

Noah and the story of flood in the Bible and the Qur'an

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Submission date: 15th December 2016

Abstract

Noah's flood is one of the most ancient religious stories of the world. The story is told and retold within the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions to depict some of the core notions of these beliefs. Like many other stories in the Bible and the Qur'an, the flood story has similarities as well as significant differences. Comparative studies of the flood stories on thematic differences derived from narratives are limited in number. This thesis is constructed on the comparisons of the stories narrated in the original texts in the Bible and the Qur'an. At first, I have summarised the narratives, which is followed by an evaluation of the contexts of the flood stories depending on the narratives. Through a critical analysis, this thesis inquires the image of the deity in the Bible and the Qur'an depicted in these two flood stories. In addition, this thesis highlights the way the stories have been interpreted and used by theologians in these two different religious dominions.

The research concludes that in the Bible, Noah's flood is a story to warn the corrupt and inspire the righteous. On the other hand, Noah's flood in the Qur'an cautions the unfaithful to God and the gruesome consequence of unfaithfulness. In biblical narratives, God decided to bring the flood Himself and also became sorry afterwards for His action. In the Qur'an, the flood is a response to Noah's prayer to God. This study shows that two flood stories portray the image of God in two different ways, The biblical God has been humanized (suitable for human to perceive) to some extent having the attributes of a human-like understanding of mistakes, a strive for correction (repentance), and a willingness to build covenant (agreement) with all His creatures (e.g. Noahic covenant). The God in the Qur'an isolates Himself from all human-like attributes; He is inimitable and all-knowing, He seeks for loyalty and submission of one's entire self to Him. He sets punishment as a recompense for unfaithfulness. The Qur'anic covenant implies obeying the one and only God, but unlike the biblical God, the Qur'anic God is not obliged to do anything like an agreement. The flood story got a symbolic transmission with the rise of Christianity. The biblical flood story shaped up in an image of baptism. In general, Islamic scholars are not interested in symbolic meanings of the flood story.

Acknowledgements

The achievement of my thesis benefits of the help and direction from my supervisor Prof. Einar Thomassen. I am highly obliged to my supervisor for his guidance, continuous supervision and for providing necessary information regarding my task. I felt motivated and encouraged every time I attended a meeting with him regarding my project. I find Prof. Einar Thomassen is an easy-going and open-minded person, without his guidance, I would not finish this final work in my master study. I put my efforts in this project; but apart from the efforts of myself, the success of my thesis depends largely on the inspiration of many others. However, it is not possible to mention everyone from a big list in my head. I would like to express my gratitude towards my parents. Their encouragement during our Skype conversations boosted my motivation. I also like to thank my dear husband, Intakhar Ahmad. Although, I know a simple “thank you” is just not enough for his tremendous support and help regarding taking care of our kids while I was constantly busy in doing my writing. Last but not the least, my kids, Labib and Aayrah who are my source of happiness, enthusiasm, and satisfaction.

Farjana Chowdhury
Bergen, Fall 2016

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Biblical and Qur'anic Stories of Noah tell about the same person who was favoured by God; the stories also differ each other in their main ideas. The flood story is found among many societies developed with their religious and cultural beliefs. The oldest flood story was Mesopotamian flood story of Gilgamesh¹, and the biblical flood story comes after this Mesopotamian flood story. So, there is a possibility that the oldest flood narrative was passed down to the biblical flood story and later on it influenced the Qur'anic one, according to the religious and cultural context in each case. However, here we will not discuss the origin of the story. We will consider the story as a myth². Like many other stories in the Bible and the Qur'an, the flood story has similarities as well as significant differences. Comparative studies combining narrative and thematic differences are limited in number. Therefore, I would like to revisit original texts in the Bible and the Qur'an to explore differences in the flood stories.

The Biblical flood narrative is contained in chapter six to nine in the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis is a collection of stories, connected in sequential order with the help of genealogies³. Genesis has two main parts, a primeval⁴ (which includes some of the famous stories in the Bible) and a patriarchal part⁵. The primeval part of the narrative covers the flood myth. The flood story in Genesis is one of the most well-known passages in the entire Bible.

¹ Sanders, N.K., *The Epic of Gilgamesh, (an English translation with introduction)* (London: Penguin Books, 1964), p-9.

² A myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. Myths are often stories that are currently understood as being exaggerated or fictitious. They are especially linked to religious beliefs and rituals.

³ Genealogy is the study and tracing of lines of descent from an ancestor. The genealogies of the Bible are used to construct a biblical chronology to substantiate the Bible's historical accuracy.

⁴ Primeval part: "Early" Story (in Genesis chapter 1 to 11).

a. Creation (Genesis ch.:1-2): On God's creation of the world and the first humans.

b. Upheaval (Genesis ch.:3): Destruction of the perfect world and its consequences.

c. The Adam's Family (Genesis ch.:4-5): Genealogies of Adam's sons.

d. Flood (Genesis ch.:6-9) The flood, the earth, and destruction of all human face (except Noah and his family).

e. Noah's Family (Genesis ch.:10-11). Genealogy of Noah's descendants.

⁵ Patriarchal part refers to the 20 male ancestor-figures/ father characters (Adam to Abraham).

The Qur'an on the other hand, tells the story of Noah, the flood story and his people in many places. As a summary of the flood story, it appears in "Surah"⁶ number 7 (Surah Al-A'raf) for the first time, and for the last time, in Surah number 71 (Surah Nuh). Mainly, three Surahs details the story, namely Surah Nuḥ (Arabic: ذوح سورة, "Noah"-prophet), Surah Hud (Arab: هود, "Hūd"-Prophet), and Surah al-Mu'minun (Arabic: المؤمنون سورة, "The Believers").

1.2 Objective

The focus of this thesis is the flood story of Noah in the Qur'an and the Bible. In both flood stories Noah is the hero who survived the flood. In the biblical version and in the Qur'anic version Noah is portrayed as a worshiper of God, one who walked the path showed by God and as a result was chosen by God. In both accounts, Noah got the opportunity (instruction) to make a boat to save himself from the coming deluge, and he survived.

The aim of this investigation is to analyse the original texts in the book of Genesis⁷ chapter six to nine where the flood story is recorded. Also, will scrutinise all Surahs in the Qur'an where the flood story is documented. Moreover, I will try to figure out significant meanings of all the verses related to the flood both in the Bible and the Qur'an.

1.3 Research Question

In this thesis, I propose two key questions to solve. The questions are:

- What are the different purposes of the two flood stories in the context of the Bible and the Qur'an
- What is the image (basic concept) of God/the deity in the Bible and the Qur'an

⁶ The Qur'an is divided into many chapters and these chapters called Surah, Suraht, Surah or Sira.

⁷ The book of Genesis is the first book of the Hebrew Bible called the Tanakh and the Christian old testament.

depending on the narratives of these two flood stories?

- How have the stories been used by theologians in the two religions to influence the cultural practices?

Although the questions are interlinked, I have broken them down for structuring my essay. Besides the key questions, my thesis provides comparison and contrast of the two stories with supporting details.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The In this work, analysis of the original sources and their translations are presented. This thesis is comprised of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the thesis topic, the research question and the approach to my study.

Chapter two discusses the Biblical story of the flood, which describes Noah, his family and ancestors, the society of that era and their fate, God's command to Noah, Noah's Ark, the great deluge, Noah's survival, his sacrifice to God, God's promise to Noah, blessing and prohibition of God to Noah and a glimpse of the post-flood situation.

Chapter three provides the Qur'anic account of the flood story, about Noah and his mission, his people, his attempt to convince people, Noah's prayer to God, Noah's Ark, the description of the flood and Noah's gratefulness after the flood.

In chapter four, I have elucidated the context of the flood. To do that, I have evaluated the pre-flood story of Genesis in the first part which briefly discusses the creation story of human beings and the earth, the first sin committed by Adam and Eve, propagation of sin after exiling from heaven, how the world gradually became more wicked. In the second part of this chapter, the background of the flood story in the Qur'an is studied. The flood story is mentioned in many ayahs in different Surahs in the Qur'an. I have scrutinised the context of Surahs where something is mentioned about the flood to make a comprehensive picture of the flood background. This chapter

answers the first question regarding different purposes of the flood in the context of the Bible and the Qur'an.

The fifth chapter attempts an overall comparison between two versions of the flood story. Here, I have made an overall view of my understanding of the flood story. This chapter replies to one of my key questions in this thesis. This chapter also replies to some supplementary questions contrasting two version of the flood story, alongside my key question this chapter analyses differences in the narratives of the flood stories, the extent of the two floods and difference in Noah's character and his role. The chapter also states some the important judgments which I made from the discussions in the previous chapters. My second question regarding the image of God is answered in general. After that, the image of God is described dividing into several thematic subdivisions, the concept of humanity, human sin, covenant, and salvation.

The sixth chapter describes some ways theologians have used the flood story in Christianity and Islam (later interpretations). That means the influence of the two versions of flood story on cultural beliefs and practices. This chapter answers the third question.

Finally, I provide a conclusion to this thesis with my observations on both the flood stories considering the similarities and differences between them.

1.5 Methodology

Biblical and Qur'anic hermeneutics⁸ is my method of choice. I have used textual analysis, deep reading of relevant passages and have made my interpretations of texts. I have compared the two version of the flood story according to my own understandings of the narratives, where the differences provide with nuances of the perception of the stories. This approach reveals the characteristic topography of flood stories. Narrative differences are analysed critically to decipher thematic differences in the story.

⁸ "hermeneutics" means the theory of interpretation, i.e. the theory of achieving an understanding of texts, utterances, and so on. Hermeneutics in this sense has a long history, reaching back at least as far as ancient Greece. However, new focus was brought to bear on it in the modern period, in the wake of the Reformation with its displacement of responsibility for interpreting the Bible from the Church to individual Christians generally. the development of hermeneutics – both as it concerns the nature of interpretation itself and as it concerns the scope and significance of interpretation – is still very much an ongoing process." (Michael N. Forster, Chicago University website)

The task of analysing the Qur'an and the Bible is difficult as the texts are written in two different languages, Hebrew and Arabic (Hebrew and Arabic are closely related as these are Afro-Asiatic languages⁹). Translation into English (which has a Germanic language root¹⁰) from these languages is difficult since they have different roots of origin. I tried to provide my own translation both for Arabic and Hebrew. To make the translation comparatively easy and authentic, frequently I needed to follow already-existing English translations for both stories. I used two sources, The HarperCollins Study Bible¹¹ and The Qur'ān: A new annotated translation¹². For additional validation, I have visited popular online sources of translations, (www.Biblehub.com and www.scripture4all.org for the Bible and for the Qur'an, www.Qur'an.com). To study later influences of the flood stories, I investigated scholarly articles and books related this topic.

⁹ Afro-Asiatic languages, also called Afrasian languages, formerly Hamito-Semitic, Semito-Hamitic, or Erythraean languages. This is a large language family of several hundred related languages and dialects. The most widely spoken Afroasiatic language is Arabic.

¹⁰ German derives most of its vocabulary from the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family.

¹¹ Meeks, W. A., & Bassler, J. M. (1993). The HarperCollins study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

¹² Droge, A. J. (2013). The Qur'ān: A new annotated translation. Sheffield, UK: Equinox.

CHAPTER 2: NOAH AND THE FLOOD STORY IN THE BIBLE

The story of the Biblical Noah is described in the Hebrew Bible, and this flood story is one of the component stories in the first book, Genesis.¹³ There are some arguments that the story has been copied from the Mesopotamian flood story.¹⁴ However, here we will not discuss the origin of the story. We will consider the story as a myth¹⁵.

In the Book of Genesis, chapters 6 to 9 are constituted with Noah's flood narrative.¹⁶ Genesis has two main parts; the first part, the primeval part covering the first twelve chapters contains some of the best-known stories in the Bible. The flood narrative is also found here.

2.1 Noah in the Bible

2.1.1 Naming of Noah

The Hebrew word Noah (נֹחַ) means, be confederate, lay, let down, (be) quiet, remain, (cause to, be at, give, have, make to) rest, set down. These words mean "to give rest."¹⁷ And according to the Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary, Noah's name means "Response" or "Consolation." So, we can conclude that the name indicates, to bring Comfort and Rest. Biblical verse justifies the meaning.

¹³ Genesis is the first book of the Torah ("Torah" means "Teaching").The Torah is also known as the Five Books of Moses:

¹⁴ Hess, Richard S., and David Toshio. Tsumura. I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994. Print. p.127

¹⁵ A myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events. Myths are often stories that are currently understood as being exaggerated or fictitious. They are especially linked to religious beliefs and rituals.

¹⁶ Chapter 6: About wickedness in the world; Chapter 7: About Going into the ark; Chapter 8: About the situation after the flood (God remembered Noah and all the wild animals after the flood stopped) ; Chapter 9: God's Covenant With Noah (God blessed Noah and his family)

¹⁷ Preez, Manie Du. As It Was in the Days of Noah. Xlibris Corporation, 2011. Print. p 141-142

"Now he (Noah's Father) named him Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our workload and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the God has cursed."¹⁸

The verse indicates the consideration of Noah's father. He hoped that his son, Noah would bring them relief from their hard work (painful labour of farming the taugt ground to grow food). Here he mentioned 'the ground which has been cursed by God' indicated mainly the earth; God cursed the earth because of eating forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve.¹⁹

If we look further down in the flood story, where it describes the situation as the flood subsides, we find some coherence with the meaning of Noah's name. The best fitting Biblical verse is:

"But the dove could not find anywhere to sit on (rest on) because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand to take the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark."²⁰

The phrase 'he reached out his hand to take the dove' gives an impression that a seeker of shelter finds a place to rest in his helping hands.

