

CHAPTER IV
THE INTERPRETATION OF SABA' ACCORDING TO KHALAFULLĀH
THEORY

A. Narration of Saba' in Al-Qur'an

The story of Saba' in the Qur'an is a short story that narrated in one package with the story of prophet Sulaimān. This story only mentioned in two places and with a brief narrative. First story is mentioned in Sūrat an-Naml verse 15 to verse 44. The second is mentioned in Sūrat Saba' verse 10 to verse 21.

The way of narrative in both two sūrah is almost the same. In Sūrat an-Naml, the Qur'an gave an introduction by mentioning the gift given by God to the Prophet Dawūd¹ and Prophet Sulaimān², as well as prior to describe the condition of Saba' in Sūrat Saba', al-Qur'an mentions the same things about the gifts God has given to the noble Prophet.

According to Khalafullāh, several description of a story in some different place and time like this is the solution to the problem of *tashabbuh*³ that the

¹. Prophet Dawūd was born in Bait Lahm Palestine around 1085 BC and died in Jerusalem in 1015 BC Jerusalem or around 1626 before moving. In his youth, he was his father's goat herders. He has a beautiful voice in art. He was awarded the Book of Psalms, which Allah in terms of language berart writing. In the books of the Old Testament, until now there is one part that is considered part of the book of the Psalms of Dawud. (*Tafsīr Al-Miṣbah*, page.578)

². In verse 15 Sūrat an-Naml, Al-Qur'an says that Allah has given knowledge to the Prophet Dawūd and Prophet Sulaimān.

³. Khalafullah commented in several times of his book that the problem that the classical scholar ever brought in the discourse of Qur'anic narrative is that the narrative of al-Qur'an is include in *Mutashabbihāt* or the interpretable verses. He quoted the comment of At-Ṭabarī that said that *Mutashabbihāt* is the narrative texts that content of multiple interpretations. That is why there is a story that have the same wording style but different in meaning, and

classical scholar had attached on narrative verses of al-Qur'an. Even some of the previous interpreter trapped in the interpretation of the repetitive element of a story. Thus, they conclude that the repetitive story is a part of *mutashābihāt*.⁴

Khalafullāh sees that this several description of a story in different place or verses shows that each of narrative definitely has the difference in the situation, characters and condition. Thus, from these differences, the prophet accommodates it with their way of narrating story.⁵

The different description of the two verses about Saba' also shows this reason. When in Sūrat an-Naml, the gifts mentioned in the form of science (*'Ulūm*), then in the Sūrat Saba', the gift mentioned is more material, that is the submission of the universe to the Prophet Dāwud and the melted of iron so at that time, the clothes of iron began to be made.⁶ While the gifts given to Prophet Sulaimān is in the form of subordination of the wind, whereby, in the morning at a time when travel speed equal to the speed of walking trips taken by people for a month, as well as his journey in the evening. Prophet Sulaimān also be a boon to the flow of copper and also submission of the jinn who worked to build buildings, sculpture, and other dishes on his orders.⁷

The narrating way in these two Sūrah, when we observed deeply, it turns out using the method of literary narrative. Both the sūrah, an-Naml and Saba', the introductory story elements of harmony between the material to be

there is also the story that different in the wording style but have one meaning. (at-Thabari, Juz 3, page.107), Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, page. 151

⁴. the word *Mutashabbih*, takes from the word *as-syabah* means similar (but not really same). There are some different definition of *Mutasyabbih* such as the the interpretable verse, the verse that only understood after the deep explanation, the verse that only God knows the meaning, the alphabetic letter that come in the beginning of surah such as *alif lam mim*, *shod* and others. Some scholar like at-Thabari argues that Narrative is a kind of *Mutasyabbihat*.

⁵. Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qashashi fī Al-Qur'an*, page.152

⁶. The Skills of making clothes from iron is what has taught by the Prophet David to humankind in his day and continues until today.

⁷. See the complete narrative in Sūrat An-Naml ayat 15-16 dan Sūrat Saba' ayat 10-13

covered in it are concerned. In the conventional literature, the integration between the elements present in the story also becomes very considered. The *Qur'an* also appeared to contribute to bring attention to it.

