

## **Nuh (alayhis salam) and The First Idol-Worshippers**

Nuh (alayhis salam) was a great prophet of Allah and a mountain of patience and perseverance. For many generations Nuh (alayhis salam's) people had been worshipping statues that they called gods. They believed that these gods would bring them good luck, protect them from evil and provide all their needs. They gave their idols names such as Wadd, Suwaa`, Yaghuth, Ya`uq, and Nasr.

Originally these were the names of good people who had lived among them. After their deaths, statues of them were made to keep their memories alive. After sometime, however, people began to worship these statues. Later generations did not even know why they had been made; they only knew their parents had prayed to them. That is how idol worship started. Since they had no understanding of Allah Ta`ala, who would punish them for their evil deeds, they became cruel and immoral.

### **The History of Idol-Worship**

It has been narrated in various ahadith: "There were righteous people who lived in the period between Adam and Nuh and who had followers who held them as role-models. After their death, their followers who used to love them said: 'If we make pictures of them, it will be more pleasing to us in our worship and will remind us of them.' So they made pictures of them, and, after they had died and others came after them, Iblees crept into their minds encouraging them to make statues of them. He taught them to bow down to these statues out of respect. Then when the next generation came, he whispered in their minds saying: 'Your forefathers used to worship them, and through that worship they got rain.' So they began worshipping these idols."

(Sahih Bukhari)

### **Nuh (alayhis salam's) Reasoning with his People**

Allah Ta`ala, in His Mercy sent His messenger Nuh (alayhis salam) to guide his people. Nuh (alayhis salam) was an excellent speaker and a very patient man. He pointed out to his people the mysteries of life and the wonders of the universe. He warned them not to worship anyone but Allah and described the terrible punishment Allah would send upon them if they continued in their evil ways.

### **Division Among Nuh (alayhis salaam's) People**

Nuh's people were divided into two groups after his warning. His words touched the hearts of the weak, the poor, and the miserable and soothed their wounds with its mercy. As for the rich, the strong, the mighty and the rulers they looked upon the warning with disbelief. They believed they would be better off if things stayed as they were. Therefore they started to argue with Nuh (alayhis salam).

They said: "O Nuh! You have disputed with us too much now. Bring upon us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful."

Nuh (alayhis salam) continued appealing to his people to believe in Allah hour after hour, day after day year after year. He admonished his people and called them to Allah day and night, in secret and openly. HE gave them examples, explained Allah's signs and illustrated Allah's ability in the formation of His creatures. But whenever he called them to Allah, they ran away from him. Whenever he urged them to ask Allah to forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears and became too proud to listen to the truth.

### **The Length of Nuh's Calling**

Nuh (alayhis salam) continued to call his people to believe in Allah for nine hundred fifty years. Allah Ta`ala said:

*"Indeed We sent Nuh to his people and he stayed among them a thousand years less fifty years (inviting them to believe in the Oneness of Allah and discard the false gods and other deities). (29:14)*

It happened that every passing generation admonished the succeeding one not to believe Nuh (alayhis salam) and to hurt him. The father used to teach his child about the matter that was between himself and Nuh (alayhis salam) and counsel him to reject his call when he reached adulthood. Their natural disposition rejected believing and following the truth.

Nuh (alayhis salam) saw that the number of believers was not increasing, while that of the disbelievers was. He was sad for his people, but he never reached the point of despair.

### **Nuh (alayhis salam) Prays for the Disbeliever's End**

There came a day when Allah revealed to Nuh (alayhis salam) that no others would believe. Allah inspired him not to grieve for them at which point Nuh (alayhis salam) prayed that the disbelievers be destroyed. He said:

*"My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth. If you leave them, they will mislead Your slaves and they will beget none but wicked disbelievers." (71:27)*

Allah accepted Nuh's prayer. The case was closed, and He passed His judgment on the disbelievers in the form of a flood. Allah the Exalted ordered His worshipper Nuh to build an ark with His knowledge and instructions and with the help of angels. Almighty Allah commanded:

*"And construct the ship under Our supervision and with Our Inspiration and address Me not on behalf of those who did wrong; they are surely to be drowned." (11:37)*

### **Nuh (alayhis salam) Builds the Ark**

Nuh (alayhis salam) chose a place outside the city, far from the sea. He collected wood and tools and began to day and night to build the ark. The people's mockery continued: "O Nuh! Do you like to be a carpenter now more than a Prophet? Why are you building an ark so far from the sea?"