2.1.2 Noah's family and his ancestors in the Bible

The book of Genesis tells us that Noah was the son of Lamech²¹ and Noah was born when his father was one hundred and eighty-two years old. The Bible does not say anything about the name of Noah's mother, brother or sister. According to Genesis,

"Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters."²²

¹⁸ Genesis 5:29

¹⁹ Genesis 3:17-19

²⁰ Genesis 8:9

²¹ Lamech is a son of Methusael. Genesis records that Lamech was 182 years old at the birth of Noah and lived for another 595 years, altogether he died at the age of 777 years. The great flood came when Noah was 600 ayear old, That means Lamech died five years before the Flood (Gleanings in Genesis, p. 78)

²² Genesis 5:30

Noah was the father of three sons, and their names were Shem, Ham and Japheth and Genesis also confirmed by stating that

“And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah fathered Ham, Shem, and Japheth.”²³

The name of Noah's wife is not given in Genesis. Nevertheless, the Book of Jubilees²⁴ gives a name for his wife, and her name was Emzara.

".. Noah took himself a wife, and her name was Emzara, the daughter of Rake'el, the daughter of his father's brother..."²⁵

According to Genesis, Noah's family had eight members (Noah, his wife, three sons, and wives of his three sons) and all of them survived the flood. According to the Bible,

“And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.”²⁶

The Bible provides a detailed genealogy of Noah. Genealogy holds importance to understand a character better as ancestral influence also plays a role in shaping up a character. According to Genesis (chapter 5), the ancestors of Noah are related to the following genealogy:

Adam → Seth → Enosh → Kenan → Mahalalel → Jared → Enoch → MethuSelah → Lamech → Noah; Son of Noah are Japheth, Shem (ancestor of Moses), and Ham.²⁷

The character, Lamech (Noah's father) is a good example of the social condition of the earth before the flood. The personality of Lamech is highlighted The Bible stating the followings:

²³ Genesis 5:32

²⁴ The Book of Jubilees is an ancient Jewish religious narrative which follows the account of creation as recorded in the Book of Genesis, but provides some more details such as names of Adam's daughters and name of Noah's wife.

²⁵ Jubilees 4:33

²⁶ Genesis 7:7

²⁷ Meeks, W. A., & Bassler, J. M. (1993). The HarperCollins study Bible: New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

“Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me; If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”²⁸

Thus Lamech, Noah’s father was a murderer. The phrase 'If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then ‘Lamech seventy-sevenfold' indicates that he was completely aware of the consequence of his heinous deed. He was the first polygamist. Although there is no direct prohibition of polygamy in the Bible, there are hints that monogamy is preferred as we find in Genesis,

"Therefore shall a man leaves his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."²⁹

According to Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary³⁰, “Lamech” means poor; made low. Interestingly, the meanings of Noah and his father's name reflect their role narrated in the Bible.

2.2 The Society of Noah’s era and their fate

The Bible describes that people of Noah’s era were awfully corrupt and violent before the great Flood. Everyone in the earth started to do wrong things, and the world was getting worse day by day. But in the Book of Genesis, We don’t find an explicit description of nature corrupt. Eventually, God regretted because of His creation. In this context, the Bible states that

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. And the God was sorry that he had made the man on the earth and it grieved him in his heart”.³¹

²⁸ Genesis 4:23-24

²⁹ Genesis 2:24

³⁰ "Hitchcock's new and complete analysis of the Bible," contains more than 2500 Biblical and Bible-related names and their meanings. This is available online through Calvin College, Michigan.

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hitchcock/Bible_names.toc.html

³¹" Genesis 6:5-6

Then God found a reason to make an end of all living things from the face of the earth. He wanted to make a fresh, good and righteous generation and for that purpose, the destruction of the human race was eminent in His mind. In the Biblical words

“I have determined to make an end of all flesh for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth.”³²

God wanted to wipe out not only humans, but also animals (domestic animals, crawling animals, and birds). Although fishes are not mentioned as we find the following text in the Bible,

"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth and from man to animals and the creeping thing and the birds of the air for I am sorry that I have made them."³³

Among His entire creature God found one man who obeyed God and was righteous and the name of that man is Noah. He was the only hope for all, hope for a new beginning of human beings on earth, to avoid the dead end for all. The Bible describes the following about Noah in Genesis;

“These are the generation of Noah, Noah was a blameless, righteous man in his time, and Noah walked with God.”³⁴

Noah's Walking with God indicated about his righteousness. The reward of being righteous is getting favoured in the eyes of the God. The favour was that God choose Noah and his family and he saved them during the deluge. In the Biblical words

"But Noah found favour in the eyes of God."³⁵

³² Genesis 6:13

³³ Genesis 6:7

³⁴ Genesis 6:9

³⁵ Genesis 6:8

2.4 God's command to Noah

As there was no good man left on the earth except Noah, God revealed to Noah that a flood would destroy all humans and animals from the whole world. In Biblical words,

“I (God) will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life from under heaven; all that is in the earth shall die.”

God ordered Noah to make an Ark to escape from the flood water. God also instructed him how he would make the Ark what would be the size of the Ark and how to pitch it. God's word to Noah found in the Bible;

"Make an Ark of gopher wood for yourself, and you shall make rooms in the ark, and you shall pitch it inside and outside with pitch."³⁶

Furthermore, we find that God instructed Noah in detail as we find in the Bible;

“And you shall make it like this: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits³⁷, the width shall be fifty cubits, and the height shall be thirty cubits. Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door on the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks”³⁸.

But the Bible does not mention whether Noah made the ark on his own, or he took help from others (for example, getting help from a carpenter or his own sons).

Noah had faith in God and he carried out the instructions building the ark which is given by God. After completing the making of the ark, God ordered Noah to enter into the ark with his family. In this case, the first occurrence of the word 'covenant'³⁹ in the Bible; In Biblical words;

³⁶ Genesis 6:14

³⁷ An ancient measure of length (approximately it is equal to the length of a forearm).

³⁸ Genesis 6: 15-16

³⁹ "Covenant" means lease, deed, or other legal contract in in general terms. In theology, "Covenant" emphasizes God's redemptive plan and His dealings. Hebrew word, בְּרִיתִי (בֶּרֶת־יְהוָה) means my covenant, the word comes from the root (brh) by which God Affirmed his bonding with the particular context He is using this word.

“And I (God) will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.”⁴⁰

God decided to keep alive every kind of animals and birds to carry out their race later on the earth. So, He suggested Noah to take animals of each kind in pairs in his ark. In the Biblical statement;

“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every sort shall come to you, to keep them alive.”⁴¹

God also put distinction among animals. He divided animals and birds into clean and unclean⁴². He explicitly instructed the quantity of them According to the book of Genesis:

“Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth⁴³

God also thought of the source of food they should survive on. So, Noah was advised to store foods in the ark during the days of the flood as it found in the Bible

“take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up, and it shall serve as food for you and them.”⁴⁴

Noah obeyed God and created an ark that would hold him safe along with his family and every kind of living things existing in the world.

⁴⁰" Genesis 6:18

⁴¹" Genesis 6:19-20

⁴² Difference between clean and unclean animals is found in Leviticus 11:1–47

⁴³Genesis 7:2-3

⁴⁴ Genesis 6:21

2.5 The Ark of Noah

The Hebrew word for Ark is תֵּבָא (*tēbāh*) which appears in two contexts in the Bible. Firstly, in the book of Genesis, in which the flood narrative is described (Genesis 6:14) and secondly, in the Book of Exodus⁴⁵, in which it refers to the basket Jochebed (Moses' mother) laid the baby Moses and placed him in the Nile (Exodus2:3). In both cases, the ark has a connection with surviving on water.

How much time Noah spent to make the ark is not mentioned in Genesis, but when he had completed the making of the ark, his age was six hundred years (Genesis 7:6).

Features of the ark those are found in the narratives in Genesis are:

a. The ark was of gopher wood (rooms). It was covered inside and out with pitch (Genesis 6:14).

b. The length of the ark was three hundred cubits, it was breadth fifty cubits, and its height was thirty cubits (Genesis 6:15).

c. It had a window finished to a cubit from the top and a door on the side of it. It had three decks: lower, second, and top. (Genesis 6:16).

Noah did find specimens of every kind of animal as scripture tells that "(They) shall come unto thee."⁴⁶. That means God himself guided the animals to the ark and kept them calm onboard.

⁴⁵ The Book of Exodus is the second Book of Moses. The book narrates how the Israelites escaped slavery in Egypt through the help of God (Yahweh).

⁴⁶ Genesis 6:20

2.6 The great deluge

The Hebrew word for the Flood (deluge) is “מַבּוּל” (*mabbul*) which means being carried along⁴⁷. In the Bible the word used in Noah’s narrative and otherwise used once in the Book of Psalms⁴⁸ to express the unfathomable power of God.⁴⁹

According to the Bible, Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came onto the earth.⁵⁰ God warned Noah about the specific day of the flood that he can be prepared for the day as we find in the Bible,

"Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made." ⁵¹

So, Noah entered into the ark with his wife, his sons and sons' wives, with clean and unclean animals and birds and of all other creatures paired in male and female as God command him to do so. The Bible states that,

"On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then God shut him in⁵²

The phrase ‘God shut him (Noah) in’ indicates that God might have provided some direct assistance to close the door of the Ark.

⁴⁷ Lovett, Tim, and John Clement Whitcomb. Noah's Ark: Thinking outside the Box. Green Forest, AR: Master, 2008. Print. p.35

⁴⁸ The third section of the Hebrew Bible with a collection of lyrical poems.

⁴⁹ Psalm 29:10

⁵⁰ Genesis 7:6

⁵¹ Genesis 7:4

⁵² Genesis 7:13-16

The flood came in the earth. The day was precise according to Noah's lifetime. There were two sources of water for the flood, deep fountains in the earth and heavy rainfall from the sky. Genesis describes this like the following,

"In the six-hundredth years of Noah's life, on the seven and tenth day of the second month and the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights."⁵³

The Bible described the flood in details, how the waters raised, how the ark was floating, what happened to the lives outside the ark. In biblical words,

"...as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all humanity. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth...Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark"⁵⁴

In the Bible, we find duration of the flood was forty days as the book of Genesis states that

"The flood water kept coming on the earth for forty days."⁵⁵

There are also two verses in the Bible claims that the flood water decreased after hundred and forty days. Those are:

"The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days."⁵⁶

⁵³ Genesis 7:11-12

⁵⁴ Genesis 7:17-23

⁵⁵ Genesis 7:17

⁵⁶ Genesis 7:24

And

“And the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred of fifty days, the waters abate.”⁵⁷

2.7 End of the Flood

2.7.1 The flood subsides

After wiping out every sinner, God wanted to make the earth as a living and thriving place for Noah and all the animals that were with him in the ark. So, “God remembered Noah.”⁵⁸ . This divine remembrance denotes to the gracefulness of God for a new start.

God took necessary steps to subside the flood. God used strong wind to blow, stopped all fountains and stopped heavy rainfall on the earth. The Bible states that

"...God caused the wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. Also, the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from heaven was restrained."⁵⁹

As we see in the verses in the book of Genesis, the flood water did not reduce suddenly. It had a gradual reduction⁶⁰. It took ten months to reduce the floodwater from the earth. But, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month, on top of the mountains of Ararat⁶¹ the ark rested.⁶²

According to the book of Genesis, after forty more days Noah opened the window of his Ark to know whether the flood water dried out or not. To check that Noah sent out a raven but the Raven got back to the ark as it did not find any dry place to live. After that, Noah sent out a dove to check if the rain waters dried out from the face of the earth. But again the dove came back to

⁵⁷ Genesis 8:3

⁵⁸ Genesis 8:1

⁵⁹ Genesis 8:1-2

⁶⁰ Genesis 8:5

⁶¹ The Mountains of Ararat (Hebrew אֲרָרָט הָרִי). The "Mountains of Ararat" refers to a general region, not a specific mountain or place. But, in the book of Jubilees specifies the name of peak of on which the ark had rested, called "Lubar" (Jubilees 7:1)

⁶² Genesis 8:4

the ark because she did not get any place to sit on in the wetlands. Therefore, Noah decided to take a seven days gap to send another bird outside from the ark. After seven days Noah sent out a dove from the ark and this time the dove came back in the evening with holding a newly sprouted and freshly plucked olive leaf in her mouth. Dove got a fresh green leaf that indicated Noah that the floodwater had subsided. Noah waited another seven days, and after seven days he sent out the dove again, but this time the dove did not return to the ark. ⁶³

The land water was not dry completely. When it came to pass the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and one years, the flood water dried out from the face of the earth. To judge the situation himself, Noah removed the covering of the ark, and when he looked around, he found the surface of the ground was dry. In the twenty-seventh day of the second months, the earth was completely dry. ⁶⁴

When God saw that the earth is ready to live again, He commanded to Noah to come out of the ark. According to the verses in the Bible,

“Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that, is with you, the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground, so they can ‘multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number.’”⁶⁵

And Noah carried out that God commands to him. He came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. With all the animals he had with him in the ark.

2.7.2 Noah's sacrifice and God's promise to Noah

Noah and his family and all living creature came out from the ark. After that, Noah built an altar⁶⁶ to show his gratefulness towards the God. According to the Bible,

⁶³ Genesis 8:6-12

⁶⁴ Genesis 8:13-14

⁶⁵ Genesis 8:15-17

⁶⁶ Sacrifices made for religious purposes.

