

THE PROPHET NOAH IN ISLAMIC TRADITION

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1.1. The entire 71st sūra of the Qur'ān is dedicated to Noah. His prophetic mission had the purpose of warning his people of their imminent punishment: "We sent Noah to his people, saying, 'Warn thy people, ere there come on them a painful chastisement'" (Qur. 71:1). But despite the divine 'signs', his people obstinately refused to repent and continued to adore their deities Wadd, Suwā^c, Yağūt, Ya'ūq, and Nasr (Qur. 71:23). Other verses of the Qur'ān mention Noah and his patience and faith¹. Notwithstanding the allusive style which characterizes the narrative parts of the Qur'ān, the story of the Ark is given much development in the sūra of Hūd (Qur. 11:25-49). In this sūra, the punishments inflicted by God on Noah's people are described, as well as those on Abraham's and Moses' peoples, and on the 'Ād and the Tamūd. It was a clear warning for the heathen Mekkans who persisted in their harsh opposition to Prophet Muḥammad and to the Revelation². The narration can be divided into six parts: I. Noah's invitation to his people to convert themselves, and their subsequent refusal (25-35); II. the construction of the Ark, and the boiling oven as the sign of the beginning of the Flood (36-40); III. the call to all believers and to each animal couple to embark onto the various floors of the Ark (40-41); IV. the drowning of Noah's unbelieving son (42-43, 45-46); V. the rescinding of the waters and the grounding of the Ark on Mount al-Ġūdī (44); VI. Noah's prayer for mercy and salvation (47-49).

1.2. The *ḥadīṭ* contains few references to Noah: he is the first Messenger (*rasūl*); he warns his people against the oncoming Dağğāl; the Prophet Muḥammad and his community will be witnesses on his behalf³. Noah's testament to his son Shem contains two orders – to profess the unity of God (*tawḥīd*) and to exalt His glory (*tasbīḥ*) – and two prohibitions – idolatry (*ṣīrke*) and presumption (*keibr*)⁴.

¹ See Qur. 7:59-64; 10:71-73; 23: 23-30 (Noah is considered a madman, possessed by the *ġinn*); 26:105-122 (he is threatened with stoning); 37:75-82 (he will be praised by all in perpetuity).

² Muḥammad's objective in mentioning the 'stories of the ancients' (*aqāṣīṣ al-mutaqaddimīn*) was to frighten his listeners with the threat of divine punishment. At the same time, God reminded Muḥammad of the 'stories of the prophets' (*qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) in order to make him patiently tolerate the harassment of his enemies. See al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* VIII, 362; IX, 22.

³ See al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* II, 452-453 nos. 3337-3340 [*Anbiyā'* 3]. Exegetes explain that Noah was the first messenger because the *risāla* revealed to Adam was only reserved to his sons (*Ṣaḥīḥ* II, 453 note 3).

⁴ See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* II, 226 no. 6580 [II, 169].

aṭ-Ṭabarī relates two traditions handed down respectively by ʿĀʾiša and by Ibn ʿAbbās, which succinctly tell the entire story of Noah. The prophet lived for 950 years, and never ceased to invite his people to embrace the true faith. He planted a tree, waited for it to grow, and then cut it to build the ship. Passers-by ridiculed him, “You are building a ship on dry ground, how will it float?” When he finished it, the oven boiled and the water poured out. A mother and child climbed up a mountain, ever higher and higher. Before being submerged, she held the child up to save it. “If God had shown pity on someone – said the Prophet Muḥammad – he would at least have shown it on the poor mother”⁵. Many details about the Ark and what happened aboard were known thanks to a miracle of Jesus. According to Ibn ʿAbbās, the Apostles asked ʿĪsā b. Maryam for an account of the Ark. Jesus brought them to a hill, he took a handful of earth, he touched it with his rod, and revived Kaʿb b. Ḥām b. Nūḥ (Noah’s grandchild), who described the Ark to them, its dimensions, its three floors, problems deriving from the proximity of the animals, the creation of the pig and the cat, and the sending of the raven and then the dove to bring proof of the Flood’s end. Then Jesus returned him to dust⁶.