In *Surat an-Naml*, the story begins with an introductory mention of gifts given to the son of Prophet Dāwud namely prophet Sulaimān:

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ
مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ
عُلْمَنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

Meaning: And We have indeed given knowledge to Dāwud and Sulaiman; and they both said: "Praise be to Allah who has favored Us of the most faithful servants. And Sulaiman has inherited Dāwud. andhesaid:" O mankind, We have beentaught the speechof birds and we were given everything. Indeed (all) this is really a real gift. (Q.S An-Naml, 15-16)

Both of the above verse mentions that Grace (*Fadl*) given to Prophet Dāwud and Prophet Sulaimān in the form of science. Introduction to stories like this can also be found in the story of Saba' in *surat Saba'* :

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا يَجِبَالُ أَوْبَىٰ مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرِ وَأَلْنَا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ
أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سَبِغَتٍ وَقَدَّرَ فِي السَّرْدِ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾
وَلِسُلَيْمَانَ الرِّيحَ غَدُوها شَهْرٌ وَرَوَاحُها شَهْرٌ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ
مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ
السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾

Meaning: And verily We gave Dawūd bounty from us. (We aid): "O mountains and birds, exalt repeatedly with Dawūd," and we have softened iron for him, (ie) make armor big one sand measure the basket; and Execute a pious deeds. Indeed, I see what you do. And We (subservient) to Sulaiman the wind, that travels in the same morning with a month's journey and his travels on the same afternoon with a trip a month(well) and Us stream of liquid copper for him. and the party of the jinns worked in front of him (under his control) with the permission of his Lord. and who deviated among them from Our command, We feel her punishment of hell fire is burning. The genie was made to Sulaiman what He wanted from High buildings and sculptures and platters (magnitude) as a pool and pot still (above the stove)..(Q.S. Saba : 10-12)

The introductory story of Saba' in both Sūrat *an-Naml* and Sūrat Saba' above equally exposes the existence of "*Fadhī*" or virtue, grace, given by God to the Prophet Dāwūd and his son, King Sulaimān. However, the details in these two *Fadhī* are different. The virtue in the form of knowledge ('Ilmu) mentioned in the story in Sūrat An-Naml, while in Sūrat Saba', the virtue or grace is illustrating in the form of something that is related to the nature and objects. What is the purpose of such a model narrative? The answer just might obtain if we conduct a study overall story.

In Sūrat an-Naml, conflict is recounted ideological differences between the divinity or theological view of Dāwūd and Ṣulaimān, who worship Allāh and civil society of Saba' which at the time worship the sun. This story told Sulaimān effort to invite the Queen Balqis and Saba' resident in order to worship Allah. After getting the news about the country of Saba' from bird Hud-hud, Sulaimān sent a letter to Balqis, and this letter was answered by the Queen through sending messengers who brought gifts to Ṣulaimān. However, this was rejected by Sulaimān and with the help of *jinn ifrit*, the

throne of Bilqis was enclosed to the kingdom of Sulaimān. This story ends with a beautiful scene, Bilqis finally surrender to Allāh.⁸

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Meanwhile, when looking at the story in Saba' as a whole, we find that the conflict is no longer between the difference between Dawūd and Sulaimān against Queen Bilqis and Saba' residents. But here the conflict happening within the community of Saba', the greed and negligence caused favors "*Baldah Tayyibah wa Rabbun Ghafūr*" that turned into a country that gets *aḏab*, prosperous natural ravaged by a great flood. Saba'society at that time had the ability to process the nature well so its nature and environment being green, fertile and prosperous, in contrast to the surrounding countries.

Between the opening of the story and material that is tell here have a coherent and harmonious correlation. That is by mentioning the virtue of Prophet Dawūd and Prophet Sulaimān in conquering Nature, seemed to indicate that the actual population of Saba' also has the same capabilities in terms of "subduing" nature. The difference is that Dawūd and Sulaimān

⁸. See in Q.S An-Naml verses 23-44

⁹. See in Q.S An-Naml verses 23-44

grateful for the gift, while the population of Saba' otherwise. They *Kufr* of favors granted by God.¹⁰

Thus, the narrative illustrates depicting God's gift to the country of Saba', *Kufr* population and ultimately the destruction of the country as a reward from God to those who disbelieve.