“Then Noah built an altar to God, and took of every clean animal and every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”⁶⁷

The God got the sweet savour (aroma) of the burnt offerings⁶⁸ and He repented himself and made a promise to Noah that He will not curse the ground anymore because of the heart of men is evil. According to the Bible,

“God smelled the soothing aroma; and He said to Himself, I (God) will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While (as long as) the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”⁶⁹

God graciously affirmed that He would not destroy the earth. But, He put a timeline in the phrase “... and day and night shall not cease”. That perhaps mean that He will not destroy the earth until the time stops because of in a book of the New Testament of the Bible, we find that God will eventually destroy the world with fire. The verse states,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be dissolved in the fire, and the earth and its works will not be found." ⁷⁰

2.7.3 Blessing and prohibition of God to Noah

God blessed Noah and his sons that they can be productive and increase their progeny. In Biblical words,

⁶⁷ Genesis 8:20

⁶⁸ Burnt offering is a tribute to God, entirely burnt on the altar. The Hebrew word for this is: עֹלָה קָרְבַּן - korban olah. The term is first used of the sacrifices of Noah. But similar sacrifices offered by Abel (Genesis 4:3-4, where it is called minhah)

⁶⁹ Genesis 8:21-22

⁷⁰ 2 Peter 3:10

"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."⁷¹

The blessing God gave to Noah and his sons (in chapter 9) has some similarity to order in the previous chapter of the book of Genesis.⁷² In that verse, God asked Noah to facilitate animals to carry on their progeny. The particular phrase in that verse is "that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." God gave authority to Noah over animals. In the Biblical words,

"The fear and dread of you (Noah) shall be on every beast of the earth, and on every bird of the air, at everything that moves upon the earth, and on all the fishes of the sea; they are delivered into your hands. Every living thing that moves it shall be food unto you. As I (God) have given you the green plants, I now give you everything." ⁷³

The blessing God gave to Noah and his sons have similarly with the blessing He gave to Adam and Eve.⁷⁴

Not only God gave them blessing but also, they got some prohibitions. They were prohibited to eat meat with its blood in it. Besides that, God strongly prohibited homicide. The Bible states that,

"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast, I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man." ⁷⁵

God assured Noah and his sons that He would never destroy the earth like he did before and He also blessed them with fertility. Moreover, God made his covenant with Noah and his sons, and later he expands his covenant to each every creature on the earth. In Biblical word the promise is,

⁷¹ Genesis 9:1

⁷² Genesis 8:17

⁷³ Genesis 9:2-3

⁷⁴ Genesis 1:28

⁷⁵ Genesis 9:4-5

"And behold I establish my covenant with you and with your offspring after you. And with every living creature that was with you, of the birds, of the livestock and every beast of the earth, of all that go out of the ark with you, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you: Neither anymore all flesh will be cut off by the waters of a flood; neither any more shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."⁷⁶

According to theologians, this covenant is called The “Noahic covenant.” This covenant is not only to Noah and his sons but also all the generation of after Noah. God also put a sign to affirm the promise. According to the Bible,

"This is the sign of the covenant (promise) I am making between me (God) and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds. I will remember my covenant between you and me and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."⁷⁷

According to the Bible, God again states the extent of His covenant to put more emphasis,

"This is the token (rainbow) of the covenant I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."⁷⁸

And God made this promise without putting any condition, and this promise is also everlasting till the end of time.

2.7.4 A glimpse on the post-flood situation

The first person documented in the Bible as being drunk is Noah. Noah was the first farmer (tiller of the land) in the post-flood history mentioned in the Bible. He planted plants and build a

⁷⁶ Genesis 9:9-11

⁷⁷ Genesis 9:12-16

⁷⁸ Genesis 9:17

vineyard, and he became drunk drinking wine made in his winery and lay naked in his tent. In the Biblical narrative,

"Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father, and their faces were turned away so that they did not see their father's nakedness."⁷⁹

When Noah came into full conscious from his drunken condition and learned that what his youngest son (Ham) had done to him. Although, The Bible does not say who told it to Noah. Noah cursed his youngest son, Ham (actually implied to Ham's son Canaan). Noah not only cursed Canaan but also, prayed to God to confirm his curse. The Bible states that,

"So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers. He also said, "Blessed be God, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant."⁸⁰

After the flood, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. Noah was six hundred years of age what the flood came. So, all together, Noah lived nine hundred and fifty years before his death⁸¹.

2.8 Summary of the Flood story in the Bible

The Flood story in the Bible is a folktale type narrative. The story displays an outline (pattern) of sin, judgment, and salvation. The reason of the flood is not a single one, it was multifaceted as the Bible states "the wickedness of man was great on the earth" "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" "the earth was corrupt in the sight of God" "the earth was full of violence" and "all flesh (men and animals) had corrupted its way upon earth. The flood came to give a new start to life on the earth from a handful of lives those survived the flood. But human

⁷⁹ Genesis 9:20-23

⁸⁰ Genesis 9:25-26

⁸¹ Genesis 9:28-29

nature has not been changed by the flood; we can even see sinfulness in Noah's family (Ham did wrong to Noah).

God was sorry to cause much suffering for His creation through the flood. That is why; God assured that He would never again curse the earth as he has done in Noah's time. God bless human being saying "Be fruitful and multiply" and with the covenant, the world now stands under the divine mercy of God according to the Bible.

In the next chapter discusses the Flood story in the Qur'an. Qur'anic verses regarding Noah's flood story are revisited in the chapter to get a comprehensive picture of the flood story.

CHAPTER 3: NOAH AND THE FLOOD STORY IN THE QUR'AN

Unlike the book of Genesis, the flood story of Noah in the Qur'an is not arranged in chronological order. In the Qur'an, the 71th Surah is named after the Prophet Noah (نوح Nuh in the Qur'an), where Noah is its subject matter. Moreover, there are many Surahs where the information about Noah can be found in the context of other "Prophets." There are 48 occurrences of Noah in the Qur'an whereas Jesus is mentioned 25 times by name. 28 out of 114 Surahs in the Qur'an contains the name, Noah.

The flood story of the Qur'an came after the Biblical flood story. So, many scholars believe that the Qur'anic flood story has been copied from the flood story in Genesis. The debate whether the story in Qur'an is originally God's word or is copied from the Bible has never come to an end. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is not mythical construct but God's verses. Here I am not going to present my arguments to prove whether the story happened or has just been invented. We do not have any solid historical or scientific evidence of the flood; the story must be considered as a myth.

We find the Qur'an's flood story as a didactical⁸² one. The story cannot be regarded as a chronicle with a tale of a series of events. The story is more likely a moral story where Noah is referred to be so as to remind the people to walk in God's pathway. The story shows the result of being gracious to God; it is a story where God set an example of punishment for the unbelievers. If we want to divide the story into parts, the story consists several parts like Noah's efforts to warn people to believe in one God (Allah⁸³), the people's denial to obey Noah's advice, Noah's warning about the punishment and the result of the Flood, who was in the ark with Noah, who were outside in the ark and why.

⁸² Intended to convey instruction and information as well as entertainment .

⁸³ Allah ("al-Ilāh", here "al" meaning 'the') is the Arabic word refers to God which is the ideal description of the "One God" of monotheism.

In this chapter, I discuss the importance of Noah in the Qur'an, the circumstances of the society during Noah's age, the rejection of Noah's by his people and the event of the flood.

3.1 Noah in the Qur'an

Noah is mentioned as a prophet in the Qur'an. Islamic theologians mentioned Noah as one of the five greatest prophets in Islam.⁸⁴ Qur'an portrays Noah's image more like a preacher rather than as the hero of the flood story who survived the flood. But he was the chosen one during his age. According to the Qur'an, Noah proclaimed himself,

رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"...A messenger from the Lord of the world."⁸⁵

In another verse Noah declares himself,

لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

"...clear warner unto you (his people)."⁸⁶

In the first ayah⁸⁷, the Arabic word رَسُولٌ meaning a messenger and in another ayah, نَذِيرٌ means a Warner, which indicates Noah as both a messenger and a warner.

As it has been told before, the Qur'an mentions Noah's name numerous times together with other prophets addressing his role as a prophet. In this chapter, I have detached those verses where I found Noah in connection with other prophets and analysed the verses to find out the traits of Noah along with other prophets.

In Surah, Al Anbiya, all the prophets are called (Including Noah) as عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ which means "honoured worshipers" or "honoured servants".⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Sohaib Sultan ,The Qur'an and Sayings of Prophet Muhammad: Selections Annotated & Explained,,p. 44

⁸⁵ Quran 7:61

⁸⁶ Quran 11:25

⁸⁷ Ayah literally means "evidence" but in Quranic context, ayah is used to mean a verse (single statement)

⁸⁸ Quran 21:26

In another ayah, Noah is called as one of a *عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ* “believing servants.”⁸⁹

Further, Noah was chosen by God because he was among one of the *الْمُحْسِنِينَ* “doers of good (who does good deeds).”⁹⁰

According to another ayah, God said about Noah; he was one of *عِبَادِنَا صَالِحِينَ* “righteous servants” of God.”⁹¹

All these adjectives used here such as, an honoured servant, a believing servant, a righteous servant, reflects that God is the supreme power and Noah is the servant of him, who serves the way God wanted him to do. God holds strong promise from His messengers to follow his way (to keep all the attributes God wants them to have. The Qur’an states in this regard,

“And (remember) when we took an agreement from the prophets and (also) from you (Muhammad), and from Noah and Ibrahim and Musa and Isa, son of Maryam, and took from them a strong covenant (agreement).”⁹²

The Arabic word *مِيثَاقًا* (*mithaq*) means promise, or covenant or agreement, which is emphasised in this Ayah. Here the Qur’an states that God holds Noah and other prophets to their strong promise to follow his way and to guide their own people on His way. So, Noah was not free like other ordinary people but had a huge obligation towards Allah. All these messengers had a plain memorandum to spread that God is the creator and sustainer of the world and that human being should recognise this and lead an ethical and moral life.⁹³

In the Qur’an, God gives Noah a special place among the generation of Noah and put him as a reminder for the next generations, from Abraham to Muhammad, the last messenger of Islam.

⁸⁹ Quran 37:81

⁹⁰ Quran 37:80

⁹¹ Quran 66:10

⁹² Quran 33:7

⁹³ Rippin, Andrew. The Blackwell Companion To The Qur’ān. 1st ed. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Pub., 2006. Print.p.44

3.2 Misguided Society and Noah's attempt to guide them

During the time of the Prophet, Noah's people were not worshiping the one and only God (Allah), did not fear or obey Him⁹⁴. At that time, people made many idols, and they also treat those idols as their Gods. They believed in many Gods named Wadd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Yauq and Nasr. Noah warned them for many years to stop worshiping those Gods except One God (Allah)⁹⁵. To describe reckless reluctance of Noah's people the Qur'an compares that with other reckless nations named "Ad and Thamud"⁹⁶. The Qur'an describes that the people of Noah's time were even more unjust and more rebellious than the people of, "Ad and Thamud."⁹⁷

To guide this misguided society God chose Noah as a messenger to show the right way to the misguided society. For many years he was among them. According to the Qur'an,

"And [Allah] certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers."⁹⁸

Noah tried to guide them on right path telling them his authority to guide them. As we find in the Qur'an,

"I am a messenger from the Lord of the world. I deliver to you the messages of my Lord, and I offer guidance to you that I know from God what you do not know of."⁹⁹

The people of Noah disbelieved him and made a surprising declaration

"You are nothing but human beings like us. You want to keep us from what our forefathers have practised."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Quran 71:3

⁹⁵ Quran 71: 22,23

⁹⁶ "Thamud were a group of tribes in ancient Arabia (from the 4th century BC to the first half of the 7th century AD). the Thamud were warned by their prophet Salih to worship God, but the Thamud stubbornly refused him and as a result they were annihilated either by a thunderbolt or by an earthquake.

Ad was a group of people to whom prophet Hud was sent to guide them and show them the path of God. But when they rejected to listen their prophet. God destroyed them by a furious wind.

⁹⁷ Quran 53:52

⁹⁸ Quran 29:14

⁹⁹ Quran 7:61-62

¹⁰⁰ Quran 14:10

The people of Noah also called him a liar. Moreover, people told him clearly a lost (foolish/insane) person. In Qur'anic words,

“So the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, we do not see you but as a man like ourselves, and we do not see you followed except by those who are the lowest of us [and] at first suggestion. And we do not see in you over us any merit; rather, we think you are a liar.”¹⁰¹

In both the verses (in two different Surahs), it is clear that his people found him just like a regular man, they did not consider him as a Prophet. They did not bother to believe someone who looked like them but speaks about something divine. Eventually, they treated him as an insane person. They wanted Noah to show them clear proof of his prophecy. Noah overlooked all of their offensive remarks and also continued to deliver his divine message purposefully. Noah tried to justify this action to his people by saying the following,

“And O my people, I ask not of you for it any wealth. My reward is not but from Allah. And I am not one to drive away those who have believed. Indeed, they will meet their Lord, but I see that you are people behaving ignorantly.”¹⁰²

He also warned them about the punishments of disbelievers and wrong doings. But, as a proof of his words, they wanted Noah to bring punishment on them. But Noah replied

“... God will bring it to you if He wills, and you will not be able to avoid (the punishment).”¹⁰³

To make them understand the virtue of God, he also made them remember the blessing of God on earth. He said,

"He (God) sends (rain) from the sky upon you in showers. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.... And God has made for you

¹⁰¹ Quran 11:26

¹⁰² Quran 11:29

¹⁰³ Quran 11:33

the earth a wide expanse that you can travel therein on broad roads and in valleys and can reach your desired destination.”¹⁰⁴

To make open their eyes and to make them grateful to God, Noah said to his people,

“What is the matter with you that you do not believe in Divine Glory? While He has created you in stages (earth).”¹⁰⁵

Afterwards, Noah tried making his people understand the capability/power of God. He said to his people,

“You don’t know how God has created the seven heavens one above another and has made the moon, a light there, and made the sun a radiant lamp. God has brought in life from the earth. Then He will return you into it, and bring you back again.”¹⁰⁶

Noah praised of God many times and tried to uphold the merciful image of God and advised his people to pray to God for forgiveness for their wrongdoings saying the following

“He (God) will forgive you of your sins (if they believe in God).”¹⁰⁷

Noah also warned about the punishments for disbelievers not only in the life on earth but also in the afterlife, and he asked them to fear of having punishments from God because of their idolatry. Noah warned to his people saying that

“That you should not worship anyone except God. Indeed, I (Noah) fear for you the punishment of a painful day.”¹⁰⁸ Here “the punishment of a painful day is” the judgment day when God will give Punishment for all wrong works.

