

CHAPTER II

SABA' AND THE CONCEPT OF QUR'ANIC NARRATIVE

A. Saba' in Al-Qur'an

Saba' is the name of the first tribe ruled Yemen. The name is attributed to 'Abdu Shamsin bin Yashjub bin Y'arub bin Qahtan. Named by Saba' because he was the first king that charming Opponents. Saba' has the meaning charm or capture. There was also a call *Raishij* because he had donated booty to his people.¹

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 day's journey from *Shan'a*, the capital of Yemen.²

The word Saba' mentioned only twice in the holy Qur'an. The first in the 22nd verses of Surah an-Naml and second is in the 15th verses of surah Saba'. In the surah an-Naml, the narration of Saba' is being a part of the story of prophet Sulaiman. It narrated that Hudhud was finding a very enchanting place that prophet Sulaiman and his people and soldiers never met and knew before. There were three information Hudhud bird brought about Saba' :

¹ . Dr. Shalah Al-Khalidi, *Ma'a Qasa'i as-sabiqa fi Al-Qur'an*, terj. Setiawan Budi Utomo, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2000) page.165

² . M. Qurais Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002) page.589

فَمَكَثَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطْتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِءَ وَجِئْتُكَ مِنْ سَبَإٍ بِنَبَأٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهِيَ عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Meaning : but the hoopoe stayed not long, he (come up and): said : “I have grasped (the knowledge of a thing) which you have not grasped and I have come to you from Saba’ with true news. I found a woman ruling over them, she has been given all things that could be possessed by any ruler of the earth, and she has a great throne” (Q.S an-Naml : 22-23)

The first information is that Saba’ is leaded by a woman (امراة تملكهم), this is great news that a country in that era had ruled by a women. The second is that this country has given abundance things (أوتيت من كل شيء), and this thing was not mentioned yet in this surah. And the last information is that it has a glorious throne (لها عرش عظيم). The historian explained that it glorious seen from the wealth of kingdom, the soldiers that facilitated with weapons, the building is covered by gold, high built and designed to a sunlight can shining over them every day so that they can worship unto the sun. ³

The meaning of Saba’ itself explained by Rasulullāh in a hadith :

حدثنا أبو عبد الرحمن، حدثنا ابن لهيعة، عن عبد الله بن هبيرة، عن عبد الرحمن بن وعله قال: سمعت ابن عباس يقول : إن رجلا سأل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن سبأ: ما هو؟ رجل أم امرأة أم أرض؟ قال: "بل هو رجل، ولد عشرة، فسكن اليمن منهم

³. Dr. Wahbah Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa al-Shar'ah wa al-Manhaj*, (Damaskus: Dar el-Fikr al-Mu'ashir 2nd pub in 1418 H) juz 19 page 284

سنة، وبالشام منهم أربعة، فأما اليمانيون: فمذحج، وكندة، والأزد، والأشعريون، وأنمار، وحمير. وأما الشامية فلخم، وجذام، وعاملة، وغسان.

In the *hadīth* above explained that Saba' is the name of a man who had ten sons in which 6 people live in Yemen, and 4 people live in Sham. Those who live in Yemen are *Famadhabij, Kindah, Azad, Ash'ariyyūn, Anmār* and *Hamīr*. And those who lived in Shām are *Lakhm, Jadhām, 'Āmilah* and *Ghussān*.⁴

In Surah an-Naml Al-Qur'an gave only a little thing description about Saba'. This story mostly talks about the theological orientation of Saba' society in which they worship unto the sun, there was no larger description on the condition of Saba' anymore.⁵ Whereas in Surah Saba', al-Qur'an explores more about the condition of Saba' society from their triumph until their devastation. It narrated in a simple description but worth fully meaning; *Baldatun Ṭayyibatun Wa Rabbun Ghafūr*.

The verses 15 until 17 of surah Saba' above are summarized the condition of Saba' before and after the devastation. And the larger interpretation about those verses will examine after knowing the concept of classical scholar in Qur'anic narrative below. Thus, we will find the newness and interesting of Khalafullah theory that the writer applies in the analysis of this thesis.