The two different places mention of this story in al-*Qur'an*, indicates that there is different thing, that is the correlation of each model of description with the continuation of the story. This is what Khalafullah mainly discussed as the unity of Quranic verses.

In interpreting a story, Khalafullah always connecting the story to other; regardless the surah, as long as it has the same themes and aims, it all connected each other. That's why Khalafullah refused the Quranic narrative's naming of classic scholar that tend to use the name of character such as; the story of Adam, the story of Nuh, the Story of people of the cave and others. Khalafullah chose to classify the name of the narrative under the similarities of aims such as the story of warning and scary, the story of good example and other.

In the classical interpretation, Ibnu Kathir for the example, the unity of a story did not get a special attention. When interpreting the story of Saba' in *Surat Saba'* the correlation of this story with the story in the *Surat an-Naml* and also the correlation with the psychology of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the condition of socio cultural of Mecca in prophet Muhammad era.

B. Material Source of Saba' Story

Examining the material source of a story is the first step Khalafullah used in interpreting a story. It conducted through two ways. This model also used by

¹⁰. This story narrated in *Surat Saba'* verse 15 until verse 17.

Khalafullah in the arrangement of his book *Alfaan Al-qaṣaṣi fī al-Qur'ān*. Those are below :

1. Correlating with the Sosio Cultural of Arab

According to Khalafullah, there are three basic correlations between the stories of the Qur'an with the socio cultural of Arab. The first is a story that previously unknown in the environment of *Mecca*, almost the whole story not known at all. The second is the story that been known previously as tale taken from the literature of ancient Arabic poetry. And the third is the story that is always debated by readers because they do not know, including from the group Where these stories.¹¹

The story of Saba' based on those three basic correlation is including in the second type. This is concluding by the source of the story that the writer got from some book of *Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ān* and also tafsir. Below are the description of Sabā and it correlation toward the socio cultural of Arab :

Saba' is the name of the srst tribe ruled Yemen. The name is attributed to *Abdu Shamsīn bin Yasyjub bin Ya'rūb bin Qahṭhān*. Named Sabā because he was the first king who charming Opponents. Sabā means charm or capture. There is also a call *Raa'ishī* because he has donated booty to his people.¹²

Saba' is standing in the 600 BC. He ruled over Ethiopia and one of the very well known districts at that time, namely *Ma'rib*, with a very large dam. This kingdom is located in Yemen, three days' journey from *Shan'a*, the capital of Yemen.¹³

In the description given by *al-Qur'ān*, Saba' has given abundant grace. The inhabitants build an advanced civilization and can master the water

¹¹ . Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qashashi fī Al-Qur'ān*, page. 184

¹² . Dr. Shalah Al-Khalidy, *Ma'a Qashasi as-sabiqina fī Al-Qur'ān*, page.165

¹³ . M. Qurais Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002) page.589

valley between two mountains, and there, they build a dam of water called the *Ma'rib* dam. From this dam they irrigate their plantations, which is between the two sides of Saba' so that the soil becomes very fertile.

In fact, there is a famous story that often cited as the commentators tell Saba' that one day a woman passing in the midst of the garden. She carries a basket on her head, and then fills it with fruits that fall without picking.¹⁴

It added that in this country there are no flies, mosquitoes, snakes, ticks, insects and the like. There is also no barren desert because of the weather and the condition is good and also because of the help of God, so that they can worship and His Oneness.¹⁵

Among the kings of theirs was Queen Bilqis, who by invitation of Sulaimān, finally declared her Islām, as contained in Sūrāt an-Naml. But after Bilqis gone, society of Saba' ascribing partners to Him (*shirk*), arrogant, ungodly, and beyond the limit. The appointment of God (*Sunnatuallah*) comes to them. God destroyed them with a painful torment; the big flood (*Sailul Arim*) that caused the destruction of the *Ma'rib* Dam. These floods drown orchards and gardens and destroy the trees and fruits.

