

**Tumbainot:  
Flood Myth And Hero Of Maasai Tribe**

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**ABSTRACT**

Myth of Tumbainot is from the Maasai tribe, Kenya. Tumbainot is righteous in the eyes of God when, from mythological and spiritual perspective, the densely populated world becomes sinful and the first murder is committed. Prior to the penance and other religious ways for the atonement of sins, complete annihilation of humankind is the primordial image to purify humans from the sins. Boat in such myths becomes the symbol and the vehicle of salvation. The myth exhibits God's wrath and renewal of man's life.

**Keywords:** *Myth, Tubainot, Maasai Tribe, Flood Myth, Noah's Ark, Hero Archetype*

**INTRODUCTION**

The following is a constructed narrative of the flood myth of the flood savior Tumbainot from Maasai, Kenya [1]:

**The Myth**

A righteous man named Tumbainot had a family consisting of his wife, Naipade and his three children, his sons named, Oshomo, Bartimaro and Barmao. According to customs, Tumbainot married his brother Lengerni's widow Nahaba-Logunja from whom he had three sons. She made her homestead after the much-argued refusal to provide milk to him in the evening time. During those days, the world was densely populated and the sinful humanity was not aligned and mindful of God. The one sin they stayed away from was murder, up until a man named Nambija hit Suage on his head and committed the sin of murder. This made the Supreme God, En-Kai (Engai) resolve to destroy humanity because of its sinfulness. He would save one righteous man and his family, Tumbainot. En-Kai told Tumbainot to build an ark and take his family that is his wives, sons and animals of every kind, into it and board the ark. Then, thereafter En-Kai sent heavy rains that lasted for many days until the whole world was flooded and all living beings drowned such as all other men and beasts too. The ark was afloat for a long time and so as the time passed, the provisions began to run low on the ark. Tumbainot sent out first a dove to figure out the status of the flood and then a vulture, after many days. The vulture was sent out with an attached arrow to its tail feathers so that wherever the vulture landed the arrow would hook onto something and would be lost. Later in the evening, the vulture returned without the arrow attached and Tumbainot figured that it must have landed on carrion. It seemed that the flood was receding. Tumbainot grounded the ark on the steppe and all aboard disembarked. Tumbainot, in each quarter of the sky saw rainbows that marked the end of God's wrath. He, his family, and the animals got down from the ark and repopulated the Earth.

**Hypothetical Interpretation**

Precedent to the flood, the world was heavily populated and Maasai's were many in number. They enjoyed peace and a blissful family life. As pastoral people, the Maasai have lived practicing their indigenous land-oriented activities. Traditionally, they take care of cattle and in the myth Nahaba-Longunja's act of setting up a homestead is a sign of prosperity. They believe cattle are the source of all nourishment and healing and they practice drinking a mixture of milk and fresh cattle blood to heal the sick. Cattle is used to their optimum for meat, milk, maintain social status and to build alliances.

According to their marriage customs, they believe in polygamy and Tumbainot's two wives and sons represent the same socially accepted family and marriage practice.

Reminiscing the good old days, Tumbainot's family life represents the peaceful beginnings.

Later, as the population rose humanity became sin-filled and lost their connect with God. They lost track of being mindful and rooted with God. The population boom is a time where people fight for resource acquisition and socially the world witnesses an increase in crimes and diseases. In such times, sins reach its peak and the unthinkable was committed, murder. Nambija killed Sauge, his own kind and hurting one's kind is the greatest crime in the eyes of God. This was reason enough for God's fury to destroy all mankind except the exemplar of human virtues and Godly faith, Tumbainot and his family.

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 2-17; Deuteronomy 5: 6-21) are an allegiance to God. They are to honor and follow faith and maintain social and familial relations. As per the sequence of the Commandments, the first five are contextual to faith and family right living and the last five are to abstain from any intentional harm to the other, such as bodily, relationship wise or moral crimes. The sixth states the most severe harm to the other, committing of murder. Such a crime deteriorates the human of us and so in the myth too, it infuriates God.