B. Concept of Quranic Narrative

1.) Definition

⁴ . Sayyid Ahmad Thanthawi , *Tafsir al-Wasīth lil qurān al-karīm*, (Cairo: Dar An-Nashr) juz 11 page.279

⁵ .See the complete story in surah an-Naml verses 15-44

Narrative⁶ -in Arabic- called *al-qaṣaṣ* comes from word *al-qaṣṣu* that etymologically means; look for or following the trace.⁷ The word *Qaṣaṣ* and its derivation were mentioned in 26 times, spreading in 12 chapters and 21 verses. From 6.342 verses in Al-Qur'an, there are 1600 verses talk about narratives and only 330 verses talk about law. It clearly shows that al-Qur'an has very big attention toward narratives.⁸

Epistemologically, *qaṣaṣ* is news about the incident or what happening in a certain times that it correlates or following each other.⁹ This definition includes the definition of Qur'anic narratives or others that noted as literature or art narratives. But some scholar and interpreter have their own definition toward *qaṣaṣ* Al-Qur'an.

Manna' Khalil Al-Qaṭṭān¹⁰ defined the term *Qaṣaṣ* al-Qur'an as the reports of the mankind's condition in the past, former prophets (*nubuwwah*), and the events happening in the past. Al-Qur'an has much information

⁶ . Narrative (noun) in spelling *nar-ra-tive* is a description of events, especially in novel. This word synonymed to the word Story. But in larger definition, story is a description of events and people that the writer or speaker has invented in order to entertain people, tell about how something happened and developed in past events. (Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary, sixth edition; 2001 oxford university press, UK. Page 846 and 1281). In this thesis, writer used both terms but tend to use narrative because it mostly used in formal or academic studies. E.g. the translation of *Khalafullah's Book; Al-fann al-qaṣaṣi fī al-Qur'an al-karīm*, translated in English by the word "The art of Narrative In Al-Qur'an Al-karīm"

⁷ . Ibnu Manẓur, *Lisan al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dar As-Shodir) Juz 5 page. 3651

⁸ . Syahrin Harahap, *Al-qur'an dan sekularisasi : kajian kritis terhadap pemikiran Thaha Husain*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1994) page.156

⁹ . Ibnu 'utsamīn, *Ushul fī tafsīr*, page 57 Software Maktabah Shamilah

¹⁰ . Manna' Khalil Al-Qaṭṭān is a famous Islamic scholar and the ex chief of supreme court in Riyadh. He had a in depth attention toward '*Ulum al-Qur'an* and his book *Mabahith fī 'Ulum al-qur'an* has been reference in the Qur'anic studies. In the chapter *Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'an*, Al-Qaṭṭān gave a rave notice or criticism toward Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah's thought about narrative. According to al-Qaṭṭān, all the story of Al-Qur'an is a historical fact that poured in beautiful and enchanting diction. It is also purified from art and literary description that out of the context of history. He rejected the statement of Khalafullah about the art of narrative in al-Qur'an. Qur'anic narrative has no correlation with literary narrative and there were no myths, imagination and fantasy in narrative of al-Qur'an.

about real stories in the past, the history of nations, the condition of countries and their inheritances and the trace of them.¹¹ In his book *Mabāhith fī ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’ān*, Al-Qaṭṭān said that narratives is the best method to interesting the reader and influence their soul. It is so effective to use as the messages delivery media in religious missionary and moral education.

Imam al-Rāzī¹² defined *qaṣaṣ* as a group of sentences contents the guidance to Islām, leading to the truth and asking to sake for the victory. The narratives in al-qur’an clearly include in this definition but did not mention yet about the religious messages, *‘amar m‘arūf nahi munkar* and others as the aims of guidance and victory.¹³ The definition of al-Rāzī taken an important place in Khalafullāh studies about the art of narratives in al-Qur’ān. He was referred many times in Khalafullāh’s book; *al-fann al-qaṣaṣi fī al-qur’ān*.