Historians mention in detail the beginning of the destruction of the dam and the great destroying flood. Briefly mentioned that since the destruction of the Ma'rib Dam rodents are mice were great, so they put the cats on any place to keep it. But the power of God prevail over them, the rats came to the dam, then beat the cats and then beat and destroy the dam.¹⁶

It was witnessed by one of their superiors, namely 'Amr bin Amir, so he is sure to be nearby ruin. 'Amr thinking about how he can take the land and kingdom out of that place. So he took the initiative to call his nephew and

¹⁴. Abū Fidā Ibnū Kathir, Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karīm, page. 923(*maktabah syamilah*)

¹⁵. Dr. Wahbah Zuhailī, *At-tafsir Al-munir fī 'Aqidah wa As-syari'ah wa Al-manhaj*, (Damaskus : Dar el-fikr al-Mu'ashir, 2nd pub.1418 h) juz 22, page 162

¹⁶. Dr. Shalah Al-Khalidy, *Ma'a Qasasi as-sabiqina fī Al-Qur'an*, page. 166

asked him intentionally heated debate in front of his people. The debate was on the basis of slander against his uncle for hiding royal treasure. So the nephew does the command to slap his uncle. The uncle then said, *"O So and so son, slap each other, I will not live in a country where I was slapped by someone. So who wants to buy my house, my land, and my household goods?"* When they knew it, they were scrambling to buy all of its.

After feeling his wealth fairly, Amr bin Amir prepares himself and his family to go out from the place. Then he called his people and told them, *"O my people! Wrath has enveloped you, and your destruction is near. So whoever of you wants a new, camel running fast, then go to Oman."*

"Who among you who wants Khamr, bread and fruits feelings, so go to Bushrā. And whoever of you wants to stand in the mud, food place, standing in a shallow pool of water, so go Yathrib¹⁷ in which there is the date palm."

Finally they stick to it and split. Azad went to Oman, Ghussan went to Bushrā. While Al-Aus and Khazraj moved to Yathrib. While Banu Ka'b settled in the middle of the palm plantations before reaching Madinah, they finally called the Khuza'ah because they are disunited or dispersed of his people.¹⁸

The series of grooves in this story leads us to answer "whether the story of the State of Saba' comes from the Arabic reason or it was not known at all in the Arab world?"

The story of Saba', seen from the description above, comes from outside of the Arab environment that is *Ma'rib*, a region in South Yemen. However, this story is widely known in Arab society through oral tradition. There is a path that connects the *Quraish of Mecca* with both descendants of Saba' who moved to *Medina*, they are Auz and Khazraj.

¹⁷ . Yasrib is the past name of the holy city of Madinah

¹⁸ . Dr. Shalah Al-Khalidy, *Ma'a Qaṣaṣi as-sābiqīna fī Al-Qur'an*, page.167

This relationship started by Hashim bin Abd Manaf, one of Bani Quraysh's first successor of the founder of Bani Quraysh, Qushay ibn Kilab. Hashim is the father of the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. After the death of Qushay, Hashim reinforce the pillars of power of Bani Quraysh to power it up to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

Hashim has a holistic view of the rule. He is aware that steps have to taken to enforce the rule covers various aspects. He started from the aspects of the economy, which is the backbone for any kind of power. Hashim initially expand the economy of *Mecca* from local into a larger networking. He began working with the regions outside the Arab. And under the hard work and ability in his diplomacy, and also his third brother, finally the Quraysh reap the glory in the economy.¹⁹

In addition to strengthening trade relations, Hashim also strengthen the relationship with the famous big tribes. He marry Salma bint Umar in Zaid, the daughter of the head of Bani 'Adi bin An-Najar of Khazraj in *Yathrib*. Hashim also married to Hindun bint 'Umar from the descendants of Khazraj. In addition, the Quraish also establish relationships with *Yathrib* society. This relationship appears more closely when the Quraysh leadership role held by Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.²⁰

From here we can know the path of the oral tradition in the story of Saba'. So although it did not originate from the Arab socio-cultural environment which at that time was centered in Mecca, the story is already known through stories of mouth. This can be evidenced in the *hadīth* that the writer has mentioned above, about a companion of prophet who asked about Saba'.

