

Surah Nuh, Chapter 71

(Noah)

Section (juz') 29

Number of Verses: 28

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Mecca, has 28 Verses and depicts the ongoing struggle of the Truth against Falsehood and treats of the stratagems to be employed by the followers of Truth.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of the Islamic Faith (S) as saying:

*"One who recites Surah Nuh shall be ranked amongst the believers enwrapped by the light of Prophet Noah's Call."*¹

Summary of the Account of Noah (as). The detailed account of Prophet Noah (as) is attested in Chapters 7, 11, 23, 26, 54, and 71, though it is most elaborated in Chapter 11, Verses 25–49.

His people claimed that he was in error;

("The leaders of his people said: 'Indeed, we see you in plain error'"²);

they mocked him at all times;

("And when those who disbelieved see you, they take you not except for mockery"³);

they called him light-headed and insane;

("insane and scatterbrained"⁴).

However, the Prophet (as) still provided them with guidance. Like other Prophets (as), he acted upon his Prophetic call by calling people unto monotheism, obedience to the Divinely appointed leader, and fear of God Almighty.

He began by warning his people against disobedience to God Almighty and imparted his Prophetic call to all people, though confronted with their obduracy, he cursed them;

("And Noah said: 'My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!"⁵).

Noah (as) is the only Prophet whose term of Prophetic call (950 years) is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. He is the only Prophet (as) whose family and people disobeyed him. He also lived the longest lifespan.

Ordered by God Almighty, he built the Ark to rescue all animals and serve as a means of human deliverance from the tempest, hence the designation the second father of mankind (Àdam Abu al-Bashar al-Thani).

He was also the first Messenger of Allah upon whom the Book was revealed and he was appointed to impart his Prophetic call to the world (ulu al-'azm).⁶ God Almighty had the earth drowned owing to his curse. He was the only Prophet (as) whose followers did not exceed ten in number after the passage of 950 years.

Surah Nuh – Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَطِيعُونَ

1. ***We sent Noah to his people and We said: "Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment."***
2. ***He said: "O my people! I am a plain warner unto you,***
3. ***"That you should worship Allah, refrain from disobeying Him, and obey me."***

As mentioned above, the blessed Chapter in question treats of Noah's (as) Prophetic call thereby providing those who tread the Path of God Almighty with points of interest concerning calling people unto the Truth, particularly while confronting obdurate peoples.

Opening with Prophethood, the blessed Verse 1 says:

"We sent Noah to his people and We said: 'Warn your people before there comes to them an excruciating torment.'"

Such excruciating torment may be this worldly or otherworldly. Both kinds of torment are further befitting, though the torments in this world better fit the context herein. The Prophets (as) were both warners and bearers of glad tidings, but the emphasis laid on warning is owing to the fact that it oftentimes entails stronger effects, in the same way that emphasis is laid on warning and chastisement the world over in order to guarantee law enforcement.

According to the second blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) was the first Prophet upon whom Divine Scriptures had been revealed and his Prophetic call addressed the world. Upon receiving Divine Command, he went to his people and said that he was a plain warner to them.

The blessed Verse 3 is saying that the goal of his Prophetic call was to urge people to worship God Almighty alone, fear Him, and obey his commands which were Divine Commands.

Prophet Noah (as) thus summarized his Prophetic call: worship the One God, Fear Him, Obey His Commands and Injunctions imparted which consisted of doctrines, moral principles, and Divine Law. At any rate, following the Prophets (as) is consequent to believing in monotheism, fear of God Almighty, obeying the Prophet (as), and believing in Resurrection.

Surah Nuh – Verse 4

يَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرُكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۚ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

4. "He will forgive you of your sins and respite you to an appointed term. But, when the term of Allah comes, it cannot be delayed, if you but knew."

Believing in God Almighty and doing righteous deeds entail absolution of sins, longevity, and warding off afflictions.

There are two appointed times for man, one which may be postponed through worshipping and fearing God Almighty and it may be precipitated by committing vices and sins and the other is the irrevocable appointed time (ajal mussama).

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that longevity and death are due to beneficence and committing sins respectively and there are few people who live a natural life or die a natural death.⁷ People are encouraged in this blessed Verse to answer to the Divine Call and be absolved of their sins.

It is worthy of note that the noble dictum "Islam covers and obliterates what precedes it" is not exclusive to the Islamic faith but is prevalent in all Divine and monotheistic religions. The blessed Verse proceeds to say that God Almighty will respite you to an appointed time and will prolong your lifetime and will ward off the torment from you.

