SAMPLE

Qawm Tubba': The Forgotten King

The Story of the People of Tubba' ( ) عبت in the Quran

Aira Aurora

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This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

Introduction: The King the Quran Remembers

The Quran mentions a name twice, a name that was known to the Arabs of the seventh century but that has faded from the common memory of later generations. The name is Tubba' (,)عّبتand it refers to the kings of Himyar, the ancient rulers of Yemen who once governed a powerful and prosperous civilization. The Quran asks: "Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them. Indeed, they were criminals" (44:37).

The mention is brief. The Quran does not tell the story of Tubba' in detail. The Quran does not narrate the rise and fall of the Himyarite kingdom. The Quran simply mentions the name and compares the fate of Tubba' and those before them to the fate of the people the Quran addresses. The mention is a warning: the people of Tubba' were powerful, prosperous, and numerous — and they were destroyed. The mention is a question: are you better than they were? And the mention is a lesson: the power does not last, the prosperity does not endure, and the civilization that forgets the One who created it will be forgotten.

This book — the fourteenth and final book in the Nations and Peoples of the Quran sub-series — explores the story of Qawm Tubba' as the Quran references it and as history transmits it. It examines the Quranic references, the title and its meaning, the Tubba' dynasty of Himyar, the journeys of the kings, the faith of Tubba' and the religion of the One, the comparison that the Quran draws, the destruction of those who passed away, the sign of the cities that vanished, and the lesson of the knowledge and the forgetting.

The Quran's treatment of Tubba' reveals a pattern that runs through the entire scripture: the pattern of the powerful civilization that rises and falls, the pattern of the prosperous people who forget the source of their prosperity, and the pattern of the divine justice that does not discriminate between the small and the great, the known and the forgotten, the remembered and the lost. The story of Tubba' is the story of every civilization that has passed away — and the warning to every civilization that remains.

The first chapter begins with the Quranic references — the two verses that mention Tubba' and what they reveal.

Chapter 1: The Quranic References — Tubba' in the Quran

The first reference to Tubba' appears in Surah al-Dukhan (44:37): "Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them.

Indeed, they were criminals." The context is the warning to the Meccans who denied the Prophet. The Quran compares the Meccans to the people of Tubba' — the people of a great civilization that was destroyed because of their crimes. The comparison is the warning: the Meccans are not better than the people of Tubba'. The Meccans are not more powerful. The Meccans are not more prosperous. And the people of Tubba' were destroyed. So the Meccans should expect the same if they persist in the denial.

The reference is brief but loaded. The Quran does not explain who Tubba' was. The Quran does not describe the civilization. The Quran does not narrate the history. The Quran assumes the audience knows — the Arabs of the seventh century knew the Tubba' kings, the Himyarite civilization, and the stories of

Yemen. The Quran mentions the name and expects the listener to fill in the context. The brevity is the confidence — the confidence that the reference is sufficient, the confidence that the audience knows, the confidence that the name alone carries the weight of the warning.

The second reference appears in Surah Qaf (50:12-14): "The people of Nuh denied before them, and the companions of the Rass, and Thamud, and 'Ad, and Fir'awn, and the brothers of Lut, and the companions of the Grove, and the people of Tubba'. All denied the messengers, so the threat was due." The reference places the people of Tubba' in a list — a list of the nations that denied the messengers and were destroyed. The list includes Nuh, the companions of the Rass, Thamud, 'Ad, Fir'awn, the brothers of Lut, the companions of the Grove, and Tubba'. The list is the catalog — the catalog of the destroyed, the catalog of the deniers, the catalog of the nations that refused the message and faced the consequence.

The placement is the lesson. The people of Tubba' are placed alongside Nuh, Thamud, 'Ad, and Fir'awn — the greatest of the destroyed nations. The placement elevates Tubba' to the level of the nations that the Quran mentions repeatedly, the nations whose stories are told in detail, the nations that serve as the primary warnings. Tubba' is mentioned briefly but placed prominently — the brief mention with the prominent placement, the short reference with the significant context.

The common thread of the two references is the destruction. In the first

reference: "We destroyed them. Indeed, they were criminals" (44:37). In the second reference: "All denied the messengers, so the threat was due" (50:14). The destruction is the constant — the constant that connects Tubba' to every other destroyed nation, the constant that the Quran emphasizes in every story of the deniers, the constant that the warning delivers.

The destruction is the lesson. The lesson is not about the power of Tubba' — though the power was real. The lesson is not about the wealth of Tubba' — though the wealth was great. The lesson is about the destruction — the destruction that came despite the power, the destruction that arrived despite the wealth, the destruction that overtook the civilization that denied the messengers. The destruction is the warning — the warning that the power does not protect, the wealth does not save, and the civilization that denies the truth will be destroyed.

The first reference asks a question: "Are they better or the people of Tubba' and those before them?" (44:37). The question is addressed to the Meccans — the Meccans who denied the Prophet, the Meccans who felt secure in their position, the Meccans who thought their wealth and their city made them immune. The question is the comparison — the comparison between the Meccans and the people of Tubba'. The comparison is the challenge: are you better than they were? Are you more powerful? Are you more prosperous? Are you more secure?

The question is the warning. If the Meccans are not better than the people of Tubba' — and they are not — then the fate of the people of Tubba' will be the fate of the Meccans. The question is the mirror — the mirror that the Quran holds up to every reader: are you better than the ones who were destroyed? Are you more righteous than the ones who were punished? Are you more secure than the ones who were overtaken? The question is the call — the call to humility, the call to reflection, the call to consider the fate of those who came before.

The Quran says: "Indeed, they were criminals" (44:37). The word "criminals" is the explanation — the explanation of why the people of Tubba' were destroyed. The destruction was not arbitrary. The destruction was not random. The destruction was the consequence of the crime. The crime was the denial — the denial of the messengers, the denial of the truth, the denial of the One. The crime was the rejection — the rejection of the message, the rejection of the call, the rejection of the guidance.

The criminals are the lesson. The lesson is that the denial is a crime — a crime against the truth, a crime against the messenger, a crime against the One who sent the message. The denial is not the opinion. The denial is not the

perspective. The denial is the crime that the Quran punishes, the crime that the justice answers, the crime that the destruction follows. The criminals are the warning — the warning that the denial is not a right but a wrong, the warning that the rejection is not a freedom but a crime, the warning that the one who denies the messenger is the one who faces the destruction.

The second reference says: "so the threat was due" (50:14). The threat is the promise — the promise of the punishment, the promise of the destruction, the promise of the consequence. The threat is the certainty — the certainty that the denial will be answered, the certainty that the crime will be punished, the certainty that the destruction will come. The threat is the justice — the justice that the Quran guarantees, the justice that the Quran promises, the justice that the Quran delivers.

The threat that was due to Tubba' is the threat that is due to every people who deny the messengers. The threat is universal — the universal of the Quran, the universal that applies to every nation, the universal that the list of the destroyed delivers. The threat is the lesson — the lesson that the denial has a consequence, the lesson that the crime has a punishment, the lesson that the rejection has an end. And the threat is the warning — the warning to every reader: the threat that was due to Tubba' is the threat that is due to you if you deny.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

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Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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