, *dhulm* is used for greater and lesser sins.

The people of Nuh committed *dhulm* in its various forms, which is why Allah Almighty said: “And do not plead with

1. AL-Raqb, p. 189.

2. Al-Mufradat, p. 326.

Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” [11:37] and [23:27]

The past verb in the previous two verses were used in Surat Hud and Surat al-Mu’minun indicating that *dhulm* is deeply instilled into them and widespread, especially since both verses mentioned the punishment immediately after the mention of *dhulm*.

3. An evil people

This attribute is not mentioned in the stories of the prophets except for two nations:

The people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*). They were described as such once in Surat al-Anbiya. Allah Almighty said: “And [remember] when Nuh had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him and delivered him and his family from the great distress. And We made him prevail over those who had rejected Our signs. They were truly an evil people, so We drowned them all.” [21:76-77]

The people of Lut (*peace be upon him*). They were described as such in Surat al-Anbiya. Allah Almighty said: “And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge, and delivered him from the society engrossed in shameful practices. They were certainly an evil, rebellious people.” [21:74]

We notice that the two descriptions came in the context of the people of Lut and the people of Nuh (*peace be upon them*) consecutively in the same Surah. The expression “an evil people”, denotes the depth of their evil¹ and that

1. Tafsir al-Alusi, 17/109.

they have fallen into evils and wrongs. Describing the “people” with evil is an indication that they were known for it. The evils that are mainly referred to here are disbelief, stubbornness, and disrespecting their messenger.¹

4. **Disbelief and dishonesty**

They are a people who belied and denied the messenger over and over again with words and actions. This denial was infused into their hearts, sufficing in disbelief, stubbornness, and far removed from the *fitrah* and the characteristics of masculinity.² Allah Almighty said:

“Before them, the people of Nuh denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated.” [54:9]

“The people of Nuh rejected the messengers” [26:105]

“But the disbelieving chiefs of his people said [to the masses], “This is only a human like you, who wants to be superior to you. Had Allah willed, He could have easily sent down angels [instead]. We have never heard of this in [the history of] our forefathers.” [23:24]

5. **Fasiqun (rebellious and immoral)**

This was mentioned twice in the context of the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and it means that they exceeded the limits in their disbelief and sin.³ Allah Almighty said: “And

1. Tafsir Ibn Ashur, 17/114.

2. Ahmad Sulaiman al-Raqb, *Manhaj al-Da’wah ila Allah fi Surat Nuh*, p. 191

3. Ibid.

the people of Nuh [had also been destroyed] earlier. They were truly a rebellious people.” [51:46]

The rebelliousness (*fisq*) of the people of Nuh were of all kinds. They were rebellious with disbelief and polytheism, with injustice and aggression, with oppression and tyranny, and by committing major sins and immoralities. This text thus added that Nuh’s people were immoral and rebellious.¹

Allah Almighty said: “And indeed, We sent Nuh and Abraham and reserved prophethood and revelation for their descendants. Some of them are [rightly] guided, while most are rebellious.” [57:26]

Zamakhshari commented on Allah’s statement in the context of the people of Nuh and Abraham (*peace be upon them*) saying: “Prevalence was for the immoral, clearly indicating falling into evils, the abundance of corruption, the spread of vices, and deviating from obedience to God in every way.”²

6. Transgression (*tughyan*)

This is mentioned once in the Qur’an with the word *atgha* indicating that they were far worse in their transgression. “And before [that He destroyed] the people of Nuh, who were truly far worse in wrongdoing and transgression.” [53:52]

Transgression is to cross the boundaries, while *dhulm* is

1. Al-Maidani, p. 164.

2. Al-Raqb, p. 191.

to put something in its improper place. Transgression is thus worse than dhulm. They were described as being “far worse” because they had heard the reminders but were heedless of them for prolonged periods of time until he prayed against them.¹ They thus reached the pinnacle of transgression and were more rebellious than those after them, so their compensation was of a proportional and befitting manner, “Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark” [69:11]. Literally, the verse says when the floodwater had “transgressed”, with the same word tagha being used to describe their punishment.

Thus, after tracing the characteristics of Nuh’s people (*peace be upon him*) in the previous verses, a society appears in front of us that is the worst in terms of order, morality and type. In it, everything is overwhelmed by transgression reaching a climax in evil, immorality, injustice, tyranny, lying and disbelief. This system of vices leads to other problems and disasters, such as arrogance, deception and indulgence, stubbornness and obsession with sins, blind following, and other ills and diseases that created such an unpleasant environment.

It is clear that this is a sick society, controlled by a group of the rich and powerful, surrounded by crowds who have disabled their minds, the foolish, and a group whose whole bodies are immersed in vices, their fitrah has become corrupted, and emotions frozen. They are no longer functioning properly, so they do not recognise the good and

1. Tafsir al-Razi, 29/24.

do not deny what is evil. Cleansing the earth from them and eradicating their sins was therefore a just divine order, and praise be to Allah.¹

Obstacles to accepting Nuh's call

The Noble Qur'an speaks about the life of the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and their most prominent diseases, faults, and characteristics. It also speaks about the obstacles that prevented them from responding to the call of monotheism and the pure worship of God Almighty that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) called for. Among the most important obstacles mentioned by God Almighty in his Noble Book are the following:

1. The First Obstacle: Pride and Arrogance

The most comprehensive definition of pride is found in the statement of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*): "Pride is the rejection of truth and belittlement of people."² Belittling people means to demean and disrespect them. It is a hidden trait, but appears on one's actions. A trait that causes one to see himself as being above others, making him someone arrogant. Pride in Nuh's people is something quite apparent in many verses.

"Do you find it astonishing that a reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own, warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?" [7:63]

1. AL-Raqb, p. 192.

2. Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 108

“They argued, “How can we believe in you, when you are followed [only] by the lowest of the low?” [26:111]

“I do not say to you that I possess Allah’s treasures or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel, nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon. Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them. [If I did,] then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.” [11:31]

In Surat Nuh this trait was mentioned about them in an explicit way: “They persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly” [71:7]. An indication of the entrenchment of this ugly characteristic in them. From this arrogance emerges the stubborn features of human childhood, so they try their best to close their ears so that the voice of truth does not leak into them, which is a clear example of persistence and stubbornness, as well as being a primitive image of adult children.¹

This arrogance is evidence of the presence of a thick veil and a psychological pride that prevents one from hearing the call of truth. This exaggeration is consistent with their condition, because if they put their fingers in their ears and cover their faces with their clothes, the impediment to hearing becomes stronger. It is said that the worst type of arrogance is that which prevents one from benefitting from knowledge, accepting the truth, and submitting to it. The people of Nuh did all of this due to the underlying illness in their hearts. They were too proud to accept Nuh’s call

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3712.

to God Almighty, while believing that they are correct in doing so. Sometimes they refuse, while being aware of the truth, but they cannot get themselves to submit and humble themselves to the noble messenger.¹

Allah Almighty says in His book: “He certainly does not like those who are too proud” [16:23]; and He said: “And do not walk on the earth arrogantly. Surely you can neither crack the earth nor stretch to the height of the mountains.” [17:37]

Many Prophetic reports have been narrated denouncing arrogance, including that reported by Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (*may God be pleased with him*) that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “He who has an atom of arrogance in his heart shall not enter Paradise.”²

2. The Second Obstacle: Stubbornness

Stubbornness is one form of pride and arrogance. The stubborn are those who show enmity to the call of preachers, accuse them, mistrust them, and stand up against them and the truth that they call to.³

The wording ‘*anid (stubborn)*’ is mentioned in the Noble Qur’an four times, all in a negative context, with no other of its derivatives mentioned in the Qur’an. Allah Almighty said:

1. Al-Raqb, p. 196.

2. Sahih Muslim, No. 91

3. Al-Raqb, p. 197.

“That was ‘Ad. They denied the signs of their Lord, disobeyed His messengers, and followed the command of every stubborn tyrant.” [11:59]

“And both sides called for judgment, so every stubborn tyrant was doomed.” [14:15]

“[It will be said to both angels,] “Throw into Hell every stubborn disbeliever” [50:24]

“But no! [For] he has been truly stubborn with Our revelations.” [74:16]

The people of Nuh were known for their stubbornness, which was one of the obstacles of responding to the call of Nuh (*peace be upon him*). Nuh’s call only took them further away from the call and its teachings. “But my calls only made them run farther away.” [71:6]

Stubbornness and persistence are two characteristics of the one whose heart and mind have been deprived of the divine light, thinking that the dazzling light might take away his sight, because he has become so used to living in the swamps of evil and the lands of darkness, like bats. From these darkened eyes arose a darkened insight, after which he was no longer able to benefit from divine revelation, and this is exactly what happened to the people of Nuh (*peace be upon him*). They, out of pride and stubbornness, assumed the worst in him and his intentions, and this prevented them from benefitting from the light and guidance that he has brought from Allah.

3. The Third Obstacle: Blind Following

The blind imitation of forefathers and rigidly following customs, for many people, is what stood in the way of the calls of the messengers and the prophets (*peace be upon them*). It is noticeable that most of the verses that spoke about following forefathers spoke about it in a negative context, although there are examples in which doing so has purified and bettered people, when this following is based on proof and evidence. As stated by Yusuf (*peace be upon him*): “I follow the faith of my fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not [right] for us to associate anything with Allah [in worship]. This is part of Allah’s grace upon us and humanity, but most people are not grateful.” [12:38]

The imitation of forefathers and fanatically following them began at an early stage in human history through the people of Nuh. They followed their early forefathers without consideration or scrutiny, adopting the most dangerous and most ignorant type of blind following, that which relates to faith and worship.¹ This disastrous disease appears among the people of Nuh in the words of the Almighty: “and they followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss.” [71:21]

They followed the rich and powerful who were led to pride due to their wealth and children, so were destroyed and lost the happiness of the two worlds, becoming role models in loss. They continued in their disobedience to

1. Abbas Al-Aqqad, Thinking is an Islamic Necessity, Al-Maktabah al-Asriya, Beirut, 2008, p. 20.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*), but were merely followers of those above them, not that they were independent with their disobedience. This is an indication that the followers from the people of Nuh are accountable for their disobedience and they have no excuse for being subordinate to their masters, for faith is nothing but a liberation of the soul and the mind.

Likewise, the people of Nuh did not seek to know right from wrong, nor truth from falsehood by themselves, but rather they returned to their forefathers. They are like the weak person who does not trust himself and lives according to the rules of others. When proof comes to him and the argument overcomes him, he simply goes back to the forefathers the predecessors.¹ To the extent that if one of these people of Nuh had a child that began to mature and understand a little, he would privately advise him never to believe in Nuh.

It is a miserable state of enslavement to customs that people are used to. This enslavement that robs a human of the inherent characteristics that distinguish humans: the freedom to contemplate and ponder, and the freedom to think and believe. Instead it makes him a slave to custom and tradition, a slave to societal norms, and a slave to what his passions and whims impose on him. Every door to knowledge and every window of light closes on him. This way, the people hastened the torment to flee from facing the truth, in fact, to flee from even contemplating the ridiculousness of the falsehood that they were slaves to.²

1. Al-Raqb, p. 200.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 3/1311.

Nuh tried his best to turn the hearts of his people away from clinging to the heritage of their forefathers, warning that being a predecessor does not necessitate knowledge. Rather predecessors and successors are equal in their *fitrah* and ability to distinguish. By doing this Nuh released the authority of reason from everything that binds it and saved it from any blind imitation that enslaved it, returning it to its kingdom with its wisdom and rule, while at the same time submitting it to God Almighty alone and abiding by His laws.¹

Blind imitation is a great danger that has afflicted humanity with disasters, not only in relation to belief and worship only, but on all levels. The miserable situation the Islamic world is witnessing today, fatal dependency, and comprehensive blind imitation, confirms the danger of this germ and its destructive effects. The blind imitation of today is not that of individuals or groups, but total imitation of countries as a whole, to powerful colonial states. This has put the Muslims in an awful situation, blindly imitating and being dependant morally, socially, politically, and economically, even following them into an unpleasant lizard hole. Allah's Messenger has spoken the truth when he said: "You shall follow the ways of those before you, inch by inch, step by step, so much so that if they had enter into a lizard hole, you would follow them into it."²

Hence, the Qur'an rebuked and belittled blind imitation

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1. Muhammad Abdu, *Risalat al-Tawhid*, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo, 2009, p. 160.
 2. Bukhari, No. 7320.

and those who imitate in falsehood, so Allah Almighty said:

“When it is said to them, “Follow what Allah has revealed,” they reply, “No! We [only] follow what we found our forefathers practicing.” [Would they still do so,] even if their forefathers had [absolutely] no understanding or guidance? The example of the disbelievers [not responding to the Messenger’s warning] is like a flock not comprehending the calls and cries of the shepherd. [They are wilfully] deaf, dumb and blind so they have no understanding.” [2:170-171]

“They reply, “No! We only follow what we found our forefathers practicing.” They fanatically insisted on following what they found their forefathers doing. How can they give precedence to their inherited customs over Allah’s guidance, even if their forefathers did not have a mind that is disciplined by monotheism, nor any guidance revealed by God.¹

Out of belittlement for them, He described them, in the way they imitated their forefathers and superiors, as wild cattle who listen to the croaking and shouting of their shepherd when leading them to the pasture, calling them to the water, and discouraging them from nearing any prohibited boundaries. They are familiar with his shouting and calling, but do not understand the meanings of what he says. They simply hear certain familiar sounds that make them come and other familiar sounds that make them go,

1. Hassan al-Turabi, *Al-Tafsir al-Tawhidi*, Dar al-Saqi, Beirut, Lebanon, 2004, 1/137.

without understanding why they need to come or go.¹

We can see how serious imitation in falsehood and accepting speech without proof is. How great the plot of the Devil is for the imitators when he lured them until imitating their forefathers in the worship of statues, rolling their foreheads for them, believing that they are on some sort of guidance, sternly supporting their ways, and arguing for their falsehood with the people of truth. It is enough of an insult for the people of blind imitation that the idol worshippers are from them.

4. The Fourth Obstacle: Idolatry

Idols (*awthan*) are stones that are worshipped besides Allah. Allah Almighty said: “He said [to his people], “You have taken idols [for worship] instead of Allah”” [29:25]

The mention of *awthan* (**plural of wathan, meaning idol**) is found three times in the Qur’an in two different context:

In the first, there is a command to avoid *awthan*, describing them as an impurity, and mentioning them alongside false witness, which is a clear indicator of how evil idol worship is. “So shun the impurity of idolatry, and shun words of falsehood.” [22:30]

In the second context, *awthan* are mentioned as providing no benefit whatsoever in this life or the next: “You worship besides Allah nothing but idols” [29:17]; and “He said [to

1. Muhammad Rashid Rida, Tafsir Al-Manar, General Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, 1990, 2/93-94.

his people], “You have taken idols [for worship] instead of Allah”” [29:25]

It is interesting that last two passages are mentioned in Surat Al-Ankabut, in which their worship of idols besides God is compared with a spider’s web. It will not provide any protection against the heat, cold, rain, or any other harm.¹ Allah Almighty said: “The parable of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of a spider spinning a shelter. And the flimsiest of all shelters is certainly that of a spider, if only they knew” [29:41]. Meaning that the weakest of shelters is that of a spider, due to its small size and shakiness. If they knew that their idols are similarly weak, they would not have worshipped them.²

The idolatry of Nuh’s people is evident in Allah’s statement: “They said [urging their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.’” [71:23] Nuh’s people were the first people on earth to worship idols, and I have already explained how this shirk began in previous pages.

It should be noted that the idols mentioned in the previous verse are their largest and greatest idols, so they specifically mentioned them to the misled masses to remind them of loyalty and pride. They were also their biggest deities who continued to be worshiped in the age of ignorance (*Jahiliyyah*) after them until the era of the Muhammadan message. The chiefs of Nuh’s people tried to encourage the

1. Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 13/229.

2. Muhammad Ali al-Sabouni, Safwat al-Tafasir, 2/461.

masses to cling on to worshipping these idols and to not accept the call of Nuh (*peace be upon him*). They have truly led others far astray, as is always the case with leadership that gathers people around idols.

5. The Fifth Obstacle: The Chiefs

Discussion about the *mala'* (*the chiefs*) in the Qur'an - as we shall see - appears in more than one context, due to the seriousness of this matter at all levels and in different eras. That is because the growth or suppression of any civilization depends on the nature and ethics of its influential leaders. The issue is not only in the tyranny of these leaders, but the problem is further complicated when the rest of the nation freezes and becomes a flock, giving away their minds, energy, and capabilities, to those false leaders who then, willingly or unwillingly, drag them into the depths of hell.¹

The *mala'* are those leaders and chiefs who people return to and follow. This word is mentioned 30 times in the Qur'an.

Twice mentioned with honour, when Allah Most High mentioned the highest assembly in heaven. “[And say,] “I had no knowledge of the highest assembly [in heaven] when they differed [concerning Adam]”” [38:69], and in Surat al-Saffat: “They cannot listen to the highest assembly [of angels] for they are pelted from every side.” [37:8]

Five times it was mentioned in its general meaning of the leaders and chiefs of people, such as His statement:

1. Al-Raqb, p. 207.

“O chiefs! Tell me the meaning of my dream if you can interpret dreams.” [12:43]

It was mentioned 23 times in the context of pride, disbelief, and enmity against towards the Prophets (*peace be upon them*), such as: “He said, “O Moses! The chiefs are actually conspiring against you to put you to death, so leave [the city]. I really advise you [to do so].” [28:20]

Likewise, they are described in in the Holy Qur’an as: rabbis and monks, the seniors of the people, the opulent, the leaders of disbelief, kings, criminals, oppressors, and the demons of mankind.¹

We have already spoken about the debate that took place between the chiefs and Nuh (*peace be upon him*), their accusations that Nuh was in clear delusion, that he was only a human being like them, that he wanted to be superior to them, and that his followers were the poor and weak, and how Nuh responded to every accusation directed against him.

Surat Nuh showed the deception of the chiefs, their stagnation upon paganism and the traditions of their forefathers, their incitement of hatred against Nuh, and the harm they caused him and the believers with him.

“and they devised a tremendous plot, urging [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.’ Those [elite] have already led many astray. So [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away.” [71:22-24]

1. Ibid, p. 208.

The causes of the enmity of chiefs to preachers and their call are many, the most important of which are:

- **Arrogance.** They imagine that calling to God Almighty and to the path of truth will reduce their influence and perhaps eliminate their status altogether; a perception that is not correct, unless they are among the oppressors who live on rejecting the truth and build their own lives through destroying the lives of others. But if they are people of truth, justice, and equality, then calling to God Almighty will be their greatest protection and their best source of safety.¹

- **Love of leadership and prestige.** Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali says in this regard:

“We notice about the disbelieving nations that they do not discuss issues of divinity, resurrection, and uprightness, in an objective way, using the intellect that they had been blessed with the way it should be used. They are instead concerned with something else that we must disclose, because its germ is still spoiling nations to the present day. What did Nuh ask of his people? He told them: “Worship God, fear Him, and obey me.” Then he described to them the God who he is inviting them to worship. Do you not see how He created seven layered heavens? But the people of Nuh did not think about this God, His greatness, and His rights, but rather thought about themselves, their rank, their wealth, and their status. They thought that this new da’wah will make Nuh superior to them and make those

1. Ibid, p. 209.

who followed him first of a higher rank. Indeed, the foolish person sees intelligence as a challenge to him, and disputes everything that he fears from it.”¹

- **Ignorance and foolishness.** Ignorance is of three types: The first is the absence of knowledge, which is the default. The second is believing something contrary to what it actually is in reality. The third type is to do something contrary to what one is supposed to do, whether his belief regarding it is correct or incorrect. Foolishness is a deficiency in intellect.²

The actions of the chiefs

Makr (*deceptive plotting*). Allah Almighty said: “and they devised a tremendous plot.” [71:22]

Here is an insightful thought mentioned by Abu al-Sa’ud: “This deceptive plotting (*makr*) can either mean to divert Nuh (*peace be upon him*) from carrying out his call or to distract the public from following him. In the first case, it refers to the chiefs inciting the masses to harm and kill Nuh. In the second case, it refers to Allah Almighty’s statement: “ And they said [urging their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.” [71:23]

Both matters are great, whether to divert people away from the truth or to conspire and incite the killing of

1. Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *The Five Themes of the Qur’an*, Dar Al-Shorouk, Cairo, 1st edition 2000, p. 108.

2. Al-Mufradat, p. 100.

God’s prophet Nuh. That is why He described their plot as “tremendous”. However, to conspire to kill is more severe, because it involves diverting people away from the path of Allah and is the pinnacle of enmity.”¹

Part of their deception was to say, these idols are your gods and the gods of your forefathers. If you accept Nuh’s words, it means you are confessing that you were ignorant disbelievers and on that your forefathers were too. Since admitting one’s own deficiencies and those of one’s predecessors is so difficult to do, using terms such as “your gods”, saying, “do not leave your gods”, diverted them from the religion. Due to the subtle nature of this speech, God described it as *makr*.²

From the aforementioned, it becomes clear that *makr* is a form of deception, and that it was a prominent characteristic in every one of the chiefs of Nuh’s people. They resort to deception and trickery to bring about evil to those they perceive to be their enemies, and when deception fails, they resort to oppression and abuse.

Extravagance. This extravagance appears in Nuh’s people in Allah’s statement: “and they followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss.” [71:21]

The meaning here is that the weaker ones followed their chiefs and the wealthy among them, but their abundant of

1. Tafsir Abu al-Sa’ud, 9/40

2. Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, 30/142.

wealth and offspring only increased them in misguidance in this life and punishment in the hereafter.¹ The community of Nuh's people comprised several classes: the leaders and the followers, the rich and the poor, and the strong and the weak.

And the luxuriant ones in every nation are the wealthy leaders, who have money, servants, and comfort, enjoying luxury and sovereignty, eventually becoming indulged in sin and immorality, belittling any value, sanctity, and dignity, and abolishing people's honour and privacy. When there is nobody there to watch over them, they behave corruptly on the earth, spreading immorality in the community, and degrading the noble values that people cannot live without. The *ummah* then disintegrates and loosens, loses its vitality, its areas of strength, and the things its survival is based on, thus becoming destroyed altogether.²

Extravagance has many harms: it corrupts the *fitrah*, aggravates emotions, blocks the senses, and weakens the delicate sensitivity of the heart that allows it to understand, sympathise, and respond. For this reason Islam tackled extravagance and established its society on a basis that does not allow extravagance to exist in the Muslim community, because, like mould, it spoils what is around it. Extravagance also leads to arrogance towards the servants of God, lying, hypocrisy, and the greatest and most dangerous of harms; getting in the way of the call of truth and preventing its

1. Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir*, 5/300.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2217.

light from reaching those dark minds plunged into a deep slumber.¹ These are the main obstacles that the *da'wah* of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) faced.



1. Al-Raqb, p. 216.

chapter

4

Nuh's
Report To
His Lord
Towards
His People

Chapter 4: Nuh's report to his Lord towards his people and his complaint about their disobedience to him and his supplication against them in Surat Nuh

First: Nuh's report to his Lord and what he did towards his people

Allah Almighty said:

“He cried, “My Lord! I have surely called my people day and night, but my calls only made them run farther away. And whenever I invite them to be forgiven by You, they press their fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their clothes, persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly. Then I certainly called them openly, then I surely preached to them publicly and privately.”” [71:5-9]

1. “He cried, My Lord! I have surely called my people day and night, but my calls only made them run farther away.”

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) made his call encompass both the times of day and night, to signify the lack of relentlessness in his eagerness to guide them, choosing the times that he perceives are more likely for them to understand his call. That is at times of activity, which is during the day, and at times of calm and peace of mind, which is during the night. The noble verses imply that he was close to them, awaiting any opportunity to influence them, at day or night, without lethargy or delay.¹

1. Al-Raqb, p. 174.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) used to approach his people as groups and individuals, day and night, without fatigue or boredom. He would call them to the way of his Lord with wisdom and kind advice. He presents his message to them and informs them of what God has commanded to him inform of matters of the faith, promises and warnings, reminding them of verses that he recites to them, and remains incredibly patient with them.¹

However, his long perseverance in calling his people did not affect them, and the more he called them, the more they would flee from him. The expression “fleeing” or “running away” comes as a metaphor for the most severe form of rejecting the invitation. It is as though the preacher is a lion who wants to prey on them while they flee from him in fear and panic, not wishing to understand anything that Nuh offers them.

Even more severe than this expression is that which God mentioned about some of the leaders of the disbelievers of Quraish, who fled from the call of the Messenger of God Muhammad (*peace be upon him*). Allah Almighty said in Surat Al-Muddathir: “Now, what is the matter with them that they are turning away from the reminder, as if they were spooked zebras fleeing from a lion?” [74:49-51]

“And whenever I invite them to be forgiven by You, they press their fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their clothes, persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly.”

1. Al-Maidani, p. 179.

That is, their frequent practice and consistent response, whenever Nuh (*peace be upon him*) called them to faith, Islam, and obedience, giving them hope that their past sins would be forgiven, was that they would respond to his call with two physical and two internal actions:

The two physical actions are:

The first: to put their fingers in their ears, so that they do not hear his words and make him feel that his words are in the air unheard, so it is better for him not to tire himself out by speaking to those who do not hear his words. They seek to make him feel that his words have become repetitive, and that they feel disgusted upon hearing them, and he should thus keep away from them.¹ This behaviour indicates their bad manners and mockery of the Prophet of God Nuh, and it indicates their misguidance and the nearing of their destruction.²

The second: to cover their faces with their clothes so that they do not see him, to make him feel that they have completely turned away from him, and that he has become a burden on them so they wish to avoid even seeing his face. This action, as well as blocking their ears with their fingers, is clearly an extremely disrespectful and belittling action. However, Nuh (*peace be upon him*) kept inviting them patiently, seeking his reward from God, indifferent to what he receives from them.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 181.

2. Aqid Khaled Al-Azzawi, *Al-Taswir al-Qurani wa Siyaqatuhu al-Dalaliyyah*, Dar Al-Asmaa for Printing and Publishing, Damascus, Syria, 1st Ed., 2016, p. 34.

The two internal actions are:

The first: their insistence on disbelief, their stubbornness, and their refusal to respond to him, indicated by his statement, “persisted”. The Arabic word *israr* (*persistence*) is usually used in the context of immoral and sinful actions.¹

The second: their outrageous and excessive arrogance to obedience to God and following His Messenger, indicated by His statement, “and act very arrogantly.” Their action of placing their fingers in their ears and covering their faces from him with their clothes indicates serious arrogance, as well as immaturity.

This is a clear indication of the intensity of their hatred of Nuh's call. These people were easily able to move away from the call and turn away from it without the need for such behaviour, but it is there deep illusion and severe stubbornness.²

2. “Then I certainly called them openly, then I surely preached to them publicly and privately.”

After despairing of inviting them openly, I took the method of public and private preaching, according to the different circumstances of people and depending on what is most appropriate.

“Called them openly”. I invited them openly as individuals and as groups, in the way of publicly speaking

1. Al-Maidani, p. 181.

2. Abd al-Razzaq Adham al-Jumaili, Creed in the Qur'an: The Messengers of Ulu al-Azm as a Model, p. 164.

to people. This is a method different to that of preaching, but rather a calmer approach which can involve questions and answers, discussion and debate, giving and taking, and dialogue. As for preaching and delivering sermons, then that was used to as mentioned in the statement, “preached to them publicly”. As for calling them openly, then it includes what we know today as lessons, lectures, conversations, dialogues, debates, and so on.

“Preached to them ... privately.” That is, I individually invited some of them privately, because some people dislike being taught or given advice publicly in front of other people, but may accept it if given privately.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) used this method with those who he felt may dislike and refuse to accept being instructed, taught, counselled, or preached to publicly. They feel that this diminishes their status in front of the masses who hold them in high regard and see them as being great in their thoughts, opinions, understanding, and actions. How then can they respond to a call that invites them to abandon their beliefs and practices in life?¹

The adjective “*israran*” is mentioned in the verse to mean that he would keep things as private as possible in some cases. He would not publish it or speak about it to people, to make it more likely for him to have some impact on them.²

1. Al-Maidani, p. 183.

2. Ibid.

This passage indicates that the method of preaching adopted by Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is as follows:

- The first stage: His call to his people was in the manner of general invitation, taking any opportunity to invite people, day or night. He would approach individuals and invite them, and approach groups and invite them, clarifying, explaining, establishing arguments, advising, enticing, and admonishing. This continued for a period of time.

- The second stage: He began to publicly preach at gatherings and congregations at which he was able to preach. It is known that preaching involves – alongside intellectual persuasion – the method of kind advice through enticement and admonishment, the use of stories, metaphors, and other methods of rhetoric that stir emotions and provide the listener with a psychological readiness to listen.

Also necessary for good rhetoric is the ability to diversify the methods of delivery and the ideas being presented, and to vary the tone of voice in accordance with the intellectual content being presented, including having an impact that is sometimes emotional and sad, arousing and exciting, and humorous.

Indeed powerful rhetoric can make the miserly person give, the coward become brave, a laughing person cry, a crying person laugh, a sad person rejoice, and a rejoicing person grieve, it can entertain the worried, and make a heedless person care. The wise eloquent orator's tongue has the tools of warming and cooling the souls, hearts and

thoughts. This peaching continued for a period of time.

- The third stage: He began to practice his call in two ways. Those he felt would not be put off by public preaching, he would invite them as individuals or groups. While those who are too arrogant to accept this and may turn away from listening to him, he would visit them in their homes, their stores, their factories, their farms, or their private places, and speak to them privately, calling them to the religion of God.¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) chose the appropriate method and progression in calling to God and monotheism. He shows us that secrecy and publicity are not two fixed approaches and methods in preaching, but rather that this is dependent on circumstances, appropriateness, what is most beneficial, opposing forces, and short term and long term goals.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) practiced his call from the outset openly and publicly. When pressure and hardship intensified, he resorted to a more secretive approach, as public preaching was no longer effective, in fact, it may have harmed his efforts and his message. He knew that he could return to public preaching whenever he feels reasonable reassurance, not placing his message, his followers, and his efforts at risk. Therefore secrecy and publicity are thus matters dictated by circumstances, and this is what Nuh (*peace be upon him*) followed, and it is the Sunnah that our Messenger Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) also followed.²

1. Ibid.

2. Aboud Al-Radi, *Fi Rehab Qasas al-Anbiya*, 1/123.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was diligent in calling to God, exerting all his effort. He used to call his people at various times, circumstances, and situations with all seriousness, perseverance, and diligence, continuing his pursuit of da'wah for "a thousand years, less fifty." The pinnacle of effort, greatness in perseverance, and an unmatched brilliance in diligence. For nine hundred and fifty years he works diligently, day and night, in private and in public. Truly a great thing. In fact, a truly unique model in the world of divine calls on earth and an example in the world of seriousness and diligence for the sake of elevating the word of God Almighty. Such a model only manifested in those who God has chosen to deliver His message, and those who follow their path and draw inspiration from their lives. "These [prophets] were rightly guided by Allah, so follow their guidance." [6:90]¹

Nuh encourages his people to seek forgiveness

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) encouraged his people to seek forgiveness, so that good things would descend upon them. Allah Almighty said: "So I said, 'Seek your Lord's forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers'" [71:10-12]

After Nuh's first call to his people and their insistence on disbelief, immorality, disobedience, and being too arrogant to follow the Messenger of their Lord to them, they became

1. Ibid.

aware of the content of his call, not ignorant of the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, and the major teachings of the religion. They no longer had any excuse left, and were thus knowingly and intentionally sinful disbelievers, and Nuh would certainly have told them this. Nuh therefore went from calling his people to the main principles of faith, the pillars of Islam, and the major teachings of the religion, to explaining that they must give up the sins in which they are immersed in, from disbelief to every other form of immorality and disobedience.¹

He urged them to seek forgiveness and repent to God Almighty, and that He, Glory be to Him, will accept their repentance no matter how great and many their sins are. It is as if he wants to tell them not to allow their many sins to be a barrier between them and repentance. He therefore used Allah's attribute of *Ghaffar*, which indicates an emphasis in being forgiving, as a way of encouraging them. The severity of their sins were even lead to them being prevented from rain, the earth becoming barren, and their souls becoming restricted.²

1. "So I said, 'Seek your Lord's forgiveness.'"

Ask God to forgive you for your sins. It is known that none seeks forgiveness for his sin except the one whose faith is sound and also forsakes his sin. He is thus calling them to give up their disbelief, immorality, and disobedience, and is

1. Al-Maidani, p. 185.

2. Al-Raqb, p. 67.

calling them to seek forgiveness from God after that.¹

In Nuh's reminder to them on the importance of seeking forgiveness, and seeking it from the Lord Almighty, "Your Lord", there is a clear indication of the significance of reminding about the name of "*Al-Rabb*" (***the Lord***). *Al-Rabb* is the owner and manager, and the meaning of the statement of the Almighty, "Lord of the Worlds", is His Lordship of the world, which includes His control over it, His management its affairs, and the enforcement of His command in it. It means that day in and day out He has something to bring about, He creates and sustains, causes death and gives life, lowers and raises, gives and withholds, honours and humiliates, and conducts matters according to His will. Denying this is a denial of His Lordship, Divinity and Ownership.²

The *Rabb* is also the One who educates all His servants through control and various types of blessings. More specifically, it involves His upbringing of His chosen servants by purifying their hearts, souls, and manners. This is why they would regularly pray to Him using this great name, seeking a pure *tarbiyah* (***upbringing and care***) from Him.³

Tarbiyah means to develop something gradually to

1. Al-Maidani, p. 185.

2. Ibn Al-Qayyim, *Al-Sawa'iq Al-Mursala*, 4/1223.

3. *Tafsir al-Sa'di*, 5/486.

the point of perfection.¹ It also contains the meaning of compassion, care, and kindness. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) throughout his life was conscious of, worshipped, and prayed to Allah using this Name. For example:

- “He cried, “My Lord (**Rabb**)! I have surely called my people day and night.”

- “So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s (**Rabb’s**) forgiveness.”

As well as other verses that were beautifully mentioned within the contexts of the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*).

Among the effects of believing in His Name, *Al-Rabb*:

The name Al-Rabb, glory be to Him, and the names and attributes that it entails, makes people aware of the purpose for which they were created, and informs them of what is beneficial and harmful to them. That is because being the Lord of the worlds means that it is not appropriate for Him to leave his servants in vain and negligence, not make them aware of Himself, nor teaching them what benefits and harms them in this life and their afterlife. This would be a nullification of Lordship and is an attribution to the Lord that which does not befit Him. “Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would never be returned to Us?” [23:115]

- Acknowledgment of the Lordship of God Almighty entails and necessitates the tawhid of God Almighty and worshipping Him without any partner, since the Creator of this universe and what is in it, the Manager who is in

1. Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur’an, p. 189.

control of life and death, creation and sustenance, alone is worthy of worship. For how can a weak creature be worshiped and made an equal with God Almighty in love, glorification, and worship, when he has no ability to create nor does he possess any control over his own affairs, let alone those of others? This is what God Almighty used against the polytheists who recognised his Lordship, but did not worship Him alone, rather associated others with Him. This argument is often mentioned in the Qur'an in various ways. For example, Allah Almighty says:

“If you ask them [O Prophet] who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, “Allah!” Ask [them], “Consider then whatever [idols] you invoke besides Allah: if it was Allah’s Will to harm me, could they undo that harm? Or if He willed [some] mercy for me, could they withhold His mercy?” Say, “Allah is sufficient for me. In Him [alone] the faithful put their trust.” [39:38]

- Belief in the Lordship (*rububiyyah*) of God Almighty means belief in His beautiful names and attributes. That is because among the attributes of the Rabb Almighty, is that He is the Capable, Creator, Originator, Fashioner, Ever-Living, Sustainer, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Benevolent, Generous, One who gives and withholds, as well as the other names and attributes. All belief in the most beautiful names therefore, in reality, goes back to what is contained in the name Rabb (*Lord*), glory be to Him.¹

1. Abdul Aziz ibn Nasser Al-Jalil, Wa lillah al-Asam al-Husna, Al-Qastawi for printing and binding, 1st edition 2018, p. 98.

Ibn al-Qayyim says: “The *Rabb* is the Creator, Originator, Fashioner, Ever-Living, Sustainer, All-Knowing, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, the Giver of blessings and Most-Generous, One who gives and withholds, who misleads and guides whoever He wants, makes happy or sad whoever He wills, and honours and humiliates whom He wills, in addition to other meanings of His *Rububiyyah* that form the beautiful names.”¹

- Some of the meanings of the Lord (*Al-Rabb*) include He who nurtures his servants from one stage to the next, blesses them with what them to flourish in this life and the next, the One who has perfected their creation, and He has given everything its distinctive form, then guided it. These meanings will inherit in the heart of the servant the great love of his Lord. They cause him to love what He loves and those who He loves, to detest what He detests and those who He detests, and hasten to please Him, glorify Him, revere Him, thank Him, and praise Him in the way that befits His greatness.

- The meanings of Al-Rabb include that He is the one who is responsible for the sustenance of His creation, that He has the treasures of the heavens and the earth, to Him is the kingdom and all praise, He gives life and decrees death, and He is able to do all things. These attributes fill the heart of the servant who knows his Lord, with great reliance upon Him Almighty in bringing about benefit, protecting from harm, and in the disposal of all his affairs. He thus does

1. Ibid, p 99.

not attach himself to anything but God Almighty, places his hope in none except Him, and is only afraid of Him, Glory be to Him. Since, how can one attach himself to weak creature like himself that do not have the power to benefit themselves, nor can they control life, death, or resurrection.

- The meanings of Rububiyyah also include His distinct power to bring benefit and ward off harm, relieve distress, and satisfy needs. Through their instinctive knowledge that Allah has these qualities, humans resort to their Lord and invoke Him in times of hardship and adversity, and they wipe their hands clean from anything but God Almighty. The more the servant knows his Lord through His names and attributes, the effect of this on his supplication, the strength of his hope, his recourse, the more this impacts the quality of his supplication (*du'a*), the strength of the hope he has in Him, and his confidence that He will suffice him and fulfil his needs.¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) used the phrase “your *Rabb*” when addressing his people, because Allah’s Lordship is constant and not dependant on their belief in it. As opposed to the phrase, “your *Ilah*” (*the one you worship*), because they do not worship their Lord.

2. “*He was truly Most Forgiving.*”

That is, one of God’s eternal attributes is that He constantly forgives His servants. The term *Ghaffar* implies exaggeration (*i.e. Most Forgiving*), though in reality,

1. Ibid, p. 98.

describing God with such form is not at all an exaggeration, but rather it is the most accurate description of the attribute of God Almighty. As for the use of the verb “was”, it denotes a continuous and permanent state of forgiveness. The same applies to all other texts in which this verb is used in relation to the attributes of God Almighty.

The *Ghaffar* is the one who conceals sins, covering them with His clothe of mercy and compassion. The meaning of concealment here is that He does not reveal the servant's affairs to other people, nor does he expose him in their eyes by punishing him. Ibn al-Qayyim said:

وهو الغفور فلو أتى بقرابها من غير شرك بل من العصيان
لأتاه بالغفران ملء قرابها سبحانه هو واسع الغفران

He is *Al-Ghafur*. If one were to come with its fill (*the earth filled*)

With sin, but without committing *shirk*

He (*Allah*) would come to him with its fill of forgiveness

Glory be to Him, He is vast in forgiveness¹

Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'di said: “The Forgiving One (*Al-Ghafur*) who is always forgiving sins, and accepting the repentance of all those who repents.”² He also said: “Al-Afuww, Al-Ghafur, and Al-Ghaffar: Known for His constant pardoning and having the attribute of forgiveness

1. Nuniyyat Ibn al-Qayyim, 2/231.

2. Abdul Rahman ibn Nasir Al-Sa'di, Al-Haqq al-Wadih al-Mubin Al Kafia Al Shafia, Dar Ibn Al-Qayyim, Riyadh, second edition, 1407 AH, p. 73.

for His servants. Everyone is in need of His pardoning and forgiveness, just as they are in need of His mercy and kindness. He has promised forgiveness for whoever fulfils its conditions, saying: “But I am truly Most Forgiving to whoever repents, believes, and does good, then persists on [true] guidance.” [20:82]

Among the fruits of believing in His Names *Al-Ghafur* and *Al-Ghaffar*:

- Loving, praising, and thanking God Almighty for His mercy upon His servants and forgiveness for their sins. This fruit fills the heart of the believer with a consciousness to avoid disobeying God Almighty as much as he can, and if a slip up occurs and the believer falls into sin, he remembers His name *Al-Ghafur* and *Al-Ghaffar*, until he sees hope in his heart, cuts off the road of despairing from the mercy of God Almighty, and thinks well of His Lord who forgives all sins.

It opens the door of hope and forgiveness for those who are astray from Allah Almighty and those who have exceeded the limits against themselves with great sins. As Allah Almighty said: “Say, [O Prophet, that Allah says], “O My servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah’s mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”” [39:53]

- It leads to an increase in righteous actions and doing good, because this is one of the causes of attaining Allah’s forgiveness for past sins. Allah says:

“Establish prayer [O Prophet] at both ends of the day and in the early part of the night. Surely good deeds wipe out evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful” [11:114].

“But I am truly Most Forgiving to whoever repents, believes, and does good, then persists on [true] guidance” [20:82]

The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “Follow up a sin with a good deed and it shall wipe it (*the sin*) away.”¹

One of the good reminders of Noah (*peace be upon him*) was thus to encourage his people to seek forgiveness from their Lord, to believe in him and His Messenger, and to worship Him alone. He explained to them, and those who came after them, the fruits of the divine law of forgiveness, the most important of which are:

3. “*He will shower you with abundant rain.*”

That is, He will send rains fall on your land plentifully and abundantly. The verb “send” was used instead of “bring down,” because it indicates that what is being sent is required to deliver a task that has been assigned to it.

The word “sky” was used in the verse to refer to rain, “send down the sky upon you”, because it comes down from the clouds above. Since everything that is above in relation to the inhabitants of the earth is called sama (*sky*) in Arabic.² What is meant by sama here, and Allah knows best, is rainwater, as one of its names in Arabic is sama

1. Tirmidhi (*Hadith No. 1987*) and Tirmidhi authenticated this Hadith.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 186.

(*literally sky*). In the Sahihayn (*Bukhari and Muslim*), Zaid ibn Khalid al-Juhani said: “The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) lead us in the morning [Fajr] prayer in Hudaibiyah after a sama during the night (*i.e. a rainy night*).”¹

“Upon you”, meaning upon your land and your farms, for our benefit, your provision, and the provision of your cattle and animals. “Abundantly.” That is, if you seek forgiveness from your Lord, He will send down abundant and continuous rains, leading to plenty of good, fertility, yields, and fruits, and prosperity, contentment, happiness, and stability will prevail.²

“[And] supply you with wealth and children.”

Money and children are the most important and most beautified of man's wants in this worldly life. He mentioned wealth first, because the people of Noah were so attached to it. As for most people, their priorities were mentioned in the saying of Allah Almighty: “The enjoyment of [worldly] desires - women, children, treasures of gold and silver, fine horses, cattle, and fertile land - has been made appealing to people. These are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah is the finest destination” [3:14]

Alternatively, it could be said that a certain amount of money, that does not reach the value of treasures, is sought more than women and children, but then wealth that is

1. Bukhari, No. 991.

2. Wahba Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Tafsir al-Munir*, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, second edition, 1418 AH, (29142).

beyond that is sought after children. Each of the two texts thus have their implication and are complementary in clarifying the nature of people. It is for the same reason that wealth is mentioned before children in several places in the Qur'an, including Surat Al-Kahf. Allah Almighty said: "Wealth and children are the adornment of this worldly life" [18:46]

4. "And give you gardens as well as rivers."

"Give you" in both worlds, great gardens and rivers that are specific to you, for the one who constantly seeks forgiveness Allah makes for them a way out from every distress and every restriction.¹

Being occupied with obedience to God is a cause for increased blessings and growth, opening the doors of goodness, generating rain, increasing yields, and abundant fruits. God has promised them five things for their good deeds: rain, a large supply of wealth, children, granting them gardens, and granting them rivers.

A man once complained to Al-Hasan Al-Basri about barrenness, so he said: seek Allah's forgiveness (*make istighfar*). Another man complained to him about poverty, another about the lack of offspring, and another of the lack of produce from his land, so he ordered all of them to seek forgiveness. Some of the people then said to him: "People came to you with various complaints and different kinds of need, but you instructed them all to seek forgiveness?"

1. Al-Biq'a'i, Nadhm al-Durar fi Tanasub al-Ayat wa al-Suwar, 8/169.

So he recited the verse: “So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving.”¹

It is noticeable that people are inclined to loving immediate goods, so Noah promised them various goods in this verse. The verse of forgiveness is evidence that seeking forgiveness leads to sustenance and rains. Sha’bi said that Umar went out for the *istisqa* (*seeking rain*) prayer and did not do more than seek forgiveness until he returned, so rain came down. They said: “We did not see you praying for rain?” He said: I sought the stars of the sky through which rain truly descends (*meaning istighfar*), then he recited: “So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers.” [71:10-12]

One of the causes of prosperity for individuals and society is resorting to God through repentance and forgiveness. God Almighty in His Noble Book has linked between forgiveness and repentance, and the descent of rain, the increase of strength, the abundance of children and offspring, and the beautiful worldly pleasures. This is what Allah has explained in the Qur’an through Nuh addressing his people saying: “So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers” [71:10-12]

In this verse there is evidence that seeking forgiveness

1. Al-Zuhailii, 29/145.

brings about provision, so Noah ordered them to seek forgiveness, which means to give up sins and to ask God for forgiveness for their previous sins. This shows a clear link between the values of faith and material values. The material life would not stand alone, nor bear its fruits, without these original pure values. While it may seem to us at times from the presence of powerful nations that this rule does not apply. However, this is simply another trial of which the Qur'an says: "And We test you [O humanity] with good and evil as a trial, then to Us you will [all] be returned" [21:35]

Moreover, that prosperity that is not based on the value of faith, is only a false type of prosperity that is short-lived compared to the lifespan of nations, states, and civilizations. A prosperity eroded by the plagues of social occupation, moral decline, injustice, oppression, and the loss of human dignity, and the recent European societies are the greatest witness to that.¹

Noah calls to reflecting on the signs of God in the souls, the heavens, the earth, and what is in them

Allah Almighty said:

"What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]? Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them

1. Sharif Sheikh Saleh Ahmed Al-Khatib, Al-Sunan al-Ilahiyah, Al-Othmani House, Amman, Jordan, 1st edition 2004, 1/423.

as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp? Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again]. And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways.” [71:13-20]

We continue with Noah (*peace be upon him*) in his long noble struggle, and we find him taking his people towards God's signs in themselves and in the universe around them. He is amazed at their disregard and bad manners with God¹, and he criticises them for it using rational discourse based on logical foundations subject to evidence and proof.