Among all of interpreters and the expert of quranic studies, *Sayyid Quṭb*¹⁴ has a special attention in the study of *qaṣaṣ al-Qur’ān*. He did not

¹¹ . Manna‘ Khalīl Al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhith fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*. (Riyāḍ; Manshūrāh al-‘asr al-hadīth, 1972) page 300

¹² . His full name is Muhammad bin ‘Umar bin al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī al-Bakrī al-Tabarīstānī al-Rāzī Fakhrūddīn, well known as Ibn al-Khatīb al-shafī‘ī al-faqīh. He was born in Ray in 543 H and death in Harah 606 H. He learned about religious and logic so that he mastering logic, philosophy and the science of tauheed. In his book *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*, logic was stucked out and dominance. Thus this book of tafseer is mixing inside several studies such as the science of health and medicine, logic and philosophy, and wisdom. (Manna khalil al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāhith fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*; Riyāḍ, manshurāt al-‘asr al-hadīth, 1972. Page 387)

¹³ . Fakhrūddīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīh al-ghayb*, (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ At-turath al-‘arb, 1996) juz 8 page 74

¹⁴ . Sayyid Quṭb Ibrāhīm Husein Syadhīlī is an author, educator, Islamic theorist, Egyptian poet and leading member of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in the era of the 1950s and '60s. In 1966 he was accused of involvement in a plot to assassinate Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and was executed by hanging.

The author of 24 books, including novels, literary criticism and art education books, he is widely known in the Muslim world through his work on what he believed as a social and political role of Islam, particularly his book *Social Justice and Milestones fī-al-Tariq*.

give definition in the term *qaṣaṣ*, but he had a comprehensive concept in this study. In addition, the interesting is that he has the same view with Khalafullāh about the art value in narrative of al-Qur'ān. In his book *taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-qur'ān*, he said that al-Qur'ān using the beauty of art as the media of giving deep impression toward the reader's feeling.¹⁵ But at the contrary, Quṭb rejected the thought of Khalafullāh about the submission of narrative of al-Qur'ān toward the rule of art. According to him, the narrative of al-Qur'ān; theme, the method of delivering stories, and the setting of events are submission to the demand of religion's aim. This submission addressed to the aim of religion and the status of al-Qur'ān as the book of missionary (*da'wah*).

In this chapter, the views, opinions and concept of *Sayyid Quṭb* will frequently referred as the explanation of common concept in qur'anic narratives. It is because, Sayyid Quṭb has the same view of the art of narrative with Khalafullāh, even though, there was still a fundamental difference between them. It is important to discuss about it in order to lead us to the discourse of quranic narratives commonly, so that we know, what kind of progressive concept *Khalafullāh* has brought in this study?

2.) Previous Concept on Qur'anic Narrative

Narrative in Al-Qur'ān is a never-ending treasure. It is like springs that will never being arid. Talking about lessons, guidance, and advisory in theology and belief, charity and preach, Jihād and resistance, logic and

Magnum opus, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* (In the shade of the Qur'ān), is a 30-volume commentary on the Qur'ān. ([www.wikipedia.org/Sayyid Quṭb](http://www.wikipedia.org/Sayyid%20Qu%20t%20b), accessed on 03 November 2014, 15.09 PM)

¹⁵ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'ān*, terj. Bahrun Abu Bakar. (Jakarta: Robbani Press, 2004) page 276

rhetoric, patience and solidarity, and a parameter of axiomatic in life.¹⁶ There are many worthy things come from the narratives in al-Qur'an. It is not only a legend was done in the past without forsake the advantages. So that we are, the believers have to be active in finding the messages in narratives of al-Qur'an and living it in our daily life.

The narratives in al-Qur'an have such psychological orientation should be used by the teacher or educator in education field especially in religious education. It is a fertile field may be made use to provide the children about life pearl of prophet, the news of the past mankind, *sunnatullah* in society and things about the past nations. Educators should have to able to serve the narratives in a language that the children may understand.¹⁷

The story in the Qur'an received less attention in depth. However, several studies in the '*Ulum al-Qur'an*' still include this theme even in short chapters and nearly equal in every discussion. This discussion can be regarded as a general concept in the study of the Qur'an story that ranges from a discussion of the model story, story elements, aims, avail or benefit of the story. Moreover, all of it would be discussed one by one in this section.

a) Models Of Narratives in Al-Qur'an

In the distribution model of the story in the Qur'an, scholars were split into two groups. The first one divides the character and the story based on time of occurrence; the group represented by *Manna' Khalil Qaṭṭān* in his book *Mabāhith fī 'Ulum al-Qur'an*. While the second group views the

¹⁶ . Dr. Ṣalah Al-Khālidi, *Ma'a Qaṣaṣi as-sābiqīnā fī Al-Qur'an*, terj. Setiawan Budi Utomo, (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 2000) page. 33

¹⁷ . This effort has been exemplified by Sayyid Quṭb, al-Jarim, and As-Shahhār that each has written books of the stories in the Qur'an with high literary style and in-depth analysis.

models in the story of the Qur'an based on a long and a short story, this group was represented by *Dr. Maryam al-Siba'i*.