¹⁹ . Khalil Abdul Karim, *Hegemoni Quraisy*, terj. M. Faishol Fatawi. (Yogyakarta, LKiS. 2002) page. 17-21

²⁰ . Khalil Abdul Karim, *Hegemoni Quraisy*,page.25

In addition, browse through the source of the story also done with the confirmation of the ancient Arabic texts such as poems or poetry. Maimūn bin Qaiṣh²¹, wrote the story of Saba' in his poem:

And from them an example for those who wrathful
A big flood of Arim destroys them
The marble stone was built by Himyar²²
If the water was came it would not be prevented
So that their plants and grapes will watered
Because there are too many water to share
And their hands become strong less
To give the water drinking to their son when weaned²³

Even, al-Hamḏani in his book *al-Ak̄līl* wrote that there was a poem written by the experts of descendant in which it tells that Saba' has talks about the coming of *Rasulullah* PBUH. The poem is below :

After al-Qaḥṭan, a messenger is mighty
The best man in devotion and tawhīd
His name is Ahmad. If I am supposed to blessed the age
Even only a year after his designation
Promise I will love and help him
With all the javelin and weapons
When he comes, give him support
Anyone who meet, give my best regard to him²⁴

²¹ . Maimūn bin Qais is a big and famous man of poet in jahiliyyah era. His wrote the most poets among other, although he was blind.

²² . Himyar was the name of a son of Abdu Shamsin bin Ya'rūb bin Yasyjub bin Qahthan, a leader of Saba', first king capable of captivating an enemy of the Arabs.

²³ Dr. Shalah Al-Khālidy, *Ma'a Qaṣaṣi as-sabiqīna fī Al-Qur'an*, page.167

²⁴ . Ibnu Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-karīm*, page 923

In the mapping of principal correlations of the story were performed by Khalafullah, the story of Saba' is included in the category of stories that have been previously known. The source of this knowledge aside from some Arab *syā'ir* from *jahiliyyah* era like the *syā'ir* from Maimūn bin Qais and the experts of descendant above. It also derived from the oral tradition. This is because the relationship between the people of Quraish in Mecca with 'Auz and Khazraj tribes of Medina which is the children of the king of Saba'.

This way of tracking the source through exploring the ancient Arabic literature got no attention in the classical book of *tafsīr*. That is why this is interesting to apply in reading the quranic narratives.

The other way is searching the correlation of the verses itself. Correlation between narrations of Saba' with the socio-cultural of Arab at that time could be finding in the explanation of the *Qur'an* in the next verses of *Surat Saba'*:

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا هُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ شَرِكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيرٍ
﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَن
قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ مَنْ
يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ قُلِ اللَّهُ وَإِنَّا أَوْ إِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى
أَوْ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

Meaning: Say: "summon those who you think is (a god) other than Allah, they do not have the (power) weighing zarrah in the heavens and the earth, and they do not have a saham in (the creation of) the heavens and the earth, and occasionally no among those who became an assistant for him. There is not a useful intercession with Allah, but for those who have allowed him to obtain the intercession, so that when it is removed fear from their hearts, they said, "What have spoken by your Lord? "they replied: (words) is true", and He is the Most High, the Most Great. Say: "Who are you giving sustenance from the sky and from the earth?" Say: "Allah", and is We or ye (idolaters), must be in the truth or in manifest error.(Q.S Saba': 22-24)

In interpreting these verses, Ibn 'Ashūr²⁵ sees the similarities between the people of Saba' and the state of the *Mushrikīn* in Mecca in Prophet Muhammad era. In the narrative of Saba' which we discussed in the beginning of this chapter, the society of Saba' described as having a sense of security and prosperity on the virtues possessed prosperous country. Similarly, experienced by *Mushrikīn* Mecca at that time, they also gain a sense of security and abundant grace imported from various directions. This is confirmed in the Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ verse 57:

وَقَالُوا إِن نَّتَّبِعِ الْهُدَىٰ مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفَ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا ۗ أَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا
ءَامِنًا يُجِئِي إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّن لَّدُنَّا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Meaning: and they said: "If we follow the guidance with you, surely we would be driven from our country". and Are We did not confirm their position in the area of the Haram (the holy land) are safe, which is brought to the place of fruits of all kinds (plants) to be sustenance (you) from Us ?. but most of them do not know.