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]?”

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah?” You do not fear Allah's Majesty and thus obey Him and single Him out in your worship. This is a critical rhetorical question. What distracts you or motivates you to not be afraid or fear the great majestic One? A greatness with which, if He willed, He could destroy you and torment you severely with, because this greatness comprises perfection in the qualities of power, knowledge, and justice. If He wants something, he simply says to it, “Be” and it will be. You will not be able to stop Him from anything.²

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3713.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 188.

The apparent meaning of “*waqar*” (**majesty**) is: why do you not expect the effects of God’s greatness and majesty, of reward and punishment. The word *waqar* is mentioned here in an absolute sense to indicate that this is indeed a great majesty, an endless greatness that is beyond being described.

“What is the matter with you...” What has happened to your minds, your thinking, your understanding, and your hearts, corrupting them and averting them from preparing for Allah’s great promise that every sane person would seek and desire, and also averting them from being aware of Allah’s threats that every wise person should fear? Have your minds become so blurred that you are unable to comprehend the visible and audible signs of Allah?

“When He created you in stages [of development].” Why do you not seek Allah’s reward and fear His punishment – two of the manifestations of Allah’s Majesty – when He has created you so incredibly in stages from dust to a sperm-drop to a clinging clot of blood, then a lump of flesh, fully formed or unformed, into an embryo, then into a child?

Has this comprehensive greatness, that is one of the effects of Allah’s attributes of perfection, not led you to understanding that there must be a resurrection and accountability for your actions? What is the reason for denying the stage of resurrection while you are witnessing the incredible stages of creation?

The word *atwar* (**stages**) is used to mean different phases each with distinct features and qualities. For example:

- Allah first creates something from dust. This is a stage.
- Then the person nourishes from it, so God creates blood from this nourishment blood. This is another phase.
- Then God creates sperm-drop from blood, and this is a third phase.
- Then God creates a clinging clot of blood from the sperm-drop. This is the fourth stage.
- Then God creates a lump of flesh from the clot, and this is a fifth stage.

Thus the phases continue until the embryo becomes a fully formed human being, so creating something with transforming features from one state to another is what creating in stages is.

He notifies humanity, through pondering over their stages of development, to contemplate the attributes of the Creator, the Wise, Almighty, All-Knowing, and All-Powerful, as each of the stages of creation direct the attention of those who think to the work of the Creator. If creation always remained upon a single form, this notification would not have occurred, because it would have seemed like this form is a permanent natural condition, and thus does not need a creator.

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]?” This verse directs us to thinking about the signs of Allah’s greatness and power in creation,

which proves His knowledge, wisdom, power, and justice. Comprehending these attributes guides one to ponder over the reality of resurrection, accountability, and that the Day of Judgment is an unquestionable truth. It directs people to contemplate themselves and Allah's creation of them, so that they can attain true knowledge and firm belief in Allah's great attributes.

“He truly created you in stages.” These stages that are being mentioned to the people of Nuh are surely ones that they understand or ones that they are able to comprehend, so that when they are reminded of them this has an impact on them which leads them to accepting his call. This can be understood by the people if mentioned to them, because the foetuses that fall before being fully developed in the wombs can give them an idea about these stages, and this is one of the implications of this verse. It may also refer to what embryology says that the embryo at first resembles a single cell animal, then after a period of pregnancy the embryo represents a multi-cell animal, then it takes the form of a water animal, then the shape of a mammal, then the shape of a human creature. However, this is unlikely to be within the knowledge of the people of Noah, as this was known only very recently, and this may be the meaning of the saying of the Almighty in another verse after mentioning the stages of the foetus: “Then We brought it into being as a new creation. So Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators” [23:14]. These verses can also have other implications that modern knowledge has not found out yet.

Though there is no doubt that the people of Nuh have some knowledge relating to the creation of the human being, which is why Nuh rebuked them for not contemplating this knowledge that points towards One creator. “What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]?” [71:13-14]

In any case, Noah directed his people to look at themselves, and reprimanded them for not feeling in themselves a reverence for the Glorious One who created them in these stages. This the strangest and worse thing that can occur from a person.

After Noah (*peace be upon him*) directed them to think about themselves, he also directed them to think about the signs of God in the skies, in plants and nature, and on earth.

Noah referred to the great elaborate cosmic phenomena in the heavens and the earth, to remind of the logical impossibility of such successive creation with total perfection existing without a great Creator who has all the attributes of perfection, comprehensive knowledge, encompassing power, great wisdom, justice, care, and mercy.

Contemplation and pondering with an enlightened mind, informed thought, and pure *fitrah* (*nature*), over the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, leads the righteous person to the unification (*tawhid*) of God Almighty, singling Him out with Lordship, servitude to Him, and preparing for the Day of Judgment, reckoning, and the afterlife.

1. “Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other”

Noah (*peace be upon him*) used rational arguments, and addressed them using reason and logic, and called them to reflect and contemplate the creation of the world which surrounds them from the skies and earth, man and plants, trees and the sun, and the stars and moon. That is because these creatures must have a Creator and Lord who brought them about. These beings could not exist without a creator, or the will of a maker, or for their existence to be random or unnecessary. He told his people to use their minds, to look at these countless blessings, signs, and great creation, with their insights, and to contemplate their creation, to surrender to their Creator, believe in Him, and obey Him.¹

Noah called to reflecting and contemplating on how God created the seven heavens, drawing the attention of his people to the fact that God Almighty is the Creator of the heavens one above the other and all that is in them. This appears to be a widely accepted matter amongst them given that it was one of the teachings that remained and that mankind inherited from Adam and the believers from his descendants. Alternatively, it could be something that he established clear proof for until they accepted it, after which he would convince them of what they did not accept by referring them to what they did accept. The fact that the heavens are seven and that they are on top of one another are two things that Noah and his people inherited from our

1. Al-Radi, 1/115.

father Adam (*peace be upon him*) and from Allah teaching him that.

This is a call from Nuh to think and research, and through sound contemplation a person will appreciate the greatness of Allah Almighty.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) added that they are seven heavens one above the other. That is, research and study using the methods of research that are available to you, because some people will come after you who will study what was reported about the seven heavens.

Noah's question to them about how these seven heavens were created is a question to them about their splendid mastery, the effects of which can be observed constantly with the succession of time in the hours of the night and day. This is to elicit their recognition of the perfection of the attributes of the Creator, then to transfer them to the right of His Lordship and their responsibility towards Him in the worldly life, then decree of judgment, reckoning and punishment, then to belief in the Day of Judgment. God made the seven heavens a layer, that is: He placed each other on top of each other, as a garment inside a garment, or as balls intertwined with each other inside each other.¹

The question, "Do you not see" has two objectives. The first objective: blaming them for their failure to benefit from this knowledge through faith and to fear God's punishment, if the answer to the question is, "Yes." The second objective

1. Al-Maidani, p. 195.

is to direct their attention to contemplating Allah's great creation which would then lead to appreciating Allah's greatness, then to believe in Him, His Messenger, and the content of His message, to fear His punishment and hope for His reward in return for faith, good deeds, and following the messenger.

“placing the moon within them as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp?”

It is noticed that Noah (*peace be upon him*) drew their attention to the moon being a light (*nur*) and that the sun is a lamp (*siraj*). It appears that they used to differentiate between a light and a lamp. If they sat in the moonlight throughout a moonlit night, they would not feel any heat from the light that extends to them, while if they sat in the sunlight during the day, they would feel strong heat that may go as far as stinging their bodies, just as a burning lamp does, because it gives off light along with heat, and its flame burns whoever touches it.

This knowledge that the people of Noah were aware through experience without being aware of its explanation and exact causes, is one of the manifestations of God's care for his creation, realising that they need this heated light that directs heat towards the earth for the sake of life to function properly for the people on earth. They also realise that they need some respite from the heat of the sun, so God gave them the night with the sun setting, and they realise that they need cool light at night, not accompanied by heat, so God made the moon for them.

Is this perfect management and control not a manifestation of Allah's care for people and a sign of His greatness, majesty, and might?

This is what Noah (*peace be upon him*) drew the attention of his people to. As for the scientific explanation of the moon being a light (*nur*), and the sun being a lamp (*siraj*), then when people come to know it they will realise that the verses have alluded to it, indicating that the religion is true, and that all of its statements are truth, because the one who revealed the religion is the All-Knowing Creator of the universe.

The *Siraj* is what people know as something that is lit giving off a luminous flame of fire. The reality of the sun that scholars have come to know thousands of years after the era of Noah, is a great fireball, swimming in the sky, which means that the insinuation in the religious clarification agreed with what human knowledge reached after thousands of years.

While *Nur* is something that removes darkness. People have differentiated - since Noah's time - between it and between the hot light that emanates from the burning fire, as people used to know cold lights without heat. A simple example to primitive people being the reflection of light that they see from glossy things that reflect light, such as mirrors, as these things reflect light without heat.

The moon, in reality, is a body in the sky that reflects the sun's light upon it and this reaches the earth in the form of a light, thus, again, the insinuation in the religious

explanation is consistent with what knowledge reached after thousands of years. The statement of the Almighty: “He placed the moon within them as a nur (*light*) meaning: reflecting a light or emitting a light. The statement of Allah Almighty: “and the sun [He made] as a siraj (*lamp*)”, that is, He made the sun like a radiant lamp for them, one that is suitable for the size and needs of the earth.¹

In this way, Noah (*peace be upon him*) directed his people to think, contemplate, and ponder over the open book of the universe, a call to looking beyond these tremendous creatures to a creative power, and this is the aim of this advice. Noah then returned and directed his people to consider their origin from the earth and their return to it at the time of death, establishing the truth of their coming out of it at the time of resurrection.²

“Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again].”

Describing the emergence of man from the earth with growth is an incredible and telling description, and is one that is repeated in the Qur'an in various ways, as God Almighty says: “The fertile land produces abundantly by the Will of its Lord, whereas the infertile land hardly produces anything. This is how We vary [Our] lessons to those who are thankful” [7:58]. This is a reference to people's creation the way plants grow, just the nurturing of man is mentioned

1. Ibid, p. 198.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3714.

alongside the growth of plants in several places in the Holy Qur'an, which is a phenomenon that surely calls for consideration. It suggests a form of unity between the living creatures on the face of the earth, and that the emergence of man from the earth is like the emergence of plants, both originating from the same primary elements, and nourishing and growing from these primary elements. It is a plant that God has created in this living image, just as actual plants have been given has its own image, while both are products of the earth, and both are nourished by this mother.

As such, faith creates in the believer a true and vivid perception of his relationship with the earth and with living things, a perception that contains an accuracy of knowledge and a vitality of feeling. That is because it is based on the living truth in the conscience, and this is the advantage of unique Qur'anic knowledge. The people who have sprouted from the earth will return to its core once again. God will return them to it as He brought them from it. Their remains will be mixed with its soil, and their atoms merge with its atoms, just as they were in it before they emerged from it. The One who first created them will take them out of it just as nurtured them the first time. A matter that is so easy and clear, not requiring much thought if a person looks at it from this angle presented by the Qur'an.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) directed his people to this truth to let their hearts feel the hand of God as it sprouts them from this earth as a plant, and it brings them back to it again, then anticipates the final emergence and prepares for its account. A matter that will occur with such ease and simplicity.

Hence, we realise that the issue of resurrection for the Day of Judgment a fact that all messengers have delivered to their nations, as it has always been part of the divine plan since the will of God Almighty ruled to create people and to test them in this life.

“And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways.”

Noah (*peace be upon him*) directed his people to the grace of God upon them in facilitating life for them on this earth and making it suitable for them to walk on, for their livelihood, and movement: “And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways.”

Spread out like a carpet on its circular surface, making it suitable for ploughing, planting, keeping farms and vast orchards in them, for the establishment of cities and villages, and the construction of roads that make vast distances shorter. Not all its land is mountains with high tops and deep valleys, and it is not like the back of a hedgehog, rather it is a flat surfaces that makes it comfortable for people to go about their lives. Had it not been like this, it would have become difficult for people to go about their lives, seek their livelihood, and to move around it on its land. “Its pathways”, whether narrow or wide, in the air, in the sea, on the physical or spiritual and intellectual. All these are pathways.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) addressed them with a truth that they witness and realise before their eyes. It confronted them completely making them unable to escape from it,

just as they could not escape from Noah's voice and his warning. They can see that this earth is spread out and flat, with even its mountains containing paths and tracks. Upon them they walk, ride, move, seek God's grace, and coexist with ease, exchanging benefits and livelihoods. They were aware of this visible reality without the need for hard scientific studies by which they study the laws that govern their existence on this earth and facilitate their life in it. The more knowledge a person gains, the more he understands new aspects and deep prospects that relate to this reality.

This is how Noah (*peace be upon him*) reached - or tried to reach - the ears of his people, their hearts and their minds through various methods and numerous means, with long perseverance, beautiful patience, and noble effort, for a thousand years less fifty. He then returned to his Lord who sent him to them, so that he could present his account and express his complaint in a detailed statement and with an emotional tone. From this precise statement we can see noble examples of patience, effort, and hardship, which is only one link in the chain of the heavenly message to this blind, misguided humanity. So what was to come after this statement?¹

Fourth: Noah's complaint about his people's disobedience to him and his supplication against them

Allah Almighty said:

“[Eventually,] Noah cried, “My Lord! They have

1. Ibid, 6/3714.

certainly persisted in disobeying me, and followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss, and who have devised a tremendous plot, urging [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.’ Those [elite] have already led many astray. So [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away.” So because of their sins, they were drowned, then admitted into the Fire. And they found none to help them against Allah. Noah had prayed, “My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth. For if You spare [any of] them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to [wicked] sinners, staunch disbelievers. My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:21-28]

When Noah (*peace be upon him*) offered his call in multiple ways and using various methods, people wished to know the result of this call, did his people accept his call? How was their response? Did anyone remain behind after this beautiful statement and patience?

Noah used the method of *targhib* (**hope and encouragement**) and *tarhib* (**fear and warning**), reminding them of the blessings of God Almighty. He drew their attention to reflect on how they were created, and the creation of the heavens and the earth, and he spared no effort in that. One wonders, after all of this, what happened?¹ And

1. Al-Tafsir al-Mawdu'i, 8/381.

the answer appears from Noah, peace be upon him:

[Eventually,] Noah cried, “My Lord! They have certainly persisted in disobeying me,

After all this effort, after all these warnings, after promises of money, children and prosperity, after all this they still disobeyed.

And they followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss,

They instead followed the people of wealth and children whose wealth and children only increased them in loss. That is because they used them to support disbelief and corruption, which increased them in loss. Had they not had abundant money and children, they would not have committed as much corruption.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) made it clear that the masses of his people followed their chiefs and their masters who occupied the positions of sovereignty among his people due to two things: their money and their children. However, this abundance in wealth and children only led them into greater corruption, which increased them in loss with their Lord above the loss that their disbelief had already caused them and the rest of the people to be in. But they bear the sin of their own misguidance and the sin of the actions by which they misled their followers, so they bore on top of their sins the same as the sins of those who have gone astray because of them. Only the consequence was thus mentioned,

1. Al-Jumaili, p. 70.

because it indicates its preliminaries, and mentioning the result indicates its cause or causes, and this is one of the methods of the Qur'an that is discovered by contemplating the Qur'an deeply and patiently, and by God granting such understanding.¹

1. And who have devised a tremendous plot,

They plotted a cunning plot with extreme arrogance. They plotted to nullify the call of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and to stand in the way of it reaching the hearts of people. They plotted to beautify the disbelief, misguidance, and ignorance which the people were upon.

The word “*Kubbar*” (*tremendous*) is used, which is a rare form of the word “*Kabir*” (*big*) intended to show exaggeration. These leaders plotted, with their money and children, for the sake of misguidance and tyranny, greatly deceiving their followers and trying to convince them of the invalidity of what Noah (*peace be upon him*) was calling them to, and to persuade them to stick to the polytheism, idol worship, immorality, injustice tyranny, customs, and abominations that they inherited from their fathers.

[And they said] urging [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.’ Those [elite] have already led many astray. So [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away.’”

These great masters urged their followers, emphasising that they should never abandon the religion of their

1. Al-Maidani, p. 203.

forefathers in worshipping their idols, especially their major ones: Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr.

They said, "Do not abandon your gods." They said "your gods" to stir up false pride and sinful fervour in their hearts, and they singled out the most important of these idols. Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr, were the largest of their deities, and they continued to be worshiped in the various eras of ignorance after them until the era of the final message of Muhammad (*peace be upon him*).

Thus, these misguided and misleading leaders set up idols, whose names and forms differ, according to the prevailing practice in every *Jahiliyyah*, gathering followers around them, and inflaming in their hearts the fervour of these idols, in order to direct them through this sin to wherever they wish and to keep them on the misguidance that guarantees for them total obedience and submission.

"They have led many astray." That is, these misguided leaders have misled many people with these idols, or it means that the idols have misled many people who believed that they were true gods or that they benefit or harm, and this is a clear delusion. Their worship of idols continued for many centuries, so people imitated them without rational or textual evidence, nor any proof or argument.¹

"They have led many astray." Like any misguided leadership that gathers people around idols: the idols of

1. Abdullah Shehata, Tafsir al- Qur'an, Dar Gharib for Printing and Publishing, Cairo, 1st Ed., 2000, 15/6113.

stones, the idols of people, and the idols of ideas. They do this through standing in the way of the call of God and turning hearts away from preachers with great cunningness, maliciousness and persistence. It is here that from the heart of the Noble Prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*) that supplication emanated against the unjust, the misguided, and the misguiding deceivers.

“So [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away.” That supplication emanating from the heart of Noah (*peace be upon him*) who struggled for a long time and suffered a lot.

This prayer is mentioned by Noah following the Arabic letter *waw* (**to mean ‘and’**). It seems that if Noah’s supplication against them was only because they had gone far astray and led others astray, that the letter *fa* (**to mean ‘so’**) would have been used, not the letter *waw*. The Messenger does not call for an increase in the misguidance of those who are astray from the truth, but it seems like the cause of the prayer is one of the issues mentioned by Noah in his complaint to Allah, so what is this issue?

We previously mentioned – in the section in which the verses of Surah al-Shu’ara was discussed – that the chiefs of his people said to him, “If you do not desist, O Noah, you will surely be stoned [to death]” [26:116]. They threatened to stone him and his people. Nuh hinted in his complaint at the threat of being stoned that he and his family received. Since they had not yet been guided to a method acceptable to their masses in which they would implement what they had promised, as God had led them astray from finding the

appropriate way, Noah wanted this threat to disappear and made a prayer related to it, saying: "So [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away."

If we highlight the hidden meanings in the text, we find that the words mean the following: "They have gone far astray, they have misled many people, and they threatened to stone us. O Lord, you have led them astray from reaching a method of getting rid of us acceptable to their masses, so increase them in going astray. This in reality is a prayer for Allah to save him and the believers with him from their enemies.¹

2. So because of their sins, they were drowned, then admitted into the Fire. And they found none to help them against Allah.

Because of their sins, their turning away from faith, and their insistence on disbelief, God drowned them in the flood, then put them in the Fire in the torment of the grave, or sent them into the fire of Hell. They then found no helpers besides God, neither sons, nor money, nor authorities, nor guardians from the alleged gods.

In this verse, the matter of these hardened sinners ends, and their remembrance disappears from life. This is even before Noah's supplication for them to perish and be annihilated. Details are not mentioned here about the story of their drowning or the story of the flood that drowned them, because the intention here is to show how quickly they

1. Al-Maidani, p. 208.

ended, such that the distance between drowning and burning is the letter *fa* which is the Qur'anic way in its creative expressive and figurative rhythms. But we will speak about the drowning and the flood in detail, insha'Allah.

3. Noah had prayed, “My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth.

This verse clarifies that their drowning mentioned in the previous verse was because of their sins and because of Noah's supplication against them. He stayed with them for a long time, but only a few believed with him, so God said to him: “None of your people will believe except those who already have. So do not be distressed by what they have been doing.” [11:36]

He thus called on God to destroy all the disbelievers and not to leave anyone behind, since Noah stayed among them a thousand years except fifty, and he took every path to calling them, but their ears were deaf and their hearts were hardened, and they were tyrants and oppressors, so he called on his Lord to purify the earth from them so that these tyrants would not be an obstacle to the new generation believing.¹

For if You spare [any of] them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to [wicked] sinners, staunch disbelievers.

O our Lord, if you leave these tyrant disbelievers, they will make people commit shirk by calling them to worship

1. Shehata, 15/6114.

idols, and at the same time they warn their offspring against following Noah. A man would say to his son, “beware of this man and do not follow him. My father warned me from following him and I am now warning you.” It thus became clear to Noah that misguidance has become an integral part of them, and they were leaders in being astray and leading others astray. Noah thus said: “For if You spare [any of] them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to wicked sinners, staunch disbelievers.” The term “your servants” suggests that they are believers, as it comes in the Qur’anic usage with this meaning. That is by subverting them from their faith by brute force, or by testing their hearts through the authority of the oppressors that they see and how God allows them to remain safe.

In addition to this, they are in an environment and atmosphere in which the disbelievers are born and disbelief is expected from the young ones, as this is what the oppressors imprint on them from a young age. There is no opportunity for the young ones to see the light, due to the misguided environment that overwhelms them. This is the truth indicated by the saying of the noble prophet Nuh, which the Qur’an quotes him saying: “and [they shall] give birth only to wicked sinners, staunch disbelievers.” They spread falsehood and delusion in the community’s atmosphere, and establish customs, conditions, systems and traditions, upon which children are raised as disbelieving sinners, as Noah (*peace be upon him*) said.

It is for this reason that Noah (*peace be upon him*) made his crushing and destructive prayer, and for this reason God

answered his call and washed the face of the earth from that evil, washing away the troubles that only the mighty force of the All-Powerful could sweep away. Then alongside this destructive prayer that he concluded by saying: “and increase the wrongdoers only in destruction”, comes a humble and loving prayer.¹

My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:21-28]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) concluded his story in Surat Nuh with this noble verse, which is a chant of supplication from a righteous prophet.

“My Lord, forgive me.” Noah’s supplication to his Lord to forgive him is the noble prophetic etiquette in the presence of God Almighty, the etiquette of a servant in the presence of the Lord. The servant who does not forget that he is human and that he errs and that he falls short, no matter how much he obeys Allah and worships, and that he does not enter Paradise by his actions unless God bless him with his grace. This is the repentance that he called his sinful people to, but they were arrogant against him. While he, the Prophet, after all effort he put in and all the troubles he faced, still asks forgiveness while he presents to his Lord the record of account.

“And my parents.” This is the prophetic faithfulness towards believing parents - as we understand from this

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3717.

supplication - since if they were not believers, he would have been reprimanded regarding them as he was in the matter of his disbelieving son who drowned with those who drowned, as will be detailed in Surat Hud.

“And whoever enters my house in faith.” This is a supplication specifically for those who entered his house as a believer, because that was the sign of salvation, as they were the believers who were with him on the Ark.

“And [all] believing men and women.” This is his general supplication after that for the believing men and women, which is a faithfulness of the believer to all the believers in every time and place, and his feeling of the bond of kinship over the course of time and difference in location. This is the amazing secret in this belief that binds its adherents to the bond of close love and deep longing, despite the distance and space between them, a secret that God deposited within this creed (*aqidah*) and entrusted within these hearts that are connected by the bond of creed.

Some scholars said that the one who responded to Noah (*peace be upon him*) and drowned the disbeliever of the earth through his supplication, would certainly answer him and have mercy on the believing men and women through his supplication.¹

In contrast to this love for the believers, there was a resentment for the oppressors: “And increase the

1. Muhammad Abd al-Haq bin Atiyyah, *Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-Aziz*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st Ed., 15/126.

wrongdoers only in destruction.” That is, destroy these wrongdoers because they are an obstacle to the call of faith and goodness.¹

The discussion here was about Nuh's statement to his Lord, the efforts he made towards his people, his complaint to God Almighty, his supplications against his people, and the divine punishment descending on them. Throughout it, I relied upon God, then the Qur'anic text, and the sayings of the interpreters.

I have presented the luminous image of the struggle of the Noble Prophet, Noah (*peace be upon him*) and the blurred image of the persistence of the oppressors. I have done this with complete love for this noble Prophet, out of admiration for this noble effort, and as a provision along this ascending path, regardless of the hardships and troubles, and whatever the sacrifices and pain. That is because it is the only path that can lead humanity to the maximum perfection destined for it on this earth, decreed for it by God the Most High, the Great.²



1. Shehata, 15/1115.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3718.

chapter

5

Nuh's
Ark and
the Great
Flood

Chapter 5: Nuh's Ark and the Great Flood

Firstly: Allah revealed to Noah that none of his people will believe except those who already have and He commanded him to build the Ark

Allah Almighty said:

“And it was revealed to Noah, “None of your people will believe except those who already have. So do not be distressed by what they have been doing. And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions, and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, “If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” [11:36-39]

1. And it was revealed to Noah, “None of your people will believe except those who already have.

The hearts that are ready for faith had believed, but the rest had neither readiness nor direction. That is what God revealed to Noah, and He knows His servants best, and He knows best what is possible and what is not. No scope was therefore left to proceed with a call that does not benefit, nor worry about their blasphemy, denial, defiance and mockery.¹

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1876.

2. *So do not be distressed by what they have been doing.*

That is, do not feel misery and anxiety, and do not worry and do not care about what they have been doing. Neither worry for yourself, as they will not harm you with anything, nor worry for them, for there is no good in them.¹

“By what they have been doing.” Their blasphemy, ridiculing, mockery, hindering, harm, denial and despair. Do not grieve like one who is distressed, and do not be saddened by the denial and abuse that you faced from them during this long period, because their time is now up and the time for revenge has come.²

This statement to Noah (*peace be upon him*) includes an indication towards their total destruction. The total despair of them believing dictates that delaying their destruction is unwise, since the purpose of affliction has been completely exhausted, and keeping them alive has become devoid of wisdom, so a comprehensive punishment for them is the wise decision. It also became useless to continue calling them to Allah.³

And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions

God Almighty's saying to Noah: “And build the ark” indicates that the means of escaping from drowning is a

1. Ibid.

2. Nawfal, p. 144.

3. Al-Maidani, p. 107.

vehicle that floats on the water, and runs in it, and that the water that will descend will flood the tops of the mountains, so taking strongholds in them will not save you from drowning. This brief statement, “and build the Ark”, is incredible in its encompassing nature and how it contains all the meanings mentioned above if the wise person ponders carefully of its meanings and implications.

The Almighty's saying: “under Our [watchful] eyes and directions” indicates that the execution, the work plan, the engineering of the ship's construction, and determining the materials from which it is built and the method of execution, are all matters preceded by revelation and surrounded by care, guiding control, and constant guidance, until the ship achieves the goal that it has been prepared for with its perfect manufacture. This is all within the capabilities of Noah available to him during his time.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was a carpenter, and he had some idea about a vehicle that is suitable for being on water and running in it. From the first step that he takes, he needs to be surrounded by God's care and His guidance before he reveals the work plan to him.

God's care and guidance for him is permanent, existing before the command of making the ship and after it, as it is an attribute that always takes precedence. Just as the manufacture indicated by the Almighty's saying: “and build” is a practical implementation, the first appropriate description that comes to mind is the builder's need to be surrounded by care and guidance, so the phrase, “under Our

[watchful] Eyes” was mentioned alongside and straight after “and build” without a separation between them, no matter what.

The term “Our Eyes” is mentioned in the plural form to denote that he was surrounded by various types of care, guidance and support, such as supplying strength, preparing means, protecting him from people’s aggression against him, and so on.

The ‘baa’ in Arabic (*meaning “with”, or in this context, “under”*) in the phrase “under Our Eyes”, denotes the noble promise that he is completely surrounded by divine providence, so that no harm would come to him. It is similar to Allah’s statement to His Messenger Muhammad (*peace be upon him*): “So be patient with your Lord’s decree, for you are truly under Our [watchful] Eyes.” [52:48]

As for what God Almighty said regarding Moses (*peace be upon him*) when he was a child in Pharaoh’s palace: “And I blessed you with lovability from Me [O Moses] so that you would be brought up under My [watchful] Eye.” [20:39]. He singled out the Eye and used “ala” (*upon or on*); because Moses at that time was pampered and preserved in the hands of some people who loved him in the Pharaonic palace, and he was not among people who were plotting against him or intending evil for him.

And since the making of the Ark would have to be within a plan that God reveals, the Almighty said: “and directions”, after saying: “under Our Eyes.”¹

1. Ibid, p. 110.

3. and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.

Their fate has been decided and the matter is over for them, so do not plead with me about them, neither supplicating for their guidance nor supplicating against them, for it was mentioned in another place when he gave up on them that he supplicated against them. Allah Almighty said:

“Noah prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” So We inspired him: “Build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions. Then when Our command comes and the oven bursts [with water], take on board a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed. And do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” [23:26-27]

From a comparison between the two texts in Surat Hud and Surat Al-Mu'minun, we can see expressive differences that bear complementary connotations between them:

What is in Surat Al-Mu'minun, which is the text that we are considering now, is that Noah called his Lord, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied me.” So God answered his prayer immediately, saying: “So We inspired him: “Build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions”, to the end of the passage. As for Surat Hud, and it has already been mentioned, the statement does not specify who it was that revealed, saying: “and it was revealed”, a variation in expression. In it, God also informs him there is no hope in the faith of any of his people in the future: “None of

your people will believe except those who have already believed.” God then said to him: “Do not be distressed by what they were doing.” Forsake them and stop calling them so that you will not be exposed to their harm. As for the types of harm they were causing you before, then do not grieve over it and do not be in distress because of it, for the punishment is descending upon them and revenge shall indeed befall them. This sentence was then complemented by the Almighty’s saying: “And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions, and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” It is directly attached to the previous section which gives it the ruling of having immediate effect, and thus it matches the passage of Surat Al-Mu’minun.¹

The passage of Surat Hud stops here, then moves on to the story of Noah building the Ark, and then mentions some of the related events that took place.

The passage in Surat Al-Mu’minun did not speak of despairing of their belief, nor of the console after despair, sufficing with what was mentioned in Surat Hud. However, it explains how when Allah’s commanded Nuh to build the ark He said to him: “Then when Our command comes and the oven bursts [with water], take on board a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed.” All the way until the end of the discussion.

We notice that prior to the occurrence of the event,

1. Ibid, p. 274.

God said to him: “take on board”, entering the ark in an organised fashion.

In the section in which God speaks about the event, the following expression is used: “We said carry on it.” He did not refer - here - to the issue of organised entry, sufficing with what was mentioned in the previous statement, despite the rapid occurrence of the event making it quite likely that some guidelines will be forgotten or overlooked, because the aim is to save people by getting them on board as quickly as possible. The situation therefore does not allow much scope for calm and full consideration of the proper arrangements, since the pouring water is imminent.

The section of Surat al-Mu'minun does not mention that Allah revealed to him to carry with him those who believed from his people who were not from his family, because Noah's concern was directed at that time to ridding himself and his family, as they were the ones exposed to the plots of his people. As for the rest of the believers, who were few, they were not directly targeted by these plots.

When the command to drown them came and the oven burst with water as a warning, this was the beginning of the flood and it became necessary to board the ship quickly, so God said: “Take into the Ark a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed - and those who believe.” So here He was also commanded to carry with him those who believed from his people besides his family, because his ship had become the only means in God's plan to be saved from drowning, and those who believed with

him from his people who were not his family also deserved to be rescued, so subsequent revelation came down to take them on board too.

This indicated to us that their not being mentioned in the previous revelation does not suggest not wanting to carry them on board, and that mentioning them in the verses afterwards was not a form of abrogation, but rather what was taken into account in both passages was what was most appropriate for each situation.

Thus, we note the how the texts on the same topic go hand in hand with one another, while alluding to various meanings through the differences in expressions. Meanings that may not have been understood were it not for the way they were arranged arrangement and distributed. This also aims at achieving the purpose of being a reminder, guidance and admonishment during the stages of revelation, bearing in mind what is appropriate for each stage in directing the people who were receiving the guidance of the Qur'an.¹

Now we aim to contemplate the sections of the passage in Surat al-Mu'minun:

“So We inspired”, the “so” indicates that this occurred straight after Nuh's supplication: “My Lord, help me because they have denied me.” The majestic “We” is used to indicate that a great divine command is about to be made; that is the great flood that will drown the oppressors. The text thus explains that Nuh's supplication led to Allah's accepting

1. Ibid, p. 275.

his supplication, making him aware that none shall believe except those who already have, and the command to build the Ark, as well as everything else that was mentioned after Nuh's *du'a* (*supplication*).

“Build the Ark.” This is what Allah inspired to him. The Arabic word *isna'* (*build/create*) is mostly used with the assumption that there is some specialised skill and art involved, such as Allah's statement regarding Dawud (*peace be upon him*): “We taught him the art of making body armour to protect you in battle. Will you then be grateful?” [21:80]

It is known that building a ship that runs in a clear sea and carries people, beasts, and food supplies, and is exposed to heavy rain on it like swarms of boats, and waves like mountains are tossing it about, requires very high industrial skill, applied by someone with experience in engineering, construction, detailing, and installation, and he must be aware of direction in order to guard against the occurrence of a defect or error that may lead its passengers to a rapid sinking. Especially given that what is required to be made is an innovative work that is not subject to past experiments but rather is newly manufactured; to then be the means of salvation once it is complete.

Although Noah (*peace be upon him*) had experience in trade, he did not build ships, so he was in need of revelation on how to build them, and to be surrounded by the care, control, guidance, and protection of God Almighty. Allah said: “So we inspired him to build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions.”¹

1. Ibid, p. 277.

So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, “If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].

The order was given to Noah (*peace be upon him*) to start building the ark, so the implementation, its beginning, and his people's attitude towards this is depicted here. “So he began to build the Ark.” The expression comes in the present tense giving the scene its liveliness and seriousness, so we can picture it in front of us and we see Nuh busy building and preparing the ark. We also see in this scene the people of Noah passing by him, group after group, laughing at him and his new work, and you can imagine the sorts of manifestations of ridicule and mockery that he faced, for the Qur'an has left the visualisation of this to your own imagination.

Reflect on the saying of the Almighty, the Most High: “and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they ridiculed him.” A sentence depicting the matter to be continuing and repetitive. That is because they saw in his new work a great opportunity to mock him, especially since he is doing this in a place that is not suitable for ships, as the incident occurred between Sham (*Levant*) and Iraq. So whenever they pass by him, they stop by and make fun of

him¹, because they can only see what is apparent, unaware of what is beyond that in terms of divine inspiration and revelation. Their concern is always in perceiving the seeming and visible realities, but are unable to comprehend the wisdom and decree that exists beyond that. As for Noah, he is confident and knowing, so he responds with certainty, tranquility, and confidence:

“If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly.”

If you mock us for our faith and for building the ship of salvation, then we will mock you when reality hits, when we are saved and you are destroyed. Then when we meet in the Hereafter, which of the two parties will be the one to ridicule? You mock us with words that disappear in the air, but we shall mock you while you are drowning in the abyss of water and tomorrow when your hearts become air out of fear, for reciprocity is a divine law and divine judgment.²

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was patient with their words, but when he got tired of them after prolonged patience, he said this to them, speaking about himself and those working with him who believed in him from his family and others.

It appears that Noah (*peace be upon him*) said this to them once, and perhaps it was in response to one of the last words of ridicule that his people threw at him, and after his patience ran out, and the ark was close to being built. This is suggested by the fact that the past tense of the verb

1. Al-Buti, p. 271.

2. Nawfal, p. 149.

“he said” is used. Had Nuh been repeating this to them, the statement would be worded differently to indicate that, such as through use of the present tense.

Noah's response (*peace be upon him*) after long patience in the face of his people's mockery of him, was still polite and balanced. He did not say: “I shall mock”, but instead spoke on behalf of himself and the believers with him. Nor did he say: “We mock you more than you what you mock us”, but instead confronted their statement with a just response.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) then pointed out to his disbelieving people the reasons for his mockery of them by saying: “You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” The Arabic word *saufa* (سوف) generally indicates that the time for something to occur will be longer than that indicated by the letter seen (س), i.e. *sata'lamun* (***you will know***), as opposed to *saufa ta'lamun*.

“Who will be visited by a humiliating torment.” That is that they will soon know who will face a torment from Allah that humiliates them and exposes their ignorance. They will know this when the water surrounds them from all angles. They will realise on that day that they are worthy of being ridiculed by them, so they will be disgraced and humiliated, and this is a reference to the punishment through drowning, which is the punishment of this life.

1. Al-Maidani, p. 114.

“And overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” This is the everlasting punishment that refers to the punishment of Hell on the Day of Judgment, the delayed punishment of the next life.

This is the end of the story of building the ark and the events that accompanied that between Noah and his people.¹

Secondly: Boarding the Ship of Salvation

Allah Almighty said:

“And when Our command came and the oven burst [with water], We said [to Noah], “Take into the Ark a pair from every species along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed - and those who believe.” But none believed with him except for a few. And he said, “Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [11:40-41]

“And when Our command came and the oven burst [with water]”

“And when”, is a time interval, but it is more dangerous than that in this case, as it is a real universal interval.

The time for our command has come, the waiting period for the disbelievers has ended, and the time of their punishment has come. The majestic plural is used “Our” to show the greatness of the command, since anything connected to the majestic plural is great.

1. Ibid, p. 115.

“And the oven burst [with water].” The sign of the beginning of the flood was the eruption of water from the oven, and this was known to Noah (*peace be upon him*) and it was in same place that Noah (*peace be upon him*) was at that time. Opinions diverge regarding the nature of the bursting of the oven. The imagination goes far away with some of them, and you clearly sense the impact of *Israiliyyat (Judeo-Christian traditions)* in them and in the whole story of the flood. As for us, we do not go into uncertain areas without evidence in such matters of the unseen from which we only know what the revealed texts present to us, and we remain within the limits of their implications without our own additions.¹ The *tannur (oven)* is well-known, and the water did not originate from the oven alone, but rather flowed from all parts of the earth. It was however sufficient to mention it alone as a notification of the end and an indication of the water that had escaped from the source of fire, the oven, and thus was even more likely to be bursting from other places.²

The scholars have spoken about the *tannur* and said that it is the oven in which bread is made. Ali ibn Abi Talib said that the *tannur* is the surface of the earth. Linguistically, anything that water bursts from is called a *tannur*, and all these meanings are acceptable and valid. Meaning that the springs burst more than usual, the surface of the earth had burst in places in which water would not normally spring,

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1877.

2. Al-Buti, p. 272.

even places that are far from the witness of people, such as ovens. It simply means that the earth began to burst with water.

What further proves the view of Ali (*Allah be pleased with him*) that what is meant is the surface of the earth is Allah's statement: "...and We caused the earth to burst with springs, so the waters met for a fate already set." [54:12]

"We said [to Noah], Carry into the Ark a pair from every species"

"We said [to Noah], Carry into the Ark." Once again, the majestic "We" is used, as there is no doubt that the event is such a great one, making it appropriate to use the majestic We.¹ In the verse, the word "carry" (*fahmil*) is used, and it is the only place in which it is used. While in Surat al-Mu'minun, the word fasluk "take" or "tread" is used, as if to mean step into the Ark in an orderly fashion.²

Some have concluded that "tread" indicates that the ship was layers, and that it was like a submarine. Carrying is a general term, but fasluk, suggests entering into something, that is the Ark, and there is no harm in that conclusion, though it was built perfectly and precisely and with guidance from the Most Merciful.

As for the Judeo-Christian reports (*israeliyyat*) that say there were three layers, one layer for animals, a layer for food, and a layer for humans, and that its length is this, its

1. Nawfal, p. 154.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 278.

height is that, and its width is this, then this is something that is not reliable, nor should it be transmitted, acknowledged, or reported, but we mentioned it out of refusal and rejection, not out of approval, God forbid. Similarly, the Holy Qur'an did not speak about the type of wood from which the ship was made, nor from where it was cut, where he was staying while building the ship, how he cut the wood and put the pieces together, how spacious the Ark was, how high, wide, and long it was, and what its exact shape was. All these questions, and others, have specific answers in Judeo-Christian reports, but the Qur'an did not give them any importance, because such questions do not provide any beneficial knowledge, nor give us a lesson or reminder.¹

“A pair from every species.” Some scholars of tafsir understood from this verse that it is absolute and encompassing every species, but this is impossible logically and realistically. Since not matter how big the Ark is, it could never encompass all the creatures of earth.

Those who hold this view base it on the premise that the flood encompassed the whole earth, but how will they prove that? The earth has been mentioned so often in a general sense, while only a specific part of it was intended. Go back to Surat Yusuf for example, and you will find this to be true. As soon as he entered the King's palace it said: “We established Joseph in the land.” [12:56] Then when he took authority over Egypt, He also said: “We established Joseph in the land.” So is this one land and is the earth or land here absolute?

1. Al-Khalidi, 1/187.

Did he prepare a comprehensive zoo and put in it a pair of each species, a male and a female, for everyone to be with him in the ship, or did he carry what he felt was important and were needed for reproduction when disembarking from the ship, or was it just what God inspired him to carry that he carried?

Shaykh Abd al-Rahman Habannakah sees that the Qur'an does not specify any of these potential options and that the Judeo-Christian reports are not to be trusted in this regard. It is therefore more appropriate to avoid specifying, as the Qur'anic passage could mean any of them and it did not clarify it, because knowing it is not so important. However, him carrying what he felt to be important or what Allah specifically revealed to him, seems more correct in this case.

Dr. Salah Al-Khalidi said that the word "every" denotes universality and generality, and the sentence "carry in it a pair from every species", indicates that Noah took with him on the ship a pair of all living creatures, from every species of animals, insects, reptiles and birds. What is meant by a pair is a male and female of every kind, such as camel and she-camel, cow and bull, goat and sheep, chicken and rooster ... and so on. Perhaps the wisdom of this is that the flood that began to destroy all living creatures on the face of the earth and will remove all manifestations of life, so this was done in order to resume life on earth after the end of the flood.¹

1. Ibid, 1/194.

“along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed - and those who believe”

Those who were on the Ark were the believers; no disbelievers would enter it. These believers are of two types:

The first are the relatives of Nuh. His close family who believed in him and followed him. “Along with your family - except those against whom the decree [to drown] has already been passed.” This sentence also shows us that Nuh's family were two groups:

- One group believed him. We do not know their names or their number, nor their exact relationship with Nuh, so we do not know how many men or women from his family believed.

- The second group disbelieved. We also do not know their names or their number, but we are certain of two of them, because the Qur'an told us about them, they are his wife and his son. But we do not know their names, and the Qur'an did not mention them.

The second type are the believers who were not from Nuh's relatives. They were from his people that he was sent to. We do not know the names or number of these people. All the Qur'an has told us is that their number was small compared to the large number of disbelievers from his people.

1. “But none believed with him except for a few”

This is a statement directed at us, mentioned within the

narration of the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his people, to inform us of something that interests and benefits preachers and benefits researchers of social phenomena, and benefits those who see the wisdom of God in His general punishments.

When Noah (*peace be upon him*) saw the sign of the coming of God's command to drown the disbelievers of his people, he carried the pairs of animals in the ark and filled it with supplies. He then said to his family and the believers with him: "Board it", and he recited the name of God and prayed to Him¹, saying: "*And he said, "Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful."*

Their boarding of the Ark was in Allah's name, its running on the waves was in Allah's name, it being protected from drowning was in Allah's name, the settling of the Ark after the flood was in Allah's name, and the believers being saved was in Allah's name.

This is an expression of its submission to Allah's will in its flow and anchorage, as it is in the care and protection of God; and what control do human beings have in the matter of the ark in an abyss, let alone the flood.²

Thus Noah began his blessed work the tasmiyah (**saying *bismillah***) and mentioning God Almighty, meaning that he seeks help from God Almighty in his work. This is the law

1. Al-Maidani, p. 118.

2. Sayyid Qutb,

of God Almighty, which he decreed for all the prophets and people, and for this reason the Messenger of God (*peace be upon him*) would begin all his matters in the name of Allah, in food, drink, clothes, sending messages, writing, and other things. The mention of Allah's name (*bismillah*) comes at the beginning of every chapter of the Noble Qur'an except for Surat Al-Tawbah.¹ The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Every matter of importance that is not begun with the remembrance of God Almighty is cut off [from blessing]."²

His saying: "Board it", using the word *fiha* (*into it*), instead of '*alayha* (*on it*), though you go on to a ship, but God wants to show us that the ship was not made in a primitive way in the form of wooden boards that people ride on, but it was made in a most advanced way, and therefore they go into it, rather simply going onto it. It was also not of just one layer, but rather several floors, because in it there are different creatures, animals, beasts, insects, and humans, and these cannot all be on board next to each other. There must therefore have been several floors, so that each type would board with its own.³

The ship's flow was in the name of Allah, and its anchorage was in the name of Allah, i.e., by His facilitation and power. This is how Noah (*peace be upon him*) taught those who believed with him how to begin all their actions in the

1. Muhammad al-Zuhaili, p. 84.

2. Musnad Ahmad, 2/359.

3. Al-Sha'rawi, 1/53.

name of Allah. The new civilization that Noah (*peace be upon him*) founded, thus began in the name of Allah.

And in his saying: “Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”, indeed, my Lord, who takes care of me and takes care of you, is Forgiving of sins and Most Merciful to the servants, showing the vastness and extent of His forgiveness and mercy.

His saying, “Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”, because those who believed with Noah were human beings, not angels. It may be that some of them erred and sought forgiveness or sinned and repented, or those who believed but their faith was tainted by some flaws. However, God decreed that they believed, so He forgave them for these sins and small errors that they committed and did not punish them for their sins¹, but rather encompassed them with His vast mercy. This way the effects of the name of God, *Al-Rabb (the Lord)*, appear in His care, management, and preservation of Noah. The name *Al-Ghafur (All-Forgiving)* because of His forgiveness for the people of faith, and the name *Al-Rahim (the Merciful)* because of His mercy to them: “Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

God Almighty commanded Noah (*peace be upon him*) after ascending the Ark to praise God for the blessing of being saved from the oppressors, and to pray to God Almighty to grant him a blessed landing, for God is the best accommodator. This divine guidance is mentioned in Surat Al-Mu'minun.

