



IMAGINING JUSTICE IN BALTIMORE

Part 4: Water Justice in Islamic Tradition(s)

Following is an excerpt from a book of transcribed lectures by the pioneering Muslim American Imam and Spokesman for Universal Human Excellence, Imam Warith Deen Mohammed. In this lecture, Imam Mohammed, a student of the Qur'an and the Bible, interprets the biblical rendering of Noah's Flood in the light of the Qur'an.

Noah's Flood: Lectures by Imam W.D. Mohammed¹

We are talking now, about Noah's flood. We've heard so many stories about this flood, and the average person in religion thinks that it really means that it started raining, and it just kept raining until water rose up over the houses and everything, and even covered the mountains, and drowned all flesh. Ok, let's look at it a little bit now.

This Noah's flood, what is it talking about exactly? It is talking about the death of flesh in two ways. Flesh represents the senses, for we are sensitive in our flesh body. Before the feelings are transferred to the mind, they have to first come through the flesh. We feel something on our flesh, and this is transferred to the mind, the senses. We look at the physical flesh body as representing man's senses. When someone is insensitive, we say he is callous and callous means, grown hard, skin grown hard like a callous. There is no life, no feeling in it anymore, you see. So we have always identified the physical body with the senses...

The flood kills all flesh. If we're going to use this interpretation now, of flesh, it means that this flood kills human sentiments. It destroys sympathy and empathy in the society, and made the society hard, cold, or callous. So, what is a callous anyway but dead flesh? Isn't that what it is? You can take a knife and trim it, there's no life in it. So that's what it is saying to us, that the society became callous, dead. They didn't have feelings for each other anymore, do you understand? So this is what this road takes us to, the road the first Adam

¹ Mohammed, W. (2019). *Noah's Flood: Lectures by Imam W Deen Mohammed*. Pp. 9-26.

traveled. It takes us first, because he didn't get enough knowledge, and he wasn't strong enough in his spiritual nature, not that all people came down this road, just a particular people came down this road. Most people, they pass the test. They don't fall, the snake doesn't get everybody, but it got this particular people that are described, or under the name Adam, in Genesis.

All right let's keep moving here now. So, Noah's flood kills all flesh. What did G-d tell Noah when He told him to make the Ark? He told him to get animals, two and two. Why is that told to us? To let us know, that G-d didn't really have it out for any animals. He wasn't out to kill flesh. He told Noah to get flesh, save flesh. So it's not that flesh that His anger is against. He told him to get animals two and two, and he brought in animals of all kind into the Ark, to tell us that G-d is not angry with animals, He's not angry with flesh, He's angry with man, for his rejection.

So G-d hit Adam once, and made him go blind spiritually and caused him to lose the happiness, that peaceful bliss that he was enjoying, but that wasn't enough to teach him the right way, we're talking about this particular people. He had to hit him again. This time He hit him by embarrassing his intellectual order. The philosophers found out that this thing we have come up with isn't as strong as we thought it was. He shamed them by having them babble their philosophy out. They failed as leaders for the society.

Their philosophy failed to save the society, and the power of philosophy fell down into nothing but babble, but that wasn't enough brothers and sisters. He still wasn't hip to what was going on in real life, and he had to be struck again. This time He struck him by killing him in the thing that had set him wrong from the beginning. He had yielded to the powers of his flesh. His senses had guided him off the right path. His physical senses, his biological senses, the drives of his flesh had directed him off the right path, so G-d now, strikes him right in the thing that had led him wrong from the beginning, and curses him by making him dead in the flesh.

Now let me tell you that's one of the worst curses that can come upon a society, and let me tell you again, America is a diverse, complex, mixed up society, and you will find every extreme in America, and I'm telling you that extremes, callousness, cannot be matched anywhere in the world with that which we find in America. We are the most insensitive people in the whole world. Dead in the flesh, don't feel for each other. Read news of death, of

misery, just like we read news of the stock market. In fact, we don't have the feelings for the human beings that are suffering and dying, that we have for the fluctuation in the stock market report. Insensitive!

Walk around in the community, see women trembling, they can't keep a straight gate for looking to the side and behind, not knowing when some crazy lunatic, ravenous beast is going to run up and snatch her purse off her arm or something. Believe me, this world is not only a mount Everest of material accomplishment, scientific accomplishment, it is also the mount Everest of every wickedness you can identify in the book, believe it or not.

Now, this Noah's flood came to kill all flesh, so G-d brought about callousness, insensitive feelings in people for each other, as a curse on them, to show them that "see the world that you're following, see the consequences of it, see what it has brought too?" "You don't want to listen to me, I tried to draw you with love, created you, and forced you to come together by putting in you a desire for each other, but you have followed your own path now, and that desire is not respected anymore, the sacred relationship turns into just a sex toy for us." A curse, brothers and sisters.

Now we go here, and the flood comes, and they say the flood rises so hard until it covered the mountains. What does this tell us? What does a mountain represent? Mountain represents government. You see, the insensitive nature started with the common people, because their leaders had deserted them, had stopped giving them guidance. Children will become insensitive to each other's needs if their parents don't continue to guide them, so the leaders neglect the masses, and the masses first grow callous, but this flood of callousness is going to rise...

That flood begins with the masses, and the water begins to mount up higher and higher, pretty soon, the high up becomes callous. The last thing to become callous is the government, they become callous. They don't have feelings for each other, don't have respect for each other. That's the last thing to happen in the destruction of a society, when it's leaders become insensitive to each other and lose respect for each other. Brother, they are finished. And isn't that what has happened here in this country?