And the dividing toward model of Quranic narratives is according to *Manna' Qatthan* as below:

1. The Story Of Prophet.

This stories content of their preaching toward their peoples, miracles that strengthen their preaching, attitude of those who fight against them, the phases of preach and its developments and also the impacts received by either believers or disbelievers. For examples, the story of Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Harun, Isa, Muhammad and the other prophets.

2. The stories related to the past events and those who did not ensured their prophet. For the examples; the stories of *talut* and *jalu*, two sons of Adam, the people of the cave, and others.

3. The stories related to the events happened in *Rasulullah's* era, such as the war of *Badr*, and *Uhud* in surah Ali-'imran, the war of *Hunain* and *Tabuk* narrated in surah At-taubah and al-Ahzab, hijrah, and others.¹⁸

Whereas the division of narratives in al-Qur'an according to Dr. Maryam as-siba'i, as below:

1. Long stories

It is wide stories that content of many sections that unified in a big theme such as the Stories of Nuh prophet which told us about the opponent of unbelievers, the against from his son (Kan'an), Nuh's ark and the great flood. Long stories might contents of a story only but repeated in several chapter such as the stories of prophet Yusuf AS.

2. Short stories

¹⁸ . Manna khalil al-Qatthan, *Mabahith fi 'ulum al-Quran*, page.436

It is a story content of some element but narrated in a short stories or being a part of a long stories such as the story of Saba' land that was a part of the story of Prophet Sulaimān.¹⁹

b) Aims of Narratives in Al-Qurān

There are lot of exposure given by the observer in study of Qura'nic stories such as *Dr. al- Maryam al-sibā'i, Ṭāha Ḥusein, Fakhruddīn al-Rāzī* and others in terms of the purpose and intent tales Qur'an. However, exposure of Sayyid Quṭb in his book *Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'an* was already enough information to represent and summarize the exposure figures. Among them are:

1. To strengthen the revelation of Qur'an

Prophet Muhammad PBUH neither a writer nor a reader. He never consorted with the priest of jewish and christian. But He narrated the stories through the revelation of al-qurān. It's clearly explained in some preface and closing of the stories such as in the preface of Surah Yūsuf it says :

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنَّ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Meaning : Surely We have revealed the Qur'an to be in Arabic, that ye may understand. . We tell you the story of the most good with the

¹⁹ . Maryam As-Sibā'i, *Al-qisoh fī qurān al-karīm*, page 55 (pdf)

Qur'an revealed this to you, and Thou art before (we reveal) it is included people who do not know.

The verse above and some other verse strengthen that *wahyu* and *risalah* come from Allāh, not the creation of *Rasulullāh*.

2. To explain that all religion were based on the oneness of God. That is why, most of the stories of the prophet assembled in a narrative and repeated in a context of telling about this basic *aqīdah*. That is believe to God as mentioned in the verse of Al-a'raf that gradually repeated some stories of the people of Prophet Nuh²⁰, Hud²¹, Ṣāleḥ²² and Shua'ib²³. All of them sent by God to their people to beg them to the light way, which is believed to one God, Allāh.²⁴
3. To explain the main rabbinic doctrine that allied between religion of Muhammad and Ibrāhim especially, and the religion of Israeli in common. Besides to showing off that the special bound between religion of Muhammad and Ibrahim is stronger than the common bounding among all religions. This is repeated in the stories of Ibrāhim, Mūsā, and Īsā.²⁵ In the surah ali-'imran Allāh said :

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Meaning :Indeed the closest to Ibrāhim are those who followed him and this Prophet (Muhammad), with those who believe (to Muhammad), and Allāh is the protector of all those who believe.