1. Ibid, 1/54.

Allah Almighty said: “Then when you and those with you have settled in the Ark, say, “All praise is for Allah, Who saved us from the wrongdoing people.” And pray, “My Lord! Allow me a blessed landing, for You are the best accommodator.” [23:28-29]

This is how Allah is praised, turned to, and described with His attributes. This is how true servants, led by the prophets who are their role models, admit Allah's favours and show noble manners towards Him.

“Then when you and those with you have settled in the Ark.” Settling here is according to its normal literal meaning, and refers to there being a balance on the Ark which ensures that one side is not heavier than the other, so that it runs on water in a stable way. This means that when you are finished with entering those you have been commanded to enter into the Ark, then placed each in their appropriate place, and settled on the Ark with those who are with you in a way that keep the Ark stable and balanced, then you should say the following:

*“All praise is for Allah (**alhamdulillah**), Who saved us from the wrongdoing people.”*

Allah taught him how to praise Him by saying *alhamdulillah* after he and his people had settled on the Ark that embarked on its journey on the water.

Alhamdulillah means praise for Allah for the perfect attributes that He is worthy of and for His blessings and favours. The word *Al* in *alhamdulillah* suggest that it encompasses all forms of praise. Meaning, all praise in all

its forms, according to Allah's knowledge, not according to what we know and understand, is for Allah alone. "Who saved us from the wrongdoing people", saved us from their plots.

This being mentioned shows the motive behind *al-hamd* (*praise*), although all praise is always to Allah, but Allah taught His servants to praise Him at every occurrence of a blessing from Him during their life, so that they may remember God at that time, just as they remember Him through supplication for their demands, thanks, obedience, and remember Him through contemplating his verses and signs of His power, knowledge, and wisdom, when appropriate. People being occupied with the means of attaining things should not distract them from remembering God, praising Him, and thanking Him, because He is the causer of all means, He is the One who prevents, He removes obstacles, He is the source of all success, so for Him is all praise.

We notice from what was mentioned in Surat Hud that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) said when they started to board the Ark: "Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Several other verses indicate that reliance using the name of Allah is a divine teaching.¹

Similarly, Allah commanded him to say: "All praise is for Allah (*alhamdulillah*), Who saved us from the wrongdoing people", when he settles with his followers

1. Al-Maidani, p. 282.

upon the Ark, and to pray to His Lord to allow him a blessed landing, and to praise Him by affirming that He is the best accommodator when the sea trip ends and the time for descending comes. Allah Almighty said: “And pray, “My Lord! Allow me a blessed landing, for You are the best accommodator.” [23:29] He prays for a landing filled with bounties, blessings, and grace, along with what God has placed in it of fertility, stability, and good residence.

“You are the best accommodator.” This is a sentence of praise for Allah, that also alludes to being a prayer that Allah would grant them a blessed landing.

Among the effects of faith is that whenever a believer thinks of any good deed or any perfect qualities that He has granted some of His creatures, and it is a quality that befits God Almighty, he should remember that God is the best of those who have that quality and attribute. To then praise his Lord like this on such occasion is a legislated form of remembrance, and God Almighty has taught us in the Glorious Qur'an to praise Him in such way in several places in the Qur'an, such as:

“Provide for us! You are indeed the Best Provider.”
[5:114]

“Our Lord! Judge between us and our people with truth. You are the best of those who judge.” [7:89]

“You are our Guardian. So forgive us and have mercy on us. You are the best forgiver.” [7:155]

“They planned, but Allah also planned. And Allah is the best of planners.” [8:30]

“Be patient until Allah judges between us. He is the Best of Judges.” [7:87]

“But [only] Allah is the best Protector, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful.” [12:64]

“My Lord! Do not leave me childless, though You are the Best of Successors.” [21:89]

“Say, [O Prophet,] “My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who show mercy.”” [23:118]

Thirdly: The Flooding of the Earth

In Surat Al-Qamar, God Almighty presented a scene of torment, punishment, the great flood that afflicted the people of Noah, how the skies were opened as if water poured from them in a way unlike usual rain, and how the whole earth turned into fountains from which water erupts violently and powerfully. You can imagine, through what the noble verses mention, the extent to which the water reached in height.¹

Allah Almighty said:

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated. So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” So We opened the gates of the sky with pouring rain, and caused the earth to burst with springs, so the waters met for a fate already set. We carried him on that [Ark made] of planks and nails, sailing under Our [watchful] Eyes - a reward for he who had been denied.

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 70.

We certainly left this as a sign. So is there anyone who will be mindful? Then how [severe] were My punishment and warnings!” [54:9-16]

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was repelled.

They denied our servant Noah. This denial includes denying that he is the Messenger of God and denying what he has told them about his Lord. The verses here do not expand on their actions which they did to face him and his call. “He was repelled”, by the chiefs of his people. They aggressively prevented him from calling the masses to the religion that he has come with and they demanded that he stop, and they scolded him violently and they repelled him, instead of them being the ones stop and take heed.¹

That is when Nuh returned to his Lord who had sent him and tasked him with delivering the message, to explain where the situation had reach regarding him and his people, and to leave the affair to Him after he had used all his power and energy to deliver the message: “So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!”

So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!”

My strength, power, and energy have now ended, and I am overcome and overpowered. So help me my Lord, and defend your call, your truth, your way, since the command is yours, the message is yours, and my role has now ended.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3429.

Then the moment these words are spoken and the messenger leaves the affair to the Great, All-Powerful, the mighty Hand points towards the universe.¹

1. So We opened the gates of the sky with pouring rain,

The verse suggests that the sky was like a great container filled with water. This container has gates which were opened by Allah, so the waters poured down proportionally, pouring down as if they were waterfalls, evenly distributed across their locations on earth.²

And [We] caused the earth to burst with springs,

This shows that there were events of water bursting from the earth reflecting those waterfalls pouring from the sky. So despite the vastness of the earth, Allah caused it to burst with springs of water.

This bursting indicates a most severe form of water flowing and rushing from the ground to what is above it. The generalisation in attributing the explosion to “the earth” suggests that the surface of the earth had erupted water, while the word “springs” specified the nature of this bursting, which gives us the incredible image of springs scattered across the earth bursting with water.

2. So the waters met for a fate already set.

Without delay the pouring water of the sky met with the bursting water from the earth, for an exact fate that

1. Ibid, 6/3430.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 23.

had already been set and decreed by Allah even before the command for it to happen came. That fate is the destruction of the people of Nuh who disbelieved.

In the previous verses, “So We opened the gates of the sky with pouring rain, and caused the earth to burst with springs, so the waters met for a fate already set.” We notice an incredible natural and universal power depicted by carefully chosen words. They begin by attributing the action to Allah, “So We opened”, making the reader feel like the Hand of the Almighty opens the gates of the sky, with abundant and continuous water pouring, with the same force and the same movement. “And [We] caused the earth to burst with springs”, as though the whole earth had turned into bursting springs.

The water pouring down from the sky met the water bursting from the earth “for a fate already set.” They met on a predetermined command both agreeing to implement it, obeying the command, and fulfilling the fate. When this then turns into a flood that engulfs the face of the earth and overcomes the impurity that the Messenger had despaired of purifying and treating, the strong and merciful Hand was extended to the Noble Messenger, who supplicated and had the whole universe move in response to that *du'a* (**supplication**). This Hand extended to him with salvation and honour.

We carried him on that [Ark made] of planks and nails,

This statement makes clear the greatness of the Ark, made of planks and nails. An Ark built from wooden planks

held together firmly by nails, as well as by ropes that hold these planks together. Notice how this watercraft was not referred to with an explicit name that clearly describes it, but rather through some of the basic materials from which it was made from, namely planks and nails. This is a wonderful artistic allusion that satisfies the clever linguists intelligence and overwhelms his feelings. However, other chapters use the word '*fulk*' (*ship*), like in Surat al-A'raf, al-Shu'ara', Yunus, Hud, and al-Mu'minin. Then it was clarified that it is a water vehicle in the verses in the fifth section.¹

Sailing under Our [watchful] Eyes

This Ark that is made from planks sails on the water that has overcome the earth, so clearly it is a ship. This sentence indicates that it was sailing under Allah's care and protection in the middle of an incredible sea of water that had poured from the sky, springs that burst from the earth, and waves as great as mountains.

What this Ark needs most is to be encompassed by Allah's care and protection, so that it can be saved and arrive safely at a calm location of the land. What is better than at describing such care than to say that it is, "Sailing under Our [watchful] Eyes." Nuh's Ark is thus under the constant care of Allah in all its movements.

3. A reward for he who had been denied.

This describes the purpose behind such care and concern

1. Ibid, p. 27.

for the Ark of Nuh. It is a reward in this life for Nuh who had been denied by his people, so Allah said: “sailing under Our [watchful] Eyes - a reward for he who had been denied.”

The text does not mention this to be Nuh's reward, but rather a description that he had been denied, rejected, and repelled by his people. This reward and favour for Nuh is thus in return for the harsh treatment and mockery that he faced. This shows us the power of one who is overcome in the path of Allah, one who puts all his effort in, then returns to his Lord leaving things in His Hands. The whole universe ends up serving him, with Allah behind all that with His power and might.

4. We certainly left this as a sign.

We left Noah's ark for a long time after him, as a sign of the event of the flood. The story of Noah with his people reminds of God's punishment for the oppressive deniers, and is an example for those who are mindful, and a reminder for those who think, so the Almighty said in the next section:

5. So is there anyone who will be mindful?

This question indicates the purpose of leaving Noah's Ark as a sign for successive generations after him, which is for it to be a reminder. A reminder that leads to one taking heed, if one has the willingness and desire to take heed, while this question also encourages taking a lesson from what happened to the people of Noah. This exhortation came in the form of a rhetorical question, also alluding to how few those who are mindful are, because the question is only asking for one mindful person who takes a lesson from

the divine punishment that befell the previous nations. Thus we see how the question, despite being so concise, contains so many meanings.

Finally, this section ends with a reminder and address to all those who understand who were alive during the time of revelation and those who come after them:

Then how [severe] were My punishment and warnings!”

How was My punishment for the people of Nuh and how were My warnings? It was as the Qur'an had depicted, a mightily destructive punishment that caused fear and reproach. All the warnings that Allah gave to the people of Nuh were warnings of complete truth that history confirmed and that remained a sign to be witnessed for generations to come. So how great is this concise statement and how accurate and perfect in getting the intended meanings across.¹

Fourthly: Noah's dialogue with his son in the midst of natural and psychological distress

Allah Almighty said:

“And [so] the Ark sailed with them through waves like mountains. Noah called out to his son, who stood apart, “O my dear son! Come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers.” He replied, “I will take refuge on a mountain, which will protect me from the water.” Noah cried, “Today no one is protected from Allah's decree except those to whom He shows mercy!” And the waves came between

1. Ibid, p. 29.

them, and his son was among the drowned.” [11:42-43]

And [so] the Ark sailed with them through waves like mountains.

The waves of a sea will not be as high as mountains unless strong and high winds were driving them, so the waves being described as mountains meant that there was no need to mention the winds in the chapter, because the mind will make the connection. However, the water is still below the level of high mountains, perhaps flooding valleys, and starting to rise until it reaches high dwellings in the middle of the mountains or close to them.

“And [so] the Ark sailed with them through waves like mountains”, indicates that it is moving under the direction and control of God Almighty. Therefore, these waves, which God described as being as high and huge as mountains, these waves that would certainly sink the largest and most powerful of ships, did nothing to Noah's Ark. They did not hit it powerfully, nor overturn it, or harm it in any way. Rather, the ship runs - that is, it moves at a high speed - between waves like mountains. Rather, its path that God Almighty has drawn for it does not have waves that hinder or harm it. Imagine how a ship in a huge sea between waves like mountains, can sail in such way, without being drowned, nor even being slowed down. But Noah's Ark is moving by the command of God Almighty, so these waves do not affect it in any way.¹

1. Al-Sha'rawi, 1/55.

1. Noah called out to his son, who stood apart, “O my dear son! Come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers.”

In this intense moment, Nuh looks to see that one of his children is not with him, so a deeply concerned fatherhood awakes in him and he goes to bring back his stray son.¹ “He stood apart” in that moment in time in a place that was away from the water.²

Some scholars say that he was apart from both his father and his people. It seems that he was hiding his disbelief out of tribalism for his father, despite being upon the beliefs of his people. So perhaps his being apart was because he did not want to support his people against his father, nor did he want to follow his father and support him against his people.

“My dear son”: Nuh calls his son with tenderness, compassion, mercy, love, kindness, affection, and closeness, if only this had any impact. “Come aboard with us” onto the Ark of salvation with the believers. “And do not be with the disbelievers.” See how gentle he is with his son when he says “with” instead of “from”. It is as though he is moving his emotions so that he would respond and obey. He is telling him that he is not from the disbelievers by the Will of Allah, so do not stand with them, and be with those believers who are saved.

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1878.

2. Nawfal, p. 162.

According to some scholars, this statement of Nuh shows that he did not know that his son was a disbeliever, which is why he told him not to be with them. For had he known that he was a disbeliever, it would have been more appropriate for him to say: “Do not be from the disbelievers”, like Allah said about Iblis: “And he was from the disbelievers.” Do not be with the disbelievers in their religion and turning away from Nuh.¹

Allah will similarly address the disbelievers like this on the Day of Judgment, saying: “Not at all! My revelations had already come to you, but you rejected them, acted arrogantly, and were one of the disbelievers.” [39:59]

2. He replied, “I will take refuge on a mountain, which will protect me from the water.”

The disobedient son does not benefit from this anxious fatherhood and the deluded youth does not appreciate the extent of the comprehensive horror. The son thus answers from his distant place of isolation, indifferent, affected to the father's concern and pity: “I will take refuge on a mountain, which will protect me from the water.” He says, I will protect myself from nature using nature, and regardless of how high the water is, in the high mountains there is a greater source of protection. This is the logic of atheism; one does not see what is ahead of them except what is before the tip of his nose. The Qur'an depicts the father's response

1. Muhammad Jamal al-Din bin Qasim al-Hallaq al-Qasimi, Mahasin al-Ta'wil (*Tafsir al-Qasimi*), Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition 1418 AH, 6/96.

to him with a sentence that contains grief and sadness, and contains the logic of true faith (*eman*), a response to the arrogance of disbelief.¹

3. Noah cried, “Today no one is protected from Allah’s decree except those to whom He shows mercy!”

There is no protection today against God’s command for this encompassing and comprehensive flood, except for those He shows mercy. He has made the Ark the only means of salvation. But the son of Noah did not take advantage of this final opportunity that he had, because he was not among the believers, and he remained adamant in keeping to his stance. Noah did not know his son’s position regarding faith, but this dialogue between father and son did not last long, as the waves came between them, bringing their dialogue to an end. The waves took the Ark far into the bays, while the son could not hurry to reach a high mountain, as the water overtook him and he was among the drowned.²

4. And the waves came between them, and his son was among the drowned.”

After thousands of years, we hold our breath - and we follow the incident - and terror takes us as if we are witnessing the scene. The Ark carries them through waves like mountains, and the anxious father Noah sends call after call, but his son, the arrogant boy, refuses to respond, and the overwhelming wave resolves the situation in a split

1. Al-But, p. 273.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 122.

second, and all comes to an end, as if there was no prayer and no answer.

The divine statement brings down a curtain over this dialogue between the logic of faith and the arrogance of disbelief. “And the waves came between them, and his son was among the drowned.”

It is as if I see in this incredible sentence thunderbolts from the manifestation of divine anger as it breaks down proud ignorance and crushes prolonged arrogance as becomes a mere trace after having been a reality. This sentence says, in a clear way, that this deluded young man had just about completed his words and his eyes had just looked over in search of a mountain that he could find refuge in, until a wave rushed to him and devoured him, and it is as though he had never been.

With this sad ending, the scene of the flood comes to an end, as the Holy Qur'an presented the scenes of the flood in three scenes:

- **Firstly:** An Ark on waves as high as mountains
- **Secondly:** Waves that come in between Nuh and his son
- **Thirdly:** water pouring from the gates of the sky and meeting with water that bursts from the springs of the earth.

It then depicts what occurs after the water settles in three scenes:

- **Firstly:** The water swallows the water.

- **Secondly:** The sky clears its clouds.
- **Thirdly:** The Ark settles on Mount Joudi.¹

Fifthly: The Divine Command to End the Flood

In the midst of the events depicted in the Qur'anic verses, and between the clamour of waves that recede and extend across a sea that is the whole earth, this scene suddenly collapses, for us to see an immediate return of calm to the world and the return of everything to its previous order. The roaring has subsided, the storm has calmed, and the world was born as it was before. Let us contemplate the divine painting that painted this scene.

Allah Almighty said:

“And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain].” The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

These amazing Qur'anic sentences depict to you the meaning of divine will and its tremendous power that extends across the entire universe, and even controls it. It controls it as it wishes; its sky, land, seas, mountains, and everything else that is in it. It that does not give any consideration to big or small or great or insignificant. Do you not see how the verse based the return of everything to what it was before on a small word? After the waters of

1. Ahmed Al-Kubaisi, *Min anba al-Qura*, Al-Resala Foundation, 1st Ed., 2007, p. 146.

the sky and earth met to cause a massive and frightening flood, a small word: “It was said”, to show you how easy the matter is, and that it only needs this divine command by which the world begins and ends. Then look at the accurate description given:

1. *“And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water.*

Do you see how He did not say: “dry up your water”, for example, although that is the expression consistent with the nature of the earth, but rather He said: “swallow up your water”, to depict to you that the earth, when the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing, was directed at it, its pores and cracks turned into hollow mouths which swallowed up the waters with a gulp.¹

The command was directed at the earth before the sky, because what is required of it is two tasks: to stop its springs from bursting with water and to swallow up the water that had overflowed, so that the water decreases and the Ark settles on the land. As for the sky, it had only one task: to stop its rain from falling. The verb “swallow” meant that the explicit command to stop was not needed, because this swallowing can only occur after the water stops springing. Then when the command came, “O Earth, swallow up your water”, it immediately stopped bursting and began to swallow up the water that had erupted to its surface.²

In this Noble Qur’anic text, water is attributed to the

1. Al-Buti, p. 274.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 124.

Earth, and our earth is the richest planet with water known to us. That is why planet Earth is called the Water Planet or the Blue Planet. Scientists have been puzzled since ancient times in explaining the source of this huge amount of water, without which the life of things that we know to exist on Earth would not have been possible. Many hypotheses and theories have been developed in order to explain the origin of the Earth's water. One was the theory of comets colliding with the Earth. This theory remained prevalent for a long time, but then collapsed, as did other claims and theories. This was through the discovery of volcanologists who said that more than 70% of what rises from the craters of some volcanoes on the surface of the earth, is the rate of revolution of each of them and the average amount of water vapor that rises in each revolution.

Scientists concluded that the same amount of water is accumulated on the surface of the earth, in the rocks and sediments of its crust, and in the surrounding gaseous atmosphere. Thus it was proven that all the water of the earth was originally brought out by our Lord, the Blessed and Almighty, from within the earth. Regarding this, Allah Almighty says: "As for the earth, He spread it out as well, bringing forth its water and pastures" [79:30-31]

The Holy Qur'an spoke about the water cycle around the earth in several other verses, including attributing water to Earth in the 44th verse of Surat Hud: "And it was said, O earth! Swallow up your water." This is a clear Quranic precedent, as the acquired sciences did not come to know this until the late decades of the twentieth century.

In this Qur'anic verse, there is an indication towards the contribution of the earth's bursting springs in creating the flood of Nuh (*peace be upon him*), and this is what the Qur'an had confirmed: "and [We] caused the earth to burst with springs, so the waters met for a fate already set." [54:12]

And O sky! Withhold [your rain].

If you consider the word "withhold", meaning stop and withhold, you would imagine how wide open it was with water pouring into the earth. It is enough for you to contemplate the other verse describing this: "And We opened the gates of the sky with pouring water", to imagine how extraordinary the waters pouring down were. Notice too how the commands are addressed to the sky and the earth directly, although they are both static non-living creatures, to illustrate the speed of their response to the command of God Almighty, as though they were led by hearing and comprehending the command.

The moment the sky heard, "O sky, withhold", it stopped its rain, the clouds disappeared, and the sky became clear without any clouds. The verb "withhold" indicates both meanings, that the sky stops raining and that the sky is cleared from its clouds.

Dr. Zaghoul Al-Najjar says regarding the Almighty's saying: "O sky, withhold", the Holy Qur'anic text confirms that the flood of Noah (*peace be upon him*) was with fresh water, distinguishing it from the many forms of marine tyranny that the land had been subjected to throughout its long history. In 1998, American geophysicists and marine

scientists William Ryan and Walter Pitman concluded that the flood was from sea water, in their book, *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries about the Event That Changed History*. These two scholars confirm that what they described as a sea flood over a lake of fresh water was a natural event that had nothing to do with the biblical story of Noah. In this book, the two writers mention that this event took place 7600 years ago, when mounting seas had burst through the narrow Bosphorus valley, and the salt water of the Mediterranean had poured into the lake with unimaginable force, racing over beaches and up rivers, destroying or chasing all life before it and leading to a number of major human migrations.

However, the discovery of the remains of Noah's Ark (*peace be upon him*) at the foot of Mount Judi buried amid layers of freshwater sediments that extend from southern Turkey to the head of the Arabian Gulf, passing through the huge area of land between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, denies the claims of the American writers that the flood was unrelated to Noah's flood. This thus confirms the accuracy of the Qur'anic description of the flood over 1,400 years ago.¹

2. The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out.

This is a manifestation of the instant response to the command of God, for the water had receded, meaning that

1. Zaghoul Al-Najjar, *Min Ayat al-I'jaz al-Inba'i wa al-Tarikhi*, Dar Al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Ed., 2013, 1/188.

nothing remained except what was on its surface before. It had all dried up and disappeared. God fulfilled His command, carried out His will, inflicted His torment on the disbelievers, drowned them in the flood, and bestowed safety upon Noah and the believers.¹

We see the sense of balance between the two successive statements: “The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out.” This indicates that the execution coincided with the decree without any additions or omissions and at almost the same pace and rhythm. The statement, “and the decree was carried out” is concise but accurate in providing its intended meaning, showing that those who God decreed would perish had perished and those God decreed salvation for were saved.

3. The Ark rested on Mount Judi

The Holy Qur’anic text confirms that Noah’s Ark (*peace be upon him*) settled on a mountain called Mount Judi. This mountain is located in the southeast region of Turkey, to the northeast of Jazirat Ibn Umar on the banks of the Tigris River, near the Turkish-Iraqi-Syrian border and to the north of the city of Mosul.

Dr. Zaghoul Al-Najjar believes that archaeological studies have proven that this is true and accurate. He mentioned that in the middle of May of the year 1948, a Kurdish shepherd, whose name was Rasheed Sarhan, discovered the remains of the wood of Noah’s Ark (*peace be upon him*) buried in a heap of sediments at the top of Mount

1. Fadil al-Samura’i, 3/159.

Judi. Studies of the site followed after that in 1953, 1959, 1980, 1987, and 1994, and they continue to this day. A huge layer of thick freshwater sediments was found in the plains between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, which were the centre of a number of ancient civilizations, some of which have been discovered, ranging between three and seven thousand years BC.

It is likely that these sediments were subsequent to the sediments of the flood that were found below them. It was found void of human traces or those of previous civilizations, due to their horizontal spread over vast areas of land and their thickness of more than ten feet, and their burial of many ancient villages that continued to be excavated during this period, from 1922 to 1934. This excavation of these ancient civilizations continued intermittently after this until today. These conclusions were confirmed by studying the sediments collected in one of the northern Iraq caves known as the Great Shanidar Cave. These sediments date back to about one hundred thousand years ago and include a number of human remains that were studied by some researchers in the United States.

As well as this, many ancient historical accounts that were recently discovered refer to the anchoring of Noah's ark (*peace be upon him*) over Mount Judi. This is found in the writings of Pyrasos, a priest of the Babylonian civilization, and Apollodorus, a student of Socrates and one of the symbols of ancient Greek civilization.¹

1. Al-Najjar, 1/190.

Yaqut al-Hamawi said in *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, regarding Mount Judi: “Al-Judi is a mountain overlooking the island of Ibn Umar on the eastern side of the Tigris from the works of Mosul, on which the Ark of Noah (*peace be upon him*) settled when the water dried out. It is close to the well-known Iraqi city of Mosul, and its name is still *Jabal Al-Judi (Mount Judi)*, a well-known mountain there.”¹

“It rested on Mount Judi”, means that it stopped running and settled on the land in a stable and level manner, not inclined to the right or to the left, nor leaning forward or back, and all of this was with the complete care and protection of God.

4. and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!”

It is a brief, decisive sentence sharing deep expressions. “Away with the wrongdoing people”; away with them in this life, for they have gone, away with them from God’s mercy, for they have been cursed, and away with them from memory, for they have ended and no longer deserve to be mentioned or even remembered. They have died and moved to the life of the *Barzakh*, and they will remain there until the Hour comes to then receive their what they deserve. So, those who disbelieved in Noah’s message, being distanced from continuing corruption on earth, is a complete distancing. They were done away with entirely, and only the believers remained on Earth.²

1. Al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, 2/179.

2. Al-Sha’rawi, 1/59.

“And it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” This is a supplication against those who perished, and describing them with injustice, so that those after them know that everyone who perished was deserving of perishing. In case some think that the punishment encompassed even those who did not deserve to be punished.¹

This sentence also implies that those who follow the path of these people in injustice and denial deserve such distancing from God and supplication against them, so it is more appropriate for the unjust and deniers to think and turn back on their denial and wrongdoing so that God does not bring down upon them what He did with their likes.

This verse is of ultimate eloquence and contains many aspects of miraculous rhetoric:

“And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain].” The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!”

This verse contains many examples of excellent rhetoric. Some scholars of *tafsir* said that this verse is the most eloquent verse in the Qur'an and contains various types of Arabic rhetoric. Many things were mentioned in the verse, essays and books had even been written regarding it, and even the opponents agree that mankind is unable to produce a verse like it.² Abu Hayyan, *tafsir* scholar, has taken care

1. Afif Tabarah, p. 77.

2. Al-Suyuti, Al-Itqan, p. 218.

to clarify its meanings, wisdoms, and hidden secrets in his book, expanding on its various types of Arabic rhetoric.¹ Muhammad Isma'il al-Amir has also written an essay on this verse that he called *Al-Nahr al-Mawrud fi Tafsir Ayat Hud*.

What further proves this miracle is what was narrated that the disbelievers of Quraish wanted to oppose and disprove the Qur'an, so they devoted themselves to the pulp of wheat, lamb, and wine for forty days, to clear their minds. When they then went ahead to proceed and heard this verse, they said to each other: "This speech does not resemble the speech of humans." So they left what they had planned to do.²

It is narrated that Ibn al-Muqaffa' was highly eloquent, to the extent that some considered him to be the most eloquent person of his time. He planned to produce something like the Qur'an, so he compiled some words organised into chapters. He sat reading the Qur'an one day, then said: "I bear witness that this speech can never be competed with, nor is this the speech of a human being."³



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1. Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, *Al-Bahr al-Muhit*, Dar Al-Fikr, Beirut, 1st edition 1420 AH, 5/228.
 2. Imad Zuhair Hafidh, *The Noble Qur'anic Stories between Fathers and Sons*, p. 46.
 3. *Tafsir al-Alusi*, 12/63.

Sixthly: Nuh's Request Regarding His Son and Seeking Forgiveness and Mercy From Allah

Allah Almighty said:

“Noah called out to his Lord, saying, “My Lord! My son is [also] of my family, Your promise is surely true, and You are the most just of all judges!” Allah replied, “O Noah! He is certainly not of your family - he was entirely of unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me about what you have no knowledge of! I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.” Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:45-47]

The journey of salvation in a deep sea of waves like mountains, rain pouring down like streams, and the sky opening its gates, made Nuh forget about of his son. The waves came in between them and he was distracted by the horrors of the harsh frightening journey.

When the ship settled and landed on Mount Judi, and when the terror and anxiety that diverts thinking went away, and there was nothing left that preoccupied them with the events of the current situation, that is when memories of his land and his people returned to Nuh. Noah remembered his land, his country, and his people. He remembered his son, though he did not know what had happened to him. But the passion of fatherhood that God Almighty placed in the hearts of fathers exploded in him.¹

1. Al-Maidani, p. 130.

1. Noah called out to his Lord, saying, “My Lord!”

A call of supplication and hope. A call that seeks help and is coupled with submission and humility. This is indicated by the word “called”, since if this were a normal, calm request, it would have been appropriate for the word *du'a* (**supplication**) to have been used.

“My son is [also] of my family”

From my family who you promised would be saved. Of course, nobody can inform Allah of what He does not know, but this is out of hope and pleading to God. A prayer for his son from a broken heart; “my son is from my family.” As though he recalls a promise of the salvation of his family, turning a blind eye to, “except those against whom the decree has already been passed.”

2. “Your promise is surely true”

This means that reality cannot contradict His promise. He may have thought that God Almighty may have saved him by a means other than boarding the Ark. Alternatively, it may have been that Noah (*peace be upon him*) was certain that his son had drowned, but he asked God for mercy and forgiveness so that his son would not miss out on salvation in the eternal hereafter, so he made a genuinely hopeful supplication to his Lord. He begins his *du'a* by saying “my Lord”; the word that contains the meanings of care, honour, nurturing and continuous care. He implies in his supplication that he wishes for Allah to show his son – one of family members – some mercy due to the status that Nuh has with his Lord. He does not explicitly say it, but he rather

presented his request and need in a polite indirect manner, sufficing with the encompassing knowledge of his Lord, and this is a method of utmost politeness and humility with God Almighty.¹

3. *“And You are the most just of all judges!”*

You are the most just and wisest in all your judgments, and I am satisfied with all that you rule, command, and decree. I submit to your destiny, your will, and your decree. I only pray to you, hope, and plead with you, while being pleased with your decree regardless of what it is, for I am your servant who has submitted to you.²

4. *Allah replied, “O Noah! He is certainly not of your family”*

God did not deny that he was his biological son, but He denied that he was upon the same faith and among his followers who have the right to be saved from drowning. This is the most correct view in the matter. As for those who claimed that he was not his real son, as he was from adultery, then this is farfetched and is a weak opinion. This is proven by what is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas, may God be pleased with them, through many chains of transmission, that he said: “No wife of a prophet has ever committed adultery, but he contradicted him in action and intention.” Ibn Kathir noted that this is the view of many scholars and the undisputed truth.³

1. Fariq Hamadah, *Aba wa Abna Malamih Tarbawiyah*, Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus, 1st edition 1997, p. 20.

2. Nawfal, p. 178.

3. Tafsir ibn Kathir, 4/226.

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari said:

“The closest view to being correct is the view of those who said that this means that he is not from your family who I promised to save, because he opposed your faith, disbelieved in Me. Since Allah told the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*) that he is his son, when He said: “And Nuh called out to his son.” This shows that his saying, “he is not of your family”, refers to him not being upon the same faith, as though He said, “he is not from the people of your faith”, but the word faith was omitted. This is similar to the verse: “Ask [the people of] the land where we were” [12:82]. It is the people of the land who they told him to ask, but “the people of” was omitted in the verse because it is known.”¹

5. *“He was entirely of unrighteous conduct.”*

This is a clarification for why he is not from his children, since faith is the true lineage. As for the disbelievers, then they are not from your family who are included in the promise, because I had previously said to you, “And those who believe.” The statement, “unrighteous conduct”, shows that he was corrupt and wicked.

True lineage is thus the lineage of faith and belief, not the lineage of blood and kinship. This fact needed to be confirmed. Allah replied, “O Noah! He is certainly not of your family.” Then He explained the reason: “He was entirely of unrighteous conduct.”²

1. Tafsir al-Tabari, 15/346.

2. Muhammad Dib Al-Jajji, Al-Nasaq al-Qur’ani, Foundation for Qur’anic Sciences, Saudi Arabia, 1st edition 2010, p. 126 - 127.

This is the great reality of this religion, the reality of the firmest, unyielding hand-hold to which all ropes go back to; the bond of faith that links individuals in a way that lineage and kinship cannot.¹

“O Noah! He is certainly not of your family. He was entirely of unrighteous conduct.” These divine words and divine verdicts removed him from the circle of his family and drove him to a deep abyss in which he is not mentioned, nor paid any attention. That is because he chose disbelief over faith, and he took the paths of Satan, so material kinship, birth, and lineage no longer mean anything. This divine speech showed that this son of Noah was included in those who drowned. He was one of the doomed because he was one of the disbelievers and transgressors in reality.

6. *“So do not ask Me about what you have no knowledge of! I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.”*

This statement, prompted by the circumstance, contains an educational addition for Nuh and for us. That is, if you do not know the inner realities of things and you have seen from your Lord something contrary to what you wish, based on your desires and emotions, then be completely confident that your Lord is All-Knowing, Wise, and that His judgments are according to His knowledge and wisdom.

“I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.” This is an emphasised word of guidance and advice regarding what I mentioned to you: “So do not ask Me about what you have

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/1880.

no knowledge of.” This indicates that the prohibition is one of advice and guidance for the future, not a prohibition of reprimanding for the past. The meaning is that I warn you from being ignorant of this fact in the future, and thus ask your Lord of something that is contrary to His knowledge, wisdom, and justice, regardless of your emotional and psychological motives. This requires complete submission and contentment with all of Allah’s decrees and judgments, even if they come against the closest people to you.¹ Noah (*peace be upon him*) then had no more to say but:

7. Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.”

Noah (*peace be upon him*) in this verse apologises for his question, while also making another request, though this time a request to protect him from asking what he has no knowledge of.

He says, “My Lord”, totally reliant upon Allah, O you who takes care of me, educates me, teaches me, supports me, and guides me.

“I seek refuge in You.” I seek Your protection and support from falling into these transgressions again.

“From asking You about what I have no knowledge of.” This is what Noah seeks refuge from, that he asks God for that of which he has no knowledge, i.e. that which he does

1. Al-Maidani, p. 132.

not have permission to ask, that which no book or divine permission has allowed.

“Unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” If you do not forgive my sin and take care of me with your mercy, my fate will be loss in this world and the hereafter, and I seek refuge in you that my affair should become like this. The loser is the one whose capital is diminished, and the true loser here is the one who has lost the love of God and the reward of God.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) asked for forgiveness first, because renunciation (*takhliyah*) takes precedence over adornment (*tahliyah*). He then he followed it with a request for mercy, because if God is satisfied with him, he would be worthy of mercy.¹ This way Allah taught us the manners of the messengers with their Lord, for us to take them as our example.²

We can also take from the story of Noah with his son that God Almighty may afflict the believer with an immoral or disbelieving child, who opposes him in his religion, contradicts him in his belief and faith, and supports his enemies, the allies of Satan, against the allies of the Most Merciful, despite the irrefutable arguments and clear proofs of the truth of his message. Of course, this is not something the believer is blamed or mistreated for. No believer has the right to criticise his believing brother if God afflicts him with a disobedient, immoral child. Rather, this affliction

1. Nawfal, p. 186.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 133.

should be a lesson for him and he should pray to God to guide his brother's child. It is not permissible for a Muslim to shame his Muslim brother or slander him because of his sinful immoral son, if he is a sane adult, because he will be accountable for his own work only and not blamed for the doings of his son. Allah Almighty said: "No soul burdened with sin will bear the burden of another." [6:164]¹

Seventhly: Nuh's Disbelieving Wife

Allah Almighty said:

"Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. Each was under [married to] one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, "Enter the Fire, along with the others!" And Allah sets forth an example for the believers: the wife of Pharaoh, who prayed, "My Lord! Build me a house in Paradise near You, deliver me from Pharaoh and his [evil] doing, and save me from the wrongdoing people." [There is] also [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imrân, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her [womb] through Our angel [Gabriel]. She testified to the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was one of the [sincerely] devout." [66:10-12]

This verse is explicit about the stance of Nuh's wife who remained a disbeliever. Her marriage to Prophet Nuh therefore did not benefit her. Betrayal here refers to

1. Abu Faris, p. 85.

a betrayal in faith and religion; it does not mean adultery.¹

Abdullah ibn Abbas said: “No wife of a prophet has ever committed adultery, but their betrayal was in relation to faith.”

Ibn Kathir said: “They betrayed them” in faith, they did not follow them in faith, nor did they believe in their prophethood, so did not benefit anything, nor did it ward off any harm from themselves. This is why Allah said, “So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever”, i.e. due to their disbelief. “Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!” The meaning of “betrayal” here is not adultery, but rather in religion, because the wives of prophets are protected from falling into adultery due to the sanctity of the prophets.² Noah’s wife spared no effort in resisting the call to goodness and monotheism. Rather, she persisted and became arrogant, and she was thus one of the disbelievers.

Noah’s wife disbelieved in her husband, though she should have been the first to believe in him, especially since she was his wife, the most knowledgeable of people about his affairs, and the closest of people to him. However, she preferred the disbelief and misguidance that her people were upon, so her end was loss and destruction. Noah’s wife disbelieved with the disbelievers, and mocked her husband with those who mocked, so Noah (*peace be upon him*) was of

1. Ahmed Al-Sharqawi, *Women in Quranic Stories*, Dar Al-Salam, Cairo, 1st Ed., 2001, 1/143.

2. *Tafsir ibn Kathir*, 4/393.

no benefit for her against God, and she entered Hell with the others.

Here is the interpretation of the verses related to the four examples, the first and second are examples of disbelievers, while the third and fourth are examples of believers.

1. “Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot.”

This example is brought forth to show that guidance is in the Hands of Allah. He alone guides or misguides whoever He wills. “You surely cannot guide whoever you like [O Prophet], but it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills, and He knows best who are [fit to be] guided.” [28:56]

The disbeliever will be a disbeliever even if he lives in an environment of faith, is surrounded by fellow believers and monotheists, and knows truth from falsehood and good from evil. This is what happened to those two women. Far be it from Noah (*peace be upon him*) and Lot (*peace be upon him*) that they fall short in calling their wives to God Almighty, to *eman*, to the truth, virtue, and goodness. However, sick hearts will only accept disbelief even if they are under the care of a blessed prophet or righteous man.¹

“Each was under [married to] one of Our righteous servants.”

The parable raises the status of both Noah and Lot (*peace be upon them*) by Allah Most High referring to them

1. Abdul Sattar Al-Marsoumi, *Al-Lafatat al-Malihah*, Dar Al-Miraj Al-Dimashqiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st Ed., 2016, p. 295.

as “servants.” On top of this, they are described as being “righteous.” They attained pure worship to God Almighty and achieved righteousness. In this there is an indication of righteousness of religion as well as righteous conduct with people, and this is why the supplication of the prophets was for righteousness. Yusuf (*peace be upon him*) for example, had authority, a high status, and honour. He was a prophet, a messenger, a truthful one (*siddiq*), a leader, knowledgeable of dream interpretation, dignified, prestigious, and wealthy. Despite all this, he says, as Allah informs us: “My Lord! You have surely granted me authority and taught me the interpretation of dreams. [O] Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Allow me to die as one who submits and join me with the righteous.” [12:101]

Similarly, Sulaiman said it: “[Sulaiman] prayed, “My Lord! Inspire me to be thankful for Your favours which You have blessed me and my parents with, and to do good deeds that please you. Admit me, by Your mercy, into [the company of] Your righteous servants.” [27:19]

The word “under” also contains clear implications on the nature of the marital relationship, in that Nuh and Lut were both “above” their wives in terms of authority and responsibility in the marital home.¹

“Yet [they] betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever.”

1. Ibid, p. 296.

What may initially come into the minds of most people is that this betrayal was a marital betrayal. However, this is not something that befits the prophets (*peace be upon them*). The prophets have been given some distinct traits so that people are not put off by them or their message. This includes contagious illnesses, lying, betrayal, and having their honour protected. This is so that people have no reason to find any fault in them. Thus, the betrayal mentioned here is of another type:

a. The betrayal of Noah's wife: Noah's wife did not believe in him, but she used to tell people that he was crazy. In the *tafsir* of Ibn Jarir al-Tabari it is reported that Ibn Abbas was asked, while he was next to the Ka'bah, about the words of Allah Almighty, "yet they betrayed them." Ibn Abbas replied: "This was adultery, but she would tell people that he was crazy." Or her betrayal was that she would tell the authorities at that time the names of those who believed in Noah (*peace be upon him*). Al-Mawardi said in *Al-Nukat wa al-Uyun*: "The betrayal of Noah's wife was that she would tell people that he was crazy, and if anyone believed in him, she would inform the tyrants of him.¹ Some scholars said that died before the flood.

b. The betrayal of Lut's wife is that she would tell his people whenever he had guests. She was a disbeliever and on the side of her disbelieving people. Her betrayal was thus also not related to adultery. Al-Dhahhak reports that Ibn Abbas said: "No wife of a prophet has ever committed

1. 6/46.

adultery, but their betrayal was in relation to faith.”

2. Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!”

God decreed for them a final judgment that they should enter Hellfire, since being the wives of two of God’s messengers did not benefit them, so on the Day of Judgment they are from the people of the Fire.¹ There is no honour or intercession when it comes to disbelief and faith, and when it comes to betrayal in creed, not even for the wives of the prophets.²

3. And Allah sets forth an example for the believers: the wife of Pharaoh, who prayed, “My Lord! Build me a house in Paradise near You, deliver me from Pharaoh and his evil doing, and save me from the wrongdoing people.”

Here is the wife of Pharaoh, who was not prevented by the flood of disbelief in which she lived in Pharaoh’s palace from seeking salvation alone. She disassociated herself from Pharaoh’s palace, asking her Lord for a house in Paradise, she disassociated herself from Pharaoh, praying to her Lord for salvation, and she disassociated herself from Pharaoh’s evil doings for fear that some of these doings would impact her. Even though she was the closest person to him, she supplicated, “deliver me from Pharaoh and his evil doing, and save me from the wrongdoing people.” The supplication of Pharaoh’s wife and her attitude is an

1. Al-Maidani, p. 310.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3621.

example of arrogance over the presentation of the worldly life in its finest form.

The supplication of Pharaoh's wife and her stance is an example of rising above the pleasures of this worldly life in its finest form. She was the wife of the greatest king on Earth at that time. She was living in his palace, the most pleasant place for a woman to find whatever she desires, but she rose above all this with her faith. Not only did she reject it and rise above it, but she considered it an evil and trial that she sought refuge in Allah from and prayed to be saved from. She was just one woman within in a vast and powerful kingdom, and this is another great virtue, since a woman is more sensitive and likely to feel the pressures of society. However, this woman is alone in the midst of the pressures of society, the palace, the king, his entourage, and the royal standing. In the midst of all this, she raised her head to the sky alone against the tyrannical disbelief that she witnessed.

This is a truly excellent model in sincerity to God despite all these influences, hurdles, and obstacles. This is what made her worthy of being mentioned in the eternal book of Allah, whose words descend from the highest heavens and are recited constantly in this universe.¹

“[There is] also [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imrân, who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her [womb] through Our angel. She testified to the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was one of the sincerely devout.”

1. Ibid, 6/3622.

She too is an example of pure sincerity to God since her birth, as God related to us in the chapters of His Qur'an. He mentions here her purity: "who guarded her chastity," exonerating her from what the Jews accused her of. "So We breathed into her [womb] through Our angel." From this breath came Jesus (*peace be upon him*) as detailed in Surat Maryam, the chapter that details the events of his birth. We will not go into details of that story in order to keep to the present text, which aims to depict Mary's purity, her complete faith, and her obedience. "She testified to the words of her Lord and His Scriptures, and was one of the sincerely devout." The mention of Pharaoh's wife here along with Maryam, the daughter of Imran, indicates the high position that she held. This was due to the circumstances that she was in that we previously mentioned. These two examples of the purified, faithful, devout woman. Allah gives these examples for the wives of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) in relation to the incident mentioned at the beginning of Surat Al-Tahrim, and He gives these examples for all believing women after them.

Eighthly: The Causes of Destruction of the Disbelieving People of Nuh

Noah (*peace be upon him*) came at the end of the first human civilization that started from Adam (*peace be upon him*) but then deviated from monotheism and pure worship of the Almighty Creator. Human life then continued to develop with material issues, but weakened and erred in its spiritual values and knowledge of its Creator. Allah thus sent Noah (*peace be upon him*) who established the argument against

the disbelievers, the oppressors, the sinners, and those who were stubborn upon *kufir*, so Allah's *sunnah* (**way**) passed in their demise and eradication. Only few believed with him, and it was with them that he established a civilization of peace and blessing after the flood. There are many factors for the demise and end of the first human civilization, the most important of which are:

1. **Disbelief in Allah Most High**

One of the most important causes of divine punishment and the destruction of the first human civilization with the Great Flood, is disbelief (*kufir*) in God. The root of *kufir* in the Arabic language goes back to meanings of covering and wrapping. The disbeliever is called a *kafir* because he has covered the faith that he should be upon with disbelief. *Kufir* is the opposite of *eman*, which means affirmation, belief, and recognition of the oneness of God, His lordship, His divinity, belief in the angels, Allah's *shari'ah* (**His law**), the message of Noah (*peace be upon him*), the Final Day, and in Qada and Qadar (**decree and predestination**), that it all comes from Allah.

The people of Nuh had rejected his call to tawhid, and thus rejecting Allah's message. They disbelieved in it, waged war against it, and were described with *kufir* by Allah, as previously mentioned in Allah's statement:

“The disbelieving chiefs of his people said, “We see you only as a human being like ourselves, and we see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us, who do so [hastily] without thinking. We do not see anything that

makes [all of] you any better than us. In fact, we think you are liars.” [11:27]

Describing the end of the first civilization that Noah's people lived in with disbelief means that in that period of human history it was distant from religion and free from the obligations of believing in God and following His guidance. This certainly leads it to deficiency and decline in morals. This is exactly what happened to the people of Noah (*peace be upon him*) as they found themselves in a state of misery and despair due to their being distant from divine guidance.

The material delinquency that has always characterized the forces of disbelief since the dawn of history until the present time, as a necessity of their attachment to the earth and its rejection of any belief in the unseen (*ghayb*) or higher values, does not represent an expression of true happiness in its comprehensive sense. On the contrary, this delinquency represents a major reversal and a dangerous deviation in an experience that fills its cells and arteries with misery and despair.¹ Whatever the case, any civilization is governed by divine norms (*sunan*), and these norms in relation to civilizations are of two types:

- Partial sunan related to the physical material world. These give everyone who utilises them according to their efforts, and do not differentiate between believer and disbeliever.

1. Abdullah Muhammad Al-Amin, *The Islamic Vision and the Civilization Issue, A Comparative Study*, Department of Islamic Research and Studies, Qatar, 1434 AH, p. 103.