The point is that when the Divine, inevitable, and irrevocable appointed time comes, it may not be postponed, though some people are unaware of it. The topic in question may be further clarified by an illustration.

Man is physically incapable of enjoying an everlasting life and even if all bodily organs function properly, they, particularly the heart, will stop functioning through exhaustion. Nonetheless, following sanitary rules and taking timely precautions may prolong human lifetime, though failing to act upon such rules may seriously shorten it.

The blessed Verse in question clearly reflects that committing sins entails shortening of lifetime, since it is said that if you believe and fear God, He will prolong your life and postpone your death. Taking the severe blows inflicted upon human body and soul by committing sins, the point in question becomes further facile to comprehend.

The point is accorded particular emphasis in Islamic traditions. A detailed discussion regarding conditional and irrevocable appointed terms may be found above under 6:2. Now, let us turn toward three traditions narrated concerning the consequences of committing sins and worshipping God Almighty.

1. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"If you intend to prolong your lifetime, maintain your blood ties [namely take good care of your relatives, and if you wish that God maintains your health, pay alms in abundance."⁸

2. It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

*"Maintaining blood ties entails five advantages: acceptance of deeds [before God Almighty], affluence, warding off afflictions, convenience in the reckoning of one's deeds [on the Day of Resurrection], and longevity."*⁹

3. Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"The deeds of those who tell the truth are accepted. One who entertains good intentions will receive increase in his Provision. He who does good to his family will be granted longevity."*¹⁰

Surah Nuh – Verses 5-9

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ
وَأَصْرُوا وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جَهَارًا

ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا

5. He said: "O my Lord! I have called my people unto you night and day,

6. "But all my calling added nothing but to their flight from truth.

7. And every time I called unto them to believe in You that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, persisted in their denial, and magnified themselves in arrogance.

8. "Then, I called to them openly to believe in and serve You.

9. And I proclaimed to them in public and I have appealed to them in private.

Proceeding with the account of Prophet Noah's (as) Prophetic Call unto his people, he is quoted in the blessed Verses in question as complaining to his Lord. His words are quite instructive and may be great advantages to all propagators of religious doctrines.

The Prophet (as) is quoted as saying that he called his people unto God Almighty and he spared no efforts in providing them with guidance, though his call was of no avail and added nothing but to their flight from truth.

It is a source of surprise that calling toward something may entail flight from it. Nonetheless, taking into account the fact that obdurate enemies of truth, upon hearing the calls of the men of God, deny the truth and such denial makes them further distance from God Almighty and reinforces their disbelief and hypocrisy.

The same theme is treated elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an¹¹:

"And We send down of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe and it increases the wrong doers nothing but loss."

According to the Glorious Qur'an, the Divine Revelation is a guide to the God fearing¹², since human heart must entertain at least a flicker of fear of God Almighty so that it may pave the path for the acknowledgement of the truth. It is the stage of the spirit of seeking the truth and preparedness for acknowledging Divine Truth.

The blessed Verse 7 quotes Prophet Noah (as) as saying that whenever he called unto them to believe in God Almighty so that He might forgive their sins, they thrust their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted in their denial and disbelief, and their vanity waxed.

They thrust their fingers in their ears in order not to hear the truth and covering themselves with their garments implies that they made further attempts not to listen to the true call and thereby kept themselves from looking at the Noble Prophet Noah (as).

They made attempts to impede themselves from hearing his words and looking at him. It is quite surprising that such people had reached such extent of animosity against the truth such that they deprived themselves from seeing, hearing, and thinking.

The blessed Verse reflects that Prophet Noah (as) untiringly strove in his long life to call his people unto embracing faith.

It is also indicative of one of the most significant factors behind their misfortune, namely their arrogance and vanity, since they regarded it far below their league to obey a man, be he Allah's Messenger, whose hear was imbued with knowledge and fear of God Almighty. Such vanity and arrogance have at all times

served as impediments to treading the path of Truth and the adverse consequence thereof are reflected throughout history in the lives of the disbelievers.

In the blessed Verses 8 and 9, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his invocations before Divine Threshold, saying that he called his people to monotheism and worshipping God and called them in public with a loud voice to believe in Allah.

He was not content with his public calls, but he expressed the truth of monotheism and belief in God Almighty in private as well. It lies in human nature that when he treads the path of falsehood such that corruption is rooted in his heart and turns into his second nature, he will be indifferent toward the calls of the men of God and clear Divine Calls.