²⁰ . see Q. S Al-a'raf verse 59

²¹ . see Q. S al-a'raf verse 65

²² . see Q. S al-a'raf verse 73

²³ . see Q. S al-a'raf verse 85

²⁴ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page 285

²⁵ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page 288

This verse shows that the religion that brought by Muhammad (Islām) has the strong and special relation to the religion of Ibrāhim. And through the narration of stories of Prophet Ibrāhim, Prophet Mūsā, Prophet Īsā and other prophets strengthen the evidence that Islām and the religion of previous prophets were came from one God, Allāh SWT.

4. To explain that Allāh always helps His prophets and destroying those who against them. It strengthens the heart of Muhammad and his people by narrating the stories of previous prophets.²⁶ This is like a *sunnatullāh* that the good things will always get win and the bad will lose by the help of God.

Except the aims above, there were still many aims that mentioned by *mufassirīn* when discuss above narrative of Al-Qur'an. In a short conclusion, we could say that all of them were merely same. And the different one in this study is the opinion of *Khalafullāh* that the discussion of this will be comes in the next chapter

c.) Method of Narrative Delivery

One of the factors that made the story is an effective medium to deliver the message is because it was delivered in an interesting way. *Uṣlūb Qaṣaṣi* most prominent and make the story has a sense of art, lies in how it is delivered or served to the reader. This is what makes the story different from the product of ignorance of literary art from past to the present.

²⁶ . In surah al-ankabūt verse14-15, al-qur'an narrating the story of the rebel of Nūh's people and how Allah finally save him from a big flood that destroying those who against him. There were many other verses of previous prophets stories used to strengthen the heart of Muhammad in his religious mission.

The story in the Qur'an has its own distinct way of delivery of literature in general. There are at least four methods of delivery in the stories of the Qur'an in the study carried the story of Sayyid Quṭb. This delivery method, according to Sayyid Quṭb, is a part of the literary characteristics that exist in the story of the Qur'an.

First, there are times when it first mentioned the story summary, then display the details after it from start to ending. It applied in *the story of Ashāb al-kahfi* that begins with a summary of the story, then followed by the details that deliberation between them before entering the cave, after they wake up, then they sent one of them to buy food, they are at the opening of the city, the messenger returned to the cave, they died, were awakened at their places of worship, and the dispute regarding their thing and so on as the beginning of this story is a summary of preliminary ignited curiosity on the continuation of the story.²⁷

Second, the end of the story and goals sometimes mentioned in beginning then after that the story begins from the beginning and continues to its phases. Thus occurs in the story of Prophet Mūsā. In *Surah al-Qaṣaṣ*. In verse 2 to 6, it told about the description of arbitrariness pharaohs (*Fir'aun*) who oppress and divide his people, killing children and men of God also tells what he will do to defend the oppressed and to show His power before the pharaohs and his army.

Later in the verses after detailed story of Mūsā from birth, growth, future, adult life, kills people out of Egypt and the Egyptian State and so on. Submission of this story begins in the story of the introduction to disclose the purpose of the story, and the preface to provoke curiosity will be the

²⁷ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page 340

next storyline. This delivery method is also applied in the story of Prophet Yūsuf.²⁸

Third, sometimes the story is mentioned directly without preliminary and so that the story flows without a summary only and full of surprises. It happened in the story of the birth of Īsā and Maryam is also the story of Sulaimān and his ants, birds, Hudhud and the queen Bilqīs that being the focus in this thesis study.

Fourth, there are times when the story switches to the main actors; it is mentioned only words that hinted at the beginning of the story of the show. Then let the story tell itself through the main actor. This delivery method is widely used in the Qur'an. For example, in the story of Prophet Ibrāhim and Ismāil. God signaled the beginning of the story and in the story and then submit the rest of the story on the main actor's dialogue or monologue.²⁹

Cues were delivered in the beginning of the story of Ibrāhim and Ismāil, as presented at the beginning of this verse of surat al-Baqarah :

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ

Meaning :And (remember) when Abraham lifted up (build) the foundations of the House along with Ismail(Q.S. Al-baqarah : 127)

In the beginning of this verse, God signaled the beginning of the story by telling Ibrahim and his son attempt to elevate the basics of *Baitullah*. Furthermore, still in the same verse, the rest of the story left to the main actors of this through dialogue picture of Ibrāhim and Ismāil in the form of Prayer to God.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

²⁸ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwir al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page 342

²⁹ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwir al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page 343

Meaning : (as he prayed): "Our Lord! Accept than ours (our deeds), Surely thou hear Supreme Knower".