- Major sunan that govern these partial sunan. This is the Sunnah of belief in God Almighty and tawhid. It determines the fate of civilizations, their growth and fall, and all the factors of the downfall of civilizations are considered secondary to this factor.

The Sunnah of God had befallen the people of Noah for many reasons including disbelief in God Almighty. The great flood thus resulted, which is one of the most prominent historical events that occurred in human history, as it is one of the most severe punishments that God punished the disbelievers with.¹

2. *Shirk (associating partners with Allah)*

It is well known that monotheism (*tawhid*) is the basis in human life and it is what created human civilization beginning with God's creation of our father Adam (*peace be upon him*). However, at the end of the era of the first human civilization and in the era of Noah's people, polytheism spread among them, and they began to deviate from the religion of monotheism, as stated in the hadith of Ibn Abbas:

There were ten centuries between Adam and Noah, all upon Islam, until Satan lured them into polytheism, when he beautified for them that it was necessary to venerate righteous men among them from their deceased. He inspired them to raise statues in the images and names of those pious men of the people of Noah, so that they would always be

1. Wafa Muhammad Saeed, *Fiqh al-Sunan al-Ilahiyah*, Dar al-Ummah, 1st Edition 2016, p. 169.

remembered. Then another generation came from the people of Nuh and Satan whispered to them that their forefathers used to worship them, so they worshipped them.”¹

We have explained in this book the dialogue that took place between Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his people, and his use of all methods of persuasion in order to call them to monotheism and abandoning polytheism. He remained amongst them for a thousand years less fifty calling them to God Almighty. Whenever his people turned away from his call, he would change his approach. If they turned away from his public preaching, he would convey the message to them privately. Despite that, their hearts did not soften, because they were sealed by their love and worship of idols.²

The people of Noah were the first polytheists in the history of human civilizations, and it was with them that deviation began. They were deeply rooted in polytheism and stubbornness. The Qur'an recorded their final stance on polytheism and idolatry after the eloquent sermons and precious advice that Noah (*peace be upon him*) gave them. Allah Almighty said: “They urged [their followers], ‘Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, and Nasr.’” [71:23] This stance is not just one of shirk and insistence upon it, but even promoting it, advising to hold firmly to it, and warning against leaving it.³

1. Mustadrak al-Hakim, 2/442.

2. Muhammad Amahzoun, Al-Sunan al-Ijtima'iyah, Dar Taiba, 1st edition 1432 AH, 3/385.

3. Saeed Muhammad Baba Sila, Reasons for the Destruction of Previous

In a situation of trust in God and reliance on Him, Noah (*peace be upon him*) shows the inability and weakness of their idols. He challenged them all and their idols, which they claimed to be gods that benefit and harm, he challenged them to seek to plot against him and harm him as much as they could. Since, if these idols were truly gods, they would have taken revenge against him and destroyed him due to his criticism and rebuttal of them. Allah Almighty said:

“Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Nuh when he said to his people, “O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you, then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay! [10:71]

But their gods did nothing. How could they when they are merely inanimate objects that do not comprehend, let alone bring about any benefit or repel any harm? After these arguments and this challenge, they did not respond with any argument or proof, but rather declared their disapproval of the arguments brought forward by Noah and closed the door of debate and dialogue altogether, instead challenging him to send down a punishment upon them. The Almighty said: “They protested, “O Nuh! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true.” [11:32]

It is a stubbornness beyond which there is no stubbornness,

all for the sake of idols which they made with their own hands and called gods without any proof.¹ In the end, God Almighty decreed the destruction of the polytheists, which is a *sunnah* for those who committed *shirk* and defied His Messenger. The pillars and foundations of their idolatry were thus destroyed by the great flood.

3. *Dhulm (oppression and transgression)*

Dhulm is one of the biggest factors in the downfall of civilizations. It is a broad and comprehensive concept, which leads to a loss of balance in all areas of life, in a person's relationship with himself, with God, and with others. From this, crooked psychological, social, and economic phenomena emerge, and a corrupt perceptions of the whole of existence, so corruption permeates human life altogether.² Allah Almighty says:

“And your Lord [O Prophet] would never destroy a society unjustly while its people were acting rightly.” [11:117]

“Such is the [crushing] grip of your Lord when He seizes the societies entrenched in wrongdoing. Indeed, His grip is [terribly] painful and severe.” [11:102]

The people of Nuh are described with *dhulm (oppression, transgression, and wrongdoing)* in many places in the Qur'an:

“Have they not received the stories of those [destroyed]

1. Ibid, p. 128.

2. Mohamed Heshour, p. 23.

before them: the people of Noah, 'd, and Thamûd, the people of Abraham, the residents of Midian, and the overturned cities [of Lot]? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” [9:70]

“And before [that He destroyed] the people of Noah, who were truly far worse in wrongdoing and transgression.” [53:52] That is, they were far worse in wrongdoing and transgression than the people of Ad and Thamud.

“Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing.” [29:14]

“Do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned.” [11:37]

“And it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

Indeed, *dhulm* reached its pinnacle with the people of Noah (*peace be upon him*) it became apparent at a societal level. They committed *dhulm* in all its forms, and continued to do so until the divine punishment descended upon them. “Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing.” Allah Almighty said: “[Imagine] how many societies of wrongdoers We have destroyed, raising up other people after them!” [21:11]

Destruction because of *dhulm* is one of the laws of God in the fall of the first human civilization. The civilization that neglected the light of revelation was annihilated and the authority of the chiefs that represented the political, social,

and intellectual leadership in that era of human history, was completely removed.

4. Denying the noble messenger Nuh (*peace be upon him*)

Many verses show that denying and belying the messengers was a cause of destruction for the previous nations. These verses are very explicit in showing the direct link between belying the messengers and the destruction that befell them.

Allah Almighty said:

“If they deny you [O Prophet], so did the people of Noah before them, as well as [the tribes of] ’Âd and Thamûd, the people of Abraham, the people of Lot, and the residents of Midian. And Moses was denied [too]. But I delayed [the fate of] the disbelievers [until their appointed time] then seized them. And how severe was My response!” [22:42-44]

These verses and others like them provided comfort to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, from the denial and turning away that he faced from his people. Allah Almighty relates to His prophet the stories of those who denied from the past nations, how they belied their messengers, and the destruction that they ended with. This reduces the burden of pain and sorrow that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) finds due to the denial of these disbelievers. He is not the first messenger to be denied, but messengers were denied before him. These verses also contain a warning and alert for the deniers of his people that their fate will be the same as that of their predecessors who belied their messengers and were seized by Allah with a speedy

torment.¹ Other similar verses include Allah's statement:

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth], as did 'd, Pharaoh of the mighty structures, Thamûd, the people of Lot, and the residents of the Forest. These were [all] enemy forces. Each rejected their messenger, so My punishment was justified.” [38:12-14]

Ibn Kathir said: “He made the cause of their destruction, their rejection of the messengers.”

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth,] as did the people of the Water-pit, Thamûd, 'Âd, Pharaoh, the kinfolk of Lot, the residents of the Forest, and the people of Tubba'. Each rejected [their] messenger, so My warning was fulfilled.” [50:12-14]

“None disputes the signs of Allah except the disbelievers, so do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land. Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth], as did [other] enemy forces afterwards. Every community plotted against its prophet to seize him, and argued in falsehood, [hoping] to discredit the truth with it. So I seized them. And how [horrible] was My punishment!” [40:4-5]

As you can see, these verses speak of the destruction of all nations due to their denial of messengers generally speaking. While other verses speak of the same thing, but discuss the approach of specific nations in denying its messenger and the consequences of that denial.

Belying the messengers means to claim that they are

1. Sila, p. 192.

lying or to imply that. It is one of the greatest crimes and atrocities committed by the previous nations and by which they deserved to perish. At the forefront of those nations were the people of Noah (*peace be upon him*). He was the most truthful of people and the most pure in secret. He was trustworthy and was supported by divine revelation and proofs. Allah only chose him to be a messenger because He knew that he was competent to take it on. He is the One from whom nothing is hidden, and He knows where to place His message.¹

Due to the severity and repulsiveness of the crime of denying the Messengers, the Holy Qur'an considered belying one Messenger, equivalent to belying all the Messengers. Allah Almighty said: "And when the people of Noah rejected the messengers, We drowned them, making them an example to humanity. And We have prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers." [25:37]

This verse indicated that they were destroyed by drowning due to their denial of the Messengers, even though God only sent Noah to them (*peace be upon him*). This is because the denial of one Messenger is a denial of all the Messengers, their predecessors and their successors, because their word is one on the matter of *tawhid* (**monotheism**), which is the basis of their message. There is thus no difference between Nuh and the other messengers in terms of the obligation of believing in them. Had Allah, the Most High, sent all the messenger to these people, they would still have belied

1. Ibid, p. 194.

them all, just as they belied Noah. And this highlights the severity of their disbelief and the evil of their crime, which is why Allah Almighty said:

“And when the people of Noah rejected the messengers, We drowned them, making them an example to humanity. And We have prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers.” [25:37]

“But they rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark” [7:64]

“But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark” [10:73]

The last two verses came at the end of the story of Nuh in Surah al-A'raf and Surah Yunus, to show their insistence and continuation in belying Nuh up until their destruction.¹

With this long story of denial and stubbornness and rejecting the arguments and signs, the people of Noah will still come on the Day of Resurrection and deny that Noah or any other messenger came to them with a warning. They will seek to deny the proof being established against them in the hope of escaping torment. But how can they attain that in the presence of trustworthy witnesses?

Imam al-Bukhari narrated on the authority of Abu Saeed al-Khudri, may God be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “Nuh will be called and it will be said: “Did you deliver (*the Message*)?” He will say: “Yes.” His people will then

1. Ibid, p. 217.

be called and it will be said: “Did he call you?” They will say: “No warner came to us. No one came to us.” He will then say to Nuh: “Who will testify for you?” He replies: “Muhammad and his Ummah.” He (*peace be upon him*) said: “You will be brought to testify that he delivered the Message, and that is His saying: “And so We have made you [believers] an upright (*and moderate*) community so that you may be witnesses over humanity and that the Messenger may be a witness over you.” [2:143]¹

5. Harming Nuh with Various Types of Harm and Nuh's Supplication Against Them

Another reason for the divine punishment that descended upon Nuh's people is that they harmed, mocked, belittled, and belied him, threatened to stone him, and accused him of madness. Allah Almighty said: “Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth] and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated.” [54:9] Their intimidation was their threatening him, like Allah said: “They threatened, “If you do not desist, O Noah, you will surely be stoned [to death].” [26:116]

They accused him of madness then warned him against continuing his call to tawhid and being critical of their idols. This accusation of both madness and lying shows how extreme they were in denying and rejecting him. That is because when a sane person lies, he says things that are believable, and some people may even be deceived and become unsure of whether he is truthful or lying. However,

1. Sahih al-Bukhari, 4/105

when a mad person lies, he usually speaks nonsense, and his lies are clear for every sane person to see. So they made Nuh's words of the latter type, open and clear lies.¹ In another instance they accused Nuh of being upon misguidance. Allah Almighty said: "But the chiefs of his people said, "We surely see that you are clearly misguided." [7:60]

They did not suffice with accusing him of misguidance, but they considered it to be misguidance that is clear for everyone to see and so far astray from the truth.² As such, one can become so misguided that he believes the one calling him to guidance to be the misguided one.³

This truly is a reversal of the scales and a distortion of facts, for Noah (*peace be upon him*) is the furthest person from misguidance, and those who accused him of misguidance are the ones truly misguided. They are the ones who worshipped idols that cannot benefit nor ward off any harm. Idols that they made with their own hands and called gods without any proof. Noah only came only to take them out of this misguidance and guide them to the truth of monotheism and the rejection of idolatry. But they were their own enemies, destroying themselves with their stubbornness and intransigence. The denial of Nuh's people did not stop there. They would also spread suspicions and doubts about his message. Sometimes they use the argument

1. Tafsir Razi, 15/36.

2. Tafsir al-Sa'di, 3/45.

3. Sayyid Qutb, 3/542.

of Nuh being a human being which they claim contradicts prophethood. Other times they accuse him of opposing the way of their forefathers, striving for prestige and status, and other claims of theirs. The denial of these people reached the point of refusing to hear the words of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and disliking to even see him, as Noah said in the words of Allah Almighty: “And whenever I invite them to be forgiven by You, they press their fingers into their ears, cover themselves with their clothes, persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly.” [71:7]¹

Things then ended with them hastening for the punishment that Nuh threatened would descend, thinking that there is no truth to that threat. This way they caused him to lose hope in them ever believing after this lengthy period of reminders, arguments, and admonishments. “And it was revealed to Noah, “None of your people will believe except those who already have.” [11:36]

Nothing was thus left except for Nuh to supplicate to his Lord and pray against them. Allah Almighty said:

“Indeed, Noah cried out to Us, and how excellent are We in responding!” [37:75]

“Noah prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” [23:26]

“So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” [54:10]

“Noah prayed, “My Lord! My people have truly rejected

1. Zad al-Masir, 8/98; Tafsir al-Baydawi, 2/529.

me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” [26:117-118]

“Noah had prayed, “My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth. For if You spare [any of] them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to [wicked] sinners, staunch disbelievers.” [71:26-27]

Allah accepted the prayers of His servant – and who greater is there to respond to prayers – so He completely destroyed the deniers.¹

6. Hastening the Punishment

Another cause of the divine punishment that befell the people of Nuh is their hastening the punishment. When they gave up on responding with sound arguments, pride in the sin took hold of them, they became arrogant, and they refused to accept sound logical and natural proofs. They thus abandoned arguing and went on to challenging Nuh. They were truly blind. Allah Almighty said: “They protested, “O Noah! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true.” [11:32]

Inability covered in clothes of power and weakness, appearing to be strong through challenging and belittling, but in reality, fearing that the truth should prevail. “Then bring us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true!” [7:70] Send down upon us the painful torment that you threatened us with, for we do not believe you nor do

1. Sila, p. 219.

we care about your threats. So when Noah (*peace be upon him*) despaired of them becoming righteous and accepting his call, and he saw that there was no good in them, and that they came to harm, oppose, and deny him in every way possible, physical and verbal, he supplicated against them with a prayer of anger to God Almighty, so God answered his prayer and fulfilled his request.¹ “And [remember] when Noah had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him and delivered him and his family from the great distress.” [21:76]

7. Disputing in Falsehood

Allah Almighty said:

“None disputes the signs of Allah except the disbelievers, so do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land. Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth], as did [other] enemy forces afterwards. Every community plotted against its prophet to seize him, and argued in falsehood, [hoping] to discredit the truth with it. So I seized them. And how [horrible] was My punishment!” [40:4-5]

A. “None disputes the signs of Allah except the disbelievers”

They alone of all people deviate, and they alone among creation stray. In comparison with all of creation, they are even smaller than ants in comparison to this earth. They stand on one side disputing the signs of Allah, while on

1. Sharif Sheikh Saleh Ahmed Al-Khatib, *Al-Sunan al-Ilahiyah fi al-Hayat al-Insaniyah*, 2/342.

the other side the entire existence stands in recognition of the Creator of existence. In such a situation, their destiny is clear and their fate is determined, no matter how strong they are, nor how much money, prestige, and power they have on their side.

B. “So do not be deceived by their prosperity throughout the land.”

No matter how much they prosper, possess, and enjoy, their end is defeat, destruction, and ruin. The end of the battle is known if there ever is a battle that can take place between existence and its Creator, and the strength of these poor individuals. People and groups like them preceded them, and their outcome is the consequence of anyone who stands in the face of the overwhelming force, exposing himself to the might of Allah.

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth], as did [other] enemy forces afterwards.”

That is, they are not the first to deny such that they would be ignorant of the consequences of denial. For this is an ancient story since the time of Nuh, and a battle with similar scenarios in every era. This verse depicts the story of the message, denial, and tyranny over the centuries and generations, as well as depicting the consequence of each.¹

C. “Every community plotted against its prophet to seize him”

Every community from the people of Noah and the forces

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/3070.

after him used various means of plotting and deception against their messenger, in order to get hold of him and prevent him from continuing the call, either through incarceration, restraining, killing, or expulsion from the land.

“And [they] argued in falsehood, [hoping] to discredit the truth with it.”

To delude with their disguised and adorned falsehood, that the truth that the messengers brought is actually falsehood. To slide the truth into the slippery slopes of suspicion and confusion that they fabricate, removing it from its firm position in the hearts and minds of the believers.

So I seized them. And how [horrible] was My punishment!”

That is, I seized and destroyed them. Destruction by different means. So how dreadful was their punishment for denying the messengers of their Lord and arguing with them in falsehood to rebut the truth? This rhetorical question informs us of the nature of the punishment, because the word “how” is used to inquire about the situation. They were punishments through natural phenomena, such as the flood of Nuh, the flooding of the sea of Musa, the overturning of the earth and turning it upside down, and so on. This was a fair revenge for nations who had voluntarily disbelieved and remained insistent on rejection of the truth, despite the long respite given to them. This was thus a lesson for those who came after them.¹

1. Al-Maidani, p. 152.

8. **Luxury and Indulgence**

Luxury is another cause of divine punishment. Allah Almighty said: “But the wrongdoers [only] pursued their [worldly] pleasures, becoming wicked. And your Lord [O Prophet] would never destroy a society unjustly while its people were acting rightly.” [11:116-117]¹

The wrongdoers – and they are the majority – followed their Lord’s respite in worldly pleasures, preferring that to the actions of the afterlife and what saves them from Allah’s punishment. Allah Almighty said: “Whenever We intend to destroy a society, We command its elite [to obey Allah] but they act rebelliously in it. So the decree [of punishment] is justified, and We destroy it utterly.” [17:16]

So if Allah intends to destroy a nation, He commands its elite to act with corruption and to maintain their life of luxury, thus continuing in sin and in disobeying Allah. Their sinning then brings about Allah’s threat of torment and destruction that He promised those who disbelieve in Him and reject His messengers. Then, He, Glory be to Him, destroys it and destroys those who are in it.

The elite are those affluent and wealthy leaders.² They are the ones referred to in many previous verses as the chiefs, and they are the ones who took lead in opposing and rejecting the messengers, as stated in many verses,

1. Imad Al-Din Khalil, *The Islamic Interpretation of History*, Dar Al-Ilm, Beirut, 5th Ed., 1991, p. 273.

2. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 3/548.

including what Allah Almighty said about Noah's people: "But the chiefs of his people said, "We surely see that you are clearly misguided." [7:60]

Noah made it clear that the masses of his people followed their leaders and the wealthy among them, whose abundance of wealth and children only increased them in misguidance in this world and punishment in the Hereafter.¹ Allah said: "And [they] followed [instead] those [elite] whose [abundant] wealth and children only increase them in loss." [71:21]

Elitism and class discrimination prevailed in Nuh's society. A society made up of chiefs and subordinates, rich and poor, and powerful and weak. The elite of every nation are a class of wealthy leaders who have money, servants, and comfort. So they enjoy comfort and dominion until their souls slouch out of old age and thrive in immorality and corruption, violating noble values and sanctities, and dignity and honour are disregarded. They were thus a cause of destruction for their nations and the places in which they lived.² Allah Almighty has told us of the many wrongdoing towns whose people were elites and deserving of His punishment. Allah Almighty said:

"[Imagine] how many societies of wrongdoers We have destroyed, raising up other people after them! When the wrongdoers sensed [the arrival of] Our torment, they started to run away from their cities. [They were told,] "Do not

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3716.

2. Al-Raqb, p. 215.

run away! Return to your luxuries and your homes, so you may be questioned [about your fate].” They cried, “Woe to us! We have surely been wrongdoers.” They kept repeating their cry until We mowed them down, [leaving them] lifeless.” [21:11-15]

9. Being Spoiled

Another crime that nations are punished for is being spoiled. This involves transgression, idolatry, and being ungrateful for blessings. Allah says: “How many societies have We destroyed that had been spoiled by their [comfortable] living! Those are their residences, never inhabited after them except passingly. And We [alone] were the Successor.” [28:58]

The people of Nuh were overly spoiled in their blessings, transgressing with them without ever being grateful for them, nor fulfilling the rights of those blessings. They thus combined between disbelief, corrupt beliefs, transgression, pride, and ingratitude.¹ While Nuh (*peace be upon him*) reminded his people to be thankful to Allah for His favours upon them:

“What is the matter with you that you are not in awe of the Majesty of Allah, when He truly created you in stages [of development]? Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them as a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp? Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then

1. Amahzoun, 1/504.

He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again]. And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways.” [71:13-20]

But the people became accustomed to being spoiled and ungrateful. When the doors of blessing were opened to them, they did nothing but rejoice with evil, arrogance, and tyranny, without showing any thanks or gratitude to the One who blessed them, glory be to Him. Their *shirk* and denial was of the worst type, as they attributed these blessings and favours to their idols and they worshipped them, while Allah alone is worthy of being worshipped, the source of all blessings and favours. But they insisted on worshipping their idols and encouraging others to do so, and thus their end was the flood that wiped them out and left none of them behind.¹

1. Arrogance (*kibr*)

Another reason for the destruction of the people of Nuh is arrogance. *Kibr* is an internal trait which leads a person to feeling that they are above others. Whenever someone has such a trait, he is described as having *kibr*, and it can appear on one's actions.² The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) explained the reality of this prohibited *kibr*, saying: “*Kibr (arrogance)* means to reject the truth and to belittle people.”³

The vile trait of arrogance was widespread amongst the

1. Ibid, 3/406.

2. Al-Mufradat, p. 421.

3. Sahih Muslim, No. 147.

people of Nuh who transgressed the limits in arrogance. Their Prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*) described them as such in his complaint to his Lord about their stubbornness and lack of acceptance. The Almighty said: “They persist [in denial], and act very arrogantly.” [71:7]

This description indicative of their excessive arrogance was also mentioned in the Almighty's statement: “And before [that He destroyed] the people of Nuh, who were truly far worse in wrongdoing and transgression” [53:52]. Al-Tabari said: “They were more oppressive of themselves, greater in disbelief in their Lord, and more rebellious against God than the other nations that were destroyed.”¹

The people of Nuh showed arrogance towards Allah by refusing to worship Him and to accept His commands and prohibitions, as well as being arrogant towards Nuh and his followers, which is why Allah's *sunnah* of destroying the arrogant befell them.

Arrogance is a truly horrible trait and a major sin. It is the cause of distress and destruction for many people in this life, while also deserving punishment in the hereafter. The texts that speak of its evil, danger, and its consequences, are countless. An example is Allah's statement: “Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humiliated” [40:60]. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “He who has, in his heart, an ant's weight of arrogance will not enter Jannah.”²

1. Sila, p. 166.

2. Sahih Muslim, No. 149.

These two texts speak of the consequences in the hereafter. As for the consequences of arrogance in this life, it is sufficient to refer to the texts indicating that arrogance was a cause of destruction for many of the previous nations. Indeed, the most harmful consequence of arrogance is that it prevents one from following the truth and submitting to it even after knowing it. He is thus barred from guidance and instead restrained by falsehood due to his arrogance and stubbornness. The disbelief of most nations was therefore due to pride and arrogance. They knew the truthfulness of the messengers and that the messages they brought was true, but they did not believe in them out of arrogance and out of resentment for following a human being like them.¹

2. Evil Plotting

Nuh face some major evil plots devised by the disbelievers. Allah Almighty said: “And they devised a mighty plot” [71:22]. Cunning plotting was a prominent characteristic in the people of Noah. The chiefs of his people used all means and methods of cunning plotting to deter people from the call of monotheism and the worship of God alone. They instead preferred suspicions and false accusations, placing obstacles and hurdles in the way of his call, as we have shown in the previous pages.

They deceptively plotted and set up ropes to trap Noah (*peace be upon him*) but God reversed their plans and made them a means of their own destruction. The destruction of evil plotters is a consistent sunnah of Allah that will

1. Sila, p. 162.

continue until Allah inherits the earth and those upon it.¹ Allah Almighty said: “And so We have placed in every society the most wicked to conspire in it. Yet they plot only against themselves, but they fail to perceive it.” [6:123]

In another verse Allah showed the end of such evil plotting disbelievers: “Indeed, those before them had plotted, but Allah struck at the [very] foundation of their structure, so the roof collapsed on top of them, and the torment came upon them from where they did not expect.” [16:26]

Wrongdoings and sins

Allah Almighty said in Surah Nuh in the supplication of Nuh: “Those [elite] have already led many astray, so [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away. Because of their sins, they were drowned, then admitted into the Fire. And they found none to help them against Allah.” [71:24-25]

“Those [elite] have already led many astray, so [O Lord], only allow the wrongdoers to stray farther away.” This supplication that stems from a heart that has strived and struggled for so long, eventually, after exerting all means, coming to the conclusion that there is no good in the hearts of such oppressive transgressors and that they are not worthy of guidance.

Before the rest of Nuh's supplication is mentioned, the end of the sinful wrongdoers in this world and the hereafter is presented. The matter of the hereafter is just like that

1. Al-Khatib, 2/332.

of this world, proceeding within Allah's knowledge and Allah's fixed decree that does not change.

“Because of their sins, they were drowned, then admitted into the Fire. And they found none to help them against Allah.” Their sins caused them to be drowned and then entered into the Fire. It is as though the short time interval between these two things does not exist, because in the scales of God, it does not count as anything.¹

Among the reasons for the divine punishment of Noah's people is their falling into disobedience and committing sins. Sins encompass all the causes of destruction of previous nations and others, because every violation of the command of God is a sin for which God may punish for. If sins and wrongdoings then accumulate in a nation, it is bound to be punished and for destruction to befall it.² Allah Almighty said:

“Have they not seen how many [disbelieving] peoples We destroyed before them? We had made them more established in the land than you. We sent down abundant rain for them and made rivers flow at their feet. Then We destroyed them for their sins and replaced them with other peoples.” [6:6]

Sins are a cause of revenge and removal of blessings³, since it detaches nations from its source of true power and

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3716.

2. Al-Khatib, 2/337.

3. Rashid Rida, Tafsir al-Manar, 7/308.

having to face the forces of faith along with the power of Allah. As Allah Almighty said: “Their fate will be like that of the people of Pharaoh and those before them - they all rejected Our signs, so Allah seized them for their sins. And Allah is severe in punishment” [3:11]. This is the sunnah of God, that He punishes nations when they become engrossed in sin; one of the main reasons that brought about the destruction of the first human civilization.

3. Being Occupied with the Worldly Life and Forgetting the Afterlife

The people of Nuh were occupied with worldly affairs and they became spoilt in that regard, thus forgetting the afterlife. They were happy and proud with their money, children, and wealth, but it missed them that they are in need of preparing for the day of departure, so they transgressed against the people of *aman*. They fell into divine gradualism (*istidraj*), so they found abundance in wealth and offspring, and became proudly indulged in many blessings. Allah's following statement applies to them:

“When they became oblivious to warnings, We showered them with everything they desired. But just as they became prideful of what they were given, We seized them by surprise, then they instantly fell into despair! So the wrongdoers were utterly uprooted. And all praise is for Allah - Lord of all worlds.” [6:44-45]

- “We showered them with everything they desired.” This Qur’anic description depicts sustenance, bounties, pleasures, and power, flowing at them like torrents without

barriers or restrictions, without even any struggle or effort on their part to attain these things.

- “But just as they became prideful of what they were given.” They became overwhelmed by the flowing of goods and sustenance, absorbed in enjoying them, joyful for having them, without any thankfulness or remembrance. Their hearts were devoid of any remembrance of the One who provided these blessings, nor were they conscious of Him, nor did they fear Him. Their concern was restricted to these pleasures, they submitted to desires, and their lives became void of concern for what is important, as is the case with those engulfed in desires and pleasures. This then led to corrupt conditions, diseased hearts, immorality, and thus life being ruined. That is when Allah’s sunnah that does not change struck them.¹

- “We seized them by surprise, then they instantly fell into despair!” They were taken by surprise while they were heedless and unaware. They then became shocked, having lost hope in being saved, unable to think straight, as each and every one of them was destroyed.

- “So the wrongdoers were utterly uprooted.” They were completely annihilated, up until every last one of them. The wrongdoers in this verse largely means polytheists, because shirk is the greatest form of dhulm (*wrongdoing*).

- “And all praise is for Allah - Lord of all worlds.” Since there is no blessing or mercy greater than having the

1. Sayyid Qutb, 2/1090.

earth purified from such wrongdoers.

Allah seized the people of Nuh, the people of Hud, the people of Salih, the people of Lut, just as He seized the Pharaohs, the Greeks, the Romans, and others. Behind the flourishing of their civilization and then its destruction, lies the hidden secret of decree in His *sunnah*, and this is the divine interpretation of this repeated historical reality.

4. The Rule of Replacement

Allah Almighty said: “If you turn away, He will replace you with another people. And they will not be like you.” [47:48]

The *sunnah* of Allah in human society has been such that He does not destroy a people, except that others are brought into existence after them. That is because the disappearance of one nation and the emergence of another is not in vain nor a matter of chance, but it is the *sunnah* of Allah in nations and states so that humanity is renewed, civilization is circulated among humans, and so that the world continues upon sound belief and correct foundations that are essential for survival.¹

Just as civilizations are bound by rules of rising and falling, are bound rules of renewal, revival, and replacement. The Holy Qur'an spoke of the substitution of civilizations, which is what Noah's people faced when the causes of destruction appeared in them, so Allah's *sunnah* passed in them through the flood. Then in order for humanity to

1. Heshour, p. 73.

resume its mission, God replaced them with Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those who believed in him. Noah and those who believed with him were distinct with their monotheism and divine moral system, patiently clinging to the truth. God fulfilled his decree and enabled them on the earth after bringing about the conditions and causes of enablement in them. In the next section we will speak about the civilization of peace and blessings that Noah (*peace be upon him*) founded after Allah removed the wrongdoers and replaced them with His righteous servants.

5. The Appointed Term of Communities

Allah Almighty said: “For each community there is an appointed term. When their time arrives, they can neither delay it for a moment, nor could they advance it” [7:34]. Just as Allah has made an appointed term for each individual at which his life comes to an end, Allah has made an appointed term for each community at which it falls and becomes a matter of the past. Similarly, civilizations move throughout history according to many precise sunan (*plural of sunnah*) that have been set by the All-Knowing, All-Wise. Sunan that cannot go against, their terms are set, and their events have already been decreed and written. “For every nation there is an appointed term.”¹

Given that these appointed terms are linked to fixed times in the knowledge of God as part of a coherent universal system and according to time scales that may seem – to one

1. Abd al-Hamid Tahmaz, Divine Sunan in Creation, Al-Dar Al-Shamiya for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Damascus, 2000, p. 35.

with limited understanding – to be long. And given that the will and wisdom of God Almighty in his creation wished to extend these terms, so that each nation has enough of an opportunity to atone for its oppression and tyranny, and to strive to adhere to the correct and straight path. Given this, some people assume that the punishment of God Almighty will not touch them, and that there shall be no deterioration nor downfall. “They only know what is apparent of this life, but are totally oblivious to the Hereafter.” [30:7]

While others provocatively seek the hastening of their destruction before its due time. “And [remember] when they prayed, “O Allah! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones upon us from the sky or overcome us with a painful punishment”” [8:32]. Except that the former and latter are both unaware that their set term had not come yet, and that when it does, they will have no choice but to embrace their fates that they had created with their own hands.

As Allah Almighty said: “If Allah were to punish people [immediately] for their wrongdoing, He would not have left a single living being on earth. But He delays them for an appointed term. And when their time arrives, they cannot delay it for a moment, nor could they advance it” [16:61]. Allah also says: “For each community there is an appointed term. When their time arrives, they cannot delay it for a moment, nor could they advance it” [10:49]. This means that every nation has an expiry date in this life, so when the time for that date comes, they will not be delayed a single hour, nor will they be advanced for an hour.

Allah Almighty said: “We have never destroyed a society without a destined term. No people can advance their destined term, nor can they delay it” [15:4-5]. This verse clarifies that all the destroyed towns had a predetermined term that followed the causes of their destruction, after God established the argument against its people by sending warnings, opportunities to repent, and the sunnah of gradualism (*istidraj*). The sunnah of God remains constant, and that is that the destruction of nations is dependent on their term that God has decreed for them, based on their conduct, actions, beliefs, and their shortcomings. In this way, the will of God is carried out, so that the deniers should not be deceived when Allah delays them for a period of time. It is God's justice that each faces the consequences of his actions and conduct. The sunnah of God proceeds down its known path, step by step, towards the appointed term that God has given those towns.¹

There is no nation that lives, then rebels against the truth and turns away from justice, except that God destroys it or punishes it before the Day of Resurrection. This is a confirmed decree in Allah's book. Allah Almighty said: “There is not a [wicked] society that We will not destroy or punish with a severe torment before the Day of Judgment. That is written in the Record.” [17:58]

This is what happened to the people of Nuh, when Allah sent a messenger to them to guide them, but they arrogantly and stubbornly rejected his call. They turned away from

1. Heshour, p. 303.

it and challenged him to hasten the punishment that he promised. Divine punishment thus befell them due to their wrongdoing in accordance with the appointed time set by Allah as per the rule of, “And for each nation there is an appointed term.” For Allah’s knowledge cannot be altered and His *sunnah* does not change, but rather is binding in line with Allah’s will, knowledge, and wisdom.

6. **The *sunnah* of destruction**

God, Glory be to Him, decreed that judgment and recompense be given on the Day of Resurrection. However, His *sunnah* and divine wisdom dictate that there is a clear separation between the people of truth and the people of falsehood in this life. That is through destroying the wrongdoers and saving the believers in the battle between the messengers and their enemies. In this battle Allah’s *sunnah* struck the people of misery. Some were drowned by the flood; a barren wind was sent to others; some were overtaken by a mighty blast; an overwhelming earthquake struck some of them, so they fell lifeless in their homes; and among them were those who were disfigured into monkeys and pigs.

The destruction that befell those wrongdoers is only disgrace to them in this world and a victory for the believers. It is an example for the nations that come after them, for them to learn about the fates of those who have passed, and to stay away from the paths of Satan, which were the cause of destruction of the past nations that rejected God and His Messenger.

The term *halaak* (**destruction**) has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an with multiple meanings depending on the context. It can mean death, corruption, losing something, and punishment¹, with the last meaning being the most used in the Qur'an and the most relevant to our discussion here. *Halaak* in the Qur'anic terminology is the punishment of utter annihilation that God Almighty inflicts on His enemies. This is used often in the Qur'an when speaking of the end of the past nations that strayed from the straight path, rejected Allah's commands, and harmed His messengers.

The type of destruction that befell the people of Nuh is drowning. Allah Almighty said: "Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty. Then the Flood overtook them, while they persisted in wrongdoing," [29:14]. The people of Nuh were the first of the destroyed nations whose story was mentioned in the Qur'an.² Allah Almighty said: "[Consider] how many peoples We have destroyed after Nuh! And sufficient is your Lord as All-Aware and All-Seeing of the sins of His servants" [17:17]. We understand from this verse that destruction began with the people of Nuh and then continued up until the period before the sending of the final prophet with the destruction of the People of the Elephant. The people of Noah were the inhabitants of the earth in that distant time period in the depths of history before the

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1. Hussein ibn Muhammad Al-Damaghani, *Islah al-Wujuh wa al-Nadha'ir*, Dar Al-Ilm lil Malayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 4th edition, 1983, p. 477.
 2. Al-Taher Ahmad Al-Zawi, *Mukhtar Al-Qamus*, p. 393.

spread of people, due to the closeness of that era to the era of Adam, the father of mankind, peace be upon him.¹

7. **The *sunnah* of loss**

The *sunnah* of loss befell the people of Nuh. Allah said: “Those who rejected the signs of Allah, it is they who are the [true] losers” [39:63]. It is the *sunnah* (**rule**) of Allah that the disbelievers lose, and never succeed. A constant *sunnah* that does not change, just as the success of the believers is a constant rule.² Therefore, everything that we saw the chiefs of the people of Nuh having of blessings, pleasure, power, and authority, this was never success according to the scales of true values. This was only them being gradually led to regret, loss, and the great flood. The people of Nuh lost their comprehension and insight, so they became lost in the deserts of doubts, the seas of desires, and the valleys of misguidance. So the *sunnah* of loss befell them. “Those who rejected the signs of Allah, it is they who will be [true] losers.”

Heedlessness of the Causes of Destruction

One of the causes of the destruction of Noah's people and the passing of God's *sunnah* among them was their neglect of the causes of destruction. They did not pay attention to the danger of these causes, but rather fell into them at an individual and societal level. The Qur'an, in the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) draws attention to taking a lesson

1. Amahzoun, 3/579.

2. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2483.

from their state. A state that is full of lessons, benefits, rules, and God's *sunnah* in the life of peoples and the demise of civilizations.

These are some of the causes that we extracted through research and studies in knowing the factors of destruction of the first human civilization. It is remarkable that the components of a new civilization emerged through the trial that Noah faced, which contributed to its commence after the ship landed on Mount Judi. A civilization that emerged in the name of God, with praise to God for saving them from the wrongdoing people, and in supplication to Allah to allow them a blessed landing, for Allah is the best accommodator. The seeds of that civilization existed in Noah's Ark: humans, animals, birds, and plants, along with spiritual values, moral principles, and an advanced understanding about God, life, the universe, existence, Heaven, Hell, judgment, destiny, and other things, through God's revelation to Noah (*peace be upon him*).

Ninthly: Being Cautious of the Judeo-Christian Reports (*isra'iliyyat*) that Distorted the Story of Nuh and the Great Flood

We have to beware of myths, legends, *isra'iliyyat*, and false reports that have been associated with the story of Noah, peace be upon him. Judeo-Christian reports in particular, have played a big role in contaminating the purity of the story of Noah in many cases. They claim, for example, that God commanded Noah to plant a tree from which to build a ship, that he planted this tree, then waited for a hundred years, then he cut it up over another hundred

years according to one report, and forty years according to a different report.¹

The same is to be said regarding the length of the ship, which is claimed to be three hundred cubits in length with a width of fifty cubits. Hamid Ahmed al-Taher al-Basyouni, in his book *Sahih Qasas al-Qur'an*, warned against these myths, legends, false reports, and Judeo-Christian reports. He critiqued many of the *isra'iliyyat*, uncovering their flaws and their contradiction to the Shari'ah as well as reason. So whoever wants a more detailed discussion should refer to it.²

Many Judeo-Christian reports speak of how the animals and birds entered the Ark, but unfortunately these reports resemble fairy tales more than they do historical facts. For instance, a report that speaks of Iblis entering the Ark in the tail of a donkey. Another narration suggests that Og (*Awaj ibn Anaq*) did not drown in the flood of Noah. It is said that he lived since the era before Noah up until the time of Moses, and that he was a tyrannical, stubborn, and rebellious disbeliever, and that his mother Anaq daughter of Adam gave birth to him from fornication. They say that he was a giant who was so big that he would take a fish from the depths of the sea and then grill it using the sun. He used to mock Noah and his Ark he would call it "the bowl".

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1. Muhammad Bayoumi Mehran, *Historical Studies in the Noble Qur'an*, 4/76.
 2. Hamed Ahmed Al-Basyouni, *Sahih Qasas al-Qur'an*, Dar Al-Hadith, Cairo, p. 94.

The reality is that this myth does not even deserve to be discussed. No mind and no Shari'ah can accept it.

Another example of such myths is a report that claims that when the Ark settled on Mount Judi, they went down to the bottom and built a village they called Eighty. They then woke up one day and were randomly speaking in eighty languages, one of which was Arabic. Many did not understand each other, so Noah had to explain what the other was saying.¹

No objective researcher can deny the impact of Judeo-Christian reports in these stories, which sometimes are unrealistic myths, other times contradict the correct Islamic belief, and often contradict each other. If we were to prove this point, using for example the incident of the different languages of the survivors of the flood, we find that the impact of the Torah in it is quite clear, if not taken directly or almost entirely from the Torah. This is because the Torah attempts to provide a naïve and unscientific explanation for the existence of different languages and races. It states that the survivors of the flood wanted to build a high tower in order to ascend to God Almighty in the heights of His heaven, believing the sky to be something like a glass that exists a few hundred meters above the ground. God feared their evil – Glorified and Exalted is He above what they claim – and guarded Himself, so He descended to the earth and confounded (*in Arabic balbala*) their tongues, so they became scattered, and hence the city was called Babylon,

1. Mehran, 4/82.

because the Lord there confounded (*balbala*) the tongues of all the people of earth.

Another Judeo-Christian report is that narrated by Ibn Kathir from the Torah. He says: “It is reported that Ham, the son of Nuh, had relations with his wife on the Ark, so Nuh prayed that his child would be born disfigured, so he had a black child who is Canaan the son of Ham, the father of the blacks. Others said that when Ham saw his father’s nakedness appear while he was asleep, he did not cover it up, but his brothers did, so Nuh prayed that Ham’s son would be disfigured and that his offspring would be slaves to the children of his brothers.¹

These are just some of many mistakes and false stories that contradict reason and contradict the authentic reports, that have unfortunately affected the books of history and leaked into the books of *tafsir* (*Qur’anic exegesis*).

There is a need to purify traditional works of these tales, and rely instead on the Qur’anic explanation presented by the Holy Quran of the story of Noah, peace be upon him.

1. **Bani Israel’s Distortions of the Prophet Nuh**

The Children of Israel slandered the Prophet of God, Noah, peace be upon him. They claimed that he drank wine, got drunk, and became exposed inside his tent. His son Ham, the father of Canaan, then saw his father’s nakedness and went out and told his two brothers what he saw. When they came in, they picked up a cover and walked up from

1. Al-Basyouni, p. 97.

behind him so that they do not see his nakedness and they covered him with it. When Noah woke up and knew what his son had done, he became angry with him and said that Canaan, the son of Ham, and his descendants, would be slaves to the sons of Shem and Japheth. He told that he would be a slave to slaves to his brothers, and he blessed Shem, saying: “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be their slave.”¹

What they mentioned here about Noah (*peace be upon him*) is a lie and a slander against Noah. It is not befitting that Noah, one of the messengers of strong resolve, to drink wine, get drunk, and strip naked until his nakedness is seen. Since that is the case, then what was said about Ham is also a lie.²

Abd al-Wahhab Abd al-Razzaq al-Rawi commented on this narration in “The Biblical Flood in the Book of Genesis,” and said: “This narration fits well with the evil intentions of the Jews, which is to slander and curse the children of Canaan, the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan - Palestine - and to raise the status and blessing of the children of Shem, who the children of Israel are from. But these Jewish writers neglected the fact that there are Arabs who are also descendants of Shem.”³

Dr. Muhammad Ali Al-Bar commented saying: “It is

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1. Genesis, Ch. 9, p. 26-27.
 2. Omar Al-Ashqar, Stories of the Torah and the Gospel in Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah, Dar Al-Nafais, 1st edition, 2011, p. 52.
 3. Hadith al-Qur'an al-Adhim, p.446

really strange that Noah, who was drunk and naked, would curse his grandson Canaan, who had nothing to do with this action that Noah himself was responsible for. Nuh then extended his blessings to Shem, the grandfather of the Jews, as they claim, and made Canaan a slave to Shem. All the people of Palestine would therefore be slaves to the Jews and the land of Palestine would belong to the children of Shem, who are obviously the Jews. Thus the distorted Torah pollutes the image of the prophets in a terrible way, just as it has polluted God Almighty Himself, Exalted is He above what the wrongdoers claim.¹

2. Did the Flood of Nuh encompass the whole earth?

Scholars have spoken about this issue and differed over it. We shall mention some of their opinions regarding this historical event:

Shaykh Muhammad Abduh answered this question saying: “As for the Holy Qur’an, there is no definitive text in it regarding the generality of the Flood nor the generality of the message of Noah, peace be upon him. The narrations reported on the matter, assuming they are authentic, are solitary narrations (*akhbar ahad*) that do not provide certainty, while these matters need to be established with certainty, not conjecture, if this is to be considered one of the matters of belief in the religion. As for the historian or researcher, then he may seek out views, despite not being certain, based on his confidence in the narrator, historian,

1. Muhammad Ali al-Bar, Allah Almighty and the Prophets in the Old Testament Torah, Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus, 2011, p. 68.

or author of the opinion concerned. What the historians and Qur'anic commentators mention regarding this matter does not go beyond narrations reported by trustworthy narrators or unreliable narrators. It does not provide definitive evidence for a religious belief.

As for the issue of how encompassing the flood was, this is a subject of dispute amongst the different religions and geologists, and a subject of disagreement amongst historians. As for the People of the Book and the scholars of Islam, they are of the view that the flood encompassed the whole earth, and many researchers agreed with them on that. They supported their opinion with the presence of some shells and fossilized fish in the higher parts of mountains, arguing that these things are only found in the sea, so their appearance in the tops of mountains is evidence that there was a time in which water ascended, and this could not occur unless the whole earth is flooded. However, later theorists claim that the flood did not encompass the whole earth, and they also have their arguments that are too long to explain now.”¹

In any case, it is not permissible for a Muslim to deny that the flood was general just because of the possibility of *ta'wil* (***an interpretation that opposes the apparent and literal wording***) in the verses of the Holy Book. Rather, anyone who believes in the religion must not deny the apparent meaning of the verses and authentic Prophetic Hadiths, instead turning to *ta'wil* except with rational

1. Mehran, 4/97.

evidence that necessitates that the literal meaning is not intended. Reaching a conclusion on such a matter requires lengthy research, continuous effort, and expert knowledge of geology, and this is dependent on various sciences, both rational and transmitted. Whoever makes baseless claims without certain knowledge, his words should not be listened to and he is not allowed to broadcast his ignorance, and God Almighty knows best.¹

Shaykh Muhammad Rashid Rida says: “The summary of this fatwa is that the apparent wordings of the Qur’an and Hadith reports indicate that the flood was universal and encompassing all the people of Noah, who were the only ones on earth at the time, so this much must be believed. However, this does not necessitate that the flood encompassed the whole earth, as there is no evidence that they were spread around the whole earth.