¹⁰⁴ Quran 71:11-12,19-20

¹⁰⁵ Quran 71: 13-14

¹⁰⁶ Quran 71:15-18

¹⁰⁷ Quran 71:4

¹⁰⁸ Quran 11:27

But all of his efforts were rejected by them, and Noah noticed that after his efforts of many years the people of his age did not stop doing idolatry. A few people listened to him, but most of them went off track. A verse in the Qur'an depicts that by stating,

“And Certainly, I sent Noah and Ibrahim and positioned in their children Prophet-hood and gave them Scripture. And among them, there are some who are guided, but many of them are sinners.”¹⁰⁹

Noah also advised his people about afterlife and the scope of his authority (his limitation) to save them by saying

“And my recommendation will not profit you, even if I wish to give you support if God's will is to keep you wrong track. He is your Lord! And to him, you shall return.”¹¹⁰

In this way, Noah kept trying to provoke his people for nine hundred and fifty years¹¹¹. He solicited his people for repentance and simultaneously he was preaching about the greatness and forgiveness of God and punishment for disbelievers.

3.3 Noah's prayer to God (Allah)

According to Hadith¹¹², every day Gabriel¹¹³ came and delivered the command: “Oh Noah, go and tell the unbelievers to recite: ‘There is no god but God, and Noah is the messenger of God.’¹¹⁴ But Most of the people ignored him, and they were divided into two different groups, one group that listened to what Noah said to them and another group did not listen. The second group was rich and powerful, and they started to argue with Noah. So, Noah said to God

"My Lord! They have disregarded my words and followed one who has wealth and children (man power) give him no increase (in the number of believers) but only loss. They

¹⁰⁹ Quran 57:26

¹¹⁰ Quran 11:32-34

¹¹¹ Quran 29:14

¹¹² Hadith (“News” or “Story”), these are records of the traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

¹¹³ Gabriel is the angelic being who “brings down” the Qur’anic revelation to the prophet Muhammad's heart (Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān, General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 1st ed. Leiden [u.a.]: Brill, 2002. Print).

¹¹⁴ Boeschoten, H. E and J O'Kane. Al-Rabghuzi's 'The Stories Of The Prophets. Qisas Al-Anbiya'. 1st ed. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015. Print.p.50

have said: 'you(other people) shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave wadd, nor Suwa, nor Yaghuth, nor ya'uq nor Nasr (names of the idols). Indeed they have led themselves to wrong ways....enter to the fire, and they found none to help them instead of God.’¹¹⁵

Noah was anxious that the disbelievers might corrupt the rest of his people (who believed in Noah’s words) if they stayed alive on earth. Therefore, Noah prayed to God to destroy them. As we find in the Qur’an,

"My Lord! Leave none of the disbelievers on the earth. If you leave them, they will mislead your followers, and they will end in none but evil disbelievers"¹¹⁶.

After all his efforts, Noah did not pray to God to guide the disbelievers but prayed to punish the disbelievers. Nevertheless, Noah kept inviting people until God revealed

“No one will believe among your people except those who have already put their faith. So, do not be distressed by what they have been doing.”¹¹⁷

Noah replied in agreement with God:

“O my Lord! Certainly, I have called my people repeatedly (both in public and private) to accept the principle (Monotheism), but all my calling added nothing but to their escape from the truth. Every time I called unto them that you might forgive them, they plunge their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, and persisted (refusal), and enlarged themselves in pride.”¹¹⁸

The following verse in the Qur’an that justifies punishment for people we do not listen to the messenger of God.

“Has there not been arrived the order of God, those before them (the people of Noah and [the tribes of] 'Aad and Thamud and the people of Abraham and the companions of Madyan) and they overturned that? Their messengers came to them with clear proofs. And

¹¹⁵ Quran 71:21-25

¹¹⁶ Quran 71: 26-27

¹¹⁷ Quran 11:36

¹¹⁸ Quran 71:5-10

God would never have taken them to an incorrect way, but they were misleading themselves.”¹¹⁹

According to the Qur’an, God listened to what Noah prayed for, and God decided to punish them. Noah ended his mission of warning the people and God put His judgment upon the disbelievers to bring a great deluge to perish the disbelievers. To save the Muminun (those who believed in God) God ordered to Noah to build a boat (Ark).

3.4 Building of an Ark

Noah started to build an ark as God instructed him by saying,

"And construct the ship under [Allah’s] observation and [Allah’s] inspiration and do not address Me concerning those who have wronged; indeed, they are [to be] drowned."¹²⁰

From this verse, it is obvious that God has supervised the work of building the ark. In this point, God explicitly asked Noah not to pray for his people who had done wrong (did not listen to Noah) because God already decided their fate.

Noah was building his ark (should be a huge boat, even if it is not mentioned in the Qur’an) on dry land (not mentioned but it is reasonable), then people laughed, ridiculed, questioned or mocked Noah.¹²¹

Noah did not tell his people the actual cause of building that ark (boat). He even did not warn them about the forthcoming flood. He replied them indicating them that some punishment was waiting for them. Noah’s reply found in the Qur’an is,

¹¹⁹ Quran 9:70

¹²⁰ Quran 11:37

¹²¹ Quran 11:38

" He (Noah) said, If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule. And you are going to know who will get a punishment that will disgrace him [on earth] and upon whom will descend an enduring punishment [in the Hereafter]."¹²²

Noah completed the building of the Ark and was waiting for God's order. And God notified him

"...When my commands come and the ‘oven’ boils, put into it two of every kind, a pair, and your family – except for them who are already late (to believe in Him).”¹²³

According to Ibn Tabari, the word ‘Oven’ was the oven of stone which belonged to Eve and became Noah’s afterwards.¹²⁴

3.5 Description of the flood in The Qur’an

At the day of the flood, Noah saw the sign of the boiling oven as God had said to him. God ordered Noah to load his ark with believers and representative animals in pairs. According to the Qur’an

“[So it was], until when God’s command came and the oven overflowed, God said, "Load upon the ship of each [creature] two mates and your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and [include] whoever has believed." But none had believed with him, except a few.”¹²⁵

As a result of being one of the disbelievers, his son denied coming with him, and he chose to go up on the mountain instead. The son of Noah drowned in the flood water. Noah cried to God to save his son, but God denied to accept his prayer and let him (Noah’s son) be drowned. Noah begged pardon for asking help to save his son from God.¹²⁶

¹²² Quran 11:38-39

¹²³ Quran 23:27

¹²⁴ brannon M. wheeler ,Prophets in the quran :An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis. P.59

¹²⁵ Quran 11:40

¹²⁶ Quran 11:42-47

Another disbeliever in Noah's family was his wife herself. She did not join Noah in the Ark. And as a result, she was also drowned in the flood water. The number of believers was not clearly specified in the Qur'an. According to Ibn Abbas, that there were 80 believers¹²⁷ and the historian Ka'ab Al Akbar proclaimed that the number of believers was 72 and other source stated that the number of believers was 10 in the Ark of Noah.¹²⁸

Noah entered into the ark while the flood water began to come forth heavily. Before entering the Ark, Noah prayed to God to forgive him and his ancestors for saying the following prayers,

"My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever enters my dwelling (boat) as a believer (believing men and believing women)."¹²⁹

On the other hand, he also prayed to ruin the disbelievers by saying,

"And do not increase the wrongdoers but putting in destruction."¹³⁰

God also opened the gate of heaven (water gate) to be mixed with the water of the earth. Flood water submerged everything on the face of the earth. Such heavy rainfall had never been seen before. The rainfall and the sea water and waves washed away all living beings except Noah and those believers who were with him in the Ark. The Qur'an describes the flood,

"And then, [Allah] opened the gates of the heavens with rain pouring down."¹³¹

In this verse, the Arabic word **مُنْهَمِرٍ**, derived from root **ه م ر** (ح م ر), means pouring down. That means rain water came so vigorously from the sky like someone was pouring it down.

"And God caused springs to stream from the earth. Therefore, the waters from the earth and the heaven joined for a matter of predetermined (programmed long before)."¹³²

¹²⁷ Omar Mahmoud ,Muhammad: An Evolution of God.p.177

¹²⁸ Omar Mahmoud ,Muhammad: An Evolution of God.p.177

¹²⁹ Quran 71 : 28

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Quran54 :11

¹³² Quran 54 :12

Here in this verse, the Arabic word قَدِرَ is a verb, derived from root qāf dāl rā (ق د ر), and the meaning is predestined. That indicates the magnitude of the flood was planned beforehand to make sure the definitive destruction of the nation. God also pre-planned how He would save the believers under His surveillance. According to the Qur'an, God says,

"And I carried him on a construction (boat) made of planks and nails, the carrier on which Noah (as) and his followers embarked Floated under my Eyes (surveillance). It was a Reward for him who had been denied of the suffering."¹³³

The dry land was covered by the flood water and all the disbelievers drowned in the water. The earth was flooded showing a clear sign of punishment for disbelieving in one and only God. But Noah was safely floating on the flood water only by the mercy of Allah. None but Allah helped him to survive. According to the Qur'an,

"Indeed, when the water overflowed, I (Allah) carried you (Noah) in the sailing (ark)."¹³⁴

3.6 The end of the flood

God commanded the earth to swallow his water, the sky to stop raining. Earth and sky did what God said. All of the disbelievers were drowned under the water, and the boat rested on the mount of Judi. According to the Qur'an God said,

"O earth! Swallow up thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)!" and the water abated, and the matter was accomplished. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and the world went forth, away with those who did wrong."¹³⁵

In this Ayah, 'the matter was accomplished' means that the desire of God to wipe out all the disbelievers has been fulfilled.

¹³³ Quran 54:13-14

¹³⁴ Quran 69:11

¹³⁵ Quran 11:44

Noah, his family and some believers with all other living things were loaded on the 10th day of Rajab, and they left the boat on 10th of Muharram (these are months on Arabic calendar).¹³⁶

Noah wanted to show thankfulness to God for choosing them to be alive after the flood and for that reason he wanted his people to have fast in honor of God. Noah ordered his people

“Those of you are fasting should complete the fast. Those of you are not fasting should fast.”¹³⁷

3.7. Conclusion

The main message we get from the flood story in the Qur’an is, Noah had preached the universal message of Tawhid¹³⁸ that is believing in one true God described in the Qur’an. In the Qur’an, the flood story used as an example for future human generations to demonstrate the fate of nonbelievers. In the story, Noah provoked his people with two contrasting characteristics of God. He was preaching the greatness and forgiveness of God and asked his people to repentant for their wrong deeds and seek forgiveness. On the hand, he warned about punishment for disbelievers not only in the present life but also in the life after death.

In the coming chapter, I will talk about over all context of the two flood stories to construct the actual resolution of the flood.

¹³⁶ Brannon M. Wheeler, Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis.p.58

¹³⁷Brannon M. Wheeler, Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis. P.61

¹³⁸ Arabic: توحيد *taw hīd*, meaning the oneness of God

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT OF FLOOD BOTH IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'AN

The story of the Biblical Flood says that everything was corrupted on the earth and as a result of this corruption, God's decision to destroy the earth by a catastrophic flood. In the Bible, it seems like corruption in human was continuous mode and God was sorry (grief-stricken) for creating such a creature

“Then God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. God was sorry that He had made the man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”¹³⁹

In the Bible, the human is portrayed as a sinful creature. God also knows human incapability and the sinfulness character of human beings, but he wants to save humanity from their sin.

"... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." ¹⁴⁰

To understand the context of the flood in the Bible, we need to look into the beginning of sinfulness in human and how this corruption continued from Adam to Noah's time. I have discussed the very first sin and the exile of Adam and Eve from the garden of heaven, assassination of human recorded in the Bible until Noah's time and how human sinfulness was unremitting in Noah's time.

On the other hand, the story of Noah and the flood is mentioned in different parts of the Qur'an, sometimes as a continuous narrative and sometimes as brief accounts in a few verses. To construct the bigger picture of the context of the flood, I looked into the main Surahs having continuous narratives of the flood and analysed the particular stage in which those Surahs were revealed.

¹³⁹ Genesis 6:5-6

¹⁴⁰ Romans 3:20-24

4.1 Context of flood in Bible

4.1.1 The very first sin and the exile of Adam and Eve from the heaven

Genesis refers that in the beginning, the God (Elohim) created the earth, the heaven, the day, the night, the sky, the stars, the ocean, fishes, animals and all living being. It took six-day to create the earth and all things as well, and on the sixth day, God created the human in his own image named Adam¹⁴¹. Adam is a Hebrew word meaning is soil. Before making Adam God made the earth and everything which needs to live in the earth for human beings. God make a barrier between the animals and Adam by giving a soul or spirit to him. The process of creating first human being, Adam is described in the Bible as,

“The God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.”¹⁴²

The Bible says a man has been made in God’s own image. In Biblical word,

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them¹⁴³.

The word God’s own image is not referring the appearance of God except the soul or spirit of God. The meaning of the “image of God” has been debated for centuries and interpreted in many ways. I am not going to be in that details because that does not fit within the scope of this thesis. But from the Biblical text, it is clear that part of bearing God’s image refers to the human abilities that separate human from the animals and to rule over them.

After creating Adam, God created a garden in Eden, and he placed Adam in that garden to look after it. God created every kind of trees in the garden to eat, and God put a ‘tree of life’ and the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ in the middle of the garden¹⁴⁴. God commanded Adam to

¹⁴¹ Genesis 1:1-26

¹⁴² Genesis 2:7

¹⁴³ Genesis 1:26-27

¹⁴⁴ Genesis 2:8-9

eat any fruits from any trees save the fruit from 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil.' God also alert him that the result of disobeying his command is death¹⁴⁵. When God saw Adam alone in the Garden of Eden, he planned to make a companion for him, but he did not find anyone from the other creatures of God who would be the mate of Adam. God made Adam to fall asleep and took a part¹⁴⁶ of Adam's side, and God made Eve from the part. So this part of the story tells, God created Eve like Adam, and she was created from affiliates of Adam's body. So, she is made of Adam's flesh.