1.3. The first exegesis does not seem to dedicate much space to the story of Noah. Muqātil (d. 767), for example, limits himself to explaining word for word the meaning of each Qurʾānic expression⁷. But already in the ninth and tenth centuries many details had enriched the legend, which by now has acquired a distinct place within the commentaries of the Qurʾān and in the works of historians such as Ibn Saʿd, al-Azraqī, Yaʿqūbī, ad-Dīnawarī, aṭ-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Ḥamdānī. It finds a natural home in the Stories of the Prophets⁸, the most significant examples of which are the *Qisāṣ al-anbiyāʾ* of al-Kisāʾī and aṭ-Taʿlabī. The legend of Noah is part of the narrative group whose main characters are biblical patriarchs (*isrāʾīliyyāt*), and is mostly transmitted on the authority of Yemeni Jews converted to Islam such as Wahb b. Munabbih and Kaʿb al-Aḥbār⁹. Later authors particularly interested in ancient legends, like al-Qurṭubī and as-Suyūṭī, historians like Sibṭ Ibn al-Ġawzī, or scholars with zoological interests like ad-Damīrī, quote and elaborate upon the details previously related by their predecessors. The different interpretations of certain terms (e.g. *tannūr*) or the discrepancies between versions (e.g. the inhabitants of the Ark’s floors)

⁵ See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 35; *Taʾriḥ* I, 180.

⁶ See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 35-36; *Taʾriḥ* I, 181.

⁷ See Muqātil, *Tafsīr* II, 278-285.

⁸ For Noah’s story, see al-Kisāʾī, *Qisāṣ* I, 85-100; aṭ-Taʿlabī, *Arwāʾis* 54-61; aṭ-Ṭarafī, *Qisāṣ* 59-71. For a general overview of the *Qisāṣ al-anbiyāʾ* literature, see Tottoli 1999a.

⁹ See Goldziher 1902, and the recent essays by McAuliffe (1998) and Tottoli (1999b), with further bibliographical references.

are conscientiously listed, often without any personal considerations. But certain episodes seem to be received with incredulity. For instance, why should Satan, made of fire or air, have feared the Flood so much that he took refuge in the Ark? – wondered ar-Rāzī¹⁰. In Islamic tradition the story of Noah takes the dimensions of an etiological tale, with the construction of the Ark, the first guard dog, the origin of certain animals, the dove's familiarity with mankind and the raven's fear of it, the use of *kuhl*, the prohibition of wine, the origin of human races, tribes, and peoples. (See section 2)

1.4. Muslim authors recognize numerous common traits with the biblical narration of the legend of Noah, often making reference to the Torah or to the affirmations of the People of the Book. This is clearly shown by the works of Ibn Qutayba and at-Ṭabarī. Similar information about the Ark, the Flood, or the rainbow which sealed God's reconciliation with mankind is also found¹¹. Goldziher had already asserted that "les éléments agadiques et rabbiniques apparaissent avec beaucoup plus de fidélité que les éléments bibliques" (1902:63). Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* represents the most extensive collection of haggadic legends, and the chapter dedicated to Noah makes numerous interesting parallels. Without diminishing the importance of comparative studies such as those of Grünbaum (1893), Sidersky (1933)¹² or of Speyer (1938), it can be said that the remarks of Heller nonetheless remain valid: "La légende biblique dans l'Islam a vécu sa propre vie, a suivi ses lois intrinsèques; elle est dominée par une tendance: elle tend à glorifier l'Islam, son fondateur historique, ses précurseurs légendaires comme Abraham, Hagar, Ismaël, à présenter les prophètes de l'antiquité comme préfigurant Mahomet, à sanctifier la Mecque, la Ka'ba et le puits de Zemzem" (1934b:17). In Islamic tradition it is not textual quotations¹³, but moreover the elaboration of myths and legends circulating in oral form in Arabia and more generally in the Near East since ancient times that have had prominence. Semitic, Hellenistic, Gnostic, Hermetic, and other elements figure alongside genuinely Arab themes and motifs. The tale of the Flood is of such universal diffusion that Utley studied more than 400 versions from different cultures and from various parts of the world¹⁴.

¹⁰ See ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* XVII, 236. Utley (1961) dedicated a specific essay to the Devil in Noah's Ark, which represents the narrative type Aarne-Thompson 825.

¹¹ Gn 6:15; 7:12; 9:13. Islamic legend spares us the image of the Lord who "smells the pleasant fragrance" that rises from the holocaust of animals sacrificed at Noah's altar in thanks to God after having saved them from the Flood (Gn 8:20-21).

¹² But see the remarks of Heller 1934b:8 ff.

¹³ A clear example of this is Ibn al-Ġawzī's 'quotation' from Genesis about the story of Noah, on the authority of Ka'b al-Aḥbār (cf. Sibṭ Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mir'āt* I, 239).

¹⁴ See Utley 1960 and 1961; cf. Schwarzbaum 1982:158.