Additionally, the presence of shells and fossils of marine animals in the tops of mountains does not mean that the flood caused this. Rather, it is more likely that it was the result of the formation of mountains and other land in the water. Since the ascension of water to the mountains for only a number of days is not sufficient for this to occur. Either way, as we said, these historical issues are not from the objectives of the Qur’an, and therefore were not explained in it in a definitive way. We simply say that the aforementioned is what the apparent wording of the texts indicate, but we do not adopt this as a definitive religious

1. Ibid.

creed. Therefore, if geologists were to prove otherwise, this does not harm us, because it does not contradict any definite text in our faith.”¹

Dr. Omar Iman Abu Bakr says: “There is no dispute between the scholars that all the disbelievers of Noah’s people were drowned and that only the believers who boarded the ship were saved. But the question remains: Did the flood encompass all parts of Earth, both inhabited and uninhabited, or was it only the populated part of Earth at that time? If we consider that a pair of each creature was carried other than humans, it seems more likely that the water encompassed all parts of the world, including the uninhabited part of it. This is because the purpose of carrying them is the fear of their extinction. So if there were parts of the world not affected by the flood, some of these creatures would have existed there, and thus there would have been no need to carry them on the ship. This is what is understood from the words of Ibn Kathir who said: “The water covered all the earth, its length and breadth, its plain and rough lands, its mountains, its deserts, and its sands, and there was no living being left on the face of the earth, neither small nor large.”²

The number of humans at the time of Noah (*peace be upon him*) were limited because his time was relatively close to the time of Adam. And considering that they all existed in one place, it appears that the flood did not cover

1. Ibid.

2. Najjar, p. 65

all five continents, especially since some of them were not discovered until around two centuries ago. Furthermore, although the texts indicate that all people were drowned, there is nothing explicit in them to say that drowning encompassed all the people of the earth. Though we are not certain that one of the two views is stronger than the other, and we leave knowledge of this to God Almighty.”¹

Shaykh Muhammad al-Tahir ibn Ashur said: “The generality of the flood is the apparent wording of the Qur’an and Sunnah, while those who say that the flood did not encompass the whole earth denied it on the basis of the short period of the flood specified in Judeo-Christian reports. Though there is no reason to be convinced of any of the various claims regarding the age of planet Earth, and this is not a definitive matter. The short period that the flood lasted is relative. That is that none of his people who he was sent to remained. It may also be said that we accept that the flood did not encompass the whole earth, but it encompassed all humans because they were confined to the lands affected by the flood. And although the evidence for the generality of the flood is not conclusive in the Qur’an, the arguments of those who denied it are not strong enough, so the apparent meanings of the Qur’an should not be left for such arguments.”²

Shaykh Abd al-Wahhab al-Najjar says: “Some scholars incline towards generalisation, and some geologists

1. Qissat Nuh, p.75

2. Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir, 12/125

say: “Whenever we search at the top of high mountains, we find animal remains of living things that only live in water, which suggests the existence of a flood on these mountains, or even a number of floods due to the difference in the age of these remains.” So there is no objection to the flood of Noah being one of them, and that it was widespread. This can also be supported by Allah’s statement: “And We made his descendants the sole survivors.” [37:77]

While another group of scholars incline towards the view that the flood was not encompassing, but that the water only impacted the part which Noah and his people lived in, while the rest of the earth was not swept away by the flood. This view is potentially supported by what the Hindus claimed in that their land extended in the past to a date before what the Torah estimated for Noah and his flood, up until today. Now, you know that I am not confident in the history that the Torah estimates, for perhaps Noah was around before it and before the period claimed by the people of India.

In any case, the issue does not contain a clear text from the Qur’an. What the Qur’an is clear about is that Noah’s people disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger, so God drowned them in the flood and saved Noah and those with him in the Ark, making his offspring the sole survivors. It could potentially have been an encompassing flood and potentially been a specific one. What I incline towards is that it was a specific flood and that humanity was not spread all over the globe, but were rather they confined to the area that was covered by the flood, and that they had perished

and Noah and his descendants remained.¹

A group of researchers spoke about the flood and the issues related to it, with the most important research being:

- Qissat al-Tufan bayn al-Usturah wa al-Din by Hisham Muhammad Mubarak.
- Tufan Nuh bayn al-Haqiqah wa al-Awham by the Centre of Research and Studies of Altajdeed Cultural & Social Society.
- Tufan Nuh fi al-Qur'an wa al-Asatir al-Qadimah by Mansur Abd al-Hakim.
- Anbiya al-Qur'an by Abd al-Majid Hamo.

3. The interest of history of religions in the flood

The story of the Great Flood has occupied many minds and drawn the attention of many researchers in the fields of science and humanities, including religious studies, comparative religion, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history. This indicates that the flood, from both a mythical and religious perspective, has had a great impact on the lives and minds of subsequent nations.²

There have been conflicting perspectives in historical sources and references regarding the story of the flood, but the Holy Qur'an alone presents the complete truth of

1. Al-Najjar, p. 65.

2. Hisham Muhammad Mubarak, *The Story of the Flood between Myth and Religion*, Dar of Academics for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 2015, p. 139.

the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and the great flood. It cannot be compared to any of the humanistic schools that discussed the flood, for God preserved from the biography of His Prophet and Messenger Noah that which benefits humanity. You will not find this in the Sumerian or Babylonian traditions, the distorted Torah, or anything else.

The Qur'anic text clearly describes that Noah was a messenger from the Lord of the worlds; that he spent the time God willed for him to spend in calling his people to the worship of the One God; that God Almighty only brought the flood about after the noble Prophet endured all kinds of harm and persecution in his call, and only after the noble Prophet tried all means of persuasion to no avail; and that the survivors of the flood in the Qur'anic story only survived because they believed in God, the Mighty, the Wise, and believed the message delivered by Noah (*peace be upon him*), contrary to other texts that claimed that the cause of their salvation was their being relatives of Nuh, despite being people of falsehood. The Holy Qur'an clarifies this particular point further, relating to us the dialogue that occurred between Noah and his son, as well his wife's stance. We see very clearly the Qur'anic principle of: "Whoever does good, it is to their own benefit. And whoever does evil, it is to their own loss. Your Lord is never unjust to [His] creation"; "No soul burdened with sin will bear the burden of another"; "So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it."

The Qur'anic text is the only text that transcends the evil of polytheism and the misguidance of idolatry, as it states

quite clearly that the people have departed from the worship of their Lord and turned to worshipping idols. In all of this it provides us with a description of God Almighty that befits His High Self. It does not lower itself to the pagan thinking in the stories of ancient Iraq, nor does it describe God Almighty using the distorted descriptions of the Torah that are neither acceptable to reason nor led by logic. In fact, it refutes many descriptions that no sane person would accept even for themselves.

It is also the only text that exalts God Almighty from feeling remorse for bringing about the flood, unlike other texts that claim that God, or the gods in the Babylonian texts, felt remorse and regret for causing the flood. The Torah went further than that, when it claimed that God – exalted is He above what they claim – had determined that he would never cause a flood again after that, so He had put the rainbow up as a sign to remind Him of His promise, so that there would never again be a flood that would drown the earth.

The Qur'anic text did not depend on anything else, because it is a revelation from God, unlike the ancient human sources. The Sumerians, for example, after they wrote their account of the flood, the Babylonians came and took from it what they had taken, and then the Jews came along using both as references. Every narrative about the flood thus depended on a narrative that preceded it. But the matter is very different with regard to the Qur'anic story, which is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds in the seventh century CE in Makkah. Revelation of the Holy Qur'an began in the

cave of Hira to our master, the Messenger of God, peace be upon him. Neither the Messenger of God, nor his people were aware of the story of Nuh and the flood, and this is alluded to in the Qur'an: "This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous." [11:49]

On top of this, does not everything that has been mentioned in this study clearly indicate the dominance of the Noble Qur'an over other heavenly books, let alone human writings. As the Almighty said, addressing the beloved chosen one, peace be upon him: "We have revealed to you [O Prophet] this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them" [5:48]. This is the book that: "falsehood cannot approach from any angle. A revelation from the One Who is All-Wise, Praiseworthy." [41:42]¹

4. Narrations with Weak Chains of Transmission

Imam Ahmad said: Abu Ja'far told us that Abd al-Samad ibn Habib al-Azdi told us on the authority of his father, Habib bin Abdullah, on the authority of Shabeel, on the authority of Abu Huraira who said that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by some Jews who fasted on the day of Ashura, so he said: "What is this fasting?" They said: "This is the day on which God saved Moses and the Children of Israel from drowning, and Pharaoh

1. Mehran, 4/97.

drowned, and this is the day on which the ship rested on Mount Judi, so Noah and Moses fasted it out of thanks to God Almighty.” The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) replied: “I have more right to Musa and to fasting this day,” so he told his companions to fast.¹

Shaykh Mustafa al-Adawi said: “This being the day that the Ark settled on Mount Judi is very weak. However, the rest of the hadith has well-known supporting narrations in Bukhari, Muslim, and other books. There are many false narrations in this regard.”²

There is another weak hadith about the flood and the people of Nuh reported by Tabari and others, and mentioned by Ibn Kathir in the *Stories of the Prophet* on the authority of Aisha (*Allah be pleased with her*) that the Prophet (*peace and blessings be upon him*), said: “If God had mercy on any of Noah’s people, He would have had mercy on the mother of the boy (*Nuh’s son*).” The Prophet said: “Nuh stayed with his people for a thousand years, less fifty years, calling them to God. He planted trees for a hundred years until a grew massively all over the place, after which he cut it and built a ship out of it. His people would pass by him and mock him saying, “A ship on land! How will it run!?”

1. A very weak hadith. Its meaning is supported by other authentic reports, except the part about this being the day the Ark settled on Mount Judi. The hadith was narrated by Ahmad (2359) and others. In its chain is Abd al-Samad ibn Habib al-Azdi whose reliability is questionable and his father is unknown.

2. Qasas al-Anbiya, 1/333

He replied: “You will soon know.” “When he finished and the water burst all over the tracks, the boy’s mother was afraid for him, and she loved him a lot, so she took him up the mountain until she reached a third of it. When the water reached her, she took him further up until she reached the top of the mountain. When the water reached her neck, she raised the boy up with her hands, but they both drowned. So if God had mercy on any of them, He would have had mercy on the mother of the boy.”¹

Many narrations with very weak chains of transmission have been reported from the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) regarding Noah (*peace be upon him*) as well as several Judeo-Christian narrations that I deliberately did not mention so as not to burden the book with things that are not sound. Likewise so that the Muslim is not preoccupied with things that are not proven from the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), and Allah knows best.

5. The fate of the children of the people of Noah

Some people ask about the fate of the children and what their fault was for them to also be overtaken by the flood? The scholars answered this by saying that when punishment befalls the people it encompasses them all, without distinguishing between young and old, righteous and immoral. In this regard the Almighty says: “Beware of

1. This is how Ibn Kathir narrated it in Qasas al-Anbiya. It was narrated by Tabari (1221/), Hakim (2342/), and others. Its chain of transmission is weak. It contains Musa ibn Ya’qub and Ibrahim ibn Abd al-Rahman who are both weak.

a trial that will not only affect the wrongdoers among you. And know that Allah is severe in punishment” [8:25]. There is no doubt that including the children in this encompassing punishment increases the torment of their parents. As for the children themselves, they died at their appointed time, at the time that God specified for them, and they are not held accountable after their death for what their parents fathers.¹

Of course, we see children dying due to various diseases, illnesses, and calamities, such as earthquakes, floods, and wars, yet this is not a punishment for the sins or misdeeds committed by these children. Rather, this is simply what God has decreed for them due to different wisdoms that accord with His knowledge, wisdom, will, decree and just destiny, “and your Lord is never unjust to His creation.” “Indeed, Allah never wrongs anyone, even by an atom’s weight.”

Some scholars claimed that God sterilized the wombs of the women of Noah’s people for forty years before the flood until those who were young grew up and all of them became responsible for their sin and worthy of facing God’s wrath and vengeance. However, this answer is no more than a claim that lacks evidence, and there is no scope for fortune-telling in such topics except with clear evidence.



1. Muhammad Al-Sayyid Al-Wakeel, *Nadharat fi Ahsan al-Qasas*, Dar Al-Qalam for Printing and Publishing, Damascus, Syria, 1st edition 1994, 1/101.

chapter

6

The Birth
of the
Second
Human
Civilization

Chapter 6: The Birth of the Second Human Civilization

Allah Almighty said:

“It was said, “O Nuh! Disembark with Our peace and blessings on you and some of the descendants of those with you. As for other nations [of them], We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us. This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous.” [11:48-49]

1. *“It was said, “O Nuh! Disembark with Our peace.”*

“It was said, O Nuh!” The One saying this is Allah Almighty who has revealed to Nuh.

“O Nuh! Disembark.” Due to the high waves, it is as though the Ark was an aeroplane flying above or because the Ark was an extremely high one, so he is being told to descend from it. The expression of disembark depicts to us that exiting the ship was from the top and that getting to the land was through inclined wooden ladders or planks. Had the deck of the ship been level with the land, it would have been more appropriate for them to simply be told to get off the ship.¹

“With Our peace and blessings upon you.” Disembark along with those who are with you and whatever is with you, accompanied by Our peace and blessings upon you. “With Our peace” means safety, which includes safety from

1. Al-Maidani, p. 134; Nawfal, p. 187.

all sorts of harm, whether death, hunger, thirst, or anything else. The word peace contains so many meanings. It contains meanings of tranquility, security, and stability. One of the main principles and core foundations of this second human civilization is peace.

“With Our peace” upon you, your followers, your faith, and upon the elements of the new human life that you will lead. “With Our peace” upon the economic, social, and political life after the flood, upon human interaction, the universe, and upon nature. This is a consequence of the name of Allah Almighty, *Al-Salam*, as this is one of his names.

God’s name *Al-Salam* in linguistically means one free of all defects and shortcomings. While it contains meanings of tranquility, security, stability, and calmness.¹

Al-Salam is He whose self, attributes, and actions are exempt from anything that does not befit His perfection. Likewise from the name *Al-Salam* is Islam derived, the religion of God, as per the saying of Allah Almighty: “The religion with Allah is Islam.” [3:19]

Ibn al-Qayyim says: “There are two views regarding Allah’s name *Al-Salam*. The first is that it is a description of His being, i.e. that He is the source of Salam (*peace*). The second is that it describes His actions that are purely good and free of all deficiencies.²

1. Al-Sha’rawi, p. 149.

2. Aqil Hussein, *The Summarised Encyclopedia of the Beautiful Names of Allah*, Dar Ibn Kathir, Damascus, Beirut, 1st edition 2010, p. 79.

Allah Almighty says:

“He is Allah - there is no god except Him: the King (*Al-Malik*), the Most Holy (*Al-Quddus*), the All-Perfect (*Al-Salam*), the Source of Serenity (*Al-Mu'min*), the Watcher of all (*Al-Muhaimin*), the Almighty (*Al-Aziz*), the Supreme in Might (*Al-Jabbar*), the Majestic (*Al-Mutakabbir*). Glorified is Allah far above what they associate with Him! [59:23]

In this verse, each of His Beautiful Names emphasises the attribute that precedes it. The King is Allah, the Most Holy is Allah, and the All-Perfect is Allah. Since these are all names of Allah Almighty, they naturally contain all the attributes of perfection in them. And although this verse is three-dimensional, it was revealed as one coherent unit with a solid structure.

The first dimension: “He is Allah - there is no god except Him.” Here, the existence of a deity other than Him is negated, emphasising that Allah has no partner in any matter. He is the One and Only God, and there is no deity besides Him. This means that if anyone seeks a god other than God Almighty, they will not find them, and this is why those who said: God is one in a trinity disbelieved. Allah said: “Those who say, “Allah is one in a Trinity,” have certainly fallen into disbelief. There is only One God. If they do not stop saying this, those who disbelieve among them will be afflicted with a painful punishment.” [5: 73]

- **The second dimension:** “The King (*Al-Malik*), the Most Holy (*Al-Quddus*), the All-Perfect (*Al-Salam*), the Source of Serenity (*Al-Mu'min*), the Watcher of all (*Al-Muhaimin*), the Almighty (*Al-Aziz*), the Supreme in Might

(*Al-Jabbar*), the Majestic (*Al-Mutakabbir*).” All these are names of Allah. What has been emphasized in the first dimension is that there is no god but He, and this means that these Names are not for multiple beings, but rather multiple attributes for He who is One. Therefore the rule is that one being can have multiple attributes, but one does not multiply due to multiple attributes. When someone is honest and just, he remains one person with multiple attributes. God is thus One and Indivisible, and His attributes are many, praise be to Him.

- **The third dimension:** “Glorified is Allah far above what they associate with Him.” This dimension fully confirms the objectives of the two previous dimensions that God is One and Indivisible. That He is the King (*Al-Malik*), the Most Holy (*Al-Quddus*), the All-Perfect (*Al-Salam*), the Source of Serenity (*Al-Mu'min*), the Watcher of all (*Al-Muhaimin*), the Almighty (*Al-Aziz*), the Supreme in Might (*Al-Jabbar*), the Majestic (*Al-Mutakabbir*). He is the One who has the Most Beautiful Names, and that is why He says: “Glorified is Allah far above what they associate with Him.”

Al-Salam, Glory be to Him, is the one from whom security comes, and hence security is a consequence of Salam (*peace*) and one of its fruits. He the Most High is the First before all things. Al-Salam consists of being free of any evil or fault, any disease or pain, ignorance or poverty, and envy or defect. It also consists of having total power, strength, and domination.¹

1. Ibid, p. 84.

God, Glory be to Him, is the source of peace and security, and anyone who seeks safety elsewhere will not find it. This is the meaning of the statement of the Prophet: “O Allah, you are Al-Salam and from you is Al-Salam.”¹ This is also why Paradise is called Dar al-Salam (*the abode of peace*), because whoever enters it is safe from calamities, evils, disturbances, and hardships. Allah Almighty said: “Enter in peace and security.” [15:46]

From this is the greeting of Islam that Islam has encouraged us to spread. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said: “You will not enter Jannah until you believe, and you shall not believe until you love one another. Should I inform you of something that will cause you to love each other? Spread greeting amongst you (*by saying Assalamu ‘Alaikum to one another*).”² In spreading it, there is a spread of security, friendliness, and peace among people.

From this is also the Salam that Allah Almighty gives to His messengers, prophets, and noble servants, as stated in several verses including:

“Glorified is your Lord - the Lord of Honour and Power - above what they claim! Peace be upon the messengers. And praise be to Allah - Lord of all worlds.” [37:180-182]

“Peace be upon Noah among all peoples.” [37:79]

“Peace be upon Ibrahim.” [37:109]

Say, [O Prophet,] “Praise be to Allah, and peace be

1. Sahih Muslim, No. 591.

2. Sahih Muslim, No. 54.

upon the servants He has chosen.” [Ask the disbelievers,] “Which is better: Allah or whatever [gods] they associate [with Him]?” [27:59]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his followers relied on great foundations that contributed to achieving peace from God Almighty to him and the believers with him, and then the launch of the second human civilization. These foundations include:

- Tawhid and abandoning shirk.
- The belief of his followers in him as a messenger and a prophet.
- Adhering to the limits and laws of God in establishing the truth, eliminating falsehood, and in other matters.¹

“And blessings on you and some of the descendants of those with you. As for the others, We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us.”

Blessing (*barakah*) is an increase in good beyond need and necessity. These blessings include increase in the earth’s bounties of crops and fruits, the increase in foods from the land and sea, and other things that people enjoy in this life, even mental health, peace of mind, and happiness.²

The gate of blessing and the gate of contentment are two gates that Allah only opens for the believers. Allah Almighty

1. Aqil Hussein, p. 84.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 135.

said: “Had the people of those societies been faithful and mindful [of Allah], We would have overwhelmed them with blessings from heaven and earth. But they disbelieved, so We seized them for what they used to commit” [7:96]. And Allah says: “Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort.” [13:28]

The word blessing is not limited to material prosperity, but is broader than that. In fact, we can almost say that it is not about material prosperity in the first place, although that is part of it. Instead it is something in people’s lives that makes them blessed, good, light, elegant, valuable, pure, and with a relaxed soul. The meanings of some words are difficult to determine specifically, but those who have tasted them will know them. For instance, mutual trust between people is a type of blessing, so is mutual love and cooperation in righteousness and piety. Being protective over your brother’s honour, maintaining the highest societal values in society, being keen on keeping ties of kinship, taking care of the needy, and seeking knowledge to benefit people are all forms of blessing.

There are hundreds of feelings and actions combined under this single word, which God gives people out of His mercy and makes them “blessings.”

As for tranquility, ask about it those who are fearful, anxious, perplexed, apprehensive, weary, and in distress. They know exactly what they are searching for. They are searching for tranquility and contentment. And Allah has shown them the way to attaining it: “Surely in the

remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort.” [13:28]

Perhaps we do not need to say that contemporary *jahiliyyah* (*pre-Islamic ignorance*), despite all the enabling tools available to it such as military power, political power, material power, economic power, and scientific power, lacks tranquility and is missing the happiness that a person so desperately seeks in this life. Alcohol, drugs, and crime alone are evidence of this loss of happiness and tranquility, let alone what we see of the spread of anxiety, suicide, madness, and mental and psychological illnesses. Alcohol and drugs are often an attempt to escape reality. So why do people seek to escape from their reality if they are happy with it!?

Crime is a type of sick feeling towards society, which expresses dissatisfaction about society, so why is crime spreading and its rate increasing?

While the mad moments of “fun” in which contemporary *jahiliyyah* drowns in at discos, cabarets, bars, and nightclubs, are not evidence of happiness, but rather evidence of the lack of it and an attempt to artificially compensate for psychological emptiness. This is the bleak image of modern *jahiliyyah* that huge factories, the large material production, and missiles that go to the moon and Mars, are unable to hide.¹

The empowerment of contemporary civilization in its pre-

1. Muhammad Qutb, *An Islamic Outlook on the Condition of the Contemporary World*, p. 62.

Islamic form is only a matter of divine gradualism (*istidraj*) that God gives the disbelievers when they desire nothing but this worldly life, doing everything in their power to attain it. He then gives them what they desire in the life of this world and opens the doors of empowerment for them. Such empowerment is temporary, no matter how long it lasts, and it always ends in destruction. While empowerment of *rida* (*granted by Allah to those He is pleased with*) extends until people change themselves and deviate from the path, which is when empowerment is removed from them. But if they do not change what is in themselves, empowerment extends with them.¹

The second human civilization that Noah (*peace be upon him*) founded was built on a foundation of peace and divine blessings. “And upon nations [descending] from those with you.” That is nations branching out and scattered over the earth from your descendants and the descendants of those who are with you, because God made his offspring the sole survivors after the flood.² This peace and blessings upon you, O Noah, and upon the nations from those with you, of course applies to those who believed with him, and then also includes the rest of the accompanying creatures.

“But other nations [of them] We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us.” That is other nations who are also from the offspring of some of those with you who are not

1. Ibid, p. 61.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 135.

included in the virtue of peace and blessings. Instead, we shall allow them brief enjoyment in this life in line with their time on earth. And regardless of what they attain, it is little compared to the afterlife. Various Qur'anic verses have indicated that the pleasures of this world no more than the delusion of enjoyment, after which comes their destinies: "then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us." This verse here and the indications of other verses indicate that this painful torment will be given to them due to their disbelief, their immorality, their oppression, and the evils they did in this worldly life.¹

These verses that spoke of peace and blessings upon Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those with him give us several things:

- An episode in the history of mankind, which is the second building block after the story of Adam (*peace be upon him*) in the construction of human history. These episodes repeat themselves, but none remembers except those who Allah shows mercy.

Noah's people are the first to be destroyed with the torment of extermination. This was then repeated after that with several nations. "[Consider] how many peoples We have destroyed after Nuh! And sufficient is your Lord as All-Aware and All-Seeing of the sins of His servants." [17:17]

- Security, peace, and blessings are the consequences of faith, and they are inseparable from it and attached

1. Ibid, p. 136.

completely to it, while outside the circle of faith none of these things are to be found.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) descended with peace and blessings from God and embarked on his mission of faith in being a successor on earth. He carried with him in the ark the elements of a new civilization, a pair from each creature and all the believers.² Divine intervention came in to drown those who denied in the flood, and to save Noah's followers so that they could set out to lay a new foundation for human civilization and to advance it to a more comprehensive vision based on fulfilling servitude to God and being true successors on earth.

Thus Noah's call had moved from a naturally restricted place to one that is historical, completing the message of Adam (*peace be upon him*) which established the family institution. And now Noah's message establishes a social, economic, political, and legislative institution within the framework of the divine message throughout human history.³

“This is from the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous.”

1. Nawfal, p. 191.

2. Al-Sha'rawi, 1/56.

3. Abd al-Rahman Helli, *The Messages of the Prophets: One Religion and Various Laws: A Quranic Study*, Beirut, Namaa Center for Studies and Research, 1st Edition, 2015, p. 69.

This verse follows from the story of Noah, providing a summary and the main fruit of the story. It is true that we pick fruits from tress, but it is related to it and part of it. The meaning is that this is an ancient historical insight into event unknown to the Arabs, as Allah said: “Neither you nor your people knew it before this.” What is in the Torah is a mixture of some truths and many myths, so what is presented of the story of Noah is not historically accurate. While the Holy Qur’an summarised it in the most perfect way, an excellent and concise presentation, and herein lies its greatness.

“This is from the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet].” This statement in Surat Hud, is also found in the chapter after it, Surat Yusuf in verse 102, after a detailed account of the story of Yusuf. And although this is mentioned in Surat Hud following the story of Noah, but the same rule extends to stories mentioned after him, including the stories of Hud, Salih, Ibrahim, Lut, Shu’aib, and then Moses and Pharaoh. They are all stories containing news of the unseen (*ghayb*). The unseen here is that which the listener cannot see due to the time period between him and the event. The story of Noah is an unseen of the past, but there is also a future unseen, as well as unseen of the present that we do not see like the angels and the highest assembly in heaven, and many worlds about which we do not have any material knowledge of, but we still believe in. There is a material unseen that exists that we do not see, though we may see some and not others, as is the case with many astronomical and earthly sciences.

“From the stories.” One story may contain within it several stories, like the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) in which there are many important incidents. For example, his calling his people for this prolonged period of time, the insistence of the chiefs of his people upon their disbelief, the building of the ship, the flood, the destruction of the people, the story of his son and the supplication of his Lord, the salvation of the believers, and so on.

“Which We reveal to you.” We reveal it to you and deliver it through in this glorious Qur’an through Jibril. This is part of Our revelation to you as prophet. Revelation is of different types, but this is not the to detail that.

“Neither you nor your people knew it before this.” This story, and the rest of the stories of this Book, were unknown to you O prophet, to your people, and even to the previous nations of prophetic origin, before We revealed this Qur’an. In this purely true form, not tainted by the impurities of fabrication, addition, and subtraction, it is not known to them either, even if it is known to them by name or they have a rough idea about it, but the details of a large part of it are incorrect and inaccurate.

“So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous (*taqwa*).” The last sentence and the end result is in favour of the people of faith and righteousness. Taqwa is a comprehensive and broad term that includes being mindful of God, fearing His punishment, and avoiding every evil that may lead to His punishment. This verse indicates that success and victory is ultimately

for the people of taqwa, and that this is a fact over which there is no doubt.¹

This verse clarifies:

- The reality of revelation, which the polytheists deny. For these stories are *ghayb* that the Prophet (***peace and blessings be upon him***) and his people did not know.

- The reality of the unity of *aqidah* (***creed***) since Noah. Despite the signs, lessons, and evidence, this did not prevent each generation from rejecting it.

- The fact that glad tidings and threats are fulfilled, as is the case with the glad tidings given to the Prophet, and this is historically clear to see.

- The reality of the divine norms. They do not lag behind, deviate, nor give anyone special treatment.

- The reality of the bond that binds an individual, a generation, and another generation. The one creed that binds all believers to one God, the One Lord. They are equally close to Him without any partner or contender.

Ibn Ashur said: “In this verse, there is a favour to the Prophet, in His saying: “Neither you nor your people knew it before this.” An admonition in His saying: “So be patient.” And an encouragement in His saying: “Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous.”

The lessons that are learnt from this story:

- These stories are firstly a reminder.

1. Nawfal, p. 193.

- The second important lesson is that “the ultimate outcome belongs only to the righteous.”
- Knowing the outcome in advance reassures those who are on the path of faith.
- These stories are wise, full of lessons and morals, and it is forbidden for these morals to be lost amid the sea of false Judeo-Christian reports.
- The information in these stories are not circulated traditions, nor taken from previous books. But it is a divine revelation.¹

First: The contribution of Noah’s attributes and morals to the establishment of the second human civilization

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was one of the messengers of firm resolve who perfected monotheism and the pure worship of God. He also called to that and some people believed in his message. He raised people with good manners and qualities that were embodied in his own self and impacted his followers around him. He was constantly thankful to his Lord, sincere to Him, knocking on His doors with supplication and prayer, intensely fearful of Him, reliant on the Almighty, the Most Merciful, repentant to God, seeking His forgiveness, patient with the responsibilities of *da’wah*, honest in his message, courageous, fearing none but God, kind to his parents, as well as other qualities and morals that he lived by, called to it, and taught to those who responded

1. Ibid, p. 196.

to his call. He worked to instil these noble qualities in the hearts of his followers before and after the flood. This solid moral system contributed to the moral foundation of the second human civilization, and we mention the most important of these qualities and morals:

1. Ikhlas (sincerity)

Noah (*peace be upon him*) clarified the importance of sincerity to God Almighty in his journey of giving *da'wah* (***calling to Allah***). He stripped his intention of all impurities, desires of the self, and greed for worldly matters. His only concern was seeking the pleasure of Allah, explaining to his people that he does not seek for his preaching any payment or compliment from them. He does not hope for any gain from it, except the reward that comes from Allah Almighty.

In Surat al-Shu'ara: "I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds." [26:109]

In Surat Hud: "O my people! I do not ask you for a payment for this [message]. My reward is only from Allah" [11:29]

In Surat Yunus: "And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah]." [10:72]

This alone is sufficient to prove his honesty and sincerity to God Almighty, and that he is a messenger from God.

Otherwise, how is it possible for Noah (*peace be upon him*) to leave his people's well-known customs, traditions, and idol worship, and demand that they abandon them, then call them to Islam which opposes all that, knowing in advance that he would face all sort of harm from his people, from mockery to being threatened with death. They should really have questioned themselves about why Noah (*peace be upon him*) would bear all these troubles and expose himself to all these dangers. Had they done so, they would have realised that this matter which Noah (*peace be upon him*) is calling them to is far greater than what they imagine and claimed against him, such as seeking to achieve high status, earning money, or some other worldly gain.¹

God, the Mighty and Sublime, explained that one of the reasons for Noah's salvation was that he was one of the sincere ones: "See then what was the end of those who had been warned. Except Allah's sincere² (*al-mukhlisin*) servants." [37:73-74]

The believers learned from Noah and the birth of the second human civilization:

- The importance of the actions of the heart, the body, and the tongue being purely for God Almighty.

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 39.

2. According to the recitation of Ibn Kathir, Abu Amr, Ya'qub, and Ibn Amir it is *al-mukhlisin* to mean sincere, while the more common recitation of Hafs recites it as *mukhlisin* to mean chosen, and both are Qur'an. This is one of many examples of how various modes of recitation can help with the tafsir of the Qur'an. (*Translator*)

- That a person must not be attached to worldly pleasures, and make his deeds in this life and in being a successor on earth, pure deeds of worship to God.

- That the believer strives to please his Creator, not affected by praise or dispraise, as they saw in the life and story of Noah, peace be upon him.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) gave a painful blow to Satan through ikhlas, the value, attribute, and character of sincerity, escaping from his whispers, him and those who followed his guidance. Allah Almighty said: “Satan said, “By Your Glory! I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen servants among them” [38:82-83]. Iblis admitted in advance that he had no authority over the pure faithful servants of God Almighty, and he despaired of them before even seeing them.

What also helped Noah (*peace be upon him*) achieve this trait in himself and his followers – the builders of the second human civilization – success granted to them by Allah; continually being conscious of Allah; feeling His greatness through the great events that they saw, including the great flood and their survival in the overloaded ark; their remembrance of the Last Day and its terrible scenes; holding themselves accountable; being critical of their own actions; and always repenting and seeking forgiveness.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) teaches us that calling to God

1. Al-Raqb, p. 142.

Almighty, to His oneness, and to His worship, if it is not accompanied by sincerity to God Almighty, seeking His pleasure, and not desiring any payment from people or worldly gain, is a call without blessing. As well as losing out on reward from Allah Almighty, such a call has little effect on people. This is something that callers to God Almighty must be aware of, both individuals and groups. They must beware of their intentions being polluted by this short-lived worldly life, whether that be money, prestige, position, praise, fame, or otherwise. We must take an example in Noah (*peace be upon him*) who announced at the very beginning of his call that he does not seek from the people any reward or money for delivering the message to them, but that his reward is from God Almighty alone. This was something that every prophet said to his people, such that this became an important feature of the call of all the prophets, peace and blessings be upon them. Something that we should pay attention to and hold ourselves accountable in light of.¹

The *ikhlas* of Noah (*peace be upon him*) to his Lord, his elevation above the world and its adornment, and his seeking Allah's pleasure in every movement of his life, are examples to be lived by for those who believed in him during his life, as well as the believers who come after him. The story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) contains many lessons

1. Abdul Aziz Nasser Al-Jalil, *Waqafat Tarbawiyah*, Dar Taiba, Riyadh, 2nd edition 1998, p. 156.

for the seeker of truth. Sincerity to Allah has its great effects on the individual, including:¹

- Protection from great catastrophes and the great flood.
- God's guardianship of the faithful. One's faith and piety is proportional to Allah's guardianship for him.
- Obtaining security, guidance, and protection from creation.
- The descent of peace in the heart.
- Steadfastness upon faith.
- Protection from Satan's temptation.
- Answered prayers.
- Acceptance on earth, praise, and other effects.

It also has an effect on the new society that was the basis of the second human civilization. This trait of *ikhlas* penetrated the souls of its members who were on the Ark of Salvation, was planted in their offspring, and then passed on to the following generations. Among the effects of sincerity on human society:

- Those who have it are included in the ranks of the people of faith.
- The descent of peace, blessings, and abundance of goods.

1. Hamad ibn Muhammad Al-Wahaibi, *Ikhlas in the Noble Qur'an*, Dar Al-Tawhid, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 2006, p. 309, 363.

- Victory and empowerment on earth.
- Obtaining security and guidance for the community.

As for in the hereafter, sincerity is the cause of salvation from Hellfire, entry to Paradise, and obtaining the pleasure of God Almighty.

2. *Sabr (patience)*

Allah Almighty said:

“So endure patiently, as did the Messengers of Firm Resolve. And do not [seek to] hasten [the torment] for the deniers. On the Day they see what they have been threatened with, it will be as if they had only stayed [in this world] for an hour of a day. [This is] a [sufficient] warning! Then, will anyone be destroyed except the rebellious people?” [46:35]

The prophets, may the peace and blessings of God be upon them, vary and differ in patience. The patience of the messengers of firm resolve (*ulu al-azm*) is the greatest in this regards, because they faced harm and rejection that other prophets did not face. Their patience was alluded to in Allah’s saying: “So endure patiently, as did the Messengers of Firm Resolve.” Nuh (*peace be upon him*) is one of the Messengers of Firm Resolve and showed incredible patience in delivering the message.¹

How patient Noah (*peace be upon him*) was with his people. He warned them so that they could remember and fear God in what they do. He called them to worship God alone and not associate any partners with Him, but they did not

1. Al-Jalil, 3/107.

respond. Despite that, he continued to call them and make clear to them the danger of their disbelief and idolatry. Yet they still refused to respond. He continued to remind them day and night of God's forgiveness for those who believe and repent. However, they only increased in misguidance, persistence, and arrogance. Nuh still did not give up, but each time they increased in their rejection and arrogance, Noah became more patient.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) lived a long life, of which a thousand years less fifty years (**950 years**) was spent calling his people to the oneness of God, the sincerity worship of Him, and urging them to obey Him and be aware of Him. He invited them night and day, privately and publicly, never becoming tired or bored. This was how intensely concerned he was about his people, and how committed he was to conveying the message.

The *da'wah* of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and the message that God Almighty assigned him to convey to his people was a general foundation for all the prophets and messages that came after him. This is because:

- It was first message that contained a *Shari'ah* after Adam, peace be upon him.
- It took a very long time.
- *Eman (faith)* was the essence of this message.
- *Shirk* and *kufir* are unnatural states that are contrary to the default state of *eman*.

1. Aqil Hussein, p. 89.

- It clarifies and expresses the method of *da'wah* (*inviting to Islam*).

- *Da'wah* in terms of duration: “a thousand years less fifty.”

- *Da'wah* in terms of time: “day and night.”

The prophethood and message of Noah, throughout this long period, laid down for the prophets after him the approach, the thinking, and the method of *da'wah*, as well as the reality of continuation, argument, dialogue, conflict, trials, and lessons. All prophets who came after Noah had a good role model in Noah. Likewise those around him from his followers who believed in him. All prophets who came after Noah had a good role model in Noah, and so did his followers who believed in him.

Is there greater patience than that displayed by Noah (*peace be upon him*) who continued to call his people for nearly ten centuries, yet after that only a few believed with him. God Almighty informed us that Noah remained among his people calling them to God for a thousand years less fifty; nine centuries and a half. But despite this long period, Allah Almighty said: “But none believed with him except for a few” [11:40]. This shows how great Nuh’s patience was for this lengthy period of time.

How could Noah not be one of the patient when God Almighty said: “Allah is with those who are patient” [2:153]. Indeed, Allah was with him at every moment of his life and throughout his call. The Almighty said: “And build the Ark under Our [watchful] Eyes and directions,

and do not plead with Me for those who have done wrong, for they will surely be drowned” [11:37]. When he then made the ark under the support, care, and revelation of God Almighty, Noah (*peace be upon him*) was patient with all that he encountered of the harm of his people, doing so for the sake of God, the Mighty and Sublime.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) stood out with the quality of patience in his life, which was one of the reasons for steadfastness and victory over the enemies. He was a role model and an excellent example since he was patient with the denial of his people, their abuse, and the ridicule that he faced, until God’s victory over the unbelieving people came. This shows us the good outcome of patience. So whoever is more patient is more worthy of victory and much more likely to achieve it.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was unique in his patience and endurance, also instilling this character in his followers. The new society after the flood was in dire need of this character in its members and their social, economic, religious, and civil lives. Those who are patient have many virtues, in this life and the next, while also varying in levels, as God Almighty explained in His book:

Allah is with them and gives them special care and support. “O believers! Seek help in patience and prayer. Allah is truly with those who are patient.” [2:153]

“But those [believers] who were certain they would

1. Ibid, p. 248.

meet Allah reasoned, “How many times has a small force vanquished a mighty army by the Will of Allah! And Allah is [always] with the steadfast.” [2:249]

Allah loves them. “How many devotees fought along with their prophets and never faltered despite whatever [losses] they suffered in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or give in! Allah loves those who are patient.” [3:146]

They have been given good tidings. “ We will certainly test you with a touch of fear and famine and loss of property, life, and crops. Give good news to those who patiently endure - who, when faced with a disaster, say, “Surely to Allah we belong and to Him we will [all] return.” They are the ones who will receive Allah’s blessings and mercy. And it is they who are [rightly] guided.” [2:155-157]

Umar ibn al-Khattab used to recite these verses and say: “What a great compensation and what a great virtue for the patient.” The compensation being blessing and mercy, and the virtue being guidance.

Being rewarded according to their best deeds and without any limit. “Only those who endure patiently will be given their reward without limit.” [39:10]

Imam al-Ghazali, may God have mercy on him, said: “There is no good deed but that it is rewarded with a specific reward and with limits, except for patience. And because fasting is patience and constitutes half of patience, God said in the Hadith Qudsi: “Fasting is mine and I will

reward for it.”¹ He specifically referred it to Himself among all other acts of worship. Allamah Ibn al-Qayyim said: “Patience is half of faith, because faith is half patience and half gratitude.”²

Attaining leadership in faith. Ibn al-Qayyim relates from his teacher Ibn Taymiyah that he said: “With sabr (*patience*) and yaqin (*certainty*), leadership in faith is attained.”³ He then recited Allah’s statement: “We raised from among them leaders, guiding by Our command, when they patiently endured and firmly believed in Our signs.” [32:24]

Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah said: “They took hold of the head of the matter, so He made them heads and leaders.”⁴

The character and value of patience is inherent in the emergence of human civilizations, and they cannot rise on a material and moral level except through patience at the level of leaders, individuals, and society. One of the features of the second human civilization is patience. A trait that distinguished Noah (*peace be upon him*) and one that he raised his followers upon.

3. Taqwa

One of the characteristics of Noah (*peace be upon him*) is God-consciousness (*taqwa*). He was concerned with calling his people to the oneness of God Almighty, to worship Him

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1. Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din, 4/310.
 2. Madarij al-Salikin, 2/115.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Al-Raqb, p. 159.

alone, and to encourage having *taqwa*. This is because *taqwa* of God Almighty is the real guarantee of people's uprightness upon the straight path, not lacking behind nor distorting it in its implementation. It is also the source of the virtuous character in which God is sought without showing off (*riya*), pretence, or arrogance. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) had strong knowledge of God Almighty, and this had a clear impact on the sincerity of his faith, the perfection of his monotheism, his fear of God, and his *taqwa* of his Lord.

The more a servant has knowledge of his Lord, glory be to Him, the more he fears, venerates, worships, loves and is sincere to Him, and the opposite is true. Hence Noah said that he said to his people: "I convey to you my Lord's messages and giving you [sincere] advice. And I know from Allah what you do not know" [7:62]. That is, I know of God's attributes, His great power, and His revenge against His enemies, that which you are unaware of.¹

The *taqwa* of Noah (*peace be upon him*) is shown in the intensity of his veneration and fear of God, and this is mentioned in the story of Noah with his people in Surat Hud, as we previously mentioned, in which God Almighty says:

"Noah called out to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! Certainly my son is [also] of my family, Your promise is surely true, and You are the most just of all judges!" Allah replied, "O Noah! He is certainly not of your family - he was entirely of unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me about what you

1. Waqafat Tarbawiyah, 3/54.

have no knowledge of! I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.” Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:45-47]

These verses show the knowledge that Noah (*peace be upon him*) had of his Lord, the Mighty and Sublime. Knowledge that led to showing such great manners with his Lord and fearing Him. So you see that when he supplicated to his Lord regarding his son, he ended his prayer saying, “and You are the most just of all judges.” He did not say, “you are the most merciful.” This shows his excellent knowledge of the names and attributes of God Almighty, and their effects. Since the situation he was in was one of submission and surrender to the great wisdom of God, which dictated that the son of Noah would be with those destroyed, not with those saved. Hence, Noah (*peace be upon him*) concluded his prayer by saying, “and You are the most just of all judges.”

We also see in this discussion that Noah (*peace be upon him*) feared his Lord, accused himself of wrongdoing, and asked for forgiveness from his Lord, Glory be to Him. This is when he said, “and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” Allah is great! Nuh who spent hundreds of years preaching to his people, who was incredibly patient throughout, and faced harm and mockery from his people. Despite all that, he ends his prayers seeking forgiveness and mercy from his Lord: “My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in

faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:28]¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was a righteous servant of his Lord in everything in which *taqwa* of God was required. That is everything that corrupts beliefs, morals, acts of worship, and public and private ties. He was certain of his Lord that “the ultimate outcome belongs only to the *muttaqin*.” Noah (*peace be upon him*) taught his followers to uphold *taqwa* of Allah and he purified their souls through developing this great trait in them.

Among the fruits of *taqwa* that leads to building knowledge, power, and obtaining sovereignty and empowerment in the land:

He granted the *muttaqin* knowledge, guidance and light in their hearts, and a *furqan* (*criterion*) by which they are able to distinguish between truth and falsehood, good and evil, and between pure and impure. A *furqan* that protects them from doubts and cleanses their sins. Allah Almighty said: “O believers! If you are mindful of Allah, He will grant you a standard [to distinguish between right and wrong], absolve you of your sins, and forgive you. And Allah is the Lord of infinite bounty.” [8:29]

Allah makes for the *muttaqin* a way out of every hardship, provides for them from where they do not expect or hope, blesses them with what He has given them, and is sufficient for them in matters that worry them. “And whoever is

1. Ibid, 3/57.

mindful of Allah, He will make a way out for them, and provide for them from sources they could never imagine. And whoever puts their trust in Allah, then He [alone] is sufficient for them. Certainly Allah achieves His Will. Allah has already set a destiny for everything.” [65:3]

The muttaqin have a special closeness to Allah, for He is with them with His support and guidance. “Allah is with those who have taqwa and who do good.” [16:128]

Through taqwa, prosperity and fertile land is attained. It is from Allah’s sunnah in His creation when people leave what God has forbidden, they obtain fertility and abundance in production, comfortable living, and abundant rain. “Had the people of those societies been faithful and mindful [of Allah], We would have overwhelmed them with blessings from heaven and earth. But they disbelieved, so We seized them for what they used to commit.” [7:96]

Good pleasure is for the muttaqin. It is Allah’s sunnah to facilitate the means of a comfortable life and a relaxed mind for the people of faith and taqwa, as well as abundance in material and spiritual blessings. This pleasure is the consequence of their worship of Allah, upholding taqwa, and seeking forgiveness. “[Tell them, O Prophet], “Worship none but Allah. Surely, I am a warner and deliverer of good news to you from Him. And seek your Lord’s forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance. He will grant you a good provision for an appointed term and graciously reward the doers of good. But if you turn away, then I truly fear for you the torment of a formidable Day.” [11:2-3]

Thus, the best outcome is certain for the righteous (*muttaqin*). It never misses them as per the *sunnah* of God in His creation. For Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his followers were patient upon the hardships of obligations, obeying commands, and avoiding prohibitions.¹

4. Repentance and seeking forgiveness

The Noble Qur'an makes mention of Nuh's seeking forgiveness from Allah.

“My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:28]

“Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

Seeking forgiveness and mercy from God Almighty suggests that Nuh had committed a sin. Some scholars mention this openly while others are more subtle in discussing it.² I will cite their claims coupled with the responses to them:

- **The First Claim: Nuh Prays for the Destruction of His People**

Noah (*peace be upon him*) had prayed for his people to perish. His supplication against them even included their

1. Al-Sunan al-Ijtima'iyah, 1/398.

2. Ikmal Salih, Repentance in Light of the Noble Qur'an, p. 197.

children though they have no sin. Allah describes what occurred: “Noah had prayed, “My Lord! Do not leave a single disbeliever on earth. For if You spare [any of] them, they will certainly mislead Your servants, and give birth only to [wicked] sinners, staunch disbelievers” [71:27]. This involves acting as judge before God, since they may give birth to some who believe in God. He should thus have been patient in the face of their harm and not prayed for them to perish.¹ However, Nuh remained uneasy about this prayer of his, such that he excused himself from intercession on the Day of Judgment. It is narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari that when he was asked to intercede, he said that he is unable to and he mentioned his sin that he committed when he asked his Lord about that which he had no knowledge of.