Not only the people of Prophet Noah (as) thrust their fingers in their ears and wrapped themselves with their garments to deprive themselves of Truth, but also there were people at the time of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) that upon hearing his sweet voice when reciting Qur'anic Verses made such clamor and havoc that they impeded others from hearing him.

According to a Qur'anic blessed Verse 13:

"And those who disbelieve say: 'Listen not to this Qur'an and make noise in the midst of its recitation so that you may overcome.'"

In this vein, it is narrated in the account of the bloody battle at Karbala' that when the lord of the martyrs, Imam Husayn (as), intended to provide the foes with guidance and thereby wake them up, they created such havoc that people could barely hear him. 14

Similar form of confrontation are to be witnessed today when we notice that the followers of falsehood have created such atmosphere with harmful recreations, devastating kinds of music, narcotics, and the like that people, particularly the youth, may not be able to hear the sweet voice of the men of God and the blessed Qur'anic Verses.

Surah Nuh – Verses 10-14

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا

وَيُؤْتِكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَيَنْبِيئِينَ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا

وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا

10. *"I said [unto them]: 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord since He is Oft-Forgiving.*
11. *'So that he sends Bountiful rain unto you in abundance,*
12. *'And give you increase in affluence and offspring and bestow upon you verdant gardens and rivers."*
13. *What is the matter with you that you do not believe in Divine Glory.*
14. *While He has created you in stages.*

In these blessed Verses, Prophet Noah (as) proceeds with his impressive guidance addressing his obdurate and disobedient people by encouraging them and bearing glad tidings to them and promising them that if they desist from committing sins and disbelief, God Almighty will grant them His Bounties and Graciousness.

Addressing his Lord, he is saying that he asked them to ask their Oft-Forgiving Lord for forgiveness of their sins. The blessed following Verse reflects that He not only absolves them of their sins, but upon turning toward him they will be granted Bountiful rain from the heaven in abundance and thus they will be granted abundant material and spiritual Bounties.

The Arabic adverbial form

midraran ("***showering abundant rain***")

derives from d-r-r denoting to flow plentifully.

It is noteworthy that the blessed Verse is saying that abundant rain will be sent to you from the heaven, but as it will be the rain of Divine Mercy, it will entail neither devastation nor harm, but it will lead to verdure and abundance everywhere.

The blessed Verse 12 is saying that He will increase your affluence and offspring and will bestow verdant gardens and rivers upon you. Thus, five great material Bounties, timely, plentiful, and fruitful rain and rivers, and one great spiritual Bounty, absolution from the impurities of disbelief and disobedience, are promised to them. Believe in and fearing God Almighty, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an, entail

prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a number of traditions, upon turning away from Prophet Noah's (as) call, such obdurate people were entangled with famine; a large number of their offspring were destroyed; most of their women became sterile. Prophet Noah (as) said unto them that if they believed their afflictions would be removed, but they paid him no heed and persisted in their obduracy and disobedience such that the final torment was sent to them and cause their total perdition.

Surah Nuh – Verses 15-16

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا

وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا

15. Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?

16. And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp?

Against the obdurate polytheists, Prophet Noah (as) produced his logical and meaningful arguments in the preceding blessed Verses to make them acquainted with the depth of their being so that they may experience the material realm. He called them to behold and examine the Divine Signs in the great world of creation and intended to familiarize them with the spiritual realm.

Beginning with the heaven, he asks:

"Know you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another?"

The Arabic verbal noun tibatq denotes comparison and contrast at times implies being laid on top of something and also harmony and accord between two things; both latter senses are herein intended. The former reflects that the seven heavens are created one above another as mentioned above in the exegesis regarding the seven heavens.

An exegesis worthy of note is that whatever is observed by armed and unarmed eyes concerning the celestial bodies constitutes the first heaven on which six other heavens are created one above the other, defying modern science, though man may be able to discover those surprising and vast realms one after the other in future.

The seven heavens were treated in details above under 2:29.

The blessed Verse 16 says that God Almighty has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a brilliant lamp. It is true that billions of brilliant celestial bodies, far more brilliant than the suns and moon in our solar system exist in the seven heavens, but the latter two are of significance in our life since they give light in the day and at night respectively.

The Arabic word

siraj ("lamp")

implying the sun and the word

nur ("light")

reflect that the light of the sun are engendered from within in the manner of a lamp, but that of the moon is from without, since it is a reflection of the former.

Thus, the word *nur*, which is broader in its semantic domain, is applied herein. Such different expressions are reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an. Further details in this respect were mentioned under 10:5.