2.1 *Noah's name and appearance.* He was the son of Lamak (Lamk, Lāmak) b. Mat-tūšalah b. Aḥnūh (Enoch/Idrīs) and Qaynūš bint Rākīl. His name was ʿAbdalḡaffār, Yaškur, Šākīr or Sakan¹⁵. According to as-Suddī, he was called Nūḥ because he saw a dog with four eyes and found it disgusting. The dog asked him, "Is it my image (*naqṣ*) that you find imperfect or its Creator (*naqqāṣ*)?" Each time Noah thought of this he moaned (*yanūḥ*) and wept for his sin of pride. For this reason he was called Nūḥ¹⁶. He had a narrow face and a long head, big eyes, strong arms, thin forearms, slender legs, weighty thighs, a large belly button, a flowing beard, and he was of high stature. He was also a man of intelligence and knowledge, a good orator with a pleasant voice. Physically he resembled Adam¹⁷. Noah was a shepherd of his people's flocks; others say he was a carpenter.

2.2 *His mission.* When he reached the age of 480, the angel Gabriel informed him of the prophetic mission (*risāla*) given to him by God (Qur. 11:25 *ff.*). For 120 years he spoke the word of the Lord among his people. Gabriel dressed him like the fighters of the Faith (*muḡāhidūn*), wearing the turban of victory and the sword of steadfastness to fight against idolatry and depravation. He had to battle against the tyrant Darmašīl¹⁸, who had introduced the cult of 1700 idols, in addition to the five adored by the people of Idrīs mentioned in the Qurʾān, for whom he had built marble temples. Priests were in their service, lighting fires and bowing down in worship; people played and danced beside these idols, drinking wine and committing adultery¹⁹. During the reign of his successor, Tūbīn, people wanted to stone Noah, but a flock of birds miraculously protected him²⁰. Noah's dwelling was in ʿAyn Warda, Syria, or in the place of the mosque of Kūfa²¹.

2.3 *The Ark.* According to the different versions, the Ark either took two, four, or even forty years to build, and its construction was carried out in the plane of Damascus with wood from Mount Lebanon²². Teak was used, sawed with carpentry tools found in Adam's coffin²³. Noah cut 124,000 boards, each one bearing the name

¹⁵ See at-Taʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis* 54; al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ* I, 85-86; as-Samarqandī, *Baḥr* II, 150.

¹⁶ See Ibn Iyās *Badāʾiʿ* 65. On the meaning of the name Nūḥ for Jews and Muslims, see Goldziher 1870 and Ginzberg 1968: V, 6.

¹⁷ See Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif* 21; al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ* I, 86.

¹⁸ at-Ṭabarī relates that Noah's people obeyed King Bēwarāsb, who was the first to divulge the views of the Sabians (*Taʾrīḥ* I, 179).

¹⁹ See al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ* I, 86-87; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* 65.

²⁰ See Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* 66.

²¹ See Muqātil, *Tafsīr* II, 282; al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ* I, 93.

²² Others say Mount Nawḍ (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 41) or al-Ḥīra (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* 68).

²³ See al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ* I, 92.

of a prophet. Four were nonetheless missing to complete the Ark that the giant ʿŪḡ then carried from the Valley of the Nile²⁴. God made a spring of bitumen (*qār*) that Noah spread on the walls of the Ark to make it resistant to water²⁵. To defend the Ark from those who wanted to burn it at night, Noah put out a dog to take guard²⁶. Noah did not know what form to give the ship so the Lord revealed to him to make it with a bow “like the breast (*ḡu’ḡu’*) of a bird”. Exegetes ended up describing its body as a mixture of various parts of different birds (peacock, dove, cockerel, falcon, eagle) – a ship even with wings²⁷. Opinions vary as to its dimensions: from 80 cubits long, 50 wide, 30 high, according to the People of the Torah, to more bigger figures such as 1200, 600, and 300 cubits²⁸. A pearl from Paradise lit its interior²⁹. There were three floors: one for wild and domesticated animals, one for men and women, and one for birds³⁰. al-Kisā’ī maintains that there were seven doors³¹.

2.4 *The inhabitants of the Ark.* Before the Flood, God made women sterile for forty years. Abū Ḡaʿfar al-Bāqir tells that, in the time of Noah, women menstruated once a year, but God, in order to limit their lust, gave them a monthly cycle³². Only Noah, his sons and the few believers who embraced his appeal embarked on the Ark. There were eighty people³³. The sign of the Flood’s beginning was the

²⁴ See ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta’rīḥ* I, 69.

²⁵ See as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593.

²⁶ See ad-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt* II, 390; cf. Basset 1926:24.