This claim can be rebuked by saying that Nuh did not pray against his people until after he knew that there is no more hope in them believing, as Allah said, “And it was revealed to Noah, “None of your people will believe except those who already have. So do not be distressed by what they have been doing” [11:36]. This is from one angle. From another angle, he had stayed amongst them for a long period of time. He had given them the choice, invited them, and understood their nature. Allah said: “Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty” [29:14]. Yet only few believed in him, which is why he came to the conclusion that he did.²

1. Tafsir al-Razi, 3/18.

2. Tafsir Al-Alusi, 29/100.

Allah Said: “But none believed with him except for a few.”
[11:40]

As for his supplication against the children of these disbelievers, then there is no issue there, because there were no children amongst them.¹ This is indicated in Allah’s statement: “So I said, ‘Seek your Lord’s forgiveness, [for] He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers.’” [71:10-12]

The second view is held by those who believe that children were present at the time of Noah’s prayer, peace be upon him. Although they are free of sin, but punishing them makes the punishment of their parents even greater when they see their children being punished. However, this view is not accepted, because Noah (*peace be upon him*) did not pray against them until after God revealed to him that none of his people will believe except those who have already believed. So God Almighty had informed him about the fate of his people, including these children, and that they will all continue to be disbelievers. There is thus no sin in Noah’s supplication against them. Both views are possible, and God knows best. Though first view is supported by the verse, as Noah (*peace be upon him*) urged his people to seek forgiveness, so that God would grant them the things that they need, such as rain, wealth, and children.²

1. Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 18/312.

2. Amal bint Saleh Naseer, Repentance in the Light of the Noble Qur’an, Dar Al-Andalus Al-Khadra, Saudi Arabia, 1st Ed., 1998, p. 199.

• **The Second Claim: Requesting the Salvation of His Disbelieving Son**

Nuh said: “My Lord! Certainly my son is [also] of my family, Your promise is surely true, and You are the most just of all judges!” [11:45]. Allah replied, “O Noah! He is certainly not of your family - he was entirely of unrighteous conduct” [11:46]. Some people claimed that Nuh firstly did not speak the truth. Secondly, he knew that his wife and son were from those who were already decreed to be destroyed, so how could he ask his Lord to save those who disbelieved?¹ They say that he was sinful, because Allah sternly rebuked him for his action, saying, “So do not ask Me about what you have no knowledge of! I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance.” [11:46]

Additionally, Nuh admitting that he had asked his Lord what he have no knowledge of further proves that he had committed a sin. “Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

This claim can also be rejected because Nuh said: “My Lord! Certainly my son is [also] of my family” [11:45]. This is not sinful, because he may have thought that his family who Allah promised to save were his close relatives, of which his son is the closest. Alternatively, when he saw his son standing apart from the disbelievers, he may have

1. Muhammad Omar Al-Razi, *The Infallibility of the Prophets ('Ismat al-Anbiya)*, p. 23.

thought that he had turned his back on disbelief and hoped that he would join the believers. Allah Almighty said: “Noah called out to his son, who stood apart, “O my dear son! Come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers.” [11:42]

The author of *Al-Manar* (**Muhammad Rashid Rida**) says:

It is possible that when he (*peace be upon him*) saw his son in isolation from the disbelievers, he thought that he had realised his disbelief and turned to faith, and that he was not included in Allah’s statement, “None of your people will believe except those who already have” [11:36]. That is because the Almighty made the survivors into two categories: his family – except for those who were excluded – and those who believe from his people. It is thus possible that he understood that some of his family who were currently disbelievers may still become believers, because they are a separate category to “his people”. Allah Almighty then explained to Nuh that true family is that of blood relationship, but relationship of eman (*faith*). As for the fact that Nuh asked was reprimanded for asking, then it is because God Almighty wanted him to know that he is asking about things that he has no correct knowledge of. That is, do not ask me for something which you have no sound knowledge of.¹

Allah tells him that it would have more appropriate to not ask this question after Allah had made this exception, “along with your family - except those against whom

1. Tafsir al-Manar, 12/85.

the decree [to drown] has already been passed” [23:27]. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) knows that so long as his son was drowned that he is not from his family, because Allah does not go against His promise. He ought to have known that his family are the believers after he saw that the ones saved were the believers.

However, the excuse of Prophet Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was that he was prompted to this question out of natural concern and affection as a father. So God Almighty wanted to teach him a lesson in loyalty. That complete loyalty is only for the believers, not for the disbelievers. This is the meaning of His saying, “I warn you so you do not fall into ignorance” [11:46]. That is, I am admonishing you lest you be one of those ignorant of the reality of bonds and ties, or the reality of God’s promise, for God’s promise has been fulfilled and those who are truly from your family were the ones saved. This is more befitting of the prophets (*peace be upon them*).

Imam Ibn Hazm says regarding this:

“There is no argument in this for them, because Noah (peace be upon him) interpreted the promise of God Almighty to save him and his family, to include his son, who is from his family in terms of blood ties. If one does so, he would be rewarded. Nuh did not ask for those who he was certain were not from his family to be saved. This led to a warning against being from the ignorant, so Nuh immediately regretted this, and this in no way involves an intentional sin, and God knows best.”¹

1. Al-Fisal fi al-Milal wa al-Nihal, 4/6.

As for Noah (*peace be upon him*) asking for forgiveness and mercy from God Almighty, this is due to him being aware of the greatness of God Almighty and feeling that he has opposed what is better, which is not to ask at all.¹ He considered this is a mistake from him, so he hastened to God Almighty to seek forgiveness. What further indicates that he did not commit a sin is that he said, “my Lord, forgive me”, and did not say, “I repent to you”, which is intended to show his deep regret and remorse for the question that he asked.²

Noah asking for forgiveness and mercy from God, draws attention to the exceptional servitude and humility to God Almighty that Nuh had. For simply opposing what is more ideal, his heart trembled for fear that by doing so he would have angered the Almighty, the Most High. He thus hastened to grovel and submit calling out: “My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women.” [71:28] And he said: “unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

I also sense from the insistence of his request and his urgency (*peace be upon him*) in having his apology accepted, that if this was the case with a chosen prophet of God, then it is even more necessary for the sinful and disobedient to hasten to return to God Almighty and insist on His forgiveness due to the intentional and unintentional

1. Tafsir al-Khazin, 7/157.

2. Nasir, p. 202.

mistakes that they commit. This way that they can attain acceptance of their repentance and God's pardon.

You also notice that Nuh uses the word *Rabb* (**Lord**) in his repentance. He said: "My Lord, I seek refuge in You" [11:47]. He began his apology by seeking refuge in Allah to show his deep desire for forgiveness, as well as to attain the blessing of something that Allah mentioned to him. This is more eloquent than saying, "I repent for asking you", because it indicates that this matter is enormous, forbidden, and cannot be avoided except by seeking refuge with God Almighty. Then he concluded his apology by asking God to accept this apology and regret, otherwise he will be among those who have lost their deeds.¹ "Unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers." [11:47]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) called upon God Almighty and asked Him for forgiveness and mercy. *Al-Ghafur* (**The Forgiving**) and *Al-Rahim* (**The Most Merciful**) are among Allah's names. They have a great effect on individuals, nations, peoples, universes, and creatures:

a. "Unless You forgive me." Noah (*peace be upon him*) asked forgiveness from *Al-Ghaffar*, the Most High, who covers the sins of His servants and conceals them with the garment of His kindness and compassion. The meaning of concealing is that he does not expose their sin to the rest of

1. Abdul Hadi Al-Shamrani, *Lessons Learned from Divine Punishment in the Noble Qur'an before the Muhammadan Message*, Dar Ibn Al-Jawzi, 2006, p. 139.

His creation, nor does He punish them in a way that causes them to be exposed before the eyes of other people.¹

Al-Ghafur (The Forgiving) is also one of Allah's names. The One who continues to forgive sins and accept the repentance of those who repent.² Among the effects of having faith in His Names, Glory be to Him, *Al-Ghafur* and *Al-Ghaffar* are:

- Loving, praising, and thanking Allah for His mercy with His servants and His forgiveness of their sins. This builds in the heart of the believer the desire to abstain from disobeying God Almighty as much as possible. If the believer slips up and falls into sin, he remembers Allah's names *Al-Ghafur* and *Al-Ghaffar*, so hope fills his heart, despair of the mercy of God Almighty is cut off, and he thinks well of his Lord who forgives all sins.

- Asking God Almighty with this noble name for forgiveness of sins and protection from their evil, because He alone has the power to forgive sins. So many Prophetic narrations (*hadith*) urge seeking forgiveness and speak of the virtue of doing so. Many prophetic supplications include seeking forgiveness, with one of the most famous of them being *Sayyid al-Istighfar*; a prayer which contains: "I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for no one forgives sins except You."³

1. Al-Khattabi, p. 38.

2. Al-Sa'di, Al-Haqq al-Wadih, p. 73.

3. Sahih al-Bukhari, No. 531

When Abu Bakr al-Siddiq asked the Prophet to teach him a supplication that he could use in his prayer, he said: “O God, I have greatly wronged myself, and You alone can forgive sins, so grant me forgiveness from Yourself and show mercy to me. You are the forgiving and the merciful One.”¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was one of those who sought forgiveness and repented to God, and he taught his followers how to seek forgiveness. That which makes a way out of all their troubles and a way out of every distress.

“And have mercy on me.” Noah (*peace be upon him*) asked for mercy from the Most Merciful Al-Rahman Al-Rahim, Glory be to Him. God’s mercy has encompassed everything, just as the knowledge of God has encompassed everything and nothing is hidden from Him. Allah Almighty said: “My mercy encompasses everything” [7:156]. He said about the prayers of the Angels: “Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord, have faith in Him, and seek forgiveness for the believers, [praying:] “Our Lord! You encompass everything in [Your] mercy and knowledge. So forgive those who repent and follow Your Way, and protect them from the torment of the Hellfire.” [40:7]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) knew how to attain God’s mercy through praying to Him and standing humbly before Him. For Nuh himself (*peace be upon him*) is one of the manifestations of God’s mercy on his creation. God had

1. Bukhari, No. 790 and Muslim, No. 6839

mercy on mankind through sending him and preserved them in the Ark through him.

One of the greatest manifestations of God's mercy, glory be to Him, is His sending messengers and books as guidance for people to bring them out of darkness into light. The messengers are a mercy from God Almighty to His servants, because they introduced Allah to them, His Names, Attributes, and how to worship Him. This way He took them, through His mercy, from ignorance to knowledge, from misguidance to guidance, from darkness to light, from misery to happiness, and from Hell to Paradise. Glory be to God, the most merciful.

Whoever gives the name of *Al-Rahman* its due, knows that this includes sending messengers and books, more than it includes sending rain, growing pastures, and producing grains. That is because the former bring life to the hearts, bodies, and souls. However, those who are deprived only understand of this name of Allah that which animals understand, while those who ponder realise what is beyond that.

The mercy of God Almighty was manifested in Noah (*peace be upon him*) by granting him guidance, preserving him, facilitating his affairs, answering his supplications, helping him against his disbelieving enemies, empowering him on earth, supporting him, relieving his distress, and enabling him to lead the second human civilization, the civilization of peace and blessings.¹

1. Al-Jalil, p. 133.

5. *Du'a (supplication)*

Another characteristic of Noah (*peace be upon him*) is that he would supplicate a lot to his Lord, and I have detailed this in other places. From the supplication of Noah that we spoke about in the previous pages include:

“And [remember] when Noah had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him and delivered him and his family from the great distress.” [21:76]

“He said, “My Lord! My people have truly rejected me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” [26:117-118]

He prayed that Allah would grant him victory over his people. “He said, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” [23:39]

“So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” [54:10]

“Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

“And pray, “My Lord! Allow me a blessed landing, for You are the best accommodator.” [23:29]

“My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:28]

One of the causes of bliss, prosperity, and repelling

distress and affliction, is to turn to God Almighty with that, because He commanded His servants to make *du'a* (*supplicate*), promising to answer them, and His promise is always true. Allah Almighty says: “Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled.” [40:60]

Allah, Glory be to Him, commanded us to direct our needs to Him and to rely on Him. He guaranteed to respond by giving us what we want, for He is the Generous One who responds to those who pray.¹

In the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) his attachment to the supplication of his Lord Almighty is clear. *Du'a* was one of the most important weapons that Noah used to attain Allah's victory. He resorted to Allah and sought His protection, not resorting to material means only. He turned to Allah in supplication because he knew that *du'a* is one of the most important means of victory. The Noble Qur'an recorded for us the forms of *du'a* that Noah (*peace be upon him*) used and how God responded to him.²

6. *'Ubudiyyah (servitude)*

One of Nuh's traits is that he was a servant and worshipper of Allah; someone who fulfilled the highest levels of servitude to Allah. Allah Almighty said:

“Before them, the people of Noah denied [the truth]

1. Al-Sunan al-Ilahiyah, 1/474.

2. Abdel Maqsood Askar, In the Company of the Honourable Messengers, Dar Al-Bashir, Tanta, Egypt, 1st Ed. 2000, p. 48.

and rejected Our servant, calling [him] insane. And he was intimidated” [54:9]

“Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!” [66:10]

“[For] he was truly one of Our faithful servants.” [37:81]

“But not the chosen servants of Allah.” [37:40]

The manifestations of ‘*ubudiyyah* appear clearly in Nuh (*peace be upon him*) in several ways, such as the following:

Gratitude. Nuh was raised to the status of grateful servant. “[O] descendants of those We carried with Noah [in the Ark]! He was indeed a grateful servant.” [17:3]

Abundance of sujud (*prostration*) and weeping out of fear of Allah. This appears in the following verse: “Those were [some of] the prophets who Allah has blessed from among the descendants of Adam, and of those We carried with Noah [in the Ark], and of the descendants of Abraham and Israel, and of those We [rightly] guided and chose. Whenever the revelations of the Most Compassionate were recited to them, they fell down, prostrating and weeping.” [19:58]

Constant du’a. He was someone whose prayers were accepted. “So he cried out to his Lord, “I am helpless, so help [me]!” [54:10]. Allah said: “And [remember] when Noah had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him

and delivered him and his family from the great distress” [21:76]. And He said: “Noah prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” [23:26]

Tawakkul (*reliance upon Allah*). “Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Noah when he said to his people, “O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you, then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay!” [10:71]

a. **Sincerity and leaving his affairs to Allah.**

“I do not say to you that I possess Allah’s treasures or know the unseen, nor do I claim to be an angel, nor do I say that Allah will never grant goodness to those you look down upon. Allah knows best what is [hidden] within them. [If I did,] then I would truly be one of the wrongdoers.” They protested, “O Noah! You have argued with us far too much, so bring upon us what you threaten us with, if what you say is true.” He responded, “It is Allah Who can bring it upon you if He wills, and then you will have no escape! My advice will not benefit you - no matter how hard I try - if Allah wills [for] you to stray. He is your Lord, and to Him you will [all] be returned.” [11:31-34]

A servant who recites Allah’s name. “And he said, “Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [11:41]

Yaqin (*certainty*). “So he began to build the Ark, and

whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him. He said, “If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” [11:38-39]

Rushing to repent and seek forgiveness. “Noah pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

Iman and Ihsan (*excellence*). “And We blessed him with Isaac and Jacob. We guided them all as We previously guided Noah and those among his descendants: David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron. This is how We reward the good-doers” [6:84]. Allah Almighty also said: “Peace be upon Noah among all peoples. Indeed, this is how We reward the good-doers. [For] he was truly one of Our faithful servants.” [37:79-81]

Ikhlas (*sincerity*). “See then what was the end of those who had been warned. But not the chosen servants of Allah.” [37:73-74]

Righteousness. “Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of Our righteous servants” [66:10]

Facing trials. “Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them” [66:10]. He faced trials with the closest people to him.

7. Knowledge.

Allah Almighty said:

“He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see. Should we [then] force it on you against your will?”” [11:28]

“He replied, “O my people! I am not misguided! But I am a messenger from the Lord of all worlds, conveying to you my Lord’s messages and giving you [sincere] advice. And I know from Allah what you do not know.”” [7:61-62]

8. Purity and chastity (*‘iffah*)

“I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds.” [26:109]

“I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the message]” [10:72]

“I do not ask you for a payment for this [message]” [11:29]

9. Amanah (*reliability and trustworthiness*).

“I am truly a trustworthy messenger to you.” [26:107]

Steadfastness.

“I am not going to expel the believers.” [26:114]

“And I will never dismiss the believers, for they will surely meet their Lord. But I can see that you are a people acting ignorantly. O my people! Who would protect me from Allah if I were to dismiss them? Will you not then be mindful?” [11:29-30]

8. Kindness to parents.

“My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women. And increase the wrongdoers only in destruction.” [71:28]

The personality of Noah (*peace be upon him*) appears in his attributes, morals, and life. A summary of its features are:

- **Servitude to God.** Among its manifestations are gratitude to God, frequent prostration, weeping, constant supplication, *tawakkul*, honesty, certainty, remembrance of Allah, repentance, seeking forgiveness, *iman*, *ihsan*, *ikhlas*, righteousness, and affliction.

- **Knowledge.** Among its manifestations are clarity and strength of argument, purity of method and clarity of approach, and intellectual, logical, and emotional conviction.

- **Chastity, honesty, and steadfastness.** Among its manifestations is love of the believers and concern for their poor and weak.

- **Kindness to parents and beautiful patience.**¹ There is no doubt that Noah (*peace be upon him*) instilled these qualities and morals in his followers. These then contributed to the revival of humanity in its second civilizational after the great flood.



1. Al-Raqb, p. 128-132.

Second: The Fiqh of Nuh in Dealing with the Divine Laws (*sunan rabbaniyyah*)

The leadership of civilizations and the upbringing and advancement of people are subject to laws, norms, and principles that control the course of individuals, societies, peoples, and nations. When we contemplate the biography of Noah (*peace be upon him*) we see that he dealt with these laws with wisdom, great ability, and success from God.

The divine laws are many. They are fixed rules of God Almighty in the universe and with man at all times and places.

The one who contemplates the verses of the Noble Qur'an will find it full of talking about the laws of God Almighty, which do not change or alter. He would find remarkable care in highlighting those laws, directing attention to them, drawing lessons from them, and working in accordance with them, to form a content society that is upright upon the command of God.

When the Noble Qur'an directs people's attention to the laws of God Almighty on earth, in the direction of history and the lives of the messengers, it brings them back to the principles that run in accordance with the laws that govern the universe, peoples, nations, states, and individuals. Laws that are constant and do not lag behind. Things do not proceed arbitrarily and things do not run in the earth in vain, but rather, these laws always apply. If Muslims study these laws and understand their implications, the wisdom behind events is revealed to them, the goals behind incidents become

clear to them, and they are assured of the consistency of the system of laws. They would understand that wisdom exists behind this system and are able to visualise the direction of the path in light of what they know of the past. They would not rely on merely being Muslims to obtain victory and empowerment without taking into account the causes that lead to it. The laws that govern life are one, so whatever happened in the past, will happen at all times.¹

The first condition for properly and systematically dealing with the divine laws and the universal laws of individuals, societies, and nations, is comprehensively understanding these laws and how they work within the divine system. In other words, what we refer to as *fiqh al-sunan*. In light of our comprehension of them, we derive laws of society and rules of civilization.²

The movement of Noah (*peace be upon him*) towards the oneness of God Almighty, worshipping Him alone, urging *taqwa* of Him, and populating the earth according to the *Shari'ah* of the Lord of the worlds, was dependant – after success from Allah – on organising the efforts of *da'wah*, building the civilized divine model of man, and dealing with the norms and laws of civilization with understanding. Through his biography and life we notice:

- The importance of leadership in building a civilization.
- The importance of an organized group of believers to

1. Sayyid Qutb, 1/478.

2. Al-Mashru' al-Hadari li Nahdat al-Ummah, p. 58.

settle on earth and become a successful authority on it.

- The importance of revelation that shows the divine approach in beliefs, morals, worship, transactions, values, and perceptions.

- The importance of the law of gradualism, which is one of the laws of God in his creation and universe. It is one of the important laws that the Muslim *umamah* must observe as it works for the advancement and empowerment of God's religion.

The use of this law is clearly seen throughout the life of Noah (*peace be upon him*) especially since the road was a long one. He walked with poise, care, and immense patience, gently moving towards the goals set. Goals such as kindness towards people, choosing the believers in his message, resisting his opponents, then the stage of victory and empowerment after the great flood.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with the law of gradualism with wisdom, intelligence and foresight. He was conscious of this law when leading people and educating the believers who bore the burden of the second human civilization in its spiritual, mental, logical, and emotional foundations. Some of the most important laws (*sunan*) that Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with after the law of gradualism, are:

1. The Divine Law of Change and its Relationship with Instilling Sound Creed

Allah Almighty said: "Indeed, Allah would never change a people's state [of favour] until they change their own state

[of faith]. And if it is Allah's Will to torment a people, it can never be averted, nor can they find a protector other than Him." [13:11]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with clarity, honesty, and sincerity. He led the change according to God's way and revelation, starting with the human being. He turned the few who believed in him into great people society after the flood. Through them he brought about a change in society, its beliefs, morals, and values, moving those who believed in him from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, and from backwardness to progress. He established with them a wonderful second human civilization, the civilization of peace and blessings.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) as per Allah's revelation, changed the beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, emotions, and morals within the souls of his followers. The world around them thus changed, so they were taught and brought up on *tawhid (monotheism)*, which is the foundation upon which the second human civilization was built.

His blessed upbringing yielded its fruits, so his followers who escaped with him were purified from all that contradicts *tawhid al-uluhiyyah*, *tawhid al-rububiyyah*, and *tawhid al-asma wa al-sifat*. In their new society they only gave authority to the law of Noah (*peace be upon him*) which was revealed from God Almighty. They did not obey anyone other than God, nor did they follow anyone against the pleasure of God. They did not love anyone the same way they loved God, they did not fear anyone but God, rely on anyone but God, resort to anyone but God, they did not pray

or seek forgiveness except from God alone, and they did not bow or prostrate to anyone but God. They believed in the Last Day and prepared for it with utmost preparation through their *tawhid*, worship, and populating earth in accordance with the way of Allah.

They believed in God's decree and destiny, that the ultimate outcome is for the righteous, and the pillars of faith that Noah (*peace be upon him*) called to. When educating them, he did not limit himself to teaching them the pillars of faith, but he corrected for them many concepts, perceptions, and beliefs about man, life, the universe, and the relationship between each of them. So that they would tread under Allah's light, realise the purpose of their existence in life, achieve what God intended for them, and be freed from illusion and myths. Their perception of the following thus became clear:

- The story of Adam, the first human civilization, and the enmity of Satan against Adam and his children.
- The importance of worship and character for humanity and the new society.
- The importance of applying the mind to the horizon, soul, and the universe, and discovering God's laws in them, as these things all point to God. Through faith in God and *tawhid*, Allah opens to his servant intellectual, spiritual, innate, emotional, and psychological insights, through which he rises in perfecting servitude towards Allah Almighty, our Creator.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) began with the internal change

of souls, through the call to belief in God Almighty and His Oneness. This is the only way to raise individuals and followers in a well-rounded way. This is what instills into individuals honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, chastity, self-accountability, controlling its impulses, preferring the truth, and broad-sightedness, an open heart, lofty determination, generosity, kindness, sacrifice, humility, sense of duty, uprightness, courage, valour, contentment, self-sufficiency, and a passion for hearing, obeying, and following the law. And this is what qualifies them to bringing about into existence the best and purest society.¹

The second human civilization that Nuh led was built upon tawhid and following the Shari'ah of Allah. "Whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray nor suffer. But whoever turns away from My Reminder will certainly have a miserable life" [20:123-124]. Through the doctrine of monotheism, he explained to his followers the reality of existence and outlined the purpose of life upon which he built the second human civilization. One that was driven by concepts, perceptions, ideas, values, and principles that are based on faith in God and His Oneness. The essence of the second human civilization is the monotheism that gave it its divine identity, and linked its legislative, moral, economic, political, social, and personal elements with its human and faith dimension. It combined between the spiritual and material dimension in its new launch after the great flood.

The story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) in dealing with

1. Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi, *Islamic Civilization*, p. 290-291.

Allah's *sunnah* of change, played a major role through his great efforts and diligent work with his followers. They thus became the solid core influencing the new civilized scene. From them, communities, societies, and human nations were formed afterwards.

2. The *sunnah* of Allah in affliction and trials

In the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) various types of affliction can be seen befalling him, his people, and his children after him. Allah Almighty said: "Surely in this are lessons. And We [always] put [people] to the test" [23:30]. "Surely in this", refers the whole story of Nuh and his people after which this verse was mentioned in Surat al-Mu'minun.

In the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his people, there are many verses that indicate a range of attributes of Allah and His wisdom behind testing and afflicting His creation and His wisdom in rewarding them with justice and grace. The oppressive disbelievers are treated with justice, while the pious believers are given great reward through Allah's grace. One can reach an understanding of the meanings indicated by the verse through intellectual implications, logical deductions, the subtleties of linguistic semantics in words and sentences, or even the structure of words and the way sentences are organised throughout the text.

We can deduce the following from the verses that presented this story in Surat al-Mu'minun:

- Allah sending Noah to his people is one of Allah's

laws in humans. There is no nation that has deviated from God's law and path, and had the true teachings of the divine religion erased from its memory, with nothing remaining of it except distortions, superstitions, and misguidance, except that God sends a messenger to it. A bringer of good news and a warner, informing it about God's religion, its laws, and guidance. Someone who calls it to faith, righteous deeds, and makes clear to it its responsibility in this worldly life, informing it that after this life comes another life to which people are sent after death, to then face accountability and recompense.

- Worshipping God alone with no partner, after believing in Him as one in His lordship and one in His divinity, is one of the greatest religious obligations that a person must fulfil. This is the only way to passing this journey successfully, to be among the dwellers of the Gardens of Bliss.¹

- God's punishment and torment is what He has prepared for those who disbelieve in Him, denying Him or associating partners with Him, and for those who disobey Him and are too arrogant to worship Him, each according to what they deserve.

- One of the human phenomena is that the leaders and chiefs of communities use the humanity of the messengers as an excuse to reject their messages. They also accuse them of being seekers of leadership and authority over their people. They try to change the beliefs, views, and customs of their people, so that they can become their leaders in the

1. Al-Maidani, p. 286.

name of religion, claiming to be messengers of Allah sent to do this. They also accuse them of being insane in order to repel the masses from them, as well as use other arguments against them.

- It is a human phenomenon that most people impose their own opinions on the wisdom of God. This includes their disapproval that the messengers to humanity be human beings themselves.

- It is the *sunnah* of God to support His Messengers and to inflict His vengeance on the wrongdoers of their people.

- The believers are required to remember God on every occasion, seek help from Him, praise Him, and call upon Him according to what is appropriate for each occasion.

- The nature of this worldly life is such that every person who fulfils the conditions of being tested faces tests, trials, and afflictions. The messengers too are afflicted. The types of trials vary. Some of them come in the form of obligations, some in the form of blessings, some come in the form of calamities, and others involve people being tested with each other.

- Some verses of the story are a sermon and reminder, so those who disbelieve must take heed and consider the divine punishment that befell the disbelievers and wrongdoers before them. They should infer from this that the Lord who promised a worldly punishment and then implemented it, will fulfil, on the Day of Resurrection, the punishment of the afterlife that He promised.

- Some of the verses in the story are a source of comfort and reassurance for the messengers and the believers that God is with them and helps them if they remain truthful and patient. God will certainly fulfil His promise to them in this world and the hereafter, so long as they fulfil in themselves the conditions required of them.

- Some verses indicate that it is God's wisdom that destruction befalls people that become widely corrupt to the extent that things cannot be remedied due to the influences and pressures of the environment that do not allow any righteous people to transpire. In this case their comprehensive destruction, with the exception of the believers, becomes an inevitable matter.¹

“We [always] put [people] to the test.” People are tested so that what is in their inner self becomes apparent, whether belief or disbelief, good deed or sin, noble action or vice, and good or evil. The majestic We is used because the context at hand is one of greatness and majesty, imposed by the authority of the Creator, who afflicts all His servants, with the Messengers (*peace be upon them*) being at the forefront.

The emphasis used in the verse indicates that the law of affliction and trial is a constant and ongoing law, in the past, present, and future.² Trials come in various forms. People are tested for patience, for gratitude, to be rewarded, to be

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

guided, to be disciplined, to be purified, and to be corrected.¹ Some of the trials that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) faced are:

- His affliction with his people who were not guided, did not believe in him and his message, and denied him.
- His was tested with his son who did wrong, for reasons that no one knows with certainty except Allah, the Exalted.
- His was tested with his wife and her lack of faith in him.
- His people's mockery of him. They ridiculed someone who deserves the greatest respect, intending to belittle him. However, the one being mocked is the one who obtains the pleasure of God Almighty and receives appreciation and acknowledgment from the honest believers who submit to Allah, Lord of the worlds.²

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was exposed to the law of affliction, becoming a role model for the afflicted throughout the ages. A true example in enduring adversity and calamity for the sake of the truth. Among the verses that reveal this *sunnah* is the saying of the Most High:

“Do you think you will be admitted into Paradise without being tested like those before you? They were afflicted with suffering and adversity and were so [violently] shaken that [even] the Messenger and the believers with him cried out, “When will Allah’s help come?” Indeed, Allah’s help is [always] near.” [2:214]

1. Sayyid Qutb, 4/2466.

2. Aqil, p. 133.

This noble verse condemns those who are addressed by it who hope to be excluded from the laws of history, thinking that they can achieve victory without facing the trials that those before them faced. God Almighty tells us that He will test His servants with prosperity, adversity, and hardship, as He did with those before them. It is a continuous *sunnah* that does not change nor lag behind. Whoever carries the banner of his religion must be tested. Faith is not by adornment, wishful thinking, and mere claims, but rather actions will either confirm or negate such a claim. It is a *sunnah* that has passed in the earlier generations, and is ongoing in the future ones.¹

3. **The *sunnah* of Allah in taking with means**

Nuh dealt with the *sunnah* of taking with means, to spread his message and establish the religion. This appears in several areas:

a. **In the method of da'wah**

Once at night and once during the day, another in secret and another in the open. He used the discourse of reason, logic, and conscience, and was able to convince some people of the superiority of his call, its sanctity, and its truthfulness, leading them to the realisation of what would benefit them in both worlds.

b. **His concern with those who believed with him**

“But none believed with him except for a few.” Nuh (*peace be upon him*) worked to form them into a single bond. A

1. Amahzoun, 1/196.

cohesive force that fuses with each other, forming the core and bearing with it the responsibilities of the message, with each of them supporting one another. Noah advised, guided, trained, and educated them, so they became the best support for him in advocating his call. The few believers that Noah (*peace be upon him*) succeeded in convincing of the message carried out the commands of God without hesitation. Nuh built a firm foundation with these believers, and they lived with him through trials, tribulations, and blessings. They managed to fulfil some encompassing principles that relate to the *sunnah* of Allah, including:

- They are the forerunners to faith in God, monotheism, and were patient in facing trials in that path.
- They were steadfast during crises and tests.
- They are chosen after affliction and trial.
- They are the supporters of the truth and the call for *tawhid*.
- They seek forgiveness from God and are thankful to Him in word and deed.
- They were on a level of understanding, knowledge, and humanitarianism, that qualified them to contribute to the establishment of the second human civilization.
- They are familiar with the continuous *sunan (laws)* of life, as they learned these from Noah, peace be upon him.
- They are satisfied with God's favours and decree.
- They are fair and just in all that they do.

- They are the epitome of their time and the remaining ones of their generation.
- They are the ones granted assistance and victory.
- They are people of determination.
- The intensity of their relationship with God. Their affairs begin in the name of God and they continually praise God and supplicate to Him.
- They are the most capable people of keeping steadfast, hearing and obeying Noah, peace be upon him.
- Satan does not deceive them.¹

These are some of the universal principles by which the followers of Noah (*peace be upon him*) who contributed to the establishment of a civilization of peace and blessings with Noah (*peace be upon him*) were described.

c. **Building the Ark**

From the *fiqh* (***understanding***) of Noah (*peace be upon him*) of the *sunnah* of using the means, he embarked on building the Ark by the command of his Lord. The project of building the Ark was subject to a work plan, building engineering, specified materials, a method of implementation, and auxiliary workers that could bear the ridicule of his people. These ridiculing people represented the majority before the flood.

“So he began to build the Ark, and whenever some of the chiefs of his people passed by, they mocked him.

1. Khamis, p. 103.

He said, “If you laugh at us, we will [soon] laugh at you similarly. You will soon come to know who will be visited by a humiliating torment [in this life] and overwhelmed by an everlasting punishment [in the next].” [11:38-39]

Allah’s law in His universe and His Shari’ah makes it imperative for us to follow means and causes, just as the strongest believer did; the Messenger of God, Muhammad (*peace and blessings be upon him*). He tackled poverty with work, ignorance with knowledge, illness with cure, disbelief and sin with striving. He would seek refuge in Allah from worry, sadness, helplessness, and laziness. He took the necessary means of eating, drinking, and saving for his family a year’s sustenance. He would not wait for sustenance to descend upon him from the sky. Someone asked him whether he should tie his camel or leave it and rely upon Allah? He said: “Tie it and rely upon Allah.”¹ The Prophet also said: “Flee from the leper as you would flee from a lion.”²

The victorious battles of the Messenger (*peace be upon him*) are but a manifestation of his incomparable determination that runs according to the will and decree of Allah. he took caution, prepared armies, sent informants and spies, he wore war shields and headgear, placed archers on the mountain, and built a trench around Madina. He commanded his followers to emigrate to Abyssinia and Medina, he emigrated himself, taking caution while doing

1. Narrated by Ibn Hibban with an authentic chain of transmission.

2. Bukhari, No. 5380.

so, he prepared the necessary provision for his journey, including an accompanying guide that knew the paths, he took a different path, and hid in the cave. Whenever he travelled for the purpose of battle or pilgrimage, he would carry provisions, yet he was the master of those who have *tawakkul* (**trust in Allah**).¹

God's decree is true and binding, but it is enforced within the laws upon which the order of the universe is based, through the causes that the Almighty created, so that existence continues in an upright way. These laws and causes are thus an inseparable part of God's comprehensive and all-encompassing decree.²

The story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) teaches us to make use of causes and take advantage of means to reach our goals. This is especially important in difficult situations that face individuals, communities, and nations. Allah made the salvation of Nuh and his followers due to the building of the Ark and mastering the science of shipbuilding. Nuh and those with him had immense determination in comprehending the divine sciences that helped them produce this great structure.

d. The seeds of the second human civilization

Noah (*peace be upon him*) carried in the Ark of Life the various animals, birds, and plants known to Noah at that time, and those easy for humans to get hold of. "We said,

1. Ali Al-Sallabi, *Belief in Qadar*, p. 164.

2. Al-Qaradawi, *Belief in Qadar*, p. 165.

take into the Ark a pair from every species.” Once again, the majestic plural, We, is used, as there is no doubt that the incident is a great one. Noah followed the guidance of God Almighty, carrying a pair from every species with him. And this led to the launch and prosperity of the second human civilization.

We notice how Noah (*peace be upon him*) followed the *sunnah* of utilizing means in many matters, the most important of which are:

- His method in *da'wah* (*calling to Allah*).
- His concern for those who believed with him.
- Building the Ark.
- Carrying the seeds of human civilization in the Ark.

4. **The *sunnah* of *tadafu'* (repellation)**

Nuh dealt with the law of repellation, and this is clear to see between him and his people. Some of the reasons for this resistance between him and his disbelieving enemies include:

That we was a human like them, not an angel. Allah Almighty said: “Do you find it astonishing that a reminder should come to you from your Lord through one of your own, warning you, so you may beware and perhaps be shown mercy?” [7:63]

Nuh clarified to them that being human does not prevent receiving revelation and being chosen by Allah the All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Accusing him of being misguided and ridiculous. Allah Almighty said: “But the chiefs of his people said, “We surely see that you are clearly misguided.” He replied, “O my people! I am not misguided! But I am a messenger from the Lord of all worlds”” [7:60-61]

Nuh defended himself against their accusations of him being clearly misguided, as Allah related to us, “[Nuh replied] O my people! I am not misguided!” Al-Alusi said in his tafsir: “Nuh addressed them by saying, “my people”, reminding them that they are his people, so that they would be more likely to incline towards him.”¹ He told them that he a messenger from the Lord of all worlds and he described himself with four traits:²

1. He is the bearer of a message and a messenger sent by the Lord of the worlds.

2. He conveyed from God that which guides them: “I convey to you the messages of my Lord.” I inform you of the commands and prohibitions with which I have been sent in worship and transactions.

3. “And I am your sincere advisor.” He used the present tense to indicate his great patience with his people throughout.

4. He was singled out amongst them with being given

1. Wafa Muhammad Saeed, p. 185.

2. Adel Saleh Abu Al-Ala, The Conflict Between Truth and Falsehood as Mentioned in Surat Al-A'raf, Ph.D. thesis at Umm Al-Qura University, 1416 AH.

knowledge of the unseen that which they do not know. The Almighty said: “And I know from Allah what you do not know.”

The pride of his people. Allah Almighty said: “We see that no one follows you except the lowliest among us” [11:27]. The chief refused to follow Nuh because the weak and poor followed Nuh. They would refer to them as lowly, as if to say that they have no reason, no knowledge, no honour, and no money. The reason for this is their pride that made them flip the truth upside down and turn away from the truth just because the lower class follow him. The reality is that the followers of the truth are the nobles, even if they are poor. It is the wrongdoers who oppose the truth are lowly and outcasts, even if they are noble the eyes of people.

Their claim that what Nuh has brought is unheard of by their forefathers. “We have never heard of this in [the history of] our forefathers.” [23:24]

- They either said this when the call first started regarding those idol worshippers who came before them, or they said this about those who went before them to worshipping idols. Alternatively, they knew that their first forefathers between Adam and Noah were mostly monotheists, but they denied this out of stubbornness. It was narrated from Ibn Abbas (*may God be pleased with him*) that between Adam and Noah were ten centuries or generations, all of them were upon the true faith. But they then differed, so Allah sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and warners.

They belied Nuh and his followers. Allah Almighty mentioned in their clash against Nuh and his followers: “we think you are liars” [11:27]. The basis of their enmity and towards the call of their Prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*) is merely their thoughts. This was sufficient for them to refuse to following Noah and those who believed with him. Then, despite the lengthy period and various methods through which Noah called them, only a few believed.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with the law of repellation with objectivity and balance, through which he achieved the pleasure of his Lord Almighty that he had hoped for. Allah Almighty said: “Had Allah not repelled a group of people by [the might of] another, corruption would have dominated the earth, but Allah is Gracious to all” [2:251]. Repellations and battles in the world of thoughts, beliefs, cultures, politics, and economics is the way to vitality and growth, a sign of life and continuity, and it is one of the instruments of life.²

The story of Noah contains lessons in the law of repellation between truth and falsehood, faith and disbelief, and guidance and misguidance. These lessons include:

- Nothing can stand in the way of God’s great power and His mighty will. This flood destroyed all those who disbelieved in God and belied Noah.
- God Almighty rewards people in this world and the

1. Wafa Muhammad Saeed, p. 187.

2. Jamal Nisar, p. 35.

hereafter for their deeds, faith, righteousness, and piety, not by their lineage. Righteousness has nothing to do with heredity and lineage, and there is no favouritism for anyone in the scale of accountability, for the son of Noah and his wife were among those destroyed.

- The most important thing that survivors wish for after a general disaster is the presence of security, stability, and tranquility.

- The story of Noah and other prophets was unknown to the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) and his people. It is a miracle of the Qur'an, a confirmation of its message, and a means of keeping him firm.¹

- If ignorance prevails over people, the devils exploit them and beautify for them the worship of other than God, so they end up worshipping idols and the graves of righteous people.

- Patience and persistence upon delivering the message (*da'wah*) is important, even if it is only accepted by few.²

5. The sunnah of victory and empowerment

Allah Almighty said:

“We certainly help Our messengers and the believers, [both] in this worldly life and on the Day the witnesses will

1. Wahba Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Qissah al-Qur'aniyah*, Dar Al-Khair, Damascus, 1st edition 1992, p. 48.

2. Abu Bakr Al-Jaza'iri, *Stories of the Messengers in the Words of the Lord of the Worlds*, King Fahd Library, Medina, 1420 AH, p. 8.

stand forth [for testimony].” [40:51]

“For it is Our duty to help the believers.” [30:47]

“Our Word has already gone forth to Our servants, the messengers, that they would surely be helped, and that Our forces will certainly prevail.” [37:171-173]

These verses and others like them refer to the victory of God and the honouring of the people of faith who are keen on calling to Allah and endure hardships in its path, whether the caller is a noble messenger or one of the believers. This honour, victory, and empowerment exists in the worldly life even before the afterlife.¹ Victory and empowerment for the believers comes in various forms, the most important of which are:

a. Communicating the message, fulfilling the trust, and people responding to them, such as the people of the village that the messengers came to (*see ch.36 v.13 of the Qur’an*) and the People of the Ditch.

b. Participation in rulership, such as the empowering Yusuf (*peace be upon him*) to rule over Egypt after the king empowered him to do so.

c. The people of monotheism gain power and take positions of authority in the state, such as the empowerment of Dawud, Sulaiman, and our Prophet (*peace be upon them*), after the conquest of Mecca.

1. Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi, *The Fiqh of Victory and Empowerment in the Noble Qur’an*, Dar al-Ma’rifah, Beirut, 5th edition 2009, p. 23.

d. God's support for his allies and empowering them through the destruction of the disbelievers and the salvation of the believers, like the story of Noah and the destruction of his people.

True empowerment, victory, and glory is when the guidance of the Lord of the worlds settles in the hearts of the people of faith, even if they are only few. What matters is not the great quantity of believers and those who accept the truth, but rather in the purity of the divine guidance that those individuals believe in, whether they are few or many. God empowered Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those who believed in him on earth because they fulfilled the conditions of empowerment. These were:

- Belief in God with all its meanings and pillars.
- Practicing good deeds of all kinds.
- Being keen on all kinds of goodness and noble actions.
- Perfecting servitude to Allah.
- Fighting polytheism in all its forms and subtleties.

Allah Almighty said:

“Allah has promised those of you who believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security - [provided that] they worship Me, associating nothing with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this [promise], it is they who will be the rebellious.” [24:55]

The law of succession (*istikhlaf*) was achieved by Noah (*peace be upon him*) for the righteous hardworking believers, and this was inherited nation after nation, generation after generation, through these conditions: faith in God and His Oneness, good deeds, perfecting servitude to Allah, and tackling idolatry. The emergence of the second human civilization, by the will of Allah, achieved justice, truth, and abolishment of falsehood. Humanity took guided steps towards perfection, happiness, contentment, freedom, equality in rights and duties, and perfecting the lofty values that Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his students called for. This empowerment came by Noah complying with the commands of God, obeying Him, keeping to His limits, and properly observing His *sunan* (*laws*) in the direction of societies, communities, and nations, such as patience, piety, making use of means, and gradualism.

The religion was established in the heart, body, and tongue of Noah, peace be upon him. Then after he and those with him were saved from the great flood, the law of God became sovereign in areas of life, people's affairs, the populating the earth, and benefitting from all the goods deposited by God Almighty in it, while directing every action in it towards God Almighty. Allah said: "Say, "Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah - Lord of all worlds." [6:162]

This empowerment was accompanied by the good remembrance of Noah (*peace be upon him*), revenge and victory over the enemies, protection and salvation for him and his followers, and divine grace accompanied by God's

peace and blessings upon him and those with him, after having relieved them of anxiety and grief.

Third: Factors of the Emergence of the Second Human Civilization

Understanding the reality of the second human civilization depends on a deep analysis of the Qur'anic stories and the deduction of a true understanding of the concept of civilization. It also depends on human prosperity with its intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and behavioural characteristics, in order to achieve the servitude of God on earth and populating it according to the will of God Almighty at the level of individuals, communities, and the *ummah* (*Muslim nation*).

The prophets and messengers are the best of those who laid down the *fiqh* of the divine civilization over the course of its long history. They are the leaders of great human civilizations that were built upon the concept of monotheism, worship, values, inhabitancy, succession, and political, social, economic, spiritual, psychological, habitational, and material advancement. Values derived from divine revelation while combining between:

- Manifestations of material advancement that include aspects of life, such as industry, commerce, agriculture, and the arts.
- Manifestations of moral advancement related to spiritual ideals, moral values, intellectual production, and high literary creativity.

Civilization for humanity is not complete until it is characterized by both material and moral superiority. That is because civilizations are measured by their scientific, industrial, and urban progress in relation to worldly and material aims, while also embodying virtuous moral principles. The pinnacle of this elevated human civilizational understanding is found in the leadership of nations led by prophets and messengers, such as:

- The second human civilization led by Noah (*peace be upon him*).
- That which occurred during the reign of Dawud and Sulaiman (*peace be upon them*).

Dr. Abdullah Muhammad Al-Amin spoke about the civilizational concepts, the Western and Islamic perspectives on the factors that lead to the rise and fall of civilizations, as well as other perspectives, in his book, *The Islamic Vision and the Issue of Civilization: A Study and Comparison*. He came to the following conclusions:

It is a clear mistake to attempt to assess civilization through merely material progress, while neglecting the matter of faith and creed that determine the nature of the relationship with God, the unseen, the universe, and man. There is fundamental disagreement regarding the concept of civilization between the secular model which sees progress as purely material, while Islam requires both moral and material progress, and that it is fundamentally human and based on monotheism. All progress in the view of Islam urges liberation from slavery to other than God. This point then leads to two further points:

There are civilizations that were founded on the rejection of God and the metaphysical, only dealing with the material world. Their knowledge, laws, and descriptions of existence were limited to man-made concepts based on conflict. “They [only] know the worldly affairs of this life, but are [totally] oblivious to the Hereafter.” [30:7]

This civilization is destined to bear the seeds of its own annihilation from within by virtue of its opposition to the cosmic system that is based on truth. Internal, economic, social, and moral crises will thus arise, as well as wars and all forms of destruction:

“They [only] know the worldly affairs of this life, but are [totally] oblivious to the Hereafter. Have they not reflected upon their own being? Allah only created the heavens and the earth and everything in between for a purpose and an appointed term. Yet most people are truly in denial of the meeting with their Lord! Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those [destroyed] before them? They were far superior in might; they cultivated the land and developed it more than these [Meccans] ever have. Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves. Then most evil was the end of the evildoers for denying and mocking the signs of Allah. It is Allah Who originates the creation, and will resurrect it. And then to Him you will [all] be returned.” [30:7-11]

a. Some religious civilizations were founded at the outset of their inception on a religious basis. Their historical development and their weakness or strength remained

dialectically linked to the extent of their commitment to the religious guidance and its presence within social institutions. Every civilization thus has its own starting point. This means that religious civilizations make divine revelation a primary source of knowledge, dealing with both the material and metaphysical world.