Look how they have neglected each other. Look how they have attacked and cut up each other. So, that's what we get in Noah's flood. The rising of

callousness that begins with the masses and it rises up and rises up, until it engulfs the leaders of society, and when that happens, time for a new world order. What does the Book say; Noah began a new world order, is that right or wrong? When Noah came out of that ark with his family, he began creation anew; everything had to be started all over again.

Now, we have come to the end of this world society. We have seen the flood, we have seen them become so callous that they don't even know what's happening right around them in high- up offices, brushing against each other and don't know that there's another human being in the office, planning and scheming how to cut his throat. All right brothers and sisters, now how is this new world order going to be made?

The Book says, "As it was in the day of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the son of man". Now, I know you thought that was Jesus, but that man is Mohammed (pbuh).² Mohammed (pbuh) comes, and when Mohammed (pbuh) comes, he comes in one that was rejected, dead, thrown out for dead, and he comes in that one, and he begins growing, and as he grows, people misidentify him. They say, "oh, that's not Mohammed (pbuh), that's the church." "So, in that new Mohammed (pbuh), they see first, coming, the return of Jesus. Not Jesus in his body that he lived in, in those days.

Not the soul that was in that body in those days, but the mind, the sensitivity, the concern for righteousness and for humanity, it's come up again. That same life has come up again in another man and that's Mohammed (pbuh). Now this Mohammed is both Christ and Mohammed, but he's not that same Mohammed (pbuh) that brought the Holy Quran. Not that same soul saw that lived in that body, but a man with the same interests in that truth that was revealed to him. You don't have to believe it, All Praises Due to Allah. If you believe it, it's for your own good. If you reject it, you just cut off yourself. You can't cut off of this, look at it yesterday, look at it today, hasn't it grown?

So how now, must the world be remade? It must be remade in agreement with the Prophecy, as it was in the day of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the son of man. After the flood, G-d first causes the waters to sway. He caused those waters to start coming down. He caused the calluses to start

² Peace be Upon Him (the salutation Muslims use any time the name of Mohammed the Prophet is mentioned)

coming down, but where did it come down from first? From the high ups. The high ups realized that we have gone wrong, we have brought curses upon us that are wiping out our institutions and our established order. If we don't right away get some concerns for the little men and women in the streets, we're going to be finished, free the slaves, give them equality, give them equal justice, All Praises Due to Allah.

So, the waters began to a-sway. They began to come down. First the mountain top has to be seen. And what did Martin Luther King say? He said, "I've been to the mountaintop. "What did he mean by that? "That I have seen what G-d has intended in His plan for us. The mountain is going to soften up; the waters of callousness are going to come down from the mountain top.

That's what he meant, that he had a vision that this world was going to come to a better shape and a better order. All right let's go on a little bit further. The waters came down, but there was still a problem. Noah didn't feel it was safe yet. Now, who is Noah? Noah is the man that died, that's Adam human being. He couldn't come out yet and populate the world. He didn't feel it safe to come out and populate the world so Noah first sent out that old raven bird. He couldn't go out; the world wasn't fit for him, so he sent out a raven bird. Go and search and see if you can find a place in that world that has gotten better, but not good enough for me. That old raven bird went out there and he didn't come back.

That let Adam know that the world still wasn't ready for him because if an old raven bird can find a place out there, it's still something wrong with it, you understand. See, that old raven, he's an insensitive bird, he's not a loving sensitive bird. He's insensitive, quarrelsome, fight type of bird. He can do good things, but he resembles fighters in his nature, not peacemakers, so he sent out that old raven, and that old raven found a place, that told Noah, "Oh, the waters aren't up here, but that water of callousness is still down there on that earth, so I'll wait a while more." So after another period elapsed, he sent out a turtle dove, and you know we sing songs about the turtle dove don't we, as sweet and as loving as a little turtle dove. So he sent out a turtle dove, and the turtle dove came back. That told Noah that still, they aren't ready. It's getting much better now, we can go out, but they aren't ready.

See, the turtle dove there, was symbolic of the kind of nature, the kind of human life that is in Noah. If the turtle dove came back, it meant that Noah

could go out and come back. But still they weren't ready, because if they were ready, the turtle dove wouldn't have come back, he would have found a home out there just like the one he found with Noah. Let's keep moving with this subject.

So what did G-d do then? He caused the wind to blow. The wind had to blow and dry up the water. Now, there are many winds in the Bible. They are winds of war, and winds of compassion. Both winds will help dry up the water of callousness won't they? Some people will change from their callous nature by suffering what others suffer, and it causes them to feel what others feel. So some have to be whipped with the winds of adversity, they have to be hurt in their body. Then there are others that kind of whipping won't change them, but the winds of kindness, winds of compassion will change them.

So what kind of wind came in Noah's day? It was the winds of compassion. The world had been callous, they had suffered their destruction, so they had seen, that they had gotten on the wrong path, To a great extent they had humbled themselves a bit, but they were still callous in the land; although the government had thought the society was still hard hearted, and insensitive, do you understand? So G-d then blew on them the winds of compassion. He didn't blow the wind of compassion on the mountain, did He? He didn't move the waters from the mountain by blowing the winds of compassion, why, because they were at fault.

They were the ones responsible for the callousness that had drowned the whole world. So why should He blow out of His chest, from around His heart, the winds of compassion to those that are callous and hard hearted, and the fathers of it. No, He waited until curses had beat them into submission, and forced them to change their wicked ways, then He looked down, metaphorically speaking, come out of that kindergarten talk. He looked down on the residue of the Nation, the lowest of the low that was still hard hearted, I know we see it, and He said, "I'll get rid of this water by blowing on this water, the winds of compassion!"