Surah Nuh – Verses 17-20

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا

ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا

لَتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا

17. And Allah has brought you forth from the earth.

18. Then He will return you into it, and bring you forth.

19. And Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse,

20. That you may go about therein in broad roads and its valleys and reach your desired destination.

The blessed Verse 17 turns, once again, toward the creation of man, saying:

"Allah has brought you forth from the earth."

The employment of inbat denoting "to germinate, cause to sprout, make grow, cultivate" applied to man reflects that man was created from dust and all his nourishment by which he grows comes from the earth, directly, like vegetables, seeds, and fruit, or indirectly, like meat; furthermore, there exist many a similarity between man and plants and many a laws as to nourishment, growth, and reproduction also apply to mankind. Such expression is quite meaningful reflecting that in terms of Guidance, the Lord is not only an Instructor, but also He is like a Gardener who places the seeds of plants in the required environment so that their potentialities may come into view.

The blessed Verse 18 treats of Resurrection, a complicated issue to the polytheists and disbelievers, saying that He will return you to the earth from which you grew and he brings you forth once again. In other words, man is from dust and will return to it.

The One who was All-Able to create you from dust is Omnipotent to revive you after having been turned into dust. Such transfer from Divine Unity to Resurrection is quite interestingly reflected in the blessed Verses in question bearing witness to the intimate interrelation between the twain.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments as to Divine Unity and Resurrection to convince the disbelievers to pay heed to the system of creation.

The blessed Verse 19 further treats of the Signs of Divine Unity in this vast world, saying:

"Allah has made for you the earth a wide expanse."

It is not that rough and uneven to impede rest and travel, not that soft to impede movement, not that hot to cause inconvenience, not that cold to impede a comfortable life. Besides, all the requirements of life are available on its expanse.

The blessed Verse 20 is saying that man may travel through the valleys. The vast expanse of the earth allows man to pass through vast paths and valleys and reach his desired destinations. The Arabic word fijaj is applied to a valley located between two mounts and also to vast roads.

Thus, Prophet Noah (as) herein alludes to Divine diverse Bounties on the earth as well as human body and life serving as arguments proving Divine Unity and Resurrection. However, such warnings, tidings, and logical arguments may not impress such obdurate people, as they persisted in their denial and disbelief whose consequences are to follow in the following blessed Verses.

Surah Nuh – Verses 21-22

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَاتَّبَعُوا مَنْ لَمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالَهُ وَوَلَدَهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا كُبَّارًا

21. [Having despaired of guiding them] Noah said: "My Lord! They have disobeyed me and followed those whose wealth and children availed them of no increase but loss.

22. "And they have plotted a mighty plot.

Having made his utmost efforts for hundreds of years, he noticed that his people, except for a few, persisted in polytheism, idolatry, error, and corruption. Thus, he despaired of providing them with guidance and turned toward Divine Threshold invoking God Almighty to chastise them.

As reflected in the blessed Verses in question, Prophet Noah (as) said:

"O Lord! They disobeyed me and followed one whose affluence and offspring availed him of no increase but loss."

Reference is here made of the leaders of his people whose only privileges consisted of affluence and offspring, though they rendered no service to the community, failed to be humble against their Creator, and employed their means to further plunge into corruption, error, vanity, and disobedience.

Taking a glance at the history of mankind, we witness that many a leader of different peoples were like them whose sole privileges rested in amassing unlawful possessions and fathering unworthy offspring and left no stone unturned to disobey God Almighty and His Messengers (as) and to impose their false beliefs upon the deprived who led their lives in bondage.

The blessed Verse 22 is saying that such leaders who were in error and led others astray employed vile stratagems. The Arabic intensified adjectival form kubbar, cognate with kibr ("arrogance, vanity"), is here in employed indefinitely and implies that they had planned satanic stratagems and ploys to lead people astray and impede them from acknowledging Noah's (as) Prophetic call.

The nature of such stratagems and ploys is unknown, but they seemingly concerned idolatry, since as per certain traditions, idolatry was unprecedented before Noah (as) and his people were its progenitors.

It is reported that between the times of Adam (as) and Noah (as), there were righteous people in whom people were interested. Satan and his followers took advantage of such interest and urged them to

fashion sculptures of those righteous men.

The prospective generations consigned to oblivion the historical context of sculpturing such figures and imagined that such righteous figures were supposed to serve as objects of worship. Thus, they preoccupied themselves with worshipping them and the wrong doing arrogant thereby led them to servitude and bondage and aforesaid vile ploys worked.