- The contemporary civilization is one that only deals with the material, and therefore should not be a model for other civilizations to follow, because it does not suit us. It was created without knowing its true nature, as it came about from the imaginations of scientific discoveries and people's whims, illusions, theories, and desires. So, although it was created by our efforts, it is not fit for our circumstances.

- Although contemporary civilization lives in a dilemma in limiting itself to the material world and is unable to answer universal questions, there are those who looked at the remaining theological radiations inherent in it, and decided that Western civilization will stand eternally. This is because substance and fuel turn into radiation. As for the rest of civilizations, they are either threatened with demise and extinction, or will dissolve in Western civilization.

- The theory of the glorification of Western civilization continued to develop, ending with Francis Fukuyama who predicted that history would end with an overwhelming victory of Western civilization. With the victory of the Western military camp, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, the basic contradictions in the world will end with victory for economic liberalism, political liberalism, and liberal democracy. Western civilization thus

declares its hegemony over the rest of civilizations. Samuel Huntington declared that with the end of the Cold War, a new type of conflict between civilizations would emerge, the clash of civilizations.

- If civilization means the presence of a model in which God's guidance is directing the work of man, in which the purpose of life is linked to the hereafter and inhabiting the earth, there is a striving for reform and not for corruption, then civilization in this sense is Islam. This is the promised victory at the stage of comprehensive emergence of Islam.

- The essence of the Islamic civilization, upon which its institutions are built, through which its historical development, external interactions, and goals were determined, is *tawhid*. Only in light of this outlook can we speak about the reality of the Islamic nation, its past, and its future. *Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of God Almighty)* is what gives the Islamic civilization its identity and connects its parts together. *Tawhid* is what stamps all the elements that enter into it, *Islamifying* and purifying them, and harmonizing them with everything else around it.¹

- Civilization is not a condition that is innate in human nature, but rather it is a gained quality that a person creates with his free will according to subjective and objective factors that lead to it. At the top of this is the factor of though represented in the perception that man has of the reality of existence. The purpose of life, when it comes

1. Abdullah Al-Amin, p. 146.

to civilization, reaches its pinnacle when civilization is based on religion and faith. Civilization, as it is a collective struggle to achieve material and moral advancement, is in reality nothing but a struggle motivated by our perception of the reality of existence and directed by our purpose in life. It is, in its principles and actions, governed by that purpose and exists to attain it. Hence, for people who do not have a clear conception of the purpose of life, their lives do not grow into a state of civilisation, but rather remain in a state of nomadism or something of that sort.

What we would like to conclude this section with is that it is difficult to imagine a culture that is completely objective and neutral. One that is not linked to historical backgrounds, a creed, or an ideology that has its philosophy on existence on which it bases its perceptions. Considering that culture or thoughts are what provide civilization with beliefs, it is also difficult to imagine a civilization without a philosophy in existence based its perceptions.

For example, contemporary Western civilization is built upon an ideal which makes man the centre of the universe, or perhaps even a god. Or it is built upon idolising materialism and making pleasure and utility the ultimate goal. Perhaps the shortcoming of this civilization is that it derives its intellectual model from deficient human thought that does not make divine revelation a source of knowledge for it.

On the contrary, one of the most prominent characteristics of Islamic civilization is that it draws inspiration from

revelation, as it is a civilization based on the way of truth. Based on the foregoing, the world vision is present in the study of civilizations.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was able to create a new human civilization that meets the needs of life and the needs of the emerging society in terms of intellectual, psychological, spiritual, physical, material, social aspects, and knowledge and action, for that generation that descended with the peace and blessings of Allah upon Mount Judi.

The second human civilization was based on important characteristics, the most important of which are:

- It was established on the basis of absolute oneness in the creed, as it calls for the one God who has no partner in his rule and dominion. He is the only one who is worthy of being worshipped and sought out. He is the one who honours and humiliates, gives and withholds. There is nothing in the heavens and the earth except that it is under His power and within His grasp.

This excellence in understanding oneness had a great impact in raising the level of humanity, liberating the masses from the tyranny of the leaders and the powerful, correcting the relationship between leadership and followers, and directing attention to God alone, the Creator of creation and Lord of the worlds. The doctrine of monotheism had a great impact on the second human civilization and stripped it of

1. Ibid, p. 147.

all aspects of paganism in its philosophy, belief, wisdom, art, poetry, and literature.

- The second characteristic of the second human civilization is that it is humane in inclination and purpose, and it meets the spiritual, mental, and material needs of humankind. The human type according to Noah (*peace be upon him*), as well as the prophets and messengers, is one. And this is what the Noble Qur'an states:

“O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may [get to] know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware” [49:13]

The Muhammadan Islamic call followed the same civilized approach that Noah (*peace be upon him*) established in his humanitarian goal and approach. When the Holy Qur'an announced this universal human unity at the level of truth, goodness, and dignity, it made its civilization a knot in which all the geniuses of peoples and nations were organized, the banner of Islamic conquests flew above it. Therefore, every civilization was able to be proud of the geniuses of its one race and one nation. But this was not the case with the Islamic civilization, which boasts of its geniuses who come from all nations and races. Abu Hanifa, Malik, Al-Shafi'i, Ahmad, Al-Khalil, Sibawayh, Al-Kindi, Al-Ghazali, Al-Firyabi, Ibn Rushd, and their like, are all from different nations, and these are only some of the geniuses through whom the Islamic civilization has presented sound Islamic thought to humanity.

The third characteristic of the second human civilization founded by Noah, peace be upon him is that it gave moral principles a high status in all its systems, and in the various fields of its scientific, legislative, economic, and family activities. Moral principles are observed in legislation and application. Allah Almighty said: “He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Noah, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet]” [42:13]. Moral principles – a fruit of monotheism – were embodied in Noah as a person and spread to those around him in learning, upbringing, and behaviour.

- The fourth of these characteristics is that it believes in knowledge in its truest forms, “I know from Allah what you do not know”, and is based on creed in its purest principles. For it has addressed both the mind and heart, and evoked emotion and thought at the same time. A feature that distinguished the civilizations led by the prophets and messengers, since divine revelation was one of the greatest factors of their advancement.¹

The fifth of these characteristics is that it is based on freedom of belief, evidence and proof, and freedom of rational, innate, logical, and sentimental choice. The Almighty said: “He said, “O my people! Consider if I stand on a clear proof from my Lord and He has blessed me with a mercy from Himself, which you fail to see. Should we [then] force it on you against your will.” [11:28]

It was based on religion, belief, and thought, that is

1. Wafa Saeed, p. 304.

enlightened by persuasion, reflection, and contemplation, not by oppression, force, and subjugation. The second human civilization was thus built upon freedom of choice in faith and belief.

As for the factors of the emergence of the second human civilization, they are:

1. The Factor of Belief

The first thing that the Prophet of God Noah (*peace be upon him*) started with was to call his people to worship God alone. There is no surprise in this, because the call to monotheism is the core of every message and the basis of every divine civilization.

By considering the verses that refer to the call of Noah (*peace be upon him*) we note the repetition of this doctrine, due to its importance. The discussion begins by speaking about his calling his people to worship God alone because that God's torment would befall them. Allah Almighty said: "Indeed, We sent Noah to his people. He said, "O my people! Worship Allah - you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day." [7:59]

We note that the Qur'an does not repeat secondary concepts, but rather repeats the overall truths and core subjects. We can thus say that the events that the Qur'an repeats are those that relate to core truths, such as those that relate to *aqidah* (*creed*) and faith. For *aqidah* is the essence of the whole religion, and every part of the religion, whether major or minor, is related to *aqidah*, either directly or indirectly. *Aqidah* thus needs continuous repetition because

of its special importance. Hence, we find this concept being repeated in Noah's conversations with his people to reinforce sound faith and establish it in themselves. There is no civilization without strong faith in the hearts of its followers.¹

2. The Industrial and Economic Factor

This factor appears in the manufacturing of the Ark, as God Almighty commanded Noah to build the ship, so he complied and built the ship with his own hands. Noah's Ark was composed of wood, ropes, and nails: "We carried him on that [Ark made] of planks and nails" [54:13]. This means that Noah (*peace be upon him*) had brought their raw materials and put them together as per the knowledge Allah revealed to him, until it became a ship that can sail. We are not going to get into the Judeo-Christian narrations about the size of the ship, but what concerns us is that this ship was so large that it withstood the crashing waves as depicted in the Qur'an: "And the Ark sailed with them through waves like mountains." [11:42]

The mission of the ship was to take on board the survivors, so that they could be safe from the flood. In this there is an indication that salvation is made by man with his own hands, then he trusts in God. The Muslim *ummah* is thus required to build its own rescue ship with its own hands and the hands of its followers, not to rely for its survival on the ships of others, nor to stand idly in front of the flood of falsehood and injustice, to then drown in it. Nor should it

1. Al-Asalib al-Tarbawiyah, p. 131.

wait to be saved by those seeking to drown it. The nation that does not build its Ark of salvation with its own hands is subject to perishing, drowning, and flooding.¹

The mastery of shipbuilding indicates the ability of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those with him. Their industrial ability in many areas including bedding, chairs, doors, windows, and stairs, and building houses for appropriate accommodation. As well as the manufacture of things they need using wood, iron, and other metals. It is proven that the prophets practiced crafts and a variety of economic and industrial activities, in addition to their main task of raising nations, taking care of them, and guiding to the worship of their Lord. This task is what produces the human being who builds life in its various aspects of civilization. Noah (*peace be upon him*) was a pioneer in the use of wood and iron in the manufacture of ships.² The Ark was carrying:

- The seeds of animal life.
- The seeds of plant life.
- Birds in their various species and types.
- The elements of the new economic and industrial life.

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) and those with him were working seriously and perseveringly. Their industrial and economic movement was strong and prosperous, and through it they achieved a distinguished civilizational success, for Nuh removed the obstacles that were in their way and made

1. Wafa Saeed, p. 306.

2. Heshour, p. 66.

things easier for them. “It was said, “O Noah! Disembark with Our peace and blessings on you and some of the descendants of those with you. As for other nations, We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us.” [11:48]

“Some of the descendants of those with you”, i.e., nations that will be upon faith after you. “As for others, We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us.” This refers to nations of disbelief that God will allow some enjoyment in the life of this world. This is one of His sunan. However, they will then be among the miserable. The promise of peace and blessings mentioned in the verse is thus for every believer at any time and any place.

The blessings that accompanied Noah (*peace be upon him*) were in his industrial, economic, social, and psychological life, as well as in feelings, emotions, livelihood, and all the good things of life. It was not only an abundance of materialistic blessings.¹

The economic life was far from cheating, dishonesty, and taking people’s wealth without right, and it was far from greed and selfishness. The *Shari’ah* of Noah was governing in economic life, so economic relations were pure and consistent with the *Shari’ah* of God Almighty. This involved:

- Giving everyone his due.

1. Ibid, p. 184.

- Honesty in measure and balance.
- Being cautious about the *halal* (*permissible*) and *haram* (*impermissible*).
- Everyone fears God in their words, actions, and intentions.

3. The Environmental Factor

Allah prepared a new environment for Noah (*peace be upon him*), and we can deduce this from the words of God Almighty: “And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain].” The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

The environment is all that surrounds the human being and is connected to him with a mutual relationship. The “environment” in the Qur’anic understanding includes the earth, its components, and what is in its atmosphere.¹ Allah Almighty said: “He [also] subjected for you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all by His grace. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect” [45:13]. Among the components of the environment that helped the emergence of the second human civilization are: the sky, the earth, water, air, plants, animals, and other things. These things have always, and continue to be, subjected for the benefit of humankind.

1. Safaa Moza, Protection of the Natural Environment, Dar Al-Nawader, Lebanon, 1st Ed., 2010, p. 26.

Things that remain in their natural state that God created them are pure, clean, blessed, and ready to respond to the call of inhabiting and populating the earth. The environment in which Noah, peace be upon him and his followers lived after the flood, really helped with contemplation and reflection, as it speaks of the oneness of God and His attributes of perfection. It is subjugated by God in all its manifestations to serve man, manage his livelihood, and achieve his well-being and security. So praise be to the One who said: “He is the One Who smoothed out the earth for you, so move about in its regions and eat from His provisions. And to Him is the resurrection [of all]” [67:15]. And Allah said: “We have indeed established you on earth and provided you with a means of livelihood. [Yet] you seldom give any thanks.” [7:10]

Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those with him stood to contemplate and search. He used his thinking and abilities to benefit from the components of the environment, and reap the fruits of its subjugation. Noah (*peace be upon him*) thus fulfilled his task of populating the earth and being a deputy on it after God granted him reason and divine guidance. Populating the earth is done through planting and building, as well as through having a positive and balanced interaction with its components, making use of them and being creative with them. Noah (*peace be upon him*) in his message, encouraged people to think and reflect on the components of the environment in which they live:

“Do you not see how Allah created seven heavens, one above the other, placing the moon within them as

a [reflected] light, and the sun as a [radiant] lamp? Allah [alone] caused you to grow from the earth like a plant. Then He will return you to it, and then simply bring you forth [again]’. And Allah [alone] spread out the earth for you to walk along its spacious pathways” [71:15-20]

Noah’s relationship with the environment was based on love and appreciation, because he knows that populating the earth and benefiting from the environment that God made for man is a noble act of worship. On top of this, he, those with him, and the components of the environment, all participate in glorifying and praising Allah and performing the tasks entrusted to them. And this relationship is based on the *sunan (laws and norms)* that Allah made clear to His prophets and messengers, and explained in His final book, the Qur’an.

Noah (*peace be upon him*) is considered a friend of the environment, because he contributed towards purifying it from the abomination of disbelief and injustice, through his blessed prayers. He preserved its creatures, carrying a pair from each species with him, and thus protected animals, birds, and plants from the great flood.

4. The Societal Factor

The new society was based on elevated divine morals. Noah (*peace be upon him*) was kind to his parents, loved his followers, and called on God to forgive them. Allah Almighty said: “My Lord! Forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house in faith, and [all] believing men and women.” [71:28]

These teachings in honouring one's parents were dominant in the teachings of the prophets and they intend through them to draw closer to Allah. His supplication for "all believing men and women" indicates the mercy and the strong bond of faith that exists between them, which is what guides the behaviour of this society.

The new society had a deeply entrenched belief in God Almighty and the Last Day, applied the guidance of revelation with all seriousness and commitment, and contained a minimal amount of sins. It views religion to be life, not just a secondary thing that one practices from time to time, but rather it is the life and soul of people. This not only means that they are careful in performing devotional rituals correctly. But it is something visible in their morals, perceptions, interests, values, social ties, family relations, neighbourly relations, buying and selling, travelling around, in the pursuit of livelihood, honesty of dealing, supporting those in need, and enjoining good and forbidding evil. Of course, this does not mean that every member of society fits this description in every way, because that cannot realistically be achieved in this life by any human society.¹

It is the society in which the true meaning of *ummah* has been achieved. An *ummah* (**nation**) is not only a group of people brought together by the unity of language, land, and interests. These things connected people in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance too. If an *ummah* is created from these things only, then it would be an *ummah* of ignorance. As

1. M. Qutb, *Kayfa Naktub al-Tarikh*, p. 100.

for the divine meaning of *ummah*, then it is when people are connected with the bond of *eman* (**faith**) and *aqidah* (**creed**), regardless of language, gender, colour, and worldly interests. The community was thus linked with the bond of creed on the basis of complete brotherhood in faith. This factor helped the second human civilization to emerge on solid and sound foundations.¹

5. The Factor of Ethics (*Akhlaq*)

Noble manners are an important part of *aqidah*, for true creed cannot be without morals. Noah (*peace be upon him*) raised his followers upon noble manners in various ways, and he himself was a leading role model in morals and manners. His personality carried noble qualities and lofty traits that impacted those around him in terms of upbringing, education, and purification. He was known for his pure servitude to God, gratitude, frequent prostration, weeping out of fear of God, constant supplication, trust in God, devotion to Him, leaving his affairs to God, frequent *dhikr*, repentance, seeking forgiveness, giving in charity, sincerity, righteousness, knowledge, honesty, chastity, uprightness, courage, patience, and kindness to his parents. These ethics influenced the believers around him.

Akhlaq is not a secondary thing in the society of Noah (*peace be upon him*), nor is it not confined to certain areas of human behaviour, but is in fact one of its pillars and includes all aspects of human behaviour. Behavioural manifestations of a noble moral character are the practical application

1. Ibid, p. 102.

of true belief and faith. Because faith is not only hidden feelings within the conscience, but applied morals too. So that when we do not see these applied morals, or worse, we see the opposite, we have the right to ask: where is this faith and what is its value if it does not manifest in your actions and conduct?¹

The followers of Noah (*peace be upon him*) were raised upon the understanding that ‘*ibadah* (**worship**) is a type of *akhlaq*, because it is a type of loyalty to God through gratitude for His favours, recognition of His kindness, and reverence for the One worthy of being revered and glorified, and all these actions are noble manners. The morals of that new society were thus divine, motivated by faith in God, united by hope in the Hereafter, and its purpose was God’s approval and pleasure.

Akhlaq according to the prophets and messengers, including Noah, are a comprehensive thing that pervades all human behaviour, all his feelings, emotions, and thoughts. *Salah*, for instance, has certain *akhlaq*, such as *kushu*’ (**focus**). Speaking has *akhlaq*, such as avoiding idle talk. Intimate relations has *akhlaq*, such as to remain within the boundaries set by Allah. Interacting with others has *akhlaq*, such as to stay balanced between stinginess and extravagance. Social life has *akhlaq*, such as ensuring that affairs between people should be decided through consultation. Even anger has *akhlaq*, such as to forgive and overlook. The occurrence of unjust aggression against

1. Muhammad Qutb, *Quranic Studies*, p. 130.

enemies entails *akhlaq*, such as repelling the aggression. So there is nothing in the life of a believer that has no *akhlaq* to guide it, and there is nothing that does not have implications relating to *akhlaq*.

God Almighty has made *tawhid*, the essence of this moral way that was laid down by the verses of Surat Al-Isra (v.23 to v.38), mentioning both noble and immoral conduct. This is because *tawhid* has an important aspect of conduct to it, since upholding moral conduct stems from being just, fair, and honest with oneself. Just as turning away from *tawhid* is in actuality due to bad morals, such as arrogance in accepting the truth, pride in following the messengers, excessive idolisation of oneself or others, arguing in falsehood to seek fame or attention, and blind imitation of misguided cultures and customs. All these, and their like, are bad manners that destroy people and turn them away from the truth even after it becomes clear to them. It distances them from happiness in this life and the next, despite being certain that the path of the messengers is the only way to it.¹

The starting point in the divine education of the second human civilization was that the followers of Noah (*peace be upon him*) would meet him, so that they would be guided and transformed through him. This way the blessing of the revelation would take them out of the circle of darkness into the circle of light. They would increase in faith, shun disbelief, and be able to endure adversity and calamities for

1. Al-Sallabi, Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, p. 115.

the sake of their religion and for the sake of Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

The personality of Noah (*peace be upon him*) was the main motivator for the members of the second human civilization. His personality possesses the ability of attracting and influencing others. God chose him for His message and to lead humanity on its new path after the great flood. Allah filled people's hearts with admiration, love, and respect for him, so people always gather around him and stay close to him out of admiration and love. In addition to this, he is the Messenger of God, the recipient of revelation from God, and the one who delivers it to the people. This is another dimension that impacts the feelings of other believers towards him. For he is not only loved for being himself, but also for that divine light that encompasses him from Allah's revelation to Him. Individuals and groups thus are connected to him through Allah's bond, for the sake of Allah, and obeying Him as a noble messenger. This was the focal point of all the emotions and actions of the believers who were with him. This love became the key to the behavioural and moral education of the second human civilization.¹

One of the factors that led to the emergence of the second human civilization was *akhlaq*. Society was based on a clear moral base derived from the commands and directives of God's law. This factor includes respectable interaction between the two genders, one of the most prominent features of this society. A society free from all that violates

1. Muhammad Qutb, *Manhaj al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah*, p. 34-35.

modesty, whether actions or words or even indications. Free from lewdness, except the odd exceptions that no society is safe from. However, this moral base is much broader than gender interaction. It represents politics, economics, society, thought and expression. The law is based on the etiquettes of Allah's Shari'ah, and social interaction is based on truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, cooperation, and love. There is no insulting, no gossip, and no slander.¹

We can prove the role of ethics in building the second human civilization and show that the ethical spirit is a gift from God Almighty to Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his followers. They were connected to one other by the bonds of love for the sake of Allah and the bonds of united belief. Allah united their hearts, so He brought about mutual affection and love and removed hatred from their hearts. This did not happen through the subjugated enforcement of the law, but through genuine consent and will.

This is the divine morality that comes from revelation and is implanted by the prophets through their own moral example. They highlight its role in uniting communities, for unity is a material and moral force. The power of ethics (*akhlaq*) is one of the greatest means to developing nations. It is the most effective way of building societies, establishing civilizations, and ensuring their cohesion. All ethical values are a source of power. Patience is a strength and a trait in heroes, while the weak cannot bear and becomes afraid and defeated in the face of challenges. Courage is strength,

1. Al-Sallabi, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, p. 268.

because its owner refuses cowardice and humiliation, and resists injustice. Justice is strength, because it represents the predominance of the impulses of truth and goodness over the impulses of falsehood and evil within man himself. Chastity is strength, because it resists desires, whims, and temptations. And all ethical values can be viewed in a similar way, which proves that they are elements of building a civilized history.¹ The ethical values that contributed to the birth of the second human civilization stemmed from true belief based on a foundation of revelation.

The second human civilization was based on ethical ties supported by a package of divine legislation. The ethical system would be seen as the most important of social behaviour in civilizations. The one who studies the nature of civilizations, and their rise and fall, will find that the essence of any civilization is ethics. Though affirming such facts may cause some people to be outraged or even disgusted at those who believe in the role of ethics for civilized cohesion and prosperity. Our answer to them is that those who they consider role models in their understanding of society have themselves admitted this reality, which is undoubtedly a strong argument in their eyes.²

Having said that, this ethical core is dependent on the psychological and mental ability of individuals and groups.

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1. Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, *The Philosophy of the Qur'an*, Lajnat al-Ta'lif, Cairo, 1947, p. 25.
 2. Albert Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization*. Translated by Abdel Rahman Badawi, Dar Al-Andalus, 1st Ed., 1983, p. 3.

History is clear and unambiguous when speaking of social conditions and general civilizational issues. It shows clear examples of the fact that the pillars of civilization throughout history are its ethics. Ethical foundations, principles of nobility, honour, sacrifice, avoidance of lewdness, adopting the dictates of moral conscience, wisdom and moderation, rejecting oppression and exploitation, and other manifestations of noble ethics, were pillars of the progress and success in all nations. Noble ethics were a quality in the elites of nations, such as their heroes, their greats, and their scholars. No person has any real value or respected personality unless he upholds good morals and noble conduct. Under the influence of ethical values, human relations were formed at the level of groups and nations. And whenever these moral principles withered in the souls of people, civilization eventually collapsed.¹

This is one of the *sunan* of Allah Almighty that will continue to exist. Even if the role of ethics is despised by those who only provide material solutions to societal challenges, and viewed as strange by many academics and intellectuals, this does not negate its essential role and clear impact in life. Those whose civilizations collapse, facing weakness and disintegration, whether in the near or distant past, opposed the *sunan* of Allah and the simplest rules of justice, neglected them, and even mocked those who speak of them. There we have the story of Aad, Thamud, the Romans, and the Greeks. Lewdness, utilitarianism, crimes,

1. Ibid, p. 4.

and other factors of civilizational downfall spread among them. And here we have the story of the countries that have started to fall in Europe and America. It is a story that always ends tragically.¹

It seems that one of the greatest downfalls of material civilizations is their deviation from ethical values, which almost instantly leads to its perishing.

The ethical factor had a great impact on the emergence, leadership, and model of humanity in the second civilization. The edifice of glory, and material and abstract advancement, is based only on ethics and sound morals. For this reason, the heavenly messages came ordering the believers to display noble morals and to renounce everything that leads to the deterioration of ethics and the dismantling of societal ties.

The virtuous society founded by Noah (*peace be upon him*) is one of noble manners, values, and high morals, with every individual being granted their untouchable dignity.

Finally, I would like to emphasize one of Allah's *sunan*. That is that knowledge of the laws of astronomy in relation to a matter such as a solar or lunar eclipses predicts its occurrence some time before it actually occurs. There is therefore no doubt that one can know the fate of nations, societies, and civilizations by studying and understanding the laws and patterns of human society. An established pattern of this sort is that the spread of injustice and

1. Abdul Latif Sharara, *Historical Thought in Islam*, Dar Al-Andalus, Lebanon, 2nd Edition 1983, p. 83.

corruption on earth is a strong indicator of the destruction of nations and states. Similarly, we know that integrity, righteousness, truth, justice, morality, and sincere work, are standard factors for the prosperity of civilizations and the sovereignty of nations.¹

6. The Political Factor

Politics is known as the art of leading societies in repelling harm and bringing benefit. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was at a great level of spiritual, social, and political leadership. He had available to him the factors that helped him organise the new life upon the foundations and values of justice, freedom, equality, and human rights, according to the guidance that Allah revealed to him:

“He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Noah, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding:] “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him]” [42:13]

Allah Almighty chose Noah (*peace be upon him*) for humanity to be a prophet and messenger, to establish the new caliphate on earth after the great flood, to organize the affairs of life for the nations that are with him, look after their interests, issue commands according to a divinely

1. Sunan al-Qur'an fi Qiyam al-Hadarat, p. 198-201.

revealed religion, and for people to be united by one view. Noah faced challenges and difficulties using wisdom and knowledge. He worked to protect the rights of people, remove oppression, and provide the necessary needs for each individual according to the guidance of the Shari'ah. He combined between the implementation of the provisions of the divine Shari'ah and an understanding of world politics. He brought together various sources of energy and remained occupied with important and lofty matters, not trivial ones.

He blew the spirit of enthusiasm in people, urging them to work and keep active. They feel nothing but happiness in their deeds that relate to this life and the next. You sense the true meaning of '*ibadah* (**worship**) in the life and conduct of that society. Not only in performing obligatory duties and voluntary acts of worship for the sake of Allah Almighty, but also in the performance of all deeds. Their work is performed with the spirit of worship:

- The ruler governs his flock with the spirit of worship.
- The teacher teaches his students with the spirit of worship.
- The merchant takes Allah into account when buying and selling, doing so with the spirit of worship.

These are some of the most important features of the second human civilization led by Noah (*peace be upon him*). There is no doubt that it is a model period in the history of humanity that needs to be studied in depth. This would help humanity to get back on the right track, after a long

period of being distant from the prophetic models of beliefs, ideas, worship, ethics, and interactions, and after the devils roamed deep into the deserts of delusion.

7. The Factor of Labourers

The *da'wah* of Noah (*peace be upon him*) was concerned with contemplation and observation of the nature and this universe, and this was the way of all the prophets and messengers. Their call was not only focused on practical experiments through which they could appreciate the greatness of Allah and discover the treasures of the earth. Rather this was accompanied by guidance towards the emotional and aesthetic aspect, in order to refine the human senses and raise it to a higher level of spiritual and moral elevation, since this dual approach moves all the innate components within man. This was also the method of the Qur'an in presenting and clarifying social laws and patterns. All this leads one to forming a sense of faith in God, His justice, mercy, greatness, and authority. Allah Almighty has willed that nature, with its components, laws, and secrets that God has placed in it, be a source for developing humanity, whether he is a scientist or an artist. For the scientist scrutinizes, experiments, discovers, and creates for the purpose of social advancement, while the artist has a taste through which he ponders, feels, and is affected, thus shaking feelings with love and affection. These emotions lead to willpower and sharpened abilities, going beyond things to deal with the mysteries of the soul and the components of existence with love, cooperation,

and sympathy, not with conflict and materialism as some intellectual doctrines depict.¹

The factor of beauty in the second human civilization is evident at the level of the messenger and the components of nature:

- The beauty of logic is clear in Noah's call.
- The beauty of ethics is shown in his endurance and patience.
- The beauty of taking care of his people.
- The beauty of the methods of advocacy and rational, logical, and emotional arguments that he used.
- The beauty of the strong emotions of fatherhood with his son.
- The beauty and craftsmanship of the Ark.
- The beauty, splendour, prestige and majesty of the artistic depiction of the Ark: "It sailed with them through waves like mountains."
- The beauty of the arrangements inside the Ark.
- The beauty of Nuh's apology and seeking forgiveness and mercy from his Lord, "unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers."
- The beauty of the creatures descending from the ship in their flocks to set out in this vast universe and its fertile pastures, trees, and dense forests.

1. Al-Muslimun wa al-Asr, Kitab al-Asr, Issue 14, p. 145.

And the beauty of the great distress being relieved in the Almighty's saying: "And it was said, "O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain]." The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, "Away with the wrongdoing people!" [11:44]

The factor of beauty has its presence in all the components of life in the second human civilization, and Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with it with the highest levels of human aesthetic taste.

The Noble Qur'an contains many verses that express scientific and doctrinal realities in depictions that overflow with magnificence and beauty. Let us contemplate the centrality of the aesthetic aspect in order to know this fact. Allah Almighty said:

"Indeed, Allah is the One Who causes seeds and fruit stones to sprout. He brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. That is Allah! How can you then be deluded [from the truth]? He causes the dawn to break, and has made the night for rest and [made] the sun and the moon [to travel] with precision. That is the design of the Almighty, All-Knowing. And He is the One Who has made the stars as your guide through the darkness of land and sea. We have already made the signs clear for people who know. And He is the One Who originated you all from a single soul, then assigned you a place to live and another to [be laid to] rest. We have already made the signs clear for people who comprehend. And He is the One Who sends down rain from the sky - causing all kinds of plants to grow -

producing green stalks from which We bring forth clustered grain. And from palm trees come clusters of dates hanging within reach. [There are] also gardens of grapevines, olives, and pomegranates, similar [in shape] but dissimilar [in taste]. Look at their fruit as it yields and ripens! Indeed, in these are signs for people who believe.” [6:95-99]

These verses present some aspects of truth and creation in life. Attention is drawn to the manner of creation and how the living are brought forth from the dead and the dead from the living. The dominant feature of these realities is beauty with all its connotations. What further indicates this aesthetic feature that points towards divine guidance is the realisation of the role of beauty in the flourishing of life: “Look at their fruit as it yields and ripens”; “Indeed, Allah is the One Who causes seeds and fruit stones to sprout.” It truly is the miracle of creation in beautifying life. And this is the phenomenon that should be emulated in the making of civilizations.

These are some of the factors that led to the emergence of the second human civilization, which was able to achieve:

- Brotherhood and love.
- Empathy and compassion.
- Collaboration and cooperation.
- Solidarity and harmony.
- Guiding and advising one another.
- Purification.

- Justice and fairness.
- Intellectual, logical, spiritual, psychological, and material progress.

It achieved the basic goals of human life, the most prominent of which are:

- **The Worship of Allah**

“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.” [51:56]

- **Custodianship of the Earth**

“But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark and made them successors, and drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!” [10:73] They were given custodianship of the earth in order to rebuild it, restore life in it, and fulfil the role entrusted to the second human civilization.

- **Inhabiting and populating the Earth**

“He [is the One Who] produced you from the earth and settled you on it” [11:61]. That is he commanded you settle on it and populate it.¹

Noah (*peace be upon him*) was able to establish a second human civilization combining between both the material tools available at the time period in which he lived and between the meanings of faith, spirituality, and ethics that

1. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Islam is the Civilization of Tomorrow*, Cairo, Wahba Library, 1st Edition 1995, p. 176.

were the real factors behind the creativity of the second civilization.

Fourth: Interpreting the Verses that Spoke about the Overloaded Ark

Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the sailing Ark, so that We may make this a reminder to you, and that attentive ears may grasp it.” [69:10-11]

This is an address from Allah Almighty to mankind from the time of Nuh until the Day of Judgment, considering that those who were carried with Noah in the Ark are the forefathers whom the people of earth descended from until today. This is so that our Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, may make it a reminder for all people, and so that the salvation of the believers and the drowning of the disbelievers may be a lesson to be heard and understood by all those with attentive ears.

The *jariyah* (*literally: runner*) is Nuh’s Ark that floated through the flood that flooded the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates with rainwater and an incredible number of bursting springs from the earth. The water overflowed the earth and drowned everyone in the Mesopotamian region except for the Prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*) and those who humans, animals, and plants that were carried with him on the Ark.

Archaeologist Charles Willis proved in 1980 that the remains of Noah’s Ark were discovered on Mount Judi, 250 miles to the southwest of Mount Ararat. Mount Judi

represents the highest peak in the mountain range in southern Turkey, with a height of more than seven thousand feet above sea level. The remains of the Ark were found buried in sediments humbled by fresh water above the surface of that mountain.¹

In addition to this, the plains of Mesopotamia, the Tigris and Euphrates, which were home to a number of ancient civilizations, recorded the event of the flood, the effects of which were found in the form of fish from freshwater sediments covering the area between the two rivers. They were excavated in at least four sites: Ur, Eric, Kish (*Tell al-Ahmar*), and Shuruppak (Tell Fara). The age of these sediments ranges between three thousand years BC and seven thousand years BC. A groups of scientists studied these sites successively, including Hal and Leonard Woolley in a joint project between the British Museum in London and the University of Pennsylvania. This research continued from 1922 to 1934, and revealed the remains of ancient civilizations at a depth of ten feet consisting of freshwater deposits, such as silt, clay, and sand that extend horizontally for thousands of square kilometres and that could not have come about except from an overwhelming flood. This was confirmed by a study conducted in a cave located in northern Iraq known as the Shanidar Cave. It contained pieces of sediment dating back 100,000 years and human remains that were studied by Ralph Solecki.²

1. Zaghoul al-Najjar, 1/197.

2. Ibid, 1/198.

All the divine messages that were sent down after Prophet Noah transmitted the news of this flood so that it would be a lesson for mankind and a warning against falling into similar conditions of idolatry. The description of Noah's flood as related in the Qur'an remains the main reference of truth for this major event in human history, and the Noble Qur'an has summarised it in tens of verses, which I have explained it in this book.

In Allah's statement, "We carried you in the floating Ark", this refers all of humanity after the flood of Noah, up until today, and until the Hour. This is because the noble verse refers to carrying the roots of that second humankind in the loins of Noah. "And We made his descendants the sole survivors." [37:77]

Those who survived the flood are his children and others, as is apparent in the Qur'an. Based on this, the believers who survived later became extinct, and no offspring remained from them. Those who remained were all the descendants of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and this way Noah is considered the father of all mankind after Adam.¹

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari said: "They said that those who were with him in the Ark were people who believed in him and followed him, except that they perished without leaving any offspring. So those who are alive today in the world are all from the children of Noah and his offspring, with none descending from the rest of the children of Adam. As

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 24.

Allah Almighty said: “And We made his descendants the sole survivors.” [37:77]¹

The knowledge of genetics confirms that all of humanity from the time of our father Adam (*peace be upon him*) until the Day of Judgment was in his loins at the moment of his creation. This then began to be distributed to his wife Hawa (*Eve*), and then to their children and grandchildren who represented the first generation of the children of Adam. When people deviated from Allah’s guidance ten centuries after the creation of Adam, Allah Almighty sent His servant and messenger Noah to them, but the majority of his people were unable to accept his guidance, so Allah punished them with the flood that destroyed them. A residue remained of the total inheritance created by Allah and deposited within our father Adam, until part of it reached the loins of Noah and the survivors with him. For Allah to then create from those loins the second wave of mankind until the Day of Resurrection.

Hence, the address in the noble verse we are referring to was directed at the second wave of humanity that survived the flood of Noah, continued to multiply to this day, and will continue to do so until the Hour. All the genetic codes in the cells of the seven billion people who fill the earth today, and in the cells of their offspring until the Day of Resurrection, are consistent with the genetic codes that were in the loins of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and the survivors with him. The address was thus directed to all members of the second

1. Tarikh al-Tabari, 1/71

wave of humanity. Our Lord, the Blessed and Most High, says: “Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark, so that We may make this a reminder to you, and that attentive ears may grasp it.” [69:11-12]

Genetics is one of the most recently acquired knowledge, as it did not crystallize until the beginning of the twentieth century. And since the berth of Noah’s Ark was not refurbished until the end of the twentieth century, the two flashes in the eleventh and twelfth verses of Surat Al-Haqqah represented two true scientific facts that testify that the Qur’an could not be manmade. These two noble verses also represent an aspect of the prophetic miracles in the Book of Allah, because no person knew anything about these realities at the time of revelation, nor for many centuries after that.

Likewise, in the twelfth verse of this blessed chapter there is an indication from Allah Almighty that Noah’s Ark will be found out in the future, and this is what happened in the year 1948. So that the great event remains a reminder to all human beings whose ears are attentive and whose minds understand.¹

“Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark, so that We may make this a reminder to you, and that attentive ears may grasp it.” [69:11-12]

1. Zaghoul al-Najjar, 1/199.

The noble verse depicts the scene of the flood and the sailing ark. It refers to the destruction of Noah's people who disbelieved and shows the great favour done to humanity in saving the roots from which they descended. The scene of the overflowing water and the Ark sailing through it, both are consistent with the scenes and spirit of the chapter. The verse touches sleeping hearts and dull ears which continue to belie despite all the foregoing verses, warnings, and consequences. Despite all the mentioned blessings and favours of Allah upon the forefathers of these heedless people. These horrific scenes that they have witnessed are minor and insignificant in comparison to the greater horror of the Day of Judgment which the disbelievers deny.¹

Go back, dear reader, and read Surat Al-Haqqah from the beginning, to see the incredible horrors that humanity are soon to face.

Allah Almighty said: "Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Noah] in the fully loaded Ark." [36:41]

In a group of verses presented in Surat Yasin to show the reality of divinity, the completeness of divine power in creation, and testify to the inevitability of resurrection, this noble verse comes along, in which Allah the Most High says: "Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Noah] in the fully loaded Ark." [36:41]

The address in this noble verse is directed to all people

1. Sayyid Qutb, 6/3679.

informing them that their children, the billions that lived and died after the flood of Noah until today, the billions that currently fill the flanks of the earth, and those who come after us until the Day of Judgment, all of them were carried on the overloaded Ark in the loins of Prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*).

The billions of children of Adam who will be created after us until the Hour, all of them were in the loins of our father Adam (*peace be upon him*) at the moment of his creation, in his reproductive cells. Modern genetics confirms this reality. Our mother Hawa was created by Allah Almighty from the same origin from which He created our father, Adam, because Allah created all things in pairs, so that He, Glory be to Him, remains One with absolute oneness above all His creation. Allah then made marriage a *sunnah* and way of life for humanity, as a way of multiplication and populating the earth.¹

From the first genetic stock that was in the loins of our father Adam (*peace be upon him*) a part moved to the loins of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and to the loins of those who believed in him and survived with him. This part constitutes the second genetic stock from which offspring are created, are still being created from, and will continue to create all human beings from after the flood of Nuh until the Day of Judgment. This is why our Lord, Blessed and Exalted be He, said, addressing the people after Noah:

“Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Noah] in the fully loaded Ark.” [36:41]

1. Al-Najjar, 1/201.

“Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark.” [69:11]

“O descendants of those We carried with Noah [in the Ark]! He was indeed a grateful servant.” [17:3]

Among the meanings of these three noble Qur’anic verses is that all of mankind from the time of the flood of Noah until the coming of the Hour were all in the Ark. This was unimaginable before the tremendous and astonishing developments in genetics at the start of the twentieth century. However, the Noble Qur’an preceded this by implicitly making a reference to this fact and emphasising that this is one of the signs of Allah in creation, testifying that the Qur’an cannot come from humans, but is the word of Allah, the Creator. This also testifies to the truth of the final messenger who received this message, the Qur’an, containing such scientific miracles. “Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Noah] in the fully loaded Ark, and created for them similar things to ride in. If We willed, We could drown them: then no one would respond to their cries, nor would they be rescued - except by mercy from Us, allowing them enjoyment for a [little] while.” [36:41-44]

Allah Almighty says: “And We blessed him [with honourable mention] among later generations: “Peace be upon Noah among all peoples.” [37:78-79]

After a long life, bitter struggles with his people, and the grave events that followed that, Allah sealed the story of His prophet Noah (*peace be upon him*) in Surat As-Saffat by saying:

“And We blessed him [with honourable mention] among later generations: “Peace be upon Noah among all peoples.” Indeed, this is how We reward the good-doers. [For] he was truly one of Our faithful servants. Then We drowned the others. And indeed, one of those who followed his way was Abraham.” [37:78-83]

“And We blessed him [with honourable mention] among later generations.”

This means that Allah Almighty has kept a good memory of him among the people who will come after him until the Day of Resurrection. The way of Allah with regard to the doers of good, after their departure from this world, is to keep good praise and beautiful remembrance for them, which continues until the Day of Resurrection.

- ***“Peace be upon Noah among all peoples.”***

Ibn Jarir said: “This is a confirmation from Allah to Noah that nobody will mention him in a negative way¹, for Allah has raised him to such a high position as a reward for his long patience in the face of his people’s harm for the sake of Allah. He was the first to be harmed in the path of Allah, so Noah (*peace be upon him*) has laid down the standard of sacrificing everything for the sake of calling to Allah for everyone who is harmed for the sake of God after him. It is thus no surprise that he is the first of the five messengers of firm resolve (*ulu al-azm*).²

1. Tafsir al-Tabari, 21/60.

2. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 81.

Allah had decreed to make Noah's offspring the inhabitants and successors of earth, and that his memory would remain in the coming generations until the end of time, "and We blessed him [with honourable mention] among later generations." Allah's peace is upon Noah as a reward for his excellence, and what reward is greater than Allah's peace and honourable mention?¹

- ***"Indeed, this is how We reward the good-doers (muhsinin)."***

This verse shows that Nuh (*peace be upon him*) has reached the pinnacle of servitude to Allah, reaching the level of *ihsan*. This means, as the Prophet said, "to worship Allah as if you see Him. If you do not, then know that He sees you."²

Noah came out of this world crowned with the crown of dignity, so he became an example for the doers of good in their reward for their excellence (*ihsan*).

Razi said: "The meaning is that we singled out Noah (*peace be upon him*) with those special honours of filling the earth with his offspring and of continuing his honourable mention upon the tongues of all people, because he was a person of excellence (*ihsan*). Then He clarified the meaning of his excellence to be that he was a believing servant of Allah. this goes to show that the highest of levels and most noble of stations is belief in Allah and submitting to Him."³

1. Sayyid Qutb, 5/2991.

2. Bukhari, No. 48; and Muslim, No. 9.

3. Tafsir al-Razi, 13/130.

“[For] he was truly one of Our faithful servants.”

This sentence serves as an explanation for what preceded it. Meaning that Noah (*peace be upon him*) attained those high virtues due to his faith (*eman*) that made him one of Allah’s faithful servants. Allah often praises His servants by mentioning their *eman*. Nuh established *eman* within himself and then sacrificed himself for the sake of spreading it amongst people. He thus reached the highest stations in the sight of God.

- ***“Then We drowned the others.”***

This is another blessing that can be added to those previously mentioned. Allah Almighty tells us in this verse that he favoured Noah and those who believed in him by drowning all his enemies who harmed him, obstructed his path, and were a stumbling block in the way of the message throughout their lives. Allah saved him from them by inflicting a torment upon them in a way that heals the hearts of the believers, such that their enemy yesterday became a lesson for those who ponder. The bitter struggle between the advocates of truth and the advocates of falsehood ended with that painful outcome that the stubborn deniers did not expect.

This is not specific to Noah (*peace be upon him*) and his people. Rather, it is a promise from Allah to all believers that He shall grant them certain victory, just as it is a warning from Him to all those who deny that the torment will not be delayed from its due time. This is the unchanging sunnah with His servants at all times and the place. Allah Almighty

said: “Indeed, We sent before you [O Prophet] messengers, each to their own people, and they came to them with clear proofs. Then We inflicted punishment upon those who persisted in wickedness. For it is Our duty to help the believers.” [30:47]¹

“And indeed, one of those who followed his way was Abraham.” [37:78-83]

Allah Almighty ended this passage by showing that a sound portion of the beliefs and laws that Noah (*peace be upon him*) brought remained in the centuries after him until the days of Ibrahim (*peace be upon him*). Ibrahim learned about them and believed in them despite the spread of paganism among his people. He followed these teachings as a believer and follower of Nuh even before Allah made him a prophet and sent him to his people as a messenger. Allah Almighty said: “And one of those who followed his way was Ibrahim.” The verse shows the relationship between Nuh and Ibrahim in *aqidah*, *da'wah*, and methodology. Ibrahim was one of the followers of Noah, despite the long time period between them. This is the one divine way which they share and through which they are connected.²

1. Omar Iman Abu Bakr, p. 83.

2. Al-Maidani, p. 148.

Fifth: The Death of Nuh

Abdullah ibn Amr said: “We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when a bedouin man wearing a robe with a border approached him until he stood before the Messenger of Allah. He said, “Your companion has debased every horseman and elevated every shepherd.” The Prophet took hold of the folds of his robe and said, “I see that you are wearing the clothes of someone who is without intelligence.” Then he went on, “When death approached the Prophet Nuh, he said to his son:

“I will give you some instructions. I command you two things and I forbid from you two things. I command you to say, *La ilaha illa Allah* (***There is no god but Allah***). If the seven heavens and the seven earths were on one side of the scale, and *La ilaha illa Allah* on the other side, *La ilaha illa Allah* would outweigh them. If the seven heavens and the seven earths were a dark ring, they would be cut by *La ilaha illa Allah*. And I instruct you to say *Subhanallahi wa bihamdih* (***Glory be to Allah and by His praise***). For it is the prayer of all things and through it does creation receive its provision. And I forbid you from *shirk* (***to associate others with Allah***) and *kibr* (***arrogance***).”