²⁵. His full name is Thahir Ibnu Ashūr (1879-1973), A great Tunisian Scholar, *Mufasssir*, and the author of *Kitab At-tahrīr wa At-Tanwīr*. His interpretation frequently used by Khalafullah in his book "Al-Fann al-Qaṣaṣi fī al-Qur'an"

After showing that the arrogance of the *Mushrikīn* who favors infidel (*Kufr*) will get a reply as occurred in the community of Saba', then God comfort the Prophet Muhammad with conveying hereafter awaits reply mutineers. After that God also reiterated that every prophet would have had opponents. And the opposition like this will continue to happen and became a phenomenon in any religious preaching. This is what Khalafullah said that Prophet Muhammad PBUH psychology greatly affect the feel of the decline of a verse from the *Qur'an*.

As further exploration the writer has done, the analysis of *Munāsabah ayāt* (correlation between verses of al- *Qur'an*) also did not used the classical scholar to finding the correlation of socio cultural Arab with the narrative of al-*Qur'an*. This is the new method that Khalafullah offers to interpret the story of al- *Qur'an*.

2. The Elements of Saba' story

The second method of finding the material source of story conducted by Khalafullāh is by mapping the element of the story.

Referring to the elements of the stories of the *Qur'an* according Khalafullāh that the writer has explained in chapter III, below is a translation of the story elements in the Land of Saba':

1. Character

The character used in the story of the country of Saba' is the People of Saba'. This is evident from the use of the plural pronoun (*Dhamīr* هُم) in the narrative. Plural character may used in the story of literature in general,

especially when the focus of the story is a social phenomenon of community as there is in the story of Saba'.

In the common concept of Qur'anic narrative, this type of character includes the character of a state or society. In this type of character, what shows is the rise and fall of the community because in the end it can be concluded that the so-called al-Qur'an the *sunnatullāh*, the laws that apply to the entire community of human society whenever and wherever.²⁶

In this story, the rise and fall of Saba' has mentioned by al-Qur'an in the surah Saba' verse 15 to 17. It shows that *sunnatullāh* comes to the society of Saba' because their greediness and the refusal toward the grace given by God to their land. And this *sunnatullāh* will apply to the entire community of human society whenever and wherever.

2. Events

There is one incident that stands out in this story, the events of *Sailul Arim* flood or which cause domestic gardens Saba' fertile changed barren and overgrown trees bitter fruit.

According to Khalafullāh There are three models of the events in the *Qur'an*: *First*, the events that occurred because of the intervention elements *qaḍa'* and *qadar*. *Second*, the event is considered as an exceptional case or miracles.²⁷ *Third*, a famous event or a regular event and is widely experienced by the characters story. The figure here is general in nature, not limited to the prophets and apostles did.

²⁶ . Prof. Dr. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, page. 323

²⁷ . Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, page. 228

The events here when referring to the concept Khalafullāh above, is include into the third category that is the famous event or a regular event which is widely experienced by the characters of story. The figure here is general, not limited to the prophets and apostles did.

3. Dialogue

There is no dialogue in this story element because this is just a short story that is meant to scare or warn the mankind.

4. Qadhā and Qadar

Qadhā and Qadar in this story is not indicated textually, but in the stories of historians, the events of the coming of rats to gnaw the dam to disintegrate it is a kind of God's intervention.

5. Conscience

No element of conscience in this story From the description of elements in the story above, this story in the category of models of a story that is intended to provide a threat or warning, then what we will enjoy the most from it is unsure is events.

By describing the elements content in the story, we know that this story is a short story that aimed to give reminder and scared the humankind that *sunnatullāh* behave in any place and time. To those who be a good human, be grateful and keep the grace God has given, they will get the goodness and God will add the grace to them. So that for those who disbelieve, ungrateful and arrogance, God will punish them with the torture.

The aim to give reminder and scared the mankind shows by exploring more about event than other element in this story. By knowing the aim, according to Khalafullāh, the correlation of the story to the *Rasulullāh* and Mecca condition could known and the source seems clearly understood.

C. Dimensions of Literature

Analysis of literature dimension of a story in Khalafullāh theory is important to reveal the miracle of the narrative text in al-Qur'an. It will give us understanding toward the wisdom (*hikmah*) of al-Qur'an in challenging the disbeliever to make a surah that can rival with the great miracle of literature dimension in al-Qur'an.²⁸

There are two ways to analyze the dimension of literature in al- *Qur'an*. And below, the writer will apply these ways to analyze the literature dimension of Saba' story.