d.) Character and Characterization

The stories in the Qur'an also have characteristics associated with the characterizations and the message. Among them:

First, If the story is related to a particular character or a human figure, al-Qur'an featuring sides that need to follow, and what is shows is the weakness, then it will shows the end of the episode is concerned or awareness of the adverse effects experienced.³⁰

As when the Qur'an tells about Qarun, it described in the beginning how arrogantly Qarun but eventually told that it faces due to the bad as well as the awareness of many community members who had admired Qarun and his wealth.³¹ Also in the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha when seducing how eventually he realized.³²

Second, If it is told about the state of society, then what will 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 *sunnatullah*, the laws that apply to the entire community of human society whenever and wherever.

It occurs when the Qur'an tells about the country Saba'. In verses 15-21 surah Saba', the Qur'an tells the grace that God gave to the country that is the presence of two very lush gardens on the right and left. Even Saba' was the only country mentioned in the Qur'an as *baldatun tayyibatun wa rabbun ghafur*, a beautiful country and has a forgiving God.

³⁰ . Prof. Dr. Quraish Shihab, *Kaidah Tafsir*, (Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2013) page. 323

³¹ . see Q. S Al-Qaṣaṣ (28) : 76-82

³² . see Q.S Yusuf (12) : 23-53

Afterwards, the Qur'an describes how society of Saba' does not know how to thankful, even they turned away from God. Therefore, He sent them the big flood or *sailul 'Arim*. Surah saba' which explains the story of the people of Saba' turned out overall is a depiction of the laws on which society will continue to be repeated until the end of time. Those who are grateful to be added by the favor of God, and will be inflicted torment is severe for those who turn away from Him.

3.) The Art of Narrative in Al-Qur'an

Art and literature³³ are relating each other. Literature is the art that expressed through the language. In his dissertation, Khalafullah gave the title "*al-fann al-qasasi fi al-Qur'an al-karim*" that literally translated into "the art of narratives in al-Qur'an". Thus, it is fine either to use the term "art" or "literature" in the study of narrative, because narrative is one of art expression pouring into the language.

³³. Literature (English). Literatur (German), literature (French), comes from Latin *litteratura* that created as the translation of Greece word; *litteratura* and *grammatika* from words *littera* and *gramma* means letter. According to the root of language, *litteratura* used in the grammatical and poetry. *Litteratus* is those who expert in grammatical and poetry. Literature in the western's modern language is every written things or the use of language in the text.

In Arabic language, there is no word has close meaning to "literature", the closest one might be the word "Adab". The meaning of Adab itself was developed through the development of the Arabs. In Jahiliyyah era, the word was adab used in the context of feast invitation. This kind of tradition was very praiseworthy and shows a high morality. Because it begged people to honoring and dignify their guests.

As the time goes by, Adab used in the context of education either verbal, moral or ethic. As Rasulullah said "adabani rabbi fa-ahsana ta'dibi" means my God has educating me and then perfecting my moral. In Umayyad Era, the word adab means learning. Thus, the word mu'allim has the same meaning to mu'addib. They taught the sons of caliphates as they wish to understanding the discourse about Arabic culture, sya'ir, public speaking, news of the Arabs and the ethnicity, the days of wars in jahiliyyah and islam and so on.

And now Adab is use to defined everything that decorates someone either it character or ethic, thus, they will be honored and dignify. Further, the definition of adab is constricted into a very beautiful writing text and has the meaning of poetry or sya'ir. (Sastra Arab dan Lintas Budaya, page 2-3)

Narratives with every grace of art and literature inside was bewitched and interesting the Arab's attention in the era when *Al-Qur'an* revealed. It caused in that time, the society of *Mecca* widely known in their proclivity in the art and literature that proved by the poetry festival which the best poetry will hanged on in the wall of *Ka'bah*³⁴.

Stories has important role in the civilization of the Arab. Even in *Rasulullah* era, the stories used by unbelievers as a tool to pulling down Prophet Muhammad and against al-quran. Naẓr ibn Hārith was able to aligned his self with prophet Muhammad and his speaking interesting the attention of Quraish, until they run away from prophet Muhammad when Naẓr narrating about the story of King of Rustum and King of Ekspandaria.