Surah Nuh – Verses 23-25

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا

مِمَّا خَطِيئَاتِهِمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأُدْخِلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا

23. "And they said: 'You shall not leave your gods: you shall leave neither Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr.

24. "And indeed they led many astray. And [O Allah]: Grant no increase to the wrong doers save error."

25. [At last] because of their sins they were all drowned and were made to enter Hellfire and they found none to help them save Allah.

As reflected in the blessed Verse 23 their chiefs asked them to neither abandon their gods and idols nor to acknowledge Noah's (as) Prophetic call to monotheism, worshipping an imperceptible god. They laid particular emphasis on five idols: Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, and Nasr and bade them not to desist from worshipping them.

In the blessed Verse 24, Noah (as) says:

"O Lord! These vain and astray leaders led many people astray. O Lord! Grant the wrong doers no increase but error."

It is noteworthy that increasing error for the wrong doers and tyrants implies their deprivation from Divine Grace which leads them to misery. It may also connote some chastisement as a consequence of their wrong doing thereby God Almighty deprives them of the light of faith substituting it with disbelief.

It is noteworthy that error and disbelief are consequences of their misdeeds, though their entanglement with error and disbelief is attributed to God Almighty, since all the acts of His creatures are within His Command and it is not in contradiction with Divine Wisdom concerning belief, disbelief, guidance, and error, as such instances do not impede free will.

Finally, the blessed Verse 25 is indicative of the final Words of God as per which they were drowned consequent to having committed sins and they were made to enter the Fire.

They found none but Him to render them assistance against Divine Wrath. The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question reflects that having been drowned they immediately were made to enter the Fire. It is a source of surprise that they were made to immediately leave water and enter the Fire which is that of purgatory, since a number of Qur'anic Verses reflect that some people will be chastised in purgatory posthumously.

According to some traditions, "grave" may be either a Garden in Paradise or a pit in Hell. It may also be indicative of the Fire on the Day of Resurrection, but since Resurrection shall indubitably come before long, the Arabic passive verbal form

udkhillu ("*they were made to enter*")

appears in the past tense. 15

Some Qur'an exegetes have also suggested that reference is herein made to the Fire in this world, such that God Almighty willed that a Fire appeared in the midst of the tempest and devoured them. 16

Surah Nuh – Verses 26–27

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا

إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا

26. And Noah said: "O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!

27. "Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants, and they will beget none but the wicked and the disbelieving.

Resuming his complaints to God Almighty from his people, Noah curses them, saying:

"O Lord! Leave not one single disbeliever on the earth!"

He uttered these words when he had totally been despaired of guiding them. He had made his last attempts to call them to monotheism, though only a few believed in him. The Arabic prepositional phrase ***'ala 'l-ardh ("on the earth")***

reflects that Prophet Noah's (as) call as well as the following tempest and the torment were worldwide. The Arabic word *dayyar*, cognate with *dar* ("house, abode") implies one who dwells in a house. The word is also employed to imply general negation, as in "There is no soul in the house."

In the blessed Verse 27, Prophet Noah (as) produces arguments to substantiate his curse, saying

"Since if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants,"

reflecting that the curses of the Prophets (as), like that of Noah (as), did not spring from wrath, hatred, and vengeance, but he cursed his people after the passage of nine hundred and fifty years of imparting his Prophetic Call and forbearance and it was consequent to his total despair that he uttered the curse.

How did Prophet Noah (as) notice that they were not prone to believe in God Almighty, but they led God's servants astray and their offspring will be corrupt and they will lead others to error and corruption?

Some have suggested that God Almighty had granted him the knowledge of the unseen, though some have suggested that it had been thus revealed unto Noah (as), as reflected in the Holy Qur'an17:

"And it was revealed to Noah (as): 'None of your people will believe except those who have already believed. Therefore, be not sorrowful owing to what they used to do.'"

The same theme is to be found in numerous traditions.¹⁸ It has been also suggested that Noah (as) had thus inductively concluded by taking into account the natural courses of the event, since his people had been called by his impressive expressions, though they failed to believe and he could not set his hopes on guiding them; furthermore, no suggestions could stand against Qur'anic Verses and traditions.

The Arabic word *fajir* is applied to one who commits vile deeds. The Arabic intensive present participial form *kaffar* denotes going to extremes in disbelief. The difference between the twain rests in practical and doctrinal aspects respectively, as it is reflected in the blessed Verses in question that Divine torments are based on Wisdom.