Adam named his partner after her importance in the context of the whole humanity.

“Then the man (Adam) named his wife Eve because she would be the mother of all who lives.”¹⁴⁷

After creating Adam and Eve, God blessed them “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”¹⁴⁸

Instead of obeying God after all He had done for them, Eve ate fruit from the forbidden tree that she was instructed to avoid (by the temptation of Satan). She also shared that fruit with Adam. This action was the first sin committed by human beings according to the Bible, which resulted in their (Adam and Eve) loss of innocence. Subsequently, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden.¹⁴⁹

4.1.2 Propagation of sin after exiling from heaven

After exiling from the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve got their first child Cain and then She (Eve) gave birth their second child Abel. Cain cultivated the ground, and Abel was looking after the flocks. Abel took some of the firstborn fattest flock which he took care of, and Cain took some fruits for making an offer to the God. God was happy with what Abel offered him, but he was not

¹⁴⁵ Genesis 2:16-17

¹⁴⁶ Many theologians claim that the part of Adam by which Eve was made is Adam's rib.

¹⁴⁷ Genesis 3:20

¹⁴⁸ Genesis 1:28

¹⁴⁹ Genesis 3:1-19

satisfied with Cain's offering. Cain was so angry that he murdered his brother Abel¹⁵⁰. That was the first murder on the earth. Sin had corrupted the descendants of Adam and Eve with the murder of a brother by another brother. Then, sin had multiplied. It took total possession of the man who was associated with it.¹⁵¹ The next murder happened by Lamech (Noah's father, there is controversy in this regard). Lamech killed a young man to take revenge. He came to his wives and told them about his heinous action and his fear of sufferings.¹⁵²

4.1.3 The widespread wickedness by human race

During the time of Noah, wickedness spread all over the world, and every living being was sinful. There is no one who was with God except Noah and his family. The sin was so great, and every man's heart was so evil that God wanted to blot out all of them. A detailed description of wickedness is not mentioned in the book of Genesis. Nevertheless, The Bible indicates moral degradation of human beings¹⁵³.

Also, conjugation of 'the sons of God' (The idea of 'the sons of God' is controversial, but we can guess that 'the sons of God' indicates someone divine) with the daughters of men was not permitted in God's eyes¹⁵⁴. Offspring's who were born from that conjugation were called Nephilim. So, it is clear that sin happened vigorously while the divine power (the sons of God) and human started to mix. The distinction between the divine power and the humans were disrupted. God did not want his spirit to mix with human offspring. According to the Bible

Then God said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Genesis 4:1-8

¹⁵¹ G. von Rad. Genesis. London. p. 108.

¹⁵² Genesis 4:23

¹⁵³ Genesis 6:5

¹⁵⁴ Genesis 6:1-4

¹⁵⁵ Genesis 6:3

4.2 Context of the flood in the Qur'an

4.2.1 Sins of human beings during Noah's time

At Noah's time, people believed in many Gods (making statues of them), and people of Noah forgot to pray the one and only God (Allah). According to the Qur'an

"And they conspired an immense conspiracy.

And said, 'Never leave your gods and never leave Wadd or Suwa' or Yaghuth and Ya'uq and Nasr.'"¹⁵⁶

Satan¹⁵⁷ influenced them to worship the statues and as a result, they gradually forgot the one and only God. According to Saheeh al-Bukharee, Wad, Suwaa', Yaqhoot, Ya'ooq and Nasr were among the idols of Noah's people. These idols were named after some righteous men. When these righteous men died, Satan inspired the people to make statues of them, named after those righteous men. These statues were positioned in their preferred assembly places as reminders of righteousness. Through generations, the purpose of the statues was forgotten. And following generations started to worship them as gods.¹⁵⁸

4.2.2 Noah in the Qur'anic Surahs

In the Qur'an, 28 Surahs talk about Noah. The number of the Surahs are 3,4,6,7, 9, 10, 11, 14,17,19,21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 33, 37, 38, 40, 42, 50, 51, 53, 54, 57, 66 and 71. Here I try to look at the context and the main theme of the Surahs (where Noah is mentioned in a bit more details) and how Noah is incorporated within. I have ordered them as it appears in the Qur'an.

Surah al-A'raf (7):59-64

¹⁵⁶ Quran 71:22-23

¹⁵⁷ Satan is a character appears in the texts of the Abrahamic religions who brings evil and temptation.

¹⁵⁸ Saheeh al-Bukharee (Eng. Trans.) vol.6, p.369-370

The basic theme of this Surah is Risalah, i.e. the "message" of Allah to humankind sent through many messengers. Some Islamic Prophets and a brief description of their missions stated along with their struggle with their community. In this Surah, Noah is introduced and gives Noah's story in a nutshell within these five verses, particularly in this following two verses

“We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a tremendous Day...But they denied him, so [Allah] saved him and those who were with him on the ship. And [Allah] drowned those who denied [Allah's] signs. Indeed, they were a blind people.”¹⁵⁹

Surah Yunus (10):71-74

The main topic of this Surah is faith in Allah with an explanation of the signs of Allah and belief in the afterlife. This Surah also tells about prophecy and the mission of the prophets as Allah sent His Messengers to remind people His existence and to warn them to worship Him. The story of Noah is told along with others prophets to recap the costs of disloyalty and pride.

Surah Hud(11):25-49

The Surah shines a light on the same topic as is covered by Surah Yunus that is an invitation to the path of worshipping Allah. The Surah tells about Allah's mercy and says that He is the provider and sustainer of all creatures. He has all his power to control human beings, and He can read human mind. The Surah also warns about punishment for not obeying Allah. A special idea in the Surah is that it as Allah can read human minds, He let Noah know about the mental status of Noah's people regarding Noah's call as it is mentioned in the Qur'an

And it was revealed to Noah that, "No one will believe from your (Noah's) people except those who have already believed, so do not be distressed by what they have been doing.”¹⁶⁰

Surah al Mu'minun (23):23-30

¹⁵⁹ Quran 7:59,64

¹⁶⁰ Quran 11:36

Like Surahs mentioned above, this one also invites to accept and follow the words of Prophets and to believe in Allah. This Surah explicitly says the earth is a testing place for Allah's servants.

“Indeed in that are signs, and indeed, [Allah] is ever testing [Our servants].”¹⁶¹

In the Surah, the Qur'an emphasises the certainty Noah's prophecy and the main message that Noah tried to propagate

“And We had certainly sent Noah to his people, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him; then will you not fear Him?"¹⁶²

Surah al-ash-shura'(26):105-122

Beside Noah's message, the Surah states that some people from the poorer part of his community believed in him.

They said, "Should we believe you (Noah) while you are followed by the lowest [class of people]?"¹⁶³

The richer part did not want to relate them to the poorer part and denied Noah. So, the class distinction was also eminent in Noah's community. Surah Hud also aligns here as the Surah says the Chiefs of Noah's community rejected his message.

Surah As-Saffat (37):75-82

The non-believers in Allah were asking for proofs that the Qur'an was the word of Allah. The Qur'an mentioned many signs both in nature and in history, and in that context, the story of Noah comes in. The Qur'an highlights the mercy Allah made upon Noah

¹⁶¹ Quran 23:30

¹⁶² Quran 23:23

¹⁶³ Quran 26:111

“And Noah had certainly called [Allah], and [Allah] the best of responders. And [Allah] saved him and his family from the great disorder.”¹⁶⁴

Surah al-Qamar (54):9-17

This Surah tells about Allah's judgment which may come any minute. Noah's flood is used as references along with the penalty of the people of 'Ad, Thamud, People of Lut, and the Pharaoh and his people. The Surah ends with a temptation for the believers who will be in the gardens of paradise after death.

Surah Nuh (71) (the entire Surah)

In this Surah, for the last time Noah is talked about in the Qur'an. The conversation between Allah and Noah and what happened in his career is discussed here. As it is described in the Qur'an, the flood story is a divine intend for the destruction of disobeying people which been started with Noah's people.

As I mentioned before, there are some other Surahs where Noah is mention very briefly. For example, Surah Bani Israel, Ayah 3; Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayahs 76, Surah Al-Furqan, Ayah 37, Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayah 15. The main message in them are also the same; it is about “Tawhid”.

4.2.3 Justification of punishment for Noah's people

According to the description found in the Qur'an, Noah had plenty of reasons to be angry with his people.

In Qur'anic narratives, we find that,

“They said: O Noah! If you do not stop, you will certainly become one of the accursed (not defined how, but seems like something very bad would happen to Noah).”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Quran 37:75-76

¹⁶⁵ Quran 26:116

“He said: My Lord! My people have branded me a liar.”¹⁶⁶

Noah did not complaint till Allah revealed to Noah that he would not be able to increase the number of believers as Allah read their mind and asked Noah nor to be stressed because he has done enough¹⁶⁷.

In Surah Nuh, we find that Noah explained to God how he persists he was in his mission. They tried to convince them in both in public and private. He tried in the day time also at night. Every time Noah approached them, they were arrogant with Noah put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments. At this point, Noah prayed to Allah that the disbelievers be destroyed to put a halt of the proliferation of disbeliever. At this point, Allah made the huge flood to wipe out the disbelievers.

To conclude the context of the flood in the Qur’an, we can say that the Qur’an uses Noah’s flood as an example to state a messenger’s mission of spreading Tawhid and then justifies the flood by showing some examples of rejection of his people which leads to their destruction. Actually, without a doubt, the Qur’an's most persistent declaration is Tawhid (believing in one God). Thirty times in the Qur’an the phrase 'there is no deity but Him (Allah)' is repeated¹⁶⁸

4.3 Brief accounts of the two contexts

In brief, we can say that the Biblical flood was set to renew the human race to eradicate corruption and immoral from the society. On the other hand, in the Qur’an, the flood story used as an exemplary implement to spread the oneness of God through the fear of punishment both in the world and in the afterlife.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the influence of both flood stories on later theological interpretation to understand the development of certain cultural practices both in Christianity and Islam.

¹⁶⁶ Quran 26:117

¹⁶⁷ Quran 11:36

¹⁶⁸ Jane Dammen McAuliffe ,The Cambridge Companion to the Qur’ān ,p.80

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE TWO FLOOD STORIES

The accounts of the flood in Genesis acknowledge Noah as being a righteous person in a human race on earth which has fallen victim to sin. In God's eyes, Noah was the only man who found favour in God's eyes and God saved him and his family because God chose him. The Qur'anic version of the story align with the underlying theme with the Biblical one omitting some of the details and shifting some of its focus regarding the image of God as a whole.

5.1 Narratives of the Flood stories

There is a fundamental scepticism in the Qur'an in detailing the flood history in contrast to the Genesis story. The Qur'an did not mention any date of the flood and did not give any hint on the length of the deluge. Unlike in the Bible, the dimensions of the vessel (Ark) are not mentioned. Perhaps, the Qur'anic description tried to avoid any confusion or inconsistency in the flood narrative obscuring some of its details. In general, the Qur'an does not appreciate further questions. The Qur'an states that

"O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are made clear (with a narrative of a sequence of events) to you, will distress you..."¹⁶⁹

5.2 The extent of the two floods as described in the Bible and the Qur'an

In Genesis, it is declared that the flood was global. The phrase "make an end of all flesh"(Genesis 6:13) implies a global flood. But we cannot say that for sure because that kind of phrase is applied elsewhere in the Bible to refer to regional events. For example,

"Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth."¹⁷⁰

Considering the communication possibility of the time stated here, it is hard to believe that people from regions geographically very far from Egypt were getting grain from Joseph. It could

¹⁶⁹ Quran 5:101

¹⁷⁰ Genesis 41:57

be a way of emphasising that each and every people in Egypt's neighbouring countries came to Egypt. This interpretation also strengthens if we re-analyze the verse [6:13] in the Bible. At the end of the verse, the phrase "destroy them with the earth" literally implies the destruction of the earth itself. But in the very next verse in the Bible, we find the instruction to Noah to build a boat

"Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch."¹⁷¹

If God wants to destroy the earth itself, why would He ask Noah to build an ark? It seems that the phrase "with the earth" is an exaggeration meant to emphasise the severity of the event, or that vegetation is not included along with the animals in the phrase. Another point that does not agree with the verse [6:13] is that if God wants to wipe out all creatures, how could He exterminate fishes using the Flood water? Thus, we cannot say with absolute certainty that the Flood was global as it is described in this verse.

The Qur'anic version suggests a local flood, but the Qur'an never states that the flood affected only the people living within proximity to Noah and his family. Perhaps, the reason why the Qur'an singles out the people of Noah in the first place as the victims of the flood is simply that it would be impossible to include all the peoples of the world since that the whole world could never have heard Noah's preaching. The Qur'an explicitly proclaims that each and every nation was preached to by a Prophet who spoke their own language. A story of a global flood would not fit well into that perspective. It is proclaimed to keep consistency in the Qur'anic verses.