Even so, the study of *Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'an* received less critical attention in the study of the science of the *Qur'an*. The study of the story is often just stop at the level of descriptive information that is neatly lay down in the discussion of *asbab nuzul* verses of *Qur'an*. In classical Islamic literature, in-depth exploration of the stories of the *Qur'an* to say there is no bias. Story in the corridor of exposure limited *sabab nuzul* earlier, limited described through *hadith* narrations, which of course is an opportunity of history authority in determining the validity of a story.

Scholar who extensively discusses the discourse surrounding the story of the *Qur'an* and its relation to literature is Sayyid Quṭb. In his book *Taṣwīr al-Fannī fī al-Qur'an*, Quṭb laid the foundations of the new in the study of progressive stories of *Qur'an* then becomes a reference and study materials in the study of the *Qur'an*.

³⁴ . Arabic society in Jahiliyyah era has a very strong attractiveness toward literature. There were some art and literature fair that happened in the time of Hajj. The most famous is the market of Ukaz that held along the months of pilgrimage. The fair of Ukaz had been the place of artist to showing off their works of literatures such as poetry, khotbah, narrative and other.

In view of Quṭb, The Story of the Qur̄ān in the theme, the method of presentation and the setting is submitted to the demands of religious purposes. The story concentrated in one of the media to convey the Qur̄ān. The story in the Qur̄ān is intent to reinforce the revelation and message of the prophet Muhammad. The story also shows the unity and interconnectedness of history with the faithful since the days of Nūh to Muhammad.³⁵

Consequently the story of the Qur̄ān were submitted to religious purposes, the method of presentation and the material was affected or influence. However, this submission does not relieve the existing art in the story. Among these impacts are as follows:

a. The narrative repetition

The repetition of the story in the Qur̄ān is generally not discuss the story as a whole, but only a portion of episode only and mostly just a glance cues that point to specific parts instructive. As to the overall body of the story, it would repeat except rarely.

Repeated episodes in the story of the Qur̄ān are very harmonious with the context. Selection repetition of this episode is prioritized by the Qur̄ān because it is a book of religious outreach. Interestingly, it did not clash with the hallmark of art.

There is such a rule in the exposure of the episodes repeated from the same story. This was apparent when the story is read in the order presented their slide. Most of the story begins with short cues, and then this hint extends slightly little by little. After it raised major episodes overall story can shape.

³⁵ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur̄ān*, page. 280

Al-Qur'ān in view of Quṭb is a book of religious outreach, and the harmony between the story it presented episodes with a story context explained priority objectives. And it is certainly not in conflict with the characteristic art.³⁶

b. The limit description of narrative

The presentation of the story in the Qur'an is limited to levels necessary to accomplish the purpose of religion and tailored to the telling episode. Sometimes the story presented from the beginning, sometimes from the middle, sometimes from the end and sometimes put forward in detail. Sometimes it is quite simply the most episodes and sometimes into the inserts between this and that it is in accordance with the lessons contained therein.

c. The mixture narrative

The intermingling of the story in the Qur'an occurred as a consequence of the story submission toward religious purposes. In this case, religion creates cues that blend in well with the story before, after or in the midst of the story. This blurring also has to remind that the stories of the Qur'an come from revelation. The stories also confirmed the message of al-Qur'an. If traced, in the stories of the Qur'an there is a review of religious instruction in accordance with the lessons contained therein.

For example, when being told the story of King Sulaimān and the Queen Bilqīs, amid verses of Hudhud insert words that can be used as guidance for mankind :

³⁶ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'ān*, page 297

إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ
 وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ
 أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ
 الَّذِي تَخْرُجُ الخَبَاءُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ
 اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ العَرْشِ العَظِيمِ ﴿٢٥﴾

Meaning : Behold, I come across a woman who govern them, and he was awarded everything and has a great throne. I find him and his people worshiped the sun, but Allah; and the devil made them look at their wonderful deeds and hinder them from the way (of God), so they cannot hint, so that they do not worship the God of what is hidden in the heavens and on earth, and who knows what you conceal and what you reveal. God, no God is to be worshiped except Him, the Lord who has' great Throne ".(Q.S An-Naml : 23-29)

The emergence of Hudhud in the middle of this story gave religious instruction exemplary by mankind. This is how the Qur'an tailors the stories to submit to religious purposes.