The mounting sins in the eyes of God call for a cleansing and that is a product of a devastating suffering, prolonged and dreadful and in the myth the ending waters, the flood.

The sin committed that led to God's indignant anger was a murder. It is a demonstration of primal aggression, the torment and violence at the level of the *psyche*[2]. It is the end or death of innocence which propagates more sins or crimes in the world. Once the murder took place in the myth, it was the coming of the age of destruction of the sinful humanity and saving the "innocent" one as a prototype of virtues to perpetuate in the new world.

The myth contains the elementals of the other flood myths such as wiping away the sins through the flourishing, renewing waters that bring for a source of new life and a burst of new consciousness along. It also parallels a classic flood myth, the myth of Noah's ark, where the acts of the chosen one and divine instructions help wash away paramount sins. This myth delineates a structure of symbolically represented within the flood myths -

**The Deluge:** God decides to destroy humanity—From the myth and spiritual perspective, sin is not just degradation of morals at a collective level. It is the cause of the destruction of humanity. Many wars, the nuclear holocaust, the ten plagues of Egypt, the Covid-19 pandemic, AIDS, and many other calamities never destroyed the whole world, but here in the myth everyone died and what really killed the whole world is only sins. Wars are countable against the prevalence and perpetuity of sins and sins keep multiplying with people. As with the increase in population there are many negative factors that are multiplying like diseases, negative effects of crowding have cropped up, global warming is worsening, crimes are going up and so are psychological problems. As a result of which sins have become manifold with the increasing population. There is an eco-moral downfall on the mass level and so mankind needs reform and renewal.

The myth explains that the world created by God and the sanctity of humanity can only be disrupted and destroyed by sin and restored to former grace as well as glory by divine intervention by someone exemplar like in the myth, Tumbainot.

**The Ratio of Righteousness:** One man vs. the whole of humanity—While all of us do what is right in our context, in God's sight the one who is worthy and compared to the multitude of men and women living in sin is the only right one. All you need is one man. It is the man to become the savior on behalf of the Savior. In the Hindu Flood myth, Vaivasvata Manu (the Flood savior hero) too displays the divine attributes of preservation as a representative of Godly virtues and qualities needed for a balanced functioning of humanity, to remove the one-sided downfall due to sinfulness. The power of good over evil rests upon just one God fearing individual. If there is one person doing what pleases God versus the countless many others doing what pleases them then it's not worth counting. Therefore, the hope of goodness is in one man's heart, like Noah's.

**Building the Boat:** The boat in the myth is the replica of the world in itself, surviving the deluge, the progenitors of a new human race and renewed nature. The world is gathered and delivered from the boat, from the mythic memory of the world.

"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2). Taking the survivors of the old world, until the land and water separate and once more a new world is formed.

In the myth Tumbainot married his brother's widow as per their custom and took her along with his previous wife and their kids onto the boat at the time of deluge. Once they landed on safe grounds they repopulated along with the other species for a fresh start. Since it was only his family and other creatures to repopulate, inbreeding took place.

This inbreeding or incest is symbolic of the union between the children of God to initiate the new world. As a common theme in creation and flood myths, incest prevents the world from going barren, or facing extinction, it makes the land fertile. Historically too, Royalty maintained the purity of the bloodline through inbreeding, for a pure lineage to carry forward their name. It has shaped races and given mankind a structure of existence.

Psychologically, Jung believed that the symbolic aspect of incest depicts growth, wholeness, union and rebirth and as the world is renewed through inbreeding such aspects manifest [3].

**Animals of the World:** The world congregated in the ark recollects and is a reminder of paradise. Animals gathered and lined up taken in the ark stayed together peacefully in a confined space for a number of days, like well domesticated creatures, before being released back into the creation. These animals had no territorial issues; it is picturesque of a perfect zoological space where a lion and a lamb live together. It is an ideal scenario.

**The Ark and the Earth:** The entire new world will walk out of it. Christians pray for the restored earth, from the days of the ark— “...As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.*Amen.*”

In the end, as the survivors symbolically disembark the catastrophe, they experience the coming of light, hope and peace. It is an end of God’s wrath through the rainbows visible in the quarters of the sky.

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