1. Story Element Analysis

Dimensions of literary and stylistic beauty of the stories of the *Qur'an* according to Khalafullāh, can be seen in the method and manner of the *Qur'an* portray various characters and events in the element of story.²⁹

The element of Saba' story has the writer mentioned above. There is a literary dimension that we could find in this story. *First*, there is only one element highlighted in this story that is the events. The way of painting literature of natural phenomena that highlighted in the text, making it appear stunning and profound though the place and time change. This is because the phenomena of nature are common in both the Arab neighborhoods and even other environmental in the world.

Second, the blurring of characters into a plural phenomenon is also shows that there is literary dimension in this story. Because Saba' story is too short

²⁸ . Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullāh, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, page.184

²⁹ . Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullāh, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, page. 186

in the Qur'an, there is no character name explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. The name of Saba' leaders and their children were only mentioned in the details of history. While the characters mentioned the Qur'an narrated by plural pronoun (*dhamir*) refers to a group of people, namely the people of Saba'.

2. Analysis of the Elements Release History

As Khalafullah thesis, history is not on the agenda of revelation of al-Qur'an, because the Qur'an is not a history book. So it is proper that many elements such as the history of the character's name, the name of the place and time of the story is hidden by al-Qur'an.

In the story of Saba' above, there are the meanings of history released by the Qur'an of the narrative such as no mention of the time of occurrence Arim Flood even the time of Saba' society life is also not mentioned. In addition, a description of what or who Saba' is also not clear. It is derived from the book of the chronicles of the commentators, the poet of (*syair*) ancient Arabic and so on Saba'.

What is even more emphasized here is the message of religion, morality and humanity. The messages are: to always be grateful for the favors of Allah and do not associate Him, don't be greedy and arrogant, keep the nature and not exploit it, and also as encouragement for every generation that in preaching to the good, the opponents will always be raised. Only those who continue to struggle that will gain happiness. As God comfort the Prophet Muhammad through stories like the story of Saba'.

This story, regarding the three model of story³⁰ mentioned by Khalafullah, is including the Historical Narrative. This conclusion is based on the analysis

³⁰ . There are three model of story according to Khalafullah : Historical narrative, parable, and myth. The extended explanation has written by the writer in chapter III

of the source of story above. But as the consequence of the submission toward literary dimension, some element of historical data was released.

D. Saba' in the Contemporary era

The general aim of the story in the Qur'an, according to Khalafullah, is a social task. This is conducted in Arabic social community which very pluralistic character and nuance so there is stubborn and there is an obedient and submissive and obedient to the teachings. *Qur'an* as a book of literature has an important role in the social task as a task the world of art and literature in general. Social task of each literature story is touching the soul (psychological) and livelihood. And these are the stories of the *Qur'an*.³¹

In each story presented by the Qur'an there is a message that is always asserted, especially if it relates to the story of defiance of a people. The message is about the enactment of *sunnatullah* in every life. Those who believe and be grateful will receive for favors, they were broken and *kufir* will receive wrath and damnation. This would hold true regardless of place and time.

There are some messages in the story of Saba' that could applied to anyone and any society regardless of place and time. Those are :

1. To keep and maintain the nature

Saba' is described as *Baldah tayyibah*, prosperous and safe land, was an instant can turn into barren because of the power of God. In fact other than mentioned as *tayyibah*, Saba' also has a forgiving God. Forgiving words here indicate that they have a chance to repent, but instead they got cocky and in the grace of God.

³¹ . Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, page.159

In terms of grace, natural resources, Indonesia is not much different from Saba'. Even in a song lyric³² expressed :

Bukan lautan hanya kolam susu
Kail dan jalan cukup menghidupimu
Tiada badai tiada topan kau temui
Ikan dan udang menghampiri dirimu

Bukan lautan hanya kolam susu
Kail dan jala cukup menghidupmu.
Tiada badai tiada topan kau temui
Ikan dan udang menghampiri dirimu

Orang bilang tanah kita tanah surga
Tongkat kayu dan batu jadi tanaman.³³

Indonesia has a richest nature resource than other countries. Resource wealth vegetable, animal, mining, marine, forest and others are very worthy to be thankful for. Thanks are understood here not only orally, but also with deeds. Ingratitude towards God in natural resources means take part to maintain, preserve and manage it well.