Are you going to drag it to the water or is the wind going to carry it for you?" Nuh (alayhis salam) replied: "You will come to know who will be put to shame and suffer."

Allah Ta`ala narrated:

*"As he was constructing the ship, whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him, they made a mockery of him. He said : "If you mock at us, so do we mock at you likewise for your mocking.*

*And you will know who it is on whom will come a torment that will cover him with disgrace and on whom will fall a lasting torment."* (11:38-39)

### **The Flood begins**

The ship was constructed, and Nuh (alayhis salam) waited Allah's command. Allah revealed to him that when water miraculously gushed forth from the oven at Nuh's house, that would be the sign of the start of the flood, and the sign for Nuh (alayhis salam) to act.

The terrible day arrived when the oven at Nuh's house overflowed. Nuh hurried to open the ark and summon the believers. He also took with him a pair, male and female, of every type of animal, bird and insect. Seeing him taking these creatures to the ark, the people laughed loudly:

"Nuh must be crazy! What is he going to do with all the animals?"

Almighty Allah narrated:

*"So then came Our Command and the oven gushed forth (water like fountains from the earth). We said: "Board upon the Ark, of each kind (of animal) two (male and female), and your family, except him against whom the Word has already gone forth, and those who believe." And none believed him except a few.* (11:40)

### **The Number of Believers**

Nuh's wife was not a believer with him so she did not join him; neither did one of Nuh's sons, who was secretly a disbeliever but had pretended faith in front of Nuh. Likewise most of the people were disbelievers and did not go on board.

The scholars hold different opinions on the number of those who were with Nuh (alayhis salam) on the ship. Ibn Abbas (radhiAllahu anhu) stated that there were 80 believers while Ka`b al-Ahbar held that there were 72 believers. Others claimed that there were 10 believers with Nuh (alayhis salam).

### **Description of the Flood**

Water rose from the cracks in the earth; there was not a crack from which water did not rise. Rain poured from the sky in quantities never seen before on earth. Water continued pouring from the sky rising from the cracks; hour after hour the level rose. The seas and waves invaded the land. The earth, for the first time was submerged in water.

## **Nuh (alayhis salam) Appeals to his Son**

Allah told the story thus: *He (Nuh) said:*

*"Embark therein in the Name of Allah will be its moving course and its resting. Surely, my Lord is Oft Forgiving, most Merciful."*

*So it (the ship) sailed with them amidst the waves like mountains, and Nuh called out to his son, who had separated himself (apart), "O my son! Embark with us and be not with the disbelievers."*

*The son replied, "I will run to the mountain, it will save me from the water." Nuh said:*

*"This day there is no savior from the Decree of Allah except him on whom He has mercy." And a wave came in between them so he (the son) was among the drowned." (11:41-43)*

## **The Flood Ends**

Allah Ta`ala told the earth: "O Earth! Swallow up the water!"

And said to the sky, "O Sky! Stop the rain."

The water was thus made to stop. And it (the ship) rested on Mount Judi.

And it was said:

*"O Noah! Come down (from the ship) with peace from Us and blessings on you and on the people o\who are with you (and on some of their offspring), but (there will be other) people to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end a painful torment will reach them from Us." (11:41-48)*

With the issue of the Allah's command, calmness returned to earth, the water went down, and the dry land shone once again in the rays of the sun. The flood had cleansed the earth of the disbelievers and polytheists.

## **The Believers Finally Come On Land**

Nuh (alayhis salam) released the birds, and the beasts which scattered over the earth. After that the believers got off the ship. Nuh (alayhis salam) put his forehead to the ground in prostration. The survivors kindled a fire and sat around it. Lighting a fire had been prohibited on board so as not to ignite the ship's wood and burn it up. None of them had eaten warm food during the entire period. Following the disembarkation there was a day of fasting in thanks to Allah.

## **Nuh (alayhis salam's) Death**

The Noble Qur'an draws the curtain on Nuh's story. We do not know how his affairs with his people continued. All we know or can ascertain is that on his deathbed he requested his son to worship Allah alone, Nuh (alayhis salam) then passed away.