²⁷ See al-Kisā’ī, *Qisāṣ* I, 92; al-Qurṭubī, *Ḡāmiʿ* IX, 31; as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593.

²⁸ According to Ham’s son, revived by Jesus, the Ark was 1200 cubits long and 600 wide.

²⁹ Others say there were two pearls, one which took the place of the sun, and the other of the moon (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 598; al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 333).

³⁰ See al-Qurṭubī, *Ḡāmiʿ* IX, 32. In other versions the first floor was occupied by wild beasts, the second by domesticated animals, the third by men and women; or, respectively, by animals, food and drink, and men. Noah took up the small ant to his floor, for fear that other animals would crush it (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593). al-Hamdānī speaks of three ‘houses’ (*abyāt*), instead of three floors (*ṭabaqāt*) (*al-Iklīl* I, 58-59). ar-Rāzī is not surprised by the difference between these traditions, given that “it is information that does not necessitate a precise knowledge” (*Mafātīḥ* XVII, 232).

³¹ According to al-Kisā’ī (*Qisāṣ* I, 94), Noah let men, the intact body of Adam and his rod through the first door; women and the body of Eve through the second; wild and domesticated animals through the third; birds and insects through the fourth; ferocious predators through the fifth; snakes and scorpions through the sixth; and elephants and lions through the seventh. Noah stood at the bow.

³² See al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 326.

³³ Exegetes disagree as to the number of the Ark’s inhabitants: seven people (Noah, his three sons and their wives); eight people (with Noah’s wife in addition); seventy-eight people (including the seventy believers); eighty people (among whom a Ḡurhum). The different versions are quoted by at-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīḥ* I, 187-188, and ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta’rīḥ* I, 70. According to Ibn Qutayba, Noah, his three sons and their wives, and forty men and forty women *min al-muslimīn* were aboard (*Māʾārif* 23).

pouring out of boiling water from an oven. It was the same oven, made in stone, in which Eve cooked bread. Exegetes do not agree on the location and meaning of *tannūr*³⁴. To avoid any intercourse, Noah divided men from women touching the first with his right hand and the second with his left³⁵. The coffin with Adam's body was placed in the middle to separate the two sexes. According to some sources, Ham contravened the order and as punishment his semen was altered by God causing his sons to be born black³⁶. The giant ʿŪǧ was saved "as attested by the People of the Book", at-Ṭabarī prudently remarks³⁷. The son of Noah who did not want to embark on the Ark and perished with the others in the water (Qur. 11:42-43) would have been Kanʿān/Yām³⁸. Some Muslim authors have questioned themselves as to the reason why animals and even innocent children were victims of the Flood. The only answer was that "their time had come"³⁹.

2.5. *The animals*⁴⁰. In the Ark, the fact that animals had to live together caused some problems. How were the lion and the cow to be reconciled? The Lord pacified all the animals and sent down a fever to weaken the lion⁴¹. The first animal to enter was the small ant (*ḍarra*), and the last was the donkey. But even Satan succeeded in entering, by holding onto the donkey's tail⁴². Noah only accepted the snake and the scorpion after obtaining the promise from them that they would not hurt the other

³⁴ as-Suyūṭī summarizes the different opinions (*Durr* III, 595-596): the *tannūr* was the oven of stone which first belonged to Eve; it means the surface of the earth; the high ground; the coming of dawn. The spring of ʿAyn al-Warda, India, the mosque of Kūfa, Jerusalem, Mecca and Madina are mentioned among the various locations of the *tannūr*. ar-Rāzī favours the literal interpretation of 'oven', the site where the water first gushed out (*Mafātih* XVII, 234).

³⁵ See al-Bağawī, *Maʿālim* III, 232.

³⁶ See at-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 188; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 70.

³⁷ See at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 37. On this giant, see Pauliny 1973.

³⁸ ar-Rāzī maintains that Noah's community was composed of believers destined for Paradise, unbelievers destined for Hell, and hypocrites, like this particular son of Noah, whose last judgement was concealed (*mabfiʿ*) (*Mafātih* XVIII, 6). But even a prophet can have an unbelieving son, observed some exegetes (al-Ḥāzin, *Lubāb* III, 235). On the drowned son of Noah, see Newby 1986:19-24.

³⁹ See at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 49; al-Muṭahhar points out that "God took the souls of the animals and of the children before they drowned" (*Badʿ* III, 17).

⁴⁰ ad-Damīrī's *Ḥayāt* amply describes the story of the Flood and traditions related to the various animals (s.vv. *asad*, *ḥayya*, *ḥanzīr*, *sinnūr*, *ʿaqrab*, *faʿr*, *fīl*, *kalb*, *hīrr*).