But unfortunately, the awareness of protecting nature is still lacking in Indonesian society. According to data released by the Indonesian Environmental Forum (WALHI) deforestation that occurred in the State of Indonesia is estimated annually is 3.2 million hectares, equivalent to 7.2 acres per minute. Facts on the ground indicate that the occurrence of illegal

³² .www.azlyric.com/Kolam-Susu. accessed on on 02 November 2014, 11.34 PM

³³ . Tanah Surga by koes ploes (Indonesian music group formed in 1969 as a continuation of the group Koes Brothers. Famous music group in the 1970s is often regarded as the pioneer of pop music and rock 'n roll in Indonesia.) www.wikipedia.id/koes-ploes. accessed on 02 November 2014, 11.34 PM

logging caused by timber companies or paper. Whereas in this case also does not benefit society. Exploitation of natural resources devoted to the pursuit of production.³⁴

If it is passed without offset the conservation and care of the environment, then Indonesia could be a destroyed Saba' in the contemporary era.

2. To be grateful and not greed

The second moral idea that we can take an example, and we can apply from the story of Saba' is the impetus to continue to be grateful and not overbearing Segal pleasure and wealth that are *duniawi* oriented.

Moreover, the story of Saba' also teaches us not to live in greedy, hedonism, to pursuit of personal happiness and cheat others:

فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعِدْ بَيْنَ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ
وَمَزَقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾

Meaning : But they said : “ O Lord! Make the stages between our journey longer “ and they wronged them selves; so we made them as tales (in the land) and we disappeared them all totally. Verily in this are indeed for every steadfast, grateful (person). (Q.S. Saba': 19)

In verse above is told about the society of Saba' pray that the journey distance that the travel distance between them and the land surrounding lands taken away. The meaning of this request is that the adjacent towns were abolished, to be a long journey and they can do a monopoly in the trade, so the advantage is greater.³⁵

³⁴ . <http://www.imahagiregion3.org/2012/10/eksplorasi-sumberdaya-alam-dalam-kaca.html/>
accessed on November 09, 16.12 PM

³⁵ . M. Qurais Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, page. 560

Monopoly of trade and economic phenomena like this are also a lot happening in the modern world. It is advantageous to the stronger side and harmful for the poor .as a result, distribution of wealth and prosperity is uneven. Greed and the pursuit of pleasures of the world makes people lose their humanity, they are hedonists and do not care about others.

The pursuit of wealth and pleasure to excess by forgetting gratitude to God and eliminating the human side, in the end will not make the obtained eternal happiness. Pleasure obtained by forgetting the gratitude and humanity will destroy itself as told in the story of Saba’.

3. Management of welfare state

As the courage to fulfill the assignment of delivering social messages of al-Qur’an, this story also taught about the Management of welfare state. The problem of managing the country to gain he prosperousness and progress in contemporary era is being a important problem to be solved. This story taught how the management of welfare state is. It says :

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وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرَى ظَهْرَةَ وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا السَّيْرَ

سِيرُوا فِيهَا لَيَالِيَ وَأَيَّامًا ءَامِنِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

Meaning : And we placed, between them and the towns which we had blessed, towns easy to be seen, and we made the stages (of journey) between them easy (saying) : travel in them safely both by night and day. (Q. S Saba’:18)

It shows that the construction of roads and the provision of means of transport and the creation of a sense of security are requirements for the

welfare of the community. The good infrastructure will support the development of country. As long as it used wisely and not be exploited, the prosperity will spread averagely.

On the other hand, this story also shows the importance of maintaining the results of development-which in this context include the dam of *Ma'rib*. People who do not build, or fail to maintain the results of its development, will collapse and its citizens will be forced to look for other areas in order to connect his life.

The creativity of Saba' population in take advantages of abundant water by built the dam *Ma'rib* should take as an example. The wise and creativity in utilizing natural resource will encourage the prosperity of a country, so that the "*baldatun ṭayyibatun wa rabbun ghafūr*" can realized in any society regardless time and place.