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Components of Islamic Civilization Based on the Historical Process of the Revelation of the Story of Prophet Noah (PBUH) in the Holy Qur'an

Somayeh Emadi ¹  Mehri Karimi ² 

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'anic Sciences, Faculty of Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, University of Maarif Quran va Itrat, Isfahan, Iran (Corresponding Author).

2. M.A. Graduate in Qur'anic Sciences and Hadith, Feyz al-Islam Institute of Higher Education, Khomeini Shahr, Isfahan, Iran.

Corresponding Email: S.emadi64@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Civilization is the manifestation of purposeful and systematic advances within one or more societies, grounded in a clear worldview that takes on a meaningful and disciplined form and guides society toward its intended destination (Gholami, 2017, p. 31). Hence, civilization has a profound and fundamental relationship with religion, as reflected in the missions of the divine prophets and their paths of guidance. A study of the objectives of the prophets' missions in the Qur'an and their practical conduct demonstrates the foundations of a monotheistic civilization designed to universalize religious teachings and promote human progress in both material and spiritual realms. By carefully analyzing the stories of the prophets and the experiences of their communities, one can discover solutions to some of today's human and social problems.

This research proceeds from the assumption that the story of Noah (PBUH)-as the first prophet of resolute will (ulu al-'azm) and bearer of divine law, whose mission spanned a very long period-contains the earliest indicators and frameworks of civilization-building. Reflecting on this narrative can help guide contemporary humanity, often bewildered and disoriented, toward the reconstruction of a religious civilization. However, since the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over twenty-three years in varying temporal and spatial contexts, certain questions arise: Which parts of Noah's story were revealed in which surahs, and under what historical and social circumstances? What is the relationship between the revealed verses concerning aspects of Noah's life and the particular conditions of the time and place of revelation? And how does correlating these circumstances with the scope of Noah's story contribute to clarifying the components of Islamic civilization?

The sequential revelation of these narratives certainly contained wisdom, for just as with many truths, if they are examined outside the context of their revelation, their meaning can be misunderstood. This makes it necessary to reconstruct the order of revelation of the prophetic stories in the Qur'an, study the circumstances surrounding each portion of revelation, and analyze them in terms of content, so that the outcomes and lessons of the prophetic narratives may be understood in their situational contexts.

Methodology

This study examines the story of Noah (PBUH) through the method of sequential thematic exegesis (tafsīr mawḍū'ī-tanzīlī). In this method, the exegete grounds their understanding of the Qur'an in its gradual revelation, analyzing the internal relationships within each verse and the context of the verses within a surah, while also taking into account the temporal, environmental,

and social circumstances of revelation. The exegete then uncovers the epistemic and guiding system of the surahs across the twenty-three years of gradual revelation. By mapping the structural and thematic geometry of the surahs and verses alongside one another, the exegete arrives at a more precise understanding of the Qur'an and the divine objectives behind its revelation (Behjatpour, 2013, p. 46).

This approach allows for pedagogical, historical, and methodological insights into the Qur'an's perspective on a given topic. One of the main benefits of this method is that by studying a topic in the order of revelation, one can grasp the process by which religious values were institutionalized in society—something that is often overlooked in conventional thematic exegesis. For example, while traditional thematic studies of the Qur'anic verses on charity (*infāq*) have explained its importance, types, uses, and obstacles, they have rarely addressed how, through what stages, charitable behavior is cultivated into a lasting moral and social trait. A study of revelation order enables us to answer such questions and trace the process by which a personal act evolves into a social practice (Khomeini, 2010, p. 242).

In this study, the criterion for the order of revelation follows narrations on the subject, the most reliable being that transmitted from 'Aṭā and Abū Karīb, reported by Ibn 'Abbās. Scholars such as Nekounam (2001, p. 142) in *An Introduction to the Dating of the Qur'an* and Behjatpour (2013, p. 345) in *Sequential Exegesis of the Qur'an* have examined these narrations critically and provided ordered tables of revelation.

Findings

The essential components of Islamic civilization derived from the sequential analysis of Noah's story include: prayer; industrial and economic capability; divine scripture; loyalty to divine authority and belief in the afterlife; explanatory jihad; glad tidings and warnings; God-consciousness (*taqwā*); the cultivation of civilization-building individuals; trustworthiness; reliance upon God; support for the oppressed; vigilance; love and compassion within the family; patience and perseverance; and migration.

Conclusion

The Qur'anic surahs were revealed to the Prophet (PBUH) under diverse historical and social conditions, each pursuing specific aims. Moreover, the Qur'an never recounts a prophetic story in its entirety; rather, each story is narrated in fragments across different surahs, each fragment serving the thematic and guiding purpose of its respective surah. The Qur'anic narratives are multi-dimensional, each dimension conveying a particular moral or pedagogical message. Hence, in various contexts, different aspects of a prophet's story are highlighted.

At the same time, all prophets across all ages followed a single path, and the hostility of their opponents displayed consistent patterns throughout history. The story of Noah (PBUH) appears in eight surahs—all Meccan: *al-Qamar*, *al-A'rāf*, *al-Shu'arā'*, *Yūnus*, *Hūd*, *Nūḥ*, *al-Mu'minūn*, and *al-Ankabūt*. These surahs were revealed during the early years of the Prophet's mission, prior to the migration, when the believers were a minority facing severe pressure from idolaters. They aimed both to call and warn the polytheists, and to console and encourage the Prophet and the believers.

The order of revelation of Noah's story is grounded in the twin theological principles of divine unity (*tawḥīd*) and prophethood (*nubuwwa*). Its features include calls to accept God's authority and reject false gods; warnings against obstinacy and harsh opposition to false beliefs; refutations

of empty superstitions; reminders of the ultimate fate of prophets, their followers, and their opponents; and the divine method of calling disbelievers to persuasion through reasoned appeal.

Keywords

Islamic civilization; Qur’anic narratives; story of Prophet Noah (PBUH); sequential thematic exegesis.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with research ethics. The authors observed the ethical principles in conducting and publishing this scholarly research, and this is confirmed by all of them.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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