Some said: “O Messenger of Allah, we know what *shirk* is, but what is *kibr*? Is it that one has a nice pair of shoes?” He said, “No.” Some said: “Is it that one has nice clothes?” He said, “No.” Some said: “Is it that one has a good animal that he rides?” He said, “No.” Some said: “Is it that one has companions that sit with him?” He said, ‘No.’ So they

said, “what then is *kibr* O messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Rejecting the truth and belittling people.” Ibn Kathir said: “Its chain of transmission is authentic.”¹

Nuh (*peace be upon him*) passed away after calling his people to Islam for a thousand years less fifty. Historians differed about the age of his death, but the Qur’an did not address this matter. Some claimed that he was buried in the Sacred Mosque (*Masjid al-Haram*), while others said he was buried in his hometown of Karak Nuh in Beqaa², but there is no evidence for this.

It is narrated that Nuh was asked towards the end of his long life, “how did you find this world?” He replied: “Like a house with two doors. I walked in from one door and left from the other.”³

So, with this, we have come to the end of this book, with God’s help, guidance, grace, mercy, and benevolence. I encourage the respected reader to consider the following objectives of the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*):

1. The First Objective

To refine his mind and thinking, “So narrate [to them the stories [of the past], so perhaps they will reflect.” One of the goals of Qur’anic stories is for people to think and take lessons. That is because they should open their minds and hearts to the incidents of Qur’anic stories that

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1. Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, 1/280.
 2. Abdullah Muhammad, p. 49.
 3. Othman al-Khamis, p. 49.

they hear, consider what happened to the losers, and follow the example of the righteous. Thinking and pondering is a Qur'anic duty and an Islamic obligation, and it is not permissible to neglect it. Whoever does not think and learn from what happened to those before him is blind in heart, mind, and insight. Allah Almighty said:

“Many are the societies We have destroyed for persisting in wrongdoing, leaving them in total ruin. [Many are] also the abandoned wells and lofty palaces! Have they not travelled throughout the land so their hearts may reason, and their ears may listen? Indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts in the chests that grow blind” [22:45-46]

2. The Second Objective

To take a lesson from what occurred to the past nations, to benefit from that. Though only those with sound intellect and insight will take lessons from this. Allah Almighty said: “In their stories there is truly a lesson for people of reason.” [12:111]

This is the last verse of Surat Yusuf, which comes after the story of Yusuf in the chapter, and shows the true purpose of mentioning the story. It is not for entertainment or anecdotal pleasure or historical narration, but rather it is a lesson and sermon.

Contemplating and taking lessons from the stories of the Qur'an is something that the people of sound reason do. Those with conscious minds and enlightened insights, who make good use of their minds and senses, and benefit

from everything they see, hear, read and come across. Such people, when they hear or read the Qur'anic stories on the past nations, they take a lesson from it by comparing these historical events to their own lives and situations, so they end up benefitting. The positive aspects of the Qur'anic stories become a role model and a lesson for them, in which they follow the stances of the prophets and messengers and their righteous followers. While the negative aspects of it, manifested in the actions and stances of the disbelievers, are a warning to them. They are thus careful not to tread the same path as theirs, lest what befell them befalls them too. However, those who are careless and heedless do not take a lesson from the Qur'anic stories. They pass by its verses while turning away, because their minds are faulty and their insights blurred.

3. The Third Objective

Through mentioning the Qur'anic stories, Allah wanted to keep firm the heart of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), the hearts of his companions and followers, and the hearts of his nation at every time and place. This is explicitly mentioned by Allah: “And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this [sûrah] the truth, a warning [to the disbelievers], and a reminder to the believers.” [11:120]

This verse is one of the last verses of Surat Hud. It comes after the stories of several prophets in the chapter. The stories mentioned in this surah are: the story of Noah, the story of Hud, the story of Saleh, the story of Ibrahim, the story of Lut, the story of Shu'aib, and the story of Moses,

peace and blessings be upon them. After mentioning these stories, the objective of relating them is mentioned: “And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart.” [11:120]

The stories of the prophets in the Qur’an are a reassurance for the heart of the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), because he is not alone on the path of *da’wah* and prophethood, but he was preceded by his brothers, the honourable prophets, upon him and them be blessings and peace. He faced what they faced, heard like they heard, and was hurt like they were hurt, so he must be patient like they were patient, for him to be victorious like they were victorious.

The stories of the prophets increase the certainty of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), that he is upon the truth and that his enemies are upon falsehood, that he will emerge and be victorious, that his religion will rise and spread, and that his enemies will be defeated. The Qur’anic stories also reassure the hearts of the companions of the Messenger of God, keep their hearts firm upon the truth, and increase their strength in facing and fighting their enemies.

The Qur’anic stories - including the story of Noah - achieve this wonderful goal for everyone who follows the path of the Messenger of God (*peace be upon him*) in education, *da’wah*, reform, *jihad*, and struggle. The hearts of all the preachers, reformers, and children of this *ummah* who are passionate about their faith remain steadfast upon the truth when they hear, contemplate, and understand the stories of

the Qur'an. This then prepares them, provides them with knowledge and benefit, gives them awareness and insight, raises their motivation, raises their morale, elevates their souls, and guides their path and actions.¹



1. Al-Khalidi, p. 33-36.

Summary and Conclusion

1. There were ten centuries (*qurun*) between Adam and Noah, all of them following the religion of truth. Disbelief in Allah only occurred in the century in which Noah (*peace be upon him*) was sent.

2. The first prophet sent by Allah to a nation to warn them and call them towards the Oneness of Allah was Noah (*peace be upon him*).

Ibn Kathir said: “If what is meant by a qarn is a hundred years, as it is understood by many people, then between them (*i.e. Adam and Noah*) is at least a thousand years. However, it is possible to be more than that if you put into consideration Ibn Abbas restricted the time period to Islam, as there may have been other centuries in which people were not upon Islam. If what is meant by a qarn is a generation, as Allah the Almighty said: “[Consider] how many qurun (*generations*) We have destroyed after Noah” [17:17], then people lived long lifespans in the generations before Noah, so there may be thousands of years between Adam and Noah, and Allah knows best.”

3. The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Abdel Halim Mahmoud said: “All that is mentioned about this is a form of speculation. The narrations regarding this open to interpretation, so it could mean a thousand years or thousands of years, and there is no certainty in the matter.”

4. The first community on the globe between Adam and Noah, peace be upon them both, was just a singular community, made up of the children of Adam and his wife Eve, and from them emerged a family, a clan, and

then a civilization. They continued to develop and receive education until they were capable of reading, writing, sewing, and medicine. These are the basic necessities needed by individuals for self-development and progress, especially considering that the first person to know carpentry and then shipbuilding was the prophet of Allah, Noah.

5. Any human civilization that existed before the flood did not know anything about shipbuilding. Human activity up to this stage was not organised into separate societies, but rather the activity of one civilisation, which is the offspring of Adam (*peace be upon him*) before the flood.

The lifespan of people at the beginning of human history was very long, as a single person could live for hundreds of years. Noah (*peace be upon him*) lived with his people as a prophet and messenger before the flood for nine hundred and fifty years. “Indeed, We sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years, less fifty” [29:14]. This means that Noah (*peace be upon him*) lived a thousand years or more, which suggests that the average lifespan between Adam and Noah, peace be upon them, is roughly a thousand years, while the lifespan of people in our time is between sixty and seventy years, with few living past eighty. A single generation between Adam and Noah can be said to be a thousand years, while a generation today will be roughly seventy years. Therefore, ten generations between Adam and Noah, peace be upon them, can be said to be around ten thousand years, which is the opinion held by Ibn Abbas (*may Allah be pleased with him*), and Allah knows best.

6. There is no messenger between Noah and Adam. Some historians added Idris (*peace be upon him*) between them, but

there is no evidence to support this claim. Rather, there is an abundance of evidence indicating that Noah (*peace be upon him*) was the first of the messengers after Adam (*peace be upon him*).

For example, Allah Almighty said:

“And indeed, We sent Noah and Abraham and reserved prophethood and revelation for their descendants.” [57:26]

“Indeed, We have sent revelation to you [O Prophet] as We sent revelation to Noah and the prophets after him. We also sent revelation to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and his descendants, [as well as] Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon. And to David We gave the Psalms. There are messengers whose stories We have told you already and others We have not. And to Moses Allah spoke directly. [All were] messengers delivering good news and warnings so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after [the coming of] the messengers. And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise.” [4:163-165]

7. Studies have proven that Idris was in fact not sent between Noah and Adam, and that Noah (*peace be upon him*) was the first messenger to be sent. Though whether Idris or Noah came first is not religiously too significant, as long as both are accepted and believed to be prophets and messengers of Allah. However, it is not appropriate for scholars to ignore the many proofs from legal texts showing that Noah (*peace be upon him*) preceded Idris (*peace be upon him*), instead relying on the works of historians that based most of their conclusions on the order of prophets on the distorted Judeo-Christian books.

8. The default position of man is monotheism, while

polytheism is a deviation from the norm. This is proven by the fact that the first human being Adam (*peace be upon him*) was a prophet who worshiped God alone without any partner, and he taught his children monotheism. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was asked about Adam: “Was he a prophet?” He said: “Yes, a prophet who Allah spoke to directly. Allah created him with His own Hand and then breathed into him from His soul.”

Allah Almighty showed that humanity was upon *tawhid* at the beginning. Idolatry and polytheism then creeped in:

“Humanity had once been one community [of believers before they lost faith]. Then Allah raised prophets as deliverers of good news and as warners, and revealed to them the Scriptures in truth to judge among people regarding their disputes. And no one disputed the Scriptures except the very people who received them after clear proofs had come to them - out of jealousy” [2:213]

Allah also informs us in His Book that the pure state (*fitrah*) that mankind was created upon is the *fitrah* of Islam, which is pure *tawhid*:

“So be steadfast in faith in all uprightness [O Prophet] - the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in [all] people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know” [30:30]

Allah Almighty said:

“And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. [Allah asked,] “Am I not your Lord?” They replied, “Yes, You are! We testify.” [He

cautioned,] “Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, ‘We were not aware of this.’” [7:172]

9. Allah showed in His Book that tawhid is the essence of the message of all the messengers, and that this is what they called their people to. Allah Almighty said:

“He has ordained for you [believers] the Way which He decreed for Nuh, and what We have revealed to you [O Prophet] and what We decreed for Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, [commanding]: “Uphold the faith, and make no divisions in it.” What you call the polytheists to is unbearable for them. Allah chooses for Himself whoever He wills, and guides to Himself whoever turns [to Him].” [42:13]

10. The default position of man is monotheism, and this is the first thing that man knew. Deviation then began and continued to develop until he fell into *shirk (idolatry)*. This is the undoubted truth. Further, this view that is consistent with the Qur’an, Sunnah, *fitrah*, and intellect, is also one that some archaeologists and Western researchers of religion have arrived at, including Adamson Hoebel, Andrew Lang, and others.

11. The origin of man is monotheism, which refutes the false claims of those who say that religion is man-made. They claim that the first form of worship in man was polytheistic, then developed into the worship of two gods, such as the god of light and the god of darkness, or the god of good and the god of evil. Then this developed into the worship of God alone.

12. *Tawhid* is the origin. It is rooted in the nature of humanity, accepted by sound minds, and proven by authentic historical events led by the masters of humanity, the prophets and messengers.

13. Humanity began with *tawhid*, then bit by bit ended up with idolatry and polytheism. This is the truth that is supported by rational, transmitted, and logical evidence, as well as scientific research.

14. The compelling facts about human origin and monotheism, turns the theory of Auguste Comte upside down. Comte believed that humanity began with polytheism before finally turning to monotheism. However, this theory does not stand in the face of modern research and thus it collapsed just as other theories held by Comte did. At one point he was viewed as a leading intellectual, but his opinions today are only taught as historical views that have passed.

15. The first *shirk* that occurred in the descendants of Adam was in the people of Noah. He was the first messenger as narrated in the Hadith of intercession which says: “O Noah, you are the first messenger to the people of earth. Allah Almighty said:

“Have they not received the stories of those [destroyed] before them: the people of Nuh, 'Ad, and Thamud, the people of Abraham, the residents of Midian, and the overturned cities [of Lot]? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.” [9:70]

16. Satan convinced the people of Noah to honour and glorify righteous men after they die. He inspired them to put up images of them in the places they used to sit and call them by their names. Satan then inspired those who came after that those before them used to worship these idols, so they worshipped them.

The Noble Qur'an mentions the idols that the people of Noah used to worship: "They urged [their followers], 'Do not abandon your idols - especially Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr.'" [71:23]

17. The worship of idols did not seep into the doctrines of people overnight, but it took a long time since the first deviation. The material life and Satan's influence over man had an impact on the development and expansion of this matter. No one should think that humanity's development in science and its advancement in other fields will not return humanity to a similar stage of paganism. We still see different forms of paganism in the modern world today that remind us of the ancient days of ignorance.

Islam has blocked all means leading to shirk and called to pure tawhid. "Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you [O Prophet] in truth, so worship Allah [alone], being sincerely devoted to Him. Indeed, sincere devotion is due [only] to Allah. As for those who take other lords besides Him, [saying,] "We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allah." [39:2-3]

18. Through the Qur'anic stories, the Book of Allah provides us with important information about the eras and nations preceding Islam. These are further supported by modern research. Through the story of Moses (*peace be upon him*) it provides us with a lot of information about the deified Pharaonic monarchy and about its political, economic, and social situation. The same is true for the story of Abraham (*peace be upon him*) which provides us with information about ancient Iraq.

19. The most prominent stories of the prophets in the Holy Qur'an are the stories of Abraham and Moses (*peace be upon them*) as they are two stories that are extensively detailed. Perhaps this is because they narrate the news of the message between the most ancient nations of human civilization, namely the nation of the valley of the two rivers and the nation of the valley of the Nile. The revolution in both of them was against the misguidance of reason in worship, which included the most deviant acts of worship in ancient times.

20. The aim of the Noble Qur'an in its stories is not only to relate history, but rather to provide lessons that lead to benefiting from what happened to the predecessors, as well as to rebuke the opponents of Islam from Quraysh. They also bring firmness and comfort to the heart of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) in the face of the harm caused by the disbelievers. Allah's mercy with the Mustafa (*chosen one*) willed that he be relieved from his adversity and pain through the stories of the prophets and messengers. Allah Almighty reminds him of the suffering and oppression that his honourable brothers faced from the wrongdoers, but they did not weaken or slacken, but remained firm and patient.

If you read the stories mentioned in the Noble Qur'an, you will not find any of the exaggerations that you find in the history books or in the Torah of the Jews available today. In addition to this, what the Noble Qur'an mentioned is true and is supported by recent discoveries, such as the story of 'Ad and Thamud, which turned out to be mentioned in the Geography of Ptolemy. There are also many other historical texts that talk about Thamud. Not to mention that the Greek and Roman writers mentioned the name 'Ad alongside

the name Iram, just like in the Qur'an. Allah has certainly spoken the truth as He says: "We have revealed to you [O Prophet] this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a supreme authority on them." [5:48]

21. The meaning of *Nabi* is he who was sent to affirm the Shari'ah of the messengers that came before him.

1. A *Rasul* is he who was sent with a new Shari'ah (***legal code***).

22. The wisdom behind sending the messengers is for them to convey Allah's revelation to humans, instruct people to worship God alone, establish the proof against people, the need of humans for a good role model, and to reform and purify people's souls.

23. Some of the things that are specific to prophets is that they receive divine revelation, their eyes sleep, while their hearts do not, they do not inherit wealth, they are given the choice at the time of death, the earth does not eat up their bodies, and they are infallible when it comes to delivering the messages of Allah.

24. As well as being a prophet and messenger, Nuh is one of *Ulu al-Azm*, that is one of the messengers of firm resolve. This is a high status that only few prophets have attained, namely: Muhammad, Ibrahim, Nuh, Musa, and Isa (***peace be upon them***).

25. Noah (***peace be upon him***) was the first messenger to the people of earth after people disputed over monotheism, with some of them disbelieving and others remaining upon the true faith.

26. Nuh being the first messenger is related to after the

dispute, so this does not negate the prophethood of Adam who was also sent to his children, but they did not dispute over *tawhid* and worshipping Allah alone.

27. Nuh was sent to his people who, at that time, made up all of humanity, after *shirk* befell people. Thus there is no contradiction between Adam being a prophet and Nuh being the first messenger sent to the people of earth.

Nuh is the second father of humanity, and this is an agreed upon matter amongst the scholars of Islam, because Allah says, “And We made his descendants the sole survivors.” [37:77]

28. Along with the honour of being the father of humanity after Adam, Nuh also has the honour of being the father of the prophets and messengers.

29. Nuh is the early grandfather of Ibrahim, the companion of Allah, and all the prophets who came after him, just as Ibrahim is the father of all the prophets and messengers after him. They are descendants of one another.

30. To my knowledge, the Noble Book and the authentic Sunnah do not mention the lineage of Noah, nor his father. Though Hafidh Ibn Kathir mentioned the lineage of Noah (*peace be upon him*) in his book the *Stories of the Prophets*, but Allah knows best how sound that is.

Nuh was a constantly grateful servant to his Lord, and this was a trait that Nuh became known for amongst the rest of the prophets. Allah Almighty said: “[O] descendants of those We carried with Noah [in the Ark]! He was indeed a grateful servant.” [17:3]

31. People in the time of Noah, and those before him to Adam, peace be upon them, used to live for long periods of

time, to the extent that some would live for a thousand years or more. Then peoples lifespans continued to decrease from that time to this day.

The call of the prophets and messengers is in essence the same throughout the ages. Each one of them puts all their effort into connecting people with their Lord and guiding them correctly. Allah Almighty said: “We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, “Worship Allah and shun false gods.” But some of them were guided by Allah, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!” [16:36]

32. The essence of the message of the prophets and messengers is to call people to the worship of Allah and perfecting *tawhid*. No issue, no matter how important, comes before *tawhid*. In the call of the prophets and messengers to *tawhid*, they would call their people to leave evil actions, such as cheating and oppressing people. This is how all callers to Allah should be. They must make *tawhid* the starting point and essence of their *da'wah*, while also addressing the problems that their communities face in their time.

33. When humanity went astray in its beliefs, Allah’s mercy willed that He send Nuh with the truth in creed (*aqidah*), goodness in ethics (*akhlaq*), and justice in the law.

34. Nuh called to the servitude of Allah, perfecting it within his own self first. All his actions were sincerely for Allah, with none being intended for anyone besides Allah, whether words, inner actions, or outer actions. He was indeed a “grateful servant.”

He would seek refuge in Allah and was keen on seeking

Allah's mercy and forgiveness. Allah Almighty said regarding him:

“Nuh pleaded, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about what I have no knowledge of, and unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers.” [11:47]

“And he said, “Board it! In the Name of Allah it will sail and cast anchor. Surely my Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” [11:41]

“Then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay!” [10:71]

Nuh would worship and supplicate using Allah's Beautiful Names: “He is indeed most forgiving”, “My Lord is truly forgiving and merciful”, “Allah knows what is within yourselves.” One of the most obvious outer actions that Nuh did is that he implemented Allah's command to him to build the Ark. Nuh perfected the servitude of the heart, body, and tongue, teaching this to his followers and calling to it with knowledge and guidance from Allah.

35. Nuh's concern was to call people to *tawhid*, directing servitude to Allah alone, and *taqwa* (**God consciousness**). This is because *taqwa* is the real guarantee of people's uprightness upon Allah's path, not lacking behind nor distorting it in its implementation.

36. The legitimate religion with God Almighty is Islam, and all other religions are not valid or accepted. This is a matter of no doubt and no ambiguity, as everything other

than Islam is either a religion that is originally made by humans, such as paganism in its various forms, or distorted after having divine origins, such as Judaism and Christianity. The religion with which Allah Almighty sent all the Messengers (*may blessings and peace be upon them*) is Islam, the worship of Allah alone.

37. The name of Nuh was mentioned in the Qur'an 43 times. His name is mentioned in two ways. Firstly, his name is mentioned in the context of his story with his people. This occurs 11 times. Secondly, his name is mentioned, not in the context of his story, but only alluding to him, his message, his Shari'ah, or his people's disbelief, in a way that is consistent with the subject of the *surah* (*chapter*) or section within a *surah*. This occurs 22 times.

38. The chapters in which the name of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) was mentioned either alone or along with his people, but not as part of his story are: Al-Imran, Al-Nisa, Al-An'am, Al-Araf, Al-Tawbah, Hud, Ibrahim, Al-Isra, Maryam, Al-Hajj, Al-Furqan, Al-Ahzab, Saad, Al-Shura, Qaf, Al-Dhairat, Al-Najm, Al-Hadid, and Al-Tahrim.

39. The chapters in which scenes and parts from the story of Nuh (*peace be upon him*) are mentioned are: Al-A'raf, Yunus, Al-Anbiya, Al-Mu'minun, Al-Shu'ara, Al-Ankabut, Al-Saffat, Al-Qamar, and Nuh. The length presented in these chapters varies, and the scenes and parts of the story are presented in an amount consistent with the topic and context of the Surah, its general theme, and the lessons intended to be taken from it.

40. Surat Nuh is all about his story with his people,

Surat Hud presents long scenes and snapshots of his story, Surat Yunus and Al-Shu'ara present shorter clips, while reference to the story is made in Surat Al-Ankabut in two verses that include important information not found in the other chapters.

41. The previous ten chapters spoke about the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*). What is remarkable is that they are all Meccan chapters. This is consistent with the nature of the Meccan part of the Qur'an, which uses past stories to prove the prophecy of Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), to show that the Qur'an is the word of God, and to provide lessons and comfort for the oppressed believers in Mecca.

42. Dr. Taha Wadi explained in his book, *Ulu Al-Azm min al-Rusul*, that 94.54% of the verses of the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) are in the Meccan era, while 5.46% of the verses of the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) were in the Medinan era.

43. The Qur'an gives attention to speaking about the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) in detail in several places. This shows the extent of the effort and struggle, both psychological and material, that this noble messenger went through for the sake of raising the word of God and spreading the worship of Allah alone in a polytheistic community, especially since he was the first messenger to the people.

44. The story of Nuh is mentioned in 25 verses in Surat Hud (v.25 – v.49). The scenes presented of the story in this *surah* are among the longest scenes, and are almost longer than the scenes presented in Surat Nuh itself, the chapter dedicated to his story.

45. The verses of Surat Hud talk about Nuh being sent to his people, him inviting them to worship Allah alone, the chiefs of the disbelievers from his people rejecting him, suspicions being raised about him, his message, and his followers, and Nuh responding to and refuting these accusations. It speaks of Nuh rejecting the request of the disbelievers to expel and punish his believing followers. He responds to them with logic and sound evidence.

46. The verses mention how Allah informs Nuh that none of his people will believe beyond those who had already believed, how he was ordered to build the Ark, and some of the incidents that occurred between him and his people during the building of the Ark.

47. The verses speak of the scenes of the start of the flood, the earth bursting with water, Nuh carrying a pair from each species with him, along with the believers, and the sailing of the Ark, in the Name of Allah, in the waves of the flood.

48. The verses depict what occurred between Nuh and his disbelieving son, and how his son drowned. As well as depicting the end of the flood, the disappearance of the water, and the Ark settling on Mount Judi.

49. The noble verses speak of Nuh asking his Lord about the drowning of his son, how Allah reprimanded him and explained to him that he is not really from his family, as he had acted in a sinful way. Nuh upholds excellent manners with his Lord and seeks His forgiveness and mercy.

50. The Qur'an spoke about the conversation that occurred between Nuh and his son in the midst of the horrific events of the flood.

51. The verses in Surat Hud end by showing how Nuh and his followers descend from the Ark and how life on earth began afresh. The story of Nuh is also used to confirm the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad (*peace be upon him*).

52. Surat Al-A'raf talks about God Almighty sending Noah to his people, calling them to worship God alone, the people accusing him of being misguided, and his rebuttal of that accusation, as well as him removing their surprise at how a messenger from Allah could be a human. The story speaks of their denial, their destruction, and the survival of those who believed.

53. Surat Al-Mu'minun mentions aspects of how the chiefs of the people of Noah attempted to deter people from Nuh's call. Allah Almighty said:

“Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people. He declared, “O my people! Worship Allah [alone]. You have no god other than Him. Will you not then fear [Him]?” But the disbelieving chiefs of his people said [to the masses], “This is only a human like you, who wants to be superior to you. Had Allah willed, He could have easily sent down angels [instead]. We have never heard of this in [the history of] our forefathers. He is simply insane, so bear with him for a while.” Nuh prayed, “My Lord! Help me, because they have denied [me].” [23:23-26]

54. In Surat al-Shu'ara the verses about the story of Nuh were concise, but encompassing. Allah Almighty said:

“The people of Nuh rejected the messengers when their brother Nuh said to them, “Will you not fear [Allah]? I am

truly a trustworthy messenger to you. So fear Allah, and obey me. I do not ask you for any reward for this [message]. My reward is only from the Lord of all worlds. So fear Allah, and obey me.” They argued, “How can we believe in you, when you are followed [only] by the lowest of the low?” He responded, “And what knowledge do I have of what they do? Their judgment is with my Lord, if you had any sense! I am not going to expel the believers. I am only sent with a clear warning.” They threatened, “If you do not desist, O Nuh, you will surely be stoned [to death].” Nuh prayed, “My Lord! My people have truly rejected me. So judge between me and them decisively, and save me and the believers with me.” So We saved him and those with him in the fully loaded Ark. Then afterwards We drowned the rest. Surely in this is a sign. Yet most of them would not believe. And your Lord is certainly the Almighty, Most Merciful.” [26:105-122]

55. When the people of Nuh faced Nuh with harm, accusations of madness and misguidance, mockery, disrespect, and threats to stone him, he responded with the greatest challenge. Some scholars even said that the miracle of Nuh was this challenge that he directed towards his people. Allah Almighty said:

“Relate to them [O Prophet] the story of Nuh when he said to his people, “O my People! If my presence and my reminders to you of Allah’s signs are unbearable to you, then [know that] I have put my trust in Allah. So devise a plot along with your associate-gods - and you do not have to be secretive about your plot - then carry it out against me without delay! And if you turn away, [remember] I have never demanded a reward from you [for delivering the

message]. My reward is only from Allah. And I have been commanded to be one of those who submit [to Allah]. But they still rejected him, so We saved him and those with him in the Ark and made them successors and drowned those who rejected Our signs. See then what was the end of those who had been warned!” [10:71-73]

56. The Noble Qur’an mentions the traits of Nuh’s people, the main ones being that they were “blind”, wrongdoers, people of evil, disbelievers, immoral, liars, and oppressors.

57. The Qur’an spoke about the story of the people of Nuh and their most prominent illnesses, deficiencies, and traits. It also spoke about the barriers that prevented them from accepting the call to *tawhid*. The main barriers mentioned by Allah Almighty are pride, stubbornness, blind imitation, idolatry, the deviant leaders who led others astray, their evil plotting, and extravagant life.

58. Nuh complained to his Lord about the rejection of his people, as stated in Surat Nuh. He encouraged them to seek forgiveness and to contemplate Allah’s creation and the world around them. But they insisted on their denial and arrogance. He then prayed against them, so Allah responded and caused the punishment to befall them.

59. Allah reveals to Nuh that none of his people will believe except those who had already believed, and He commanded him to build the Ark of Salvation.

60. The Qur’an describes the efforts of Nuh and the believers with him in building the Ark, explaining that this happened with the guidance and support of Allah.

61. The Qur'an spoke about boarding the Ark, what Nuh carried on it, and how it took off in the name of Allah. He thanked Allah for being saved from the wrongdoers and prayed for a landing in a blessed land.

62. In Surat Al-Qamar, Allah Almighty presents scenes of the great flood that afflicted Noah's people, how the gates of the sky were opened as if water was being poured out of them unlike normal rainfall, how the whole earth turned into springs from which water erupts in a violent and powerful manner, and by reading the relevant verses you can imagine how high the waters reached.

63. In the midst of these events that the Qur'anic verses pictured and in the depths of the waves that extend across the sea of this land, this great scene comes to a sudden halt. What comes next is the return of calm to the world and the return of all things to their normal system. The screams have calmed and the storms have quietened. The earth is born once again the way it was created the first time. Let us take a look at how the divine words have described this scene. Allah Almighty says:

“And it was said, “O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain].” The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

These incredible Qur'anic verses provide us with a clear picture of what Divine Will and Divine Authority that extends across the whole universe really means. In fact, this Will has a complete grasp of the universe, controlling its heaven, earth, seas, mountains, and everything. In God's

Will there is no consideration given to that which is big or small or great or insignificant. Do you not see how after the waters of the skies and earth met forming an incredible and frightening flood, everything was returned to normal by a small word, “and it was said”? That is to show us how easy the matter is with the command of the Divine Will that is in control of the beginning and end of the universe.

64. “And it was said, “Away with the wrongdoing people!” This implies that those who follow the path of these people in injustice and denial deserve such distancing from God and supplication against them, so it is more appropriate for the unjust and deniers to think and turn back on their denial and wrongdoing so that God does not bring down upon them what He did with their likes.

Allah says: “Allah sets forth an example for the disbelievers: the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lot. Each was married to one of Our righteous servants, yet betrayed them. So their husbands were of no benefit to them against Allah whatsoever. Both were told, “Enter the Fire, along with the others!” [66:10]

This verse is explicit about the stance of Nuh’s wife who remained a disbeliever. Her marriage to Prophet Nuh therefore did not benefit her. “Betrayal” here refers to a betrayal in faith and religion; it does not mean adultery. Abdullah ibn Abbas said: “No wife of a prophet has ever committed adultery, but their betrayal was in relation to faith.”

65. Nuh (*peace be upon him*) came towards the end of the first human civilization that started with Adam (*peace be upon him*). A civilization that began to stray from the

path of monotheism (*tawhid*) and directing worship to the Almighty Creator alone. Human life continued to develop in its material affairs, but lost sight of its spiritual values and its understanding of its Almighty Lord. Allah thus sent Nuh (*peace be upon him*) to his people to establish the proof against them. Though Allah's *sunnah* (*way*) ensued in annihilating and eradicating them, with only a few of them believing. It was with this few that a new society of peace and blessing was then established after the great flood.

66. There are many factors for the demise and end of the first human civilization, the most important of which are: disbelief in Allah, idolatry, oppression, belying the noble messenger, causing Nuh various types of harm, his prayer against them, sins, being occupied with worldly affairs and forgetting the hereafter, the *sunnah* of replacement, the *sunnah* of appointed terms, the *sunnah* of loss, and being heedless of the causes of destruction.

67. We have to beware of myths, legends, *isra'iliyyat*, and false reports that have been associated with the story of Noah, peace be upon him. Judeo-Christian reports in particular, have played a big role in contaminating the purity of the story of Noah in many cases. They claim, for example, that God commanded Noah to plant a tree from which to build a ship, that he planted this tree, then waited for a hundred years, then he cut it up over another hundred years according to one report, and forty years according to a different report.

68. Many Judeo-Christian reports speak of how the animals and birds entered the Ark, and how Iblis entered the Ark in the tail of a donkey, as well as other myths.

69. No objective researcher can deny the impact of Judeo-Christian reports in these stories, which sometimes are unrealistic myths, other times contradict the correct Islamic belief, and often contradict each other.

70. These are just some of many mistakes and false stories that contradict reason and contradict the authentic reports, that have unfortunately affected the books of history and leaked into the books of *tafsir* (*Qur'anic exegesis*). There is a need to purify traditional works of these tales, and rely instead on the Qur'anic explanation presented by the Holy Quran of the story of Noah, peace be upon him.

71. The Children of Israel slandered the Prophet of God, Noah, peace be upon him. They claimed that he drank wine, got drunk, became exposed inside his tent, and other things. What they mentioned here about Noah (*peace be upon him*) is a lie and a slander against Noah. It is not befitting for Noah, one of the messengers of strong resolve, to drink wine, get drunk, and strip naked until his nakedness is seen by others. Since that is the case, then what was said about Ham is also a lie.

72. Scholars have debated whether the flood of Nuh encompassed the whole globe.

73. The story of the Great Flood has occupied many minds and drawn the attention of many researchers in the fields of science and humanities, including religious studies, comparative religion, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and history. This indicates that the flood, from both a mythical and religious perspective, has had a great impact on the lives and minds of subsequent nations.

74. There have been conflicting perspectives in historical

sources and references regarding the story of the flood, but the Holy Qur'an alone presents the complete truth of the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) and the great flood. It cannot be compared to any of the humanistic schools that discussed the flood, for Allah preserved from the biography of His Prophet and Messenger Noah that which benefits humanity. You will not find this in the Sumerian or Babylonian traditions, the distorted Torah, or anything else.

75. The Qur'anic text is the only text that transcends the evil of polytheism and the misguidance of idolatry, as it states quite clearly that the people have departed from the worship of their Lord and turned to worshipping idols.

76. The Qur'anic text did not depend on anything else, because it is a revelation from God, unlike the ancient human sources. The Sumerians, for example, after they wrote their account of the flood, the Babylonians came and took from it what they had taken, and then the Jews came along using both as references. Every narrative about the flood thus depended on a narrative that preceded it. But the matter is very different with regard to the Qur'anic story, which is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

Neither the Messenger of God, nor his people were aware of the story of Nuh and the flood, and this is alluded to in the Qur'an: "This is one of the stories of the unseen, which we reveal to you [O Prophet]. Neither you nor your people knew it before this. So be patient! Surely the ultimate outcome belongs [only] to the righteous." [11:49]

77. Some people ask about the fate of the children and what their fault was for them to also be overtaken by the flood?

The scholars answered this by saying that when punishment befalls the people it encompasses them all, without distinguishing between young and old, righteous and immoral. In this regard the Almighty says: “Beware of a trial that will not only affect the wrongdoers among you. And know that Allah is severe in punishment” [8:25]. There is no doubt that including the children in this encompassing punishment increases the torment of their parents. As for the children themselves, they died at their appointed time, at the time that God specified for them, and they are not held accountable after their death for what their parents fathers.

Of course, we see children dying due to various diseases, illnesses, and calamities, such as earthquakes, floods, and wars, yet this is not a punishment for the sins or misdeeds committed by these children. Rather, this is simply what God has decreed for them due to different wisdoms that accord with His knowledge, wisdom, will, decree and just destiny, “and your Lord is never unjust to His creation.” “Indeed, Allah never wrongs anyone, even by an atom’s weight.”

Some scholars claimed that God sterilized the wombs of the women of Noah’s people for forty years before the flood until those who were young grew up and all of them became responsible for their sin and worthy of facing God’s wrath and vengeance. However, this answer is no more than a claim that lacks evidence, and there is no scope for fortune-telling in such topics except with clear evidence.

The second human civilization began with Nuh descending from the Ark with peace and blessings after the flood. Its beginnings are made clear in Allah’s saying: “It was said, “O Noah! Disembark with Our peace and blessings on you

and some of the descendants of those with you. As for other nations, We will allow them [a brief] enjoyment, then they will be touched with a painful punishment from Us.” [11:48]

78. Noah (*peace be upon him*) was one of the messengers of firm resolve who perfected monotheism and the pure worship of God. He also called to that and some people believed in his message. He raised people with good manners and qualities that were embodied in his own self and impacted his followers around him. He was constantly thankful to his Lord, sincere to Him, knocking on His doors with supplication and prayer, intensely fearful of Him, reliant on the Almighty, the Most Merciful, repentant to God, seeking His forgiveness, patient with the responsibilities of *da'wah*, honest in his message, courageous, fearing none but God, kind to his parents, as well as other qualities and morals that he lived by, called to it, and taught to those who responded to his call. He worked to instil these noble qualities in the hearts of his followers before and after the flood. This solid moral system contributed to the moral foundation of the second human civilization.

79. The leadership of civilizations and the upbringing and advancement of people are subject to laws, norms, and principles that control the course of individuals, societies, peoples, and nations. When we contemplate the biography of Noah (*peace be upon him*) we see that he dealt with these laws with wisdom, great ability, and success from God.

80. The divine laws are many. They are fixed rules of God Almighty in the universe and with man at all times and places. The one who contemplates the verses of the Noble Qur'an will find it full of talking about the laws of

God Almighty, which do not change or alter. He would find remarkable care in highlighting those laws, directing attention to them, drawing lessons from them, and working in accordance with them, to form a content society that is upright upon the command of God.

81. The movement of Noah (*peace be upon him*) towards the oneness of God Almighty, worshipping Him alone, urging taqwa of Him, and populating the earth according to the Shari'ah of the Lord of the worlds, was dependant – after success from Allah – on organising the efforts of da'wah, building the civilized divine model of man, and dealing with the norms and laws of civilization with understanding. Through his life and biography we notice the following:

The importance of leadership in building a civilization; the importance of an organized group of believers to settle on earth and become a successful authority on it; the importance of revelation that shows the divine approach in beliefs, morals, worship, transactions, values, and perceptions; the importance of the law of gradualism, which is one of the laws of God in his creation and universe. It is one of the important laws that the Muslim ummah must observe as it works for the advancement and empowerment of God's religion.

82. Nuh dealt with the *sunnah* of reforming souls through what Allah revealed to him of pure beliefs, sound outlooks, guided thoughts, and noble manners. He reformed his followers who believed with him and led them to Allah's straight path.

83. Nuh dealt with the *sunnah* of taking with means in

his method of *da'wah*, showing concern for his followers, building the Ark, carrying the fathers of the second human civilization on the Ark, and other things.

84. Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with the law of repulsion in the world of thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, and ethics. This appeared quite clearly between him and his people.

Nuh dealt with the sunnah of victory and empowerment, while fulfilling its conditions. Allah Almighty's promise thus was fulfilled for Nuh and the believers with him: "For it is Our duty to help the believers" [30:47]. "We certainly help Our messengers and the believers, [both] in this worldly life and on the Day the witnesses will stand forth [for testimony]." [40:51]

Understanding the reality of the second human civilization depends on a deep analysis of the Qur'anic stories and the deduction of a true understanding of the concept of civilization. It also depends on human prosperity with its intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and behavioural characteristics. This is required to achieve the servitude of God on earth and populating it according to the will of God Almighty at the level of individuals, communities, and the *ummah* (***Muslim nation***).

85. The prophets and messengers are the best of those who laid down the fiqh of the divine civilization over the course of its long history. They are the leaders of great human civilizations that were built upon the concept of monotheism, worship, values, inhabitancy, succession, and political, social, economic, spiritual, psychological, habitational, and material advancement, with values derived from divine revelation. Civilization for humanity is not

complete until it is characterized by both material and moral superiority. That is because civilizations are measured by their scientific, industrial, and urban progress in relation to worldly and material aims, while also embodying virtuous moral principles. The pinnacle of this elevated human civilizational understanding is found in the leadership of nations led by prophets and messengers, such as the second human civilization led by Noah (*peace be upon him*).

86. Civilization for humanity is not complete until it is characterized by both material and moral superiority. That is because civilizations are measured by their scientific, industrial, and urban progress in relation to worldly and material aims, while also embodying virtuous moral principles. The pinnacle of this elevated human civilizational understanding is found in the leadership of nations led by prophets and messengers, such as the second human civilization led by Noah (*peace be upon him*).

87. *Tawhid (belief in the Oneness of God Almighty)* is what gives the Islamic civilization its identity and connects its parts together. *Tawhid* is what stamps all the elements that enter into it, *Islamifying* and purifying them, and harmonizing them with everything else around it.

88. Some of the distinct features of the second human civilization include individuality, humanity, ethics, knowledge, and freedom.

89. The factors that led to the emergence of the second human civilization are many, including factors of creed, industry, economics, nature, society, ethics, politics, and beauty.

90. The *da'wah* of Noah (*peace be upon him*) was concerned with contemplation and observation of the nature and this universe, and this was the way of all the prophets and messengers. Their call was not only focused on practical experiments through which they could appreciate the greatness of Allah and discover the treasures of the earth. Rather this was accompanied by guidance towards the emotional and aesthetic aspect, in order to refine the human senses and raise it to a higher level of spiritual and moral elevation.

The factor of beauty in the second human civilization is evident at the level of the messenger and the components of nature: the beauty of logic is clear in Noah's call; the beauty of ethics is shown in his endurance and patience; the beauty of taking care of his people; the beauty of the methods of advocacy and rational, logical, and emotional arguments that he used; the beauty of the strong emotions of fatherhood with his son; the beauty and craftsmanship of the Ark; the beauty, splendour, prestige and majesty of the artistic depiction of the Ark: "It sailed with them through waves like mountains"; the beauty of the arrangements inside the Ark; the beauty of Nuh's apology and seeking forgiveness and mercy from his Lord, "unless You forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be one of the losers"; the beauty of the creatures descending from the ship in their flocks to set out in this vast universe and its fertile pastures, trees, and dense forests; and the beauty of the great distress being relieved in the Almighty's saying: "And it was said, "O earth! Swallow up your water. And O sky! Withhold [your rain]." The floodwater receded and the decree was carried out. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and it was said,

“Away with the wrongdoing people!” [11:44]

The factor of beauty has its presence in all the components of life in the second human civilization, and Noah (*peace be upon him*) dealt with it with the highest levels of human aesthetic taste.

91. The second human civilization, which was able to achieve brotherhood and love; empathy and compassion; collaboration and cooperation; solidarity and harmony; guiding and advising one another; purification; justice and fairness; intellectual, logical, spiritual, psychological, and material progress. It achieved the basic goals of human life, the most prominent of which are the worship of Allah, custodianship of the earth, and inhabiting and populating the earth.

Allah Almighty said: “Indeed, when the floodwater had overflowed, We carried you in the floating Ark, so that We may make this a reminder to you, and that attentive ears may grasp it.” [69:10-11]

This is an address from Allah Almighty to mankind from the time of Nuh until the Day of Judgment, considering that those who were carried with Noah in the Ark are the forefathers whom the people of earth descended from until today.

Allah Almighty said: “Another sign for them is that We carried their children [with Nuh] in the fully loaded Ark.” [36:41]

In a group of verses presented in Surat Yasin to show the reality of divinity, the completeness of divine power in creation, and testify to the inevitability of resurrection, this

noble verse comes along. The address in this noble verse is directed to all people informing them that their children, the billions that lived and died after the flood of Noah until today, the billions that currently fill the flanks of the earth, and those who come after us until the Day of Judgment, all of them were carried on the overloaded Ark.

The story of Nuh has many objectives, including to refine the mind and thinking of the reader, “So narrate [to them the stories [of the past], so perhaps they will reflect.” One of the goals of Qur’anic stories is for people to think and take lessons. That is because they should open their minds and hearts to the incidents of Qur’anic stories that they hear, consider what happened to the losers, and follow the example of the righteous. Thinking and pondering is a Qur’anic duty and an Islamic obligation, and it is not permissible to neglect it. Whoever does not think and learn from what happened to those before him is blind in heart, mind, and insight.

To take a lesson from what occurred to the past nations, to benefit from that. Though only those with sound intellect and insight will take lessons from this. Allah Almighty said: “In their stories there is truly a lesson for people of reason.” [12:111]

Through mentioning the Qur’anic stories, Allah wanted to keep firm the heart of the Prophet (*peace be upon him*), the hearts of his companions and followers, and the hearts of his nation at every time and place. This is explicitly mentioned by Allah: “And We relate to you [O Prophet] the stories of the messengers to reassure your heart. And there has come to you in this [sûrah] the truth, a warning [to the disbelievers], and a reminder to the believers.” [11:120]

92. This book is a serious attempt to study the lives and stories of the messengers of firm resolve, relying upon Allah firstly, then upon what was mentioned in the Noble Qur'an, while also relying upon the views of the competent scholars of *tafsir*, *fiqh*, thought, and history.

93. This book was written in a modern and academic way in line with the spirit of our time. In clarifying the truth regarding the story of Noah (*peace be upon him*) it relies above all on the verses of the Qur'an in a rational and logical manner. Its aim is to reach the depths of the human conscience that is thirsting for knowledge of the truth about Noah (*peace be upon him*), the great flood, and the birth of the second human civilization. This book is a serious attempt to clarify and explain the biography and story of Noah, peace be upon him.

And our closing prayer is, “All praise is for Allah, Lord of all worlds!”

Glory and praise be to You Allah, I bear witness that there is no god but You, I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You

Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi

Dr. Ali Muhammad al-Sallabi was born in Benghazi in Libya in 1963. He is a writer, historian, and Islamic thinker. He is the deputy secretary general of the International Union of Muslim Scholars. He first gained his degree from the Faculty of Da'wah and Usul al-Din at the Islamic University of Madina in 1993. His book, "Moderation in the Holy Qur'an", earned him an MA from Omdurman Islamic University (*Sudan*) in 1996. He then completed his PhD in 1999 at the same university. His PhD thesis, now published, is titled, "The Fiqh of Empowerment in the Holy Qur'an."

In his scholarly journey, he benefitted from a group of scholars including Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Sheikh Akram Dhiya' al-Omeri, Dr. Yasin al Khateeb, Salman al-Awdah, and other scholars. From early on, Dr. Ali al-Sallabi was interested in Quranic *tafsir*, Islamic history, the *fiqh* of divine ways (*sunan*), and cultures. He is known for his books and efforts in Qur'anic sciences, jurisprudence, history, and Islamic thought. He is a member of the Historical Review Committee and Texts Auditing Committee for many drama series like the Omar ibn al-Khattab, Abu Ja'far al-Mansour, Imam al-Hassan series, and others. He has lead several national initiatives, both political and social, in Libya.

The writings of Dr. Sallabi exceed seventy works in history and Islamic thought. The following have been translated into English:

- Prophetic Biography
- Abu Bakr al-Siddiq

- Omar ibn al-Khattab
- Uthman ibn Affan
- Ali ibn Abi Talib
- Al-Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib
- Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz
- Salahuddin al-Ayubi
- Mohammad al-Fateh
- Isa Ibn Maryam (*The Whole Truth*)
- Nuh and the Great Flood



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NUH

(NOAH)

AND THE GREAT FLOOD

THE ADVENT OF THE SECOND HUMAN CIVILIZATION

This book is a continuation of a new academic project that relates to the detailed study of Ulu al-Azm (Messengers of Firm Resolve) and the stories of the prophets and messengers in the Qur'an. The book is part of the Messengers of Firm Resolve Compilation which I dream of completing. I hope from Allah that it is sincerely for His sake and beneficial for people. Mankind is in real need of knowing the lives of the prophets and messengers, an explanation of their biographies, their character, and the foundations of their message. It is in need of learning these things through the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) – that cannot be proven false from any angle, the authentic traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the statements of the great scholars, in a contemporary style that suits the phase that humanity is currently facing. A phase in which humanity is searching for convincing answers to major questions about God, the universe, life, Paradise and Hellfire, divine decree, prophets and their messages, ancient human civilizations, when they appeared and what they eventually became, the foundations of noble character, and spiritual morals. Questions about managing the struggle between truth and falsehood; guidance and misguidance; good and evil; and faith and disbelief.



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