The prospective generations of a corrupt people who lead others to error and corruption will be jeopardized by their vile deeds. Such people are not entitled to live according to Divine Wisdom and they will be entangled with afflictions such as tempest, lightning, and earthquake, hence their effacement from the face of the earth, as the tempest obliterated Noah's (as) vile and wrong doing people from the face of the earth.

Granted that such Divine Law is not particular to any specific time and place, we are supposed to bear in

mind that Divine torments are in store for the corrupt people who lead others astray and whose offspring are disobedient and disbelievers, since there is no exception to the Law and it is a Divine Tradition that such vile people meet their dire fate.

The Arabic clause

yudhdhilu 'ibadaka ("they mislead Your servants")

may suggest the scarcity of those who believed in Prophet Noah's (as) Prophetic call in such long time, though it may also imply that the deprived are forced by their wrong doing leaders to follow their beliefs.

Surah Nuh – Verse 28

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا تَزِدِ
الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا تَبَارًا

28. "O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!"

In the closing blessed Verse, Prophet Noah (as) thus invoked God Almighty:

"O Lord! Forgive me and my parents and all those who enter my home as believers and all the believing men and women. And to the wrong doers grant no increase but perdition!"

Invoking God Almighty for forgiveness reflects that he is saying that he spent hundreds of years in incessantly imparting his Prophetic call and forbore all the hardships in the Cause of Allah, though he had to invoke God Almighty to forgive him since he might have neglected some priority (tark ula).

The invocation reflects that Noah (as) did not regard himself as totally free from blame. Such friends of God Almighty, after making some many efforts in Allah's Cause still think that they might have made mistakes, but, unlike people who within their small capacities magnify themselves to the extent that they regard God Almighty obliged to grant them His Grace, Allah's friends are never entangled with vanity and egotism.

Prophet Noah (as) actually invoked God Almighty to forgive some people: himself, lest he had neglected some priority, his parents as a token of his gratitude for their troubles, for all those few who believed in his Prophetic call and embarked the Ark which was his home, and finally for all believing men and women in the world down the centuries, thus establishing his ties with all the believers worldwide and at all times. Nonetheless, he accords particular emphasis to the destruction of the wrong doers, implying that they deserved such torment.

It is worthy of note that Qur'an exegetes are not unanimous concerning the precise sense of the Arabic nominal form bayt in this context, but different exegetes have suggested four senses: private home, mosque, Noah's Ark, his religion.

It is narrated in this vein from Imam Sadiq (as) as saying that the word bayt herein implies

"guardianship" (wilaya),

namely whoever enters it he enters the Prophets' homes.¹⁹ It is narrated from Imam Ridha (as) that the mosque at Kufa was Noah's abode and those who entered his home are in fact those who enter the mosque at Kufa.²⁰ According to a tradition, Imam Husayn (as) did not slay some of the foes at Karbala', saying that he would not slay the foes whose offspring would include the believers.²¹

Finally, the story of Prophet Noah (as) possesses copious reflection in Arabic and Persian literature and particular emphasis has been accorded to the tempest and his Ark as a means of deliverance for the believers.²² It is also worthy of note that his name designates that he invoked God Almighty and lamented for many years so that his people might be impressed and believe in God Almighty.

O Lord! When the tempest of Your Wrath comes, deliver us by the Ark of Your Mercy and that of the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S) as saying:

*"My Ahl al-Bayt are like Noah's Ark, whoever embarks it will find salvation and whoever denies it will be destroyed."*²³

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 359.

2. 7:60

3. 21:36

4. 54:9

5. 71:26

6. Kanz al-'Ummal, tradition 32391.

7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 140.

8. Safinat al-Bihar, p. 599.

9. Usul Kafi, tradition no. 3.

10. al-Khisal, p. 42.

11. 17:82

12. 2:2

13. 41:26

14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 45, p. 8.

15. Fakhr Razi's Tafsir, vol. 30, p. 145.

16. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir, vol. 11, p. 280.

17. 11:36

18. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 428.

19. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 429.
20. Tafsir Nur, under the blessed Verse in question.
21. Mawsu'a Kalimat al-Imam Husayn, p. 505.
22. For further details, see the relevant references, e.g. A'lam Qur'an; Farhang-i Qisas-i Qur'an; Dihkhuda's Lughatnama, s.v. Nuh; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'a; al-Gadir; Kanz al-'Ummal; Ihqaq al-Haqq; 'Abaqat al-Anwar; and other tradition sources.

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