But we should also look at the following verses:

"At length, behold! There came Our Command, and the fountains of the earth gushed forth! We said: `Embark therein, of each two, male and female, and your family- except those against whom the Word has already gone forth,- and the believers.' But only a few believed with him.....Then the word went forth: `O earth! Swallow up thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)! And the water abated'"¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Genesis 6:14

¹⁷² Quran 11:40,44

And

"So [Allah] opened the gates of heaven, with water pouring forth. And we caused the earth to gush forth with springs. So the waters combined to the extent decreed. But [Allah] bore him on a (vessel) made of broad planks and caulked with palm-fibre: She floats under [Allah's] eyes (and guidance)...."¹⁷³

These verses state that the earth poured forth water, implying that the flood may be universal. They do not suggest that only the area where Noah and his people lived gushed forth the flood waters. This clue also gives occasion to raise a general question: if the flood was purely local, why the need to take two opposite sexes of every species? A local flood would not eradicate the entire animal life from the face of the earth. This suggests the universality of Noah's flood. Unlike the book of Genesis, the God of the Qur'an did not order a particular distribution of the kinds of animals, clean and unclean; such a picking off animals during a local flood would be redundant and irrational. Noah could easily have a smaller Ark if he had not needed to take animals with him.

5.3 The depiction of Noah's character and his role

The flood heroes of Qur'an and Genesis carry the same name, Noah, and were chosen by God (Allah in the Qur'an and Genesis by God Yahweh, Elohim). The Qur'an clearly describes Noah as a follower of God who was sent to his people to warn them about the consequences of being a disbeliever in God. Genesis portrays Noah as a unique righteous person among his people at his time (does not say is a completely blameless man). The Qur'an also refers to him as a blameless man among his people. In both accounts the deity revealed to the flood hero the news of a coming flood and ordered him to build an Ark to survive the flood; the flood hero followed the divine command and built an Ark exactly as he was instructed.

In the Qur'an, the story begins in the very first verse of Surah 71 which depicts Noah. The verse states that Noah was sent to his people إِلَى قَوْمِهِ with a warning to them. What does the Qur'an

¹⁷³ Quran 54:11-14

mean by “his people” here? There are two possibilities. He has to warn his immediate family or his whole nation. We should consider some other passages in the Qur’an

"And [Allah] did not send any messenger except in the language of his people to state clearly for them,.."¹⁷⁴

And

“And for every nation is a messenger. So when their messenger comes, it will be judged between them in justice, and they will not be wronged.”¹⁷⁵

The only likely and consistent answer seems to be that Noah came to his nation. But Noah only saved his family (except Noah's wife who was a nonbeliever along with one of Noah's sons). Noah preached to his people for many years, but no one listened to him. Thus Noah failed utterly if we compare him to the influence of Muhammad on his people. Noah only convinced some of his immediate family over which he had authority. It makes sense if we look the second part of the verse in Qur’an 14:4:

“...and Allah sends [messenger] of course to whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And He is the Almighty, the Wise.”¹⁷⁶

If we take that particular verse into consideration, Allah sealed the heart of Noah’s people but also asked Noah to preach to his people. Here, the image of God contrasting with each other.

On contrast, Noah was not a Messenger in the Bible, and he did not preach to his people to worship God. He just was chosen by God as “he was following the way of God”.¹⁷⁷

In the Qur’an, Noah is described as a person totally dependent on God and his decisions. A particular event in the narrative shows this. After the end of the flood, Noah landed on the ground without checking the situation himself. He blindly believed in God and followed his command to land. In contrast, Noah in Genesis sent birds to find a place to live and to know the flood condition

¹⁷⁴ Quran 14:4

¹⁷⁵ Quran 10:47

¹⁷⁶ Quran 14:4

¹⁷⁷ Genesis 6:9

of the earth. He landed making sure of the condition of the earth. In general, the Qur'anic teaching develops an Islamic sentiment highlighting complete dependence on Allah's words without further judgment.

In both the Qur'an and the Bible, the hero showed his gratefulness to the Creator of the earth. Noah in the Bible sacrificed a clean animal in honour of God, but Noah in the Qur'an fasted in honour of Allah. In general, fasting is more of a person making the sacrifice.

A more dignified image of Noah in the Qur'an in contrast to that in the Bible is also evident in the issue of drinking wine. Genesis states that after surviving the flood, Noah started a vineyard and made wine. One day when he became drunk, his youngest son Ham saw him naked, told his elder two brothers in the mode of a joke about it and they covered Noah up. After Noah had waked up, he figured out what had happened while he was asleep and cursed Ham and his descendants. This story presents in Noah in a bad light. First of all, he was drunk and then he did not show mercy even to his youngest son who might have less sensibility compared to his elder brothers. Not only did Noah curse his son but he also cursed his descendants. In the Qur'anic version, on the other hand, Noah is free from all kind of inappropriate activities. Therefore, the Muslim attitude to the story of Noah getting drunk is that it gives them a basis for attacking the claim of the inspiration of the Bible.

5.4 God's role in the flood stories in general

In the Qur'an, God did not take the responsibility on Himself, as we find in the Qur'an that God listened to His messenger, Noah. Taking his suggestion God destroyed his nation. Although this conveys a milder image of Gods despotism, it contradicts some of the other claims in the Qur'an:

"....But you [Prophets] are only a Warner. And Allah is Disposer of all things."¹⁷⁸

God here claims He decides everything Himself. But in this case, He followed Noah's decision.

¹⁷⁸ Quran 11:12

In comparison, the book of Genesis is clear that everything happened exclusively through an unambiguous decision by God. God only wanted to save Noah and his family. God did not ask Noah to preach to his people. God did not plan that they might repent and avoid destruction from the face of the earth. God told Noah to build the ark just to save his family and some representative creatures. Noah was favoured by God because God chose to save him and his family with representatives of some animals. God's sovereign power is very clear in this context. Unlike the Qur'an, the Bible does not state anything which indicates that Noah warned anyone about the punishment to come. God warned Noah about the coming flood to destroy the earth. Noah, though being righteous before God, never conveyed this information to his people. He just followed God's instruction and made an Ark for himself and his family (and for some representative animals).

All in all, we do not sense a forgiving redeeming attitude of God regarding inundating the earth in the huge flood. On the other hand, the Qur'anic verses alleviate such an arrogant attitude of God. The Qur'an makes Noah a Warner instead. Moreover, the Qur'an represents God as unbiased as He excluded Noah's wife and one of his sons and did not favour Noah's own family, even though Noah asked for it:

“.....ask Me (Allah) not for that about which you (Noah) have no knowledge. Indeed, I advise you, lest you be among the ignorant.”¹⁷⁹

In other Qur'anic verses this example is used to glorify the fairness of God's judgment:

"Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of [Allah's] righteous servants but betrayed them, so those prophets did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, Enter the Fire with those who enter."¹⁸⁰

Another interesting point in the Qur'anic flood story is that Noah took many years to build the ark but did not change the dimensions of the boat according to a suggestion by God. That means God knew in the first place that Noah's warning would not work for Noah's people and that he would eventually destroy his people as a punishment.

¹⁷⁹ Quran 11:46

¹⁸⁰ Quran 66:10

Three fundamental attributes of God are asserted in the stories: all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good/loving. The all-powerful attribute always upholds in both the Flood stories. God could have destroyed everything and everyone including Noah and his family, as well as the animals, to make an end of his creation or to start a new beginning. But he chose not to do that and gave his creation a second chance to multiply on the face of the earth. But critical analysis of the flood stories weakens the all-knowing and the all-good attributes of God to some extent both in the Qur'an and in the Bible.

As we discussed before, the God of Genesis decided Himself to wipe out the human race along with other animals (excluding Noah, his family, and some representative creatures), a fact that casts doubt upon the all-good/loving aspect of God to the modern mind. The population he wiped out must have included children, disabled persons, and unborn children. And how could the animals be blamed for the sinfulness of humankind?

In the end, the biblical God showed sympathy for his creation and was regretful for His deed as He promised not to curse the earth again by a flood. God determined to take the suffering of His creatures upon himself for the sake of the future of the world. This action of God also raises another question. Why did He regret? Was He not aware of the consequence of the Flood?. This is not the only example in the Biblical narrative where God was confused about his action. In another passage in the Bible that details the cause of the flood, we read that God was distressed and felt sorry for making humankind.¹⁸¹ Such confusion on the part of God contradicts the idea of God as all knowing.

Interestingly, if we consider this repentant attitude of God from another perspective, it highlights the kindness or the all-good/loving aspect of the Biblical God more than does the image of God in the Qur'an.

In the Qur'anic flood story, God wanted everyone to pray to God and keep faith in Him. When He saw that people were worshiping many gods, he chose Noah to give his message and warning through him. As the people of Noah rejected him, God became angry and planned to destroy them, accepting Noah's prayer. The Qur'anic God demands to be worshipped and praised,

¹⁸¹ Genesis 6:6

as we also find in the stories of Hud, Saleh, and Lot, who are mentioned alongside Noah and whose peoples were destroyed, when they did not listen to their prophets and, did not worship God. Destruction of humankind is also prominent in the Bible, but the purpose of punishment is different. It seems as if the Qur'anic God is more worried about his superiority while the biblical God is more concerned for humanity and its wrongdoing.

However, it is not accurate to say that Qur'anic God merely insists on his divine authority to destroy his creation or to punish them; in addition, the Qur'anic flood story also expresses Allah's love and care for his creation. If he did not care for humankind, he would not have sent His messengers for guidance. But the bottom line is that the Qur'anic God had a harsher attitude in the flood story as He did not make a covenant with Noah. Moreover, He destroyed humans many times even after the flood of Noah. The Qur'an states that

“But (there were people) before them, who denied (the Signs),- the People of Noah, and the Confederates (of Evil) after them; and every People acted against their prophet, to seize him, and disputed by means of vanities, therewith to condemn the Truth; but it was I[Allah] that seized them! and that is how (terrible) was My Requital! ”¹⁸²

The God of the Qur'an did not show any mercy or forgiveness to the people who did not worship God. Besides, God was not repentant over his decision. God wants to make an exemplary story of punishment for the next generations so that they will not disobey Him. There is a verse in the Qur'an that precisely depicts this feature of the Qur'anic God

“...Allah showed favours on the descendants of Adam, and of those we carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the decedents of Abraham and Israel, and of those who guided and chosen. When the sign of the Merciful was recited to them, they fell in prostration and weeping. But after them came successors who neglected the prayer and followed their own desire. Soon they will meet the conscience of their wrongdoing. ” ¹⁸³

¹⁸² Quran 40:5

¹⁸³ Quran 19:58

Qur'anic God described as a merciful God through the Qur'an. But this love to human is conditional. God only love and forgive those who believe in his oneness and worship him.

5.5 Image of humanity (ideal human characteristic) according to the flood stories

The flood story in Genesis represents humanity from a perspective of intended harmony. The essence of humanity is created by God as the representation of God's image on earth. The task that has been given to human as attributes of humanity are: multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number (which is stated in the Bible several time¹⁸⁴). Here "humanity" does not mean to fulfil the role of a servant of God but to avoid becoming an agent of disruptive chaos on the earth. Human beings are responsible for maintaining peace and harmony in nature having authority over the animals.

The Qur'anic flood story provides a notion that every prophet or righteous person keeps asking his people to follow the path of humanity as described by God. The path not only highlights faith in God but also offers a complete code of lifestyle. Disobedience is seen as the opposite of humanity and results in punishment after death. On the other hand, the person who will follow the way of the righteous person will be protected from the anger of God and will be rewarded for their faith.

5.6 Sin in the context of biblical flood

In the first place, violating the divine command became the reason for exiling from the Garden of Eden for the first human, Adam and Eve. The blessings (Genesis 1:28) they got in the heaven immediately turned into a curse (Genesis 3:16-17). Here, the sin is disobedience of God's command to seek knowledge about good and bad¹⁸⁵. Later on, Cain did violence of divine command by murdering his own brother (Genesis 4.8).

¹⁸⁴ Genesis 1:22, 1:28 and 9:7

¹⁸⁵ According to the Genesis 3:4, as Adam and Eve wanted to gain knowledge about good and evil which only God has and for the sake of gaining forbidden knowledge they disobeyed God though they were not supposed to eat the fruit.

Afterwards, at Noah's time, the sin became worldwide¹⁸⁶, and the divine judgment against this phenomenon was an ultimate elimination for the whole earth saving one man and his family. Here, what kind of sin occurred in the earth is not clearly defined and but in the book of Genesis, we find that human mind was occupied by evil thinking (Genesis 6:5). Of course, the moral character of a man's actions is determined by the moral state of his heart. Another root of sin (controversial, not explicitly explained in the Bible) is the conjugation between 'the sons of God' and 'the daughters of humans.' In this case of worldwide sin, we don't see a defined boundary of the sin. It is totally dependent on God's judgment. In this case, is the standard of perfection established by God and if someone falls short, he/she will be a sinner. According to the Bible,

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."¹⁸⁷

In the Bible, sin has a collection appearance and the whole community can suffer for the sin, even if everyone is equally responsible and sometimes one can suffer for others fault. In the story of Noah we see that the God wiped out very one except Noah and his family, did not consider any young or very old to have mercy. Another example, in after flood situation, Noah cursed his youngest son's son Canaan even though he was not a sinner; the sinner was cannon's father.

5.7 The Doctrine of Sin in the Qur'an

As the Qur'an is not organised in chronological order, the theme of sin is not systematically elaborated but is referred to more incidentally in a sequential. In the Islamic view, the first sin happened by the first human Adam and his wife as they disobeyed¹⁸⁸ the command of Allah.

But in Noah time, God asked Noah to warn his people about believing in one God leaving all their pseudo-gods. According to Qur'an 23:23 and Qur'an 11:27, it is explicitly stated that the sin is "not believing in one God". Islam emphasised on monotheism¹⁸⁹ which is opposite to

¹⁸⁶ According to the Genesis 6:5, and Genesis 6:11-12

¹⁸⁷ Romans 3:23

¹⁸⁸ As both of them ate the fruit from the tree which was forbidden for them by the divine authority.

¹⁸⁹ Monotheism is in belief in one God and Islam called it *tawhīd* or oneness of Allah who does not share partnership with any one.

polytheism¹⁹⁰. And the sin of believing many gods is called “Shirk”¹⁹¹ in Islam. About the Shirk Qur’an says,

“Allah does not forgive (the sin of) associating with other Gods, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates other Gods with Allah has certainly stayed far, far away (from the right)”¹⁹².