Back again to the discussion of the art of story in the Qur'an, unlike Khalafullāh who sees the story has a submission on the literary characteristics; Quṭb insisted that the story still adhere to religious purposes. However, this does not hamper the emergence characteristics of art in the story.³⁷

Al-Qur'an, for Quṭb, making the beauty of art as a means of touching. This is same as the statement of Khalafullāh that the Qur'an always talks by considering the psychology of the reader. The major difference between these two figures of the story lies in the conclusion that for Quṭb, the stories

³⁷ . Sayyid Quṭb, *Taṣwīr al-fanni fī al-Qur'an*, page.323

in the Qur'ān in the past is the fact that it happened and it told by the Qur'ān with consequent submission to the intent and purpose of religion.

As Khalafullāh said, not all the stories in the Qur'ān are something that history could verify. There are some stories that deliberately told or made by the Supreme narrator to interest readers and encourage the prophet at that time. Therefore, the prophet psychology has a very important role in the narrative models that exist in the Qur'ān. Overall, the model of narrative in the Qur'ān is subject to the models of narrative literature. This problem will be discussed further in next chapter.

C. Qur'anic Narratives in Western Scholars Views

It is a well known fact that the Qur'anic narrative are brief and straight to the point to tend not to go into much detail concerning chronological, historical and environmental details³⁸, as opposed to the bible, which tends to elaborate. Thus when non *muslīm* study a *Qur'anic surah* containing a story which they have already seen in other scriptures, they naturally assume that the Qur'ān derives from those other scriptures.

Abraham Geiger³⁹, the traditional Western scholar, in his essay “*What did Muhammad Retain from Judaism?*” tried to find the extent of biblical influence on the Qur'ān. He explained what and how the prophet took from Judaism. Geiger believed that some of the Qur'anic narratives were not to

³⁸ . Kate Zebiri, *Muslīm and Christian Face to face*, (Oxford: One World Press, 1997) page 18

³⁹ . He was a German rabbi and scholar who led the founding of Reform Judaism. At Bonn university, he began an intense study of Arabic and Qur'ān. His essay “*What did Muhammad Retain from Judaism?*” winning a prize and earned him a doctorate at the University of Marburg. (www.wikipedia.en , accessed on 03 November 2014, 8.45 AM)

be found in any source except Judaism. Besides the bible, according to Geiger, the prophet used many post biblical Jewish material.⁴⁰

Another western scholar and linguistic expert, Theodore Noldeke, saw the Qur'an as the product of the prophet. He believed that after the poetic style of the early Meccan surahs, the prophet's creative powers gradually declined and consequently the style became progressively more prosaic.⁴¹ Torrey agreed this thought and make a further explanation about the Jewish settlement in Mecca relating to the material of al-Qur'an. According to him, the prophet receive at least the biblical and haggadic narratives (which occupy a large part of the Qur'an) in his town. Then make it extended in Qur'anic narratives.⁴²

Most of western scholar raised a question about the validity of narrative from the historical aspect. The method they use to determining the validity is almost the same. They compare the text of Qur'anic narrative with all the event, accident and characters mentioned in *Taurat*, *Zabur*, *Injil* and other books of story.

The conclusion of this method states that most of the texts of Qur'anic narrative are contradictory with historical reality. This contradiction, according to them, proves that al-Quran is very historic and not the revelation from God. Al-Qur'an is the creation of Muhammad PBUH, because if it is God's revelation, it is impossible that al-Qur'an diverged from the fact and historical data.⁴³

⁴⁰ . Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Islam*, (New York : KTAV Publication House 1970), viii

⁴¹ . Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qur'an : A contemporary Approach to a Ve Led text*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996) page.95

⁴² . Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, New York:KTAV Publishing House1967(first pub. in 1933) page.12

⁴³ Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, *Al-fann Al-Qaṣaṣi fī Al-Qur'an*, translated by Zuhairi Misrawy and Anis Maftukhin, (Jakarta : Paramadina, 2002), page. 180.

This thought socialized through the books, journals, and seminars and other. It should be straightened and clarified; regarding that al-Qur'^{ān} is the main source of Islā^m, the thought of Orientalist above can give the bad impact for Islā^m and the view of other religion pupils toward Muslī^m.

Perhaps this thesis will give a satisfied analysis to disprove those accusations.