Allah emphasised the heed to obey only one God such as in Surah an-Nisā’ 4:48, Surah al-Mā’ida 5:72, Surah Luqmān 31:134:48, Surah al-Mā’ida 5:72, Surah Luqmān 31:13 and Surah an-Nisā’ 4:36. These verses demonstrated that the Qur’anic view toward *Shirk* and how serious is it. The Qur’an says that sinners go to the hell after their death and hell is described in various names like *Jahannam*¹⁹³, *al-Nār*¹⁹⁴, *al-jahim*¹⁹⁵. And all the nonbelievers¹⁹⁶ and sinners¹⁹⁷ will end up in hell in their afterlife. Throughout the Qur’an, Allah warns (through his messengers) his people to obey and worship only one Allah and not to worship anyone besides Allah. In Noah’s whole life, he warned his people to worship only Allah and obey his messenger. No other sin gets so much emphasis as comparing anyone with Allah. As in the stories of the destruction of other community during other Prophets (Lot, Saleh, Hud, etc....) (Surah Ash-Shura: 160-168),(Surah Hud:50), (Surah Hud:52), in Noah’s story, chief sin is disobeying God and his messenger.

In the Qur’an, sin is very much personal. There are two verses that clearly state this,

“Whoever earns (commit) sin, only earns it against himself...”¹⁹⁸

And

¹⁹⁰ Believing in many gods is called Polytheism and polytheism is not acceptable in Islam.

¹⁹¹ *Shirk* is an Arabic word which is strictly forbidden in Islam. *Shirk* is the jointing other gods with Allah or comparing someone as a partner with Allah.

¹⁹² Quran 4:116

¹⁹³ Quran 2:206, 3:12, 197, 4:55, 169, 7:41, 8:36, 35:36, 38:56, 50:30, 85:10, 89:23, 98:6.

¹⁹⁴ Quran 2:39, 3:185, 7:44, 50, 10:27, 14:30, 27:90, 32:20, 38:59, 50:24, 59:20, 74:31

¹⁹⁵ Quran 2:119,5:10,5:86, 9:113, 22:51, 26:91,37:23,37:55

¹⁹⁶ Quran 5:10, 86, 8:36, 9:73, 35:36, 39:71, 57:19, 98:6.

¹⁹⁷ Quran 14:49-50, 19:86, 38:55, 43:74, 78:21-2.

¹⁹⁸ Quran 4: 111

“No one earns anything to save himself, and no one bearer a burden bears the burden of another (during the judgment day no one can help other, not even family).”¹⁹⁹

In the flood story in the Qur’an, we find that those who believed in God and listened to Noah survived in the Ark. On the other hand, one of Noah’s own sons and his wife were drowned as non-believers. However, the flood story does not talk about children and pre-born children and how they could be sinners.

The doctrine of sin is different in the biblical flood and the Qur’anic flood. Sin in the Bible is being wicked and violating the world. In the later part of the Old Testament, to disobey any of the Ten Commandments (documented at Exodus 20:1–17, and then at Deuteronomy 5:6–21.) is a sin. In Islam, the biggest sin is Shirk (comparing Allah with another God or gods) which is unforgivable (Qur’an, 4:116).

5.8 Covenant in the Bible

In the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the idea of the covenant has considerable theological importance because it expresses the relation between God and humans at specific moments in sacred history²⁰⁰. The Hebrew word בְּרִית (*berit*) means "covenant." ‘Covenant is a kind of agreement between two people where two people are bound to keep agreements. “If one fails to keep the agreement, will it can break down²⁰¹”.

For the first time in the Bible, God made his covenant with the first human Adam and his wife. But they failed to keep their promise. Later God enlarges the covenant which was made with Noah and his sons after the flood. The Adamic covenant, renewed through the Noachic covenant with modifications, applies to all mankind as an everlasting covenant²⁰². This is the covenant by which God confirmed His relationship with all humanity. The covenant is a universal covenant (discussed in the second chapter of this thesis). Later on, God made another covenant with

¹⁹⁹ Quran 6: 164

²⁰⁰ Juan Eduardo Campo, Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.170

²⁰¹ Keene, Michael. This Is Judaism. 1st ed. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 1996. Print. p.26

²⁰² Edwards, Larry D. The Twelve Generations Of The Creation. 1st ed. [Longwood, Fla.]: Xulon Press, 2006. Print. p.138

Abram²⁰³ narrowing down its extent. The next covenant is called Mosaic²⁰⁴ covenant (Exodus 20-24) which was a covenant between God and Israelites, and this covenant is a kind of completion of the Abrahamic covenant.

First God made his covenant with all the humanity (with Noah and his descendants) and then with the part of humanity (with Abraham and his descendants) and lastly with the people of Israel. The last one is very specific and specialised.

All the three covenants were made with some of the conditions, in the Noahic covenant commands (Genesis 9:4– 7) and a sign (rainbow) (Genesis 9:13), same conditions applied for Abrahamic covenant (circumcision) (Genesis 17:12– 14) and in Mosaic covenant commands detailed in (Exodus 20-24) and the sign, Sabbath (Exodus 31:13). And the result of disobeying the command is death²⁰⁵ or being off from their people^{206 207}.

6.9 Covenant in the Qur'an

The Arabic word *mīthāqa* means covenant which is derived from the root wāw thā qāf. An Islamic scholar Robert Darnell finds out that, the Qur'anic covenant is an agreement with God which has overall three general features: the remembrance of God's grace, the second feature is a divine promise of reward, and the third one is commandments²⁰⁸ which must be followed²⁰⁹. In another word, "A covenant(mithaq) occurs through the doing of those things that render obedience obligatory."²¹⁰

²⁰³ According to Genesis 17:5 God changed Abram's name to Abraham

²⁰⁴ Moses was the chosen one (Exodus 19:4) like Noah and Abraham as he was the obeying God's command (Exodus 19:7) and the covenant was made with Moses on behalf of the people of Israel on the top of the Mount Sinai.

²⁰⁵ According to the Genesis 9:5-6 God will demand a life in exchange of a life if anyone did not listen his command

²⁰⁶ As Genesis 17:14 states, "Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

²⁰⁷ Exodus 31:14 tells that "Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people.

²⁰⁸ There are many commandments to believe for the Muslim believers. These are: not to compare others with God, they should not steal, should not commit adultery, should not kill someone, should not give false witness and should be kind and caring to parents.

²⁰⁹ Darnell, Robert Carter. *The Idea Of Divine Covenant In The Qur'an*. 1st ed. 1970. Print.p. 340-342.

²¹⁰ Weiss, Bernard G. *The Spirit Of Islamic Law*. 1st ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006. Print.p.33-34

God's covenant with all humanity is called the primordial (primitive) covenant. The first covenant in the Qur'an was between God and all humanity in which humanity acknowledged about the sanctified commitments in Islam and the rewards after the death. In the Qur'an, Surah 7, verse 172 states that God asked the 'children of Adam'²¹¹, about the supremacy of God. In reply, they took a vow and answered that He (God) is certainly their creator and their God. According to the verse,

“And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves: “Am I not your Lord?” They said: “Yes, we testify”—lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: “We have been unaware of this,” or lest you should say: “It is only that our fathers were polytheists of old, and we were their seed after them; would you destroy us on account of what the falsifiers did?”²¹²

This verse speaks about the day of *Alatsu* when every soul appeared before it was born to testify God as their Lord. As God created all humanity, He wanted us to acknowledge His sovereignty with some obligatory law; to obey and worship him and listen to his messengers.

If anyone breaks the covenant, he or she will face the punishment of hell (Qur'an 13:25) and ever keeps the covenant and will fulfil the other law he or she will dwell in Paradise (Qur'an 2:35-36, 13:20-23). The Qur'an states about this matter,

“By the soul and Him Who perfected it and inspired it with knowledge of what is wrong with it and what is right for it: indeed successful will be the one who keeps it (soul) pure, and indeed failure will be the one who corrupts it.”²¹³

²¹¹ According to the verse 172, the word *Dhurriyyah* used for the children of Adam. The meaning of this word is offspring or descendants and the word had used many times in the Quran with indicating the same meaning. The word 'Dhurriyyah' therefore signifies the descendants or offspring of Adam that means all the humanity. This implies that the covenant of God was with all the humanity as all the humans are the progeny of Adam.

²¹² Quran 7:172

²¹³ Quran; 91:7-10

God make another kind of Covenant with prophets. God sent many Prophets such as Noah Abraham²¹⁴, Moses²¹⁵, Jesus²¹⁶, Muhammad and so many. They were sent to people to guide them the right path to living and most importantly to worship only one God. According to the Qur'an,

“And [recall, O People of the Scripture], when Allah took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], "Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him." [Allah] said, "Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?" They said, "We have acknowledged it." He said, "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.”²¹⁷

And,

“And remember [Allah] took from the Prophets their Covenant as (We did) from thee (Muhammad): from Noah Abraham Moses and Jesus the son of Mary: We took from them a solemn Covenant.”²¹⁸

These verses say that God took a covenant from all the prophets and gave the Scripture and knowledge. Their covenant with God to proclaim His supremacy, carry out the many commandments which were given in the scriptures and spread them to the people.

The last covenant in the Qur'an was with Muhammad and his followers. But the Qur'an also mentions the covenant with Abraham, Moses, and Noah. However, the children of Israel and (Qur'an 2:83) the people of Christians broke their covenant (Qur'an 5:14) together, and they corrupted their scripture. That is why Qur'an confirmed their punishment in the afterlife. The Islamic understanding of covenant is different from that of the Jews and Christians. Judaism claims that the Children of Israel was chosen by God himself as his people for all the time, and the Islamic covenant is not symbolic like the Jewish mandatory sign of circumcision as explains the covenantal relationship between God and Israelites. The Islamic perspective on sin involves on forgetting the

²¹⁴ Quran mentioned Abraham as Ibrahim

²¹⁵ Biblical Moses is Musa in the Quran

²¹⁶ Isa in Quran and Jesus in the New testament

²¹⁷ Quran 3:81

²¹⁸ Quran 33:7

covenant what people swore before birth (primordial covenant), but in Judaism and Christianity, sin is violating the commandments of God. The covenant in Qur'an shows that the sovereignty of God is more important whereas the Biblical covenant reflects the heed to fulfil the commandments of God. In both perspectives, the covenant is the bridge to get the ultimate Salvation.

5.10 Biblical view on Salvation

The knowledge of salvation first appeared in the biblical flood story. If we look back, salvation is not get related to the afterlife but means blessings in their life.²¹⁹ During the time of Adam and Eve, because of their sin, they were exiled from the Garden of Eden instead of getting salvation. At that time, there was no salvation for the sinners and the prerequisites of gaining salvation was dependent on divine judgment²²⁰. Noah was the first person in the Bible, whom God is redeeming as a result of 'being righteous, blameless and walking faithfully with God'²²¹. All these virtues were the way of receiving salvation at that time. But the question is, why was the whole family of Noah rescued as there was no proof of their incorruptibility? Or answer be that "the human race itself preserved because one man was pleasing in the sight of God."²²²

Later in the Bible, the same theme is exposed in the story of Lot. According to Genesis (18:20-29), the wickedness of the city of Sodom and Gomorrah was so great that God decided to destroy these cities. But Abraham negotiated with God to spare the people of the cities, if ten righteous people could be found (18:32). As there were no people except Lot, both cities were destroyed with all the people save Lot²²³ and his two daughters (19:29-30). The perspective of this story is the same as in the flood story. But, here he (Lot) got salvation because God just chooses him. His character is not explained in the story.

²¹⁹ Genesis 1:28 states that God blessed Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth even though they committed sin by eating the fruit from the forbidden tree.

²²⁰ Divine judgment rely on one's character whether he was good or bad, or he was following God's way or not.

²²¹ According to Genesis 6:9, Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. And that was the reason that he was chosen (Genesis 6:8) by God to keep alive through an ark (Genesis 6:22).

²²² Schoeman, Roy H. *Salvation Is From The Jews* (John 4:22). 1st ed. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003. Print.p.25

²²³ Genesis 19:19 refers that he found favoured in the eyes of God. But there is no clarification whether he was a righteous man or not, Or why he chosen by God?

After that, salvation came to all of the people of Israel, not only to one who was chosen by divine power. One example of that is the exile of all Israelites from the slavery of the king of Egypt²²⁴. But the reason for doing this favour is that they descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob²²⁵.

In Judaism, the doctrine of Salvation is valid only on the earth as the idea of “heaven and hell as opposed places, where individuals go to receive reward or retribution for their deeds, is non-existent in the Old Testament²²⁶”. But, what the real reason for salvation is not clear in the Bible. In Noah’s time, the blameless person got salvation but afterwards, God chose who should get salvation.

The Biblical flood and the later stories in Genesis indicate that the salvation of humans happen in the earth and the punishment of sin also happens in the earth. There is nothing left for the final judgment in the afterlife.

5.11 The Qur’anic concept of Salvation

In the Qur’an, the idea of salvation is centred in believing or keeping faith in the oneness of God. Islamic theologians entitled this hypothesis as *tawhid*. To justify the perception of believing one God and affiliation between Salvation and *Tawhid*, one of the scholarly comment is following,

Salvation for a Muslim, therefore, is not completely meritorious, as in addition to the performance of good works, it is based upon the belief or faith in the oneness of God, the prophecy of Muhammad, and the afterlife²²⁷.

The main aim of Noah’s life was to preach to his people to make them believe in the oneness of God and make them believing in his (Noah’s) word. Besides, He warned people about

²²⁴ Exodus 12:51

²²⁵ According to exodus2: 23-24, The people of Israel cried out to God to get rid of the slavery and The people of Israel rescued when God remembered the covenant which he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

²²⁶ Ma’súmián, Farnáz. Life After Death. 1st ed. Oxford: Oneword, 1995. Print.p.32

²²⁷ Geisler, Norman, and Abdul Saleeb. Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993.p.125

the reward of having believed in one God and worshipping Him. One of the Qur’ans verses affirms that,

“God has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds [that] for them there is forgiveness and a great reward (the Paradise).”²²⁸

The above ayah says that the believers, who believe in one God and do good in the earth, (but believing in Oneness Of God emphasised in whole Qur’an), they will be exonerated and finally they will get their salvation in Paradise. It seems like, the only and the ultimate way of salvation according to Qur’an is Heaven.

There are many examples where the Qur’an speaks about the life of after death (*al-Ākhirah*²²⁹). Not only that, the Qur’an has correspondingly a very monotonous declaration about the punishment of the fire²³⁰ in the afterlife. To add to its significance, the Qur’an explains the Day of Judgment in a numerous way, such as *Al-Yawm al-Ākhir*²³¹, *al-Sā’ah*²³², *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*,²³³ and the *Yawm al-Hisāb*.²³⁴ According to the Qur’an, during the day of *Yawm al-Hisāb*,

“People will come forward in separate groups to be shown their deeds: whoever has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it, and whoever has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it”²³⁵

On this matter the commentary of Stephen, Lambert says following,

“Muslims live under persistent uncertainty about the successful completion of this quest; ultimately, their after-worldly lives hang in the balance. In the end, good works will be balanced against evil deeds.”²³⁶

²²⁸ Qur’an 5:9.

²²⁹ Quran 2:201

²³⁰ Quran 2:201

²³¹ Quran. 2:8, 3:114, 4:38-9, 5:69, 9:18-9, 24:2, 29:36, 33:21, 58:22, 60:6, 65:2

²³² Quran. 6:31, 40, 7:187, 12:107, 15:85, 16:77, 42:17-8, 43:66, 45:27, 47:18, 54:1, 79:42

²³³ Q. 2:85, 3:55, 5:14, 7:32, 10:60, 11:60, 16:25, 17:13, 19:95, 20:100-1, 21:47.

²³⁴ Q. 38:16, 26, 53, 40:27

²³⁵ Quran 99:6-8

²³⁶ Lambert, Stephen P. Y: The Sources of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct. Washington, D.C.: Joint Military Intelligence College, 2005).p.53

The Qur'an puts as much as importance on Heaven, which is referred in Arabic as al-Jannah²³⁷ (singular form) and Jannāt²³⁸ (plural form) that, the al-Jannah or Jannāt is signified as the reward of those who were believers and were just.²³⁹

S. Murata and W. C. Chittick highlighted the topic follows,

“No scripture devotes as much attention as the Koran to describing the torments of hell and the delights of paradise.”²⁴⁰

The consequences of disbelievers according to the Qur'an,

“Indeed, God has cursed the disbelievers (disbelieving in one and only God) and prepared for them a Blaze. Abiding therein forever, they will not find a protector or a helper.”²⁴¹

All in all, the ultimate salvation in Islam is Paradise, and the way to Paradise is believing in *tawhid*. The Qur'an also speaks about the other good deeds²⁴², but if we consider the Surah Nisa Ayah 116²⁴³, the idea of good deeds becomes nugatory. However, the concept of salvation in the Qur'an is not acceptable as we do not know about the life of after the death or heaven nor hell. The wonder is, why Qur'an said something which has no basis. So, it leaves us with a big question.

²³⁷ Q. 2:214, 3:142, 4:124, 7:50, 41:30, 47:6, 68:17, 79:41, 81:13

²³⁸ Quran. 4:13, 5:65, 9:72, 14:23, 22:14, 23, 56, 42:22, 44:52, 47:12, 51:15, 61:12, 64:9, 74:40

²³⁹ Q. 2:25, 14:23, 22:14, 23, 56, 29:58, 42:22, 47:12, 64:9

²⁴⁰ Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994),p.211.

²⁴¹ Quran 33: 64-65

²⁴² Quran 3:132, 3:134

²⁴³ As God said that he will forgive for every wrong doing except *shirak*. On this basis, if anyone do all good but obeying God, he or she will not have salvation. So, good deeds or bad deeds are same only one thing is glorified and that is *tawhid*.

CHAPTER 6: INFLUENCE OF FLOOD STORIES ON LATER THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

Both flood stories have didactic qualities that have impacted on both Judeo-Christian and Muslim societies. These two flood myths influenced Judeo-Christian and Islamic paintings, poetry, and media. For example, Noah was an American epic biblical drama film in 2014. Many other movies have been made on Noah's flood in both Islamic and Judeo-Christian cultures.

6.1 Judeo-Christian values impacted by the flood story

The biblical flood story has a great influence on Western thought, culture, religion, and society.

When Christianity arises, the Christian writers portrayed the biblical flood story in a new appearance; they shaped up the story in an image of baptism²⁴⁴. As water washes everything, it can also be used to clean the sin of human beings (like the flood water cleaned the whole earth). Thus, they linked water with baptism.²⁴⁵ The salvation which comes through baptism (Water baptism being called an "antitupon") is symbolised by the safety the Ark provided for Noah and his family to save them from the flood.²⁴⁶ Christianity elevates Noah so much that in some cases, Noah is treated as a version of Jesus Christ. His survival from the flood and his reappearance from the ark is interpreted as the resurrection of Christ.²⁴⁷

In the words of the New Testament

²⁴⁴ Baptism refers to the Christian religious rite of sprinkling water on to a person's forehead or of immersing them in water, symbolizing purification or regeneration and admission to the Christian Church. In many denominations, baptism is performed on young children and is accompanied by name-giving

²⁴⁵ Wright, Timothy. No Peace Without Prayer. 1st ed. Print.p.202

²⁴⁶ Yarnold, Edward. Cyril Of Jerusalem. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.p.58

²⁴⁷ Norman Cohn. Noah's flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.25

"And this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."²⁴⁸

Furthermore, the three different stories (level) of Noah's Ark as mentioned in the description of the Ark, is considered as the symbol of three virtues praised by the Apostle: faith, hope, and charity.²⁴⁹

In the Genesis flood, As a dove brought an olive leaf in her mouth after the flood, the image of a white dove bearing an olive branch in her mouth has turned into a general symbol of peace. The Jewish state, Israel has taken a menorah flanked by two olive branches one on each side as the emblem of the state. An olive tree is treated as a symbol of long life.²⁵⁰

In early Christianity, the olive branch was a striking subject for art: "on sarcophagi and in the catacombs it epitomized the hope of resurrection and life everlasting."²⁵¹

Another impact of the biblical flood story on western culture and society is the image of a raven. It is treated as an unclean bird; a symbol of evil, and an enemy. Because, theologians from the fourth century, on generally wrote that the raven had failed in its task as Noah sent forth a raven from the ark to check the flood status, which went flying about.²⁵² Not only that, the raven is expelled in baptism²⁵³, ' and the bird is mentioned as "the foul bird of wickedness."²⁵⁴

Another impact of the biblical flood story on western culture and society is "theologians from the fourth century, on generally wrote that the raven had failed Noah in its mission and characterised it as "an unclean bird; a symbol of evil, and "the enemy"²⁵⁵.

²⁴⁸ 1 Peter 3:21

²⁴⁹ This quote is originally from Augustine but Norman Cohn used the quote in his book, Noah's flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.29

²⁵⁰ Eisenberg, Ronald L. The JPS Guide To Jewish Traditions.p.672

²⁵¹ Norman Cohn. Noah's flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.31

²⁵² Plec, Emily. Perspectives On Human-Animal Communication.P.208

²⁵³ Norman Cohn. Noah's flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.31

²⁵⁴ Norman Cohn. Noah's flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.31

²⁵⁵ Plec, Emily. Perspectives On Human-Animal Communication.P.208

The character of Noah also influenced in Judaism and in later theology as well. At the time of the flood the concept of Noah had recognised as a sign of righteousness, in the sense of unquestioning obedient to God, became commonplace; and soon it was carried further.²⁵⁶ In Christianity, Noah has been glorified many times and “he came to be seen as the ‘type’ of Christ. His survival and his emergence from the ark were interpreted as prefiguring the resurrection of Christ and his emergence from the tomb- and so the resurrection to eternal life which is the hope of every Christian.”²⁵⁷

6.2 Noah’s flood story in Islamic Values

In general, Islamic scholars are not interested in the symbolic meaning of the flood story. Perhaps they just take it as an exemplary story in the Qur’an to teach people. Nevertheless, Islamic scholars came to accept that where the ark of Noah took rest after the flood (The idea of Temple Mount in Judaism) would be the place of Resurrection and Last Judgment.²⁵⁸

Theologians show that there is a legendary association of crucial events in the lives of the prophets in Islam, for example, the day on which Noah's Ark came to rest on land (the 10th day in the month of Muharram), the day on which God forgave Adam, the day of Joseph's release from prison, the day of the births of Jesus, Abraham, and Adam, and the day of Muḥammad's conception are the same date.²⁵⁹

Noah became a role model of righteousness in Islamic thinking as well as among the Muslims. The flood story did not have much effect on later Islamic theology because Islamic theologians did not show much interest in scrutinising the metaphorical meaning of the story.

²⁵⁶ Norman Cohn. Noah’s flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.24

²⁵⁷ Norman Cohn. Noah’s flood, The Genesis Story in Western Thought, Yale University Press, 1996.p.25

²⁵⁸ Lazarus-Yafeh, Hava. Some Religious Aspects of Islam. 1st ed. Leiden: Brill, 1981. Print. p.66.

²⁵⁹ Megan H. Reid, ‘Āshūrā,Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three

In addition, we find the conceptual similarity of present Islamic culture in the description of the flood story in the Qur'an. In the Biblical flood story, the concept of family is purely traditional. It forms either by marriage or by blood connection. The flood story described in the Qur'an adds a different aspect to the idea of forming a family. Along with the traditional concept of family, shared faith is equally important to form a proper family in Islam

According to the Qur'an, during the time of embarkation into the ark Noah invited his son by saying

"My son! Sail with us and do not be with the disbelievers²⁶⁰."

His son replied,

"I shall take refuge on a mountain that will protect me from the water²⁶¹".

To save his son from the flood Noah prayed to Allah,

"My Lord, Surely my son is one of my family, and surely your promise is the truth, and You are the most just of judges."²⁶²

Allah refused his request and said to him,

"Surely he is not one of your family. Surely it is an unrighteous deed, so do not ask me about what you have no knowledge of"²⁶³.

"And do not marry Al-Mushrikat (idolatresses, etc.) till they believe (worship Allah Alone). And indeed a slave woman who believes is better than a (free) Mushrikah (idolatress, etc.) even though she pleases you..."²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ Quran 11:42,

²⁶¹ Quran 11:43

²⁶² Quran 11:45

²⁶³ Quran 11:47

²⁶⁴ Quran 2:221

This maybe one of the clues that generate doubt in interfaith marriages in present Islamic culture. This marriage related issue also aligns with another verse in the Qur'an. We also find the same notions is a famous Muslim scholar's commentary,

“Gods revelation to all prophets and messengers since Noah and Abraham right up to Moses, Jesus and Muhammad has always given precedence to ties of faith and religion over thoe of blood and ancestry. to love or to hate, for thye sake of God, has always been the basis for agreement or disharmony, respectively, among individuals and communities.”²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Ghazālī, Muḥammad, A. A Shamis, and Zaynab Alawiye. A Thematic Commentary on The Qur'an. 1st ed. Herndon, Va.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000. Print.p.223

CONCLUSION

The story of the Flood in the Qur'an is a didactic narrative that portrays the fundamental linkage of God with mankind, which has a cyclical nature. The pattern consists in alignment with God, deterioration of the alignment, correction (as a form of salvation) which aims towards the regaining of alignment. Man's behaviour deteriorates, and sin rises over time. Sin results in bewilderment, pain, and misery. Eventually, the pain reaches a tipping point where people crave for salvation without knowing the right path to salvation. God then sends a messenger to lead the people back to Him and realign them with His disposition. Thus, the succession of redemptive acts continues. As portrayed in the Qur'an, Noah represents hope, a correction to bring his people back to God and continue the cycle of redemption. The Ark is a platform of salvation (people who came in the ark escaped the suffering of the flood) the story doesn't come to a conclusion with redemption only.

God showed mercy to Noah and his family during the flood. What we see afterwards is that the behaviour of Noah's sons after the landing contained sinful events. That means, we find the continuity of sinfulness even in that righteous family, but God still protected them. In the Qur'anic view of the flood story, along with hope, another factor is added to it, that is fear (in the form of alarm and punishment). The Qur'anic revelation goes farther than the Bible in compelling people to total submission to God. The Qur'an states that Muhammad is a prophet to all the people who listen to his message. Along with this message the Qur'an is to alert the people to come into to obedience to God by the intimidation of punishment, claiming that it has always come upon those who disbelieved their Prophets, taking Noah's flood story as an example. In a interesting twist, the Qur'an states that Noah did not pray to God for his disobedient people to overcome their plight. Noah was frustrated with them and had no further care for them, and showed them no final compassion. Not pleading for their forgiveness before God, he even prayed for their destruction. After that, God listened to Noah. This story gives more authority to Muhammad and strengthens his direct connection to God's will. Beside this, it also softens the image of God regarding the destruction of Noah's people by the flood as God did in response to the prayer of His messenger Noah.

In the Bible, the acts of God sound scandalous to the modern mind. God destroyed humankind on his own will. It portrays God's supremacy but less of His rationality. An obvious question comes in response to the flood stories: among Noah's people, there were children, handicapped people, and of course some unborn children. Why had God to kill them all? Why had they to suffer from others? The almighty, the most merciful images of God dim with this issue. Even though, we find that in the Bible that God felt sorry afterwards. In the Qur'an, everything done by God is justified by one notion that is, what God knows, the human mind cannot perceive.

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