⁴¹ See Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kāmil* I, 71.

⁴² See at-Ṭaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis* 57.

animals⁴³. In the version related by al-Kisā'ī (*Qiṣaṣ* I, 94), the angel Gabriel broke the venomous tooth of the snake and the scorpion's sting before they entered the Ark. Only animals of birth and animals hatched from eggs were allowed to enter, not creatures originating from mud⁴⁴. Aboard, the dog broke the rule banning intercourse and was cursed by Noah. As we will see further on, the elephant, the pig, the mouse, and the cat were all involved in solving various "logistical" problems in the Ark⁴⁵, whereas the task of bringing proof of the Flood's end was given to the raven and then to the dove⁴⁶. Noah also took plants into the Ark. According to some versions, the first to be planted after the Flood was the palm or the myrtle⁴⁷. When he wanted to plant the vine he could not find it. The angel Gabriel informed him that Satan had stolen it. Noah had to bargain with him promising him two thirds of the grapes. Beside the plant, Satan sacrificed some animals⁴⁸. The drink obtained from the grapes affected Noah, making him drunk⁴⁹.

2.6. *The end of the Flood and Noah's death.* The Flood lasted forty days and forty nights. After travelling the world for six months, the Ark circumnavigated the Sacred Territory of Mecca, without entering. God had lifted up the Inhabited House which he had sent down in the time of Adam. Angel Gabriel had carried the Black Stone up to Mount Abū Qubays⁵⁰. The Ark continued towards the Yemen, then it returned and ended its journey on Mount al-Ġūdī - in al-Ġazīra, near Mosul - on the

⁴³ Whosoever mentions this pact pronouncing the Qur'ānic verses "Peace be upon Noah among all beings! Even so We recompense the good-doers; he was among Our believing servants" (Qur. 37:79-81) will be protected from the venom. See ad-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt* II, 57-58. A spell of the Prophet Muḥammad says that "If a snake comes into the house tell it 'I ask you [to respect] the pact with Noah and with Solomon son of David not to hurt us! If it returns, kill it'. On these traditions, see Canova 1991:205.

⁴⁴ "like chinchies, mosquitoes, and flies", see al-Baġawī, *Mā'ālim* III, 233.

⁴⁵ See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 70; cf. Basset 1926: I, 26-28.

⁴⁶ According to as-Suyūṭī, the dove went to the Land of Sheba and then to Mecca (*Durr* III, 598). as-Samarqandī also includes the kite in the story (*Baḥr* II, 157).

⁴⁷ See al-Maġlisī, *Bihār* XI, 293; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78. According to as-Suyūṭī, the first tree ever to be planted was the teak, in order to build the Ark (*Durr* III, 594).

⁴⁸ Satan slaughtered the peacock on its roots, such that they would absorb the blood; when the vine sprouted its leaves, he slaughtered a monkey; when it bore fruit, a lion; and when the grapes were mature, a pig. People who get drunk behave like these animals: they strut like peacocks, dance like monkeys, quarrel like lions, and doze off like pigs. See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78. According to ad-Damīrī (*Ḥayāt* I, 12) there are seven slaughtered animals: the lion, the bear, the panther, the jackal, the dog, the wolf, the cockerel; cf. I, 651, where the story refers to Adam (the same in Ibšihī, *Mustatraf* II, 252-253).

⁴⁹ al-Kisā'ī comments about this that "Iblīs was the first to press grapes, and to build drums, oboes and musical instruments (*ālāt at-ṭarab*)" (see Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78).

⁵⁰ See al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* I, 50-51; at-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 185; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 72.

tenth of Muḥarram (*‘āšūrā*)⁵¹. Noah fasted as a sign of thanks to God and ordered men and animals to do likewise. On leaving the Ark, Noah founded the first village, which was called *Tamānīn* ('Eighty') based on the number of the Ark's inhabitants⁵². Then he fasted for the whole month of Ramaḍān⁵³. He buried the body of Adam in Jerusalem⁵⁴. The last part of his existence was spent living as a hermit in a tent, neglecting his person and only wearing animal hides⁵⁵. The Angel of Death presented Noah with a cup of nectar from Paradise. He found him beneath the burning sun and informed him that he had arrived to take his soul. Noah asked to move to the shade, given that passing to the after-life was like passing from the sun to the cool shade⁵⁶. Noah saw life as "a house with two doors, one to enter, and one to go out"⁵⁷. Gabriel invited him to transmit the Supreme Name of God, science and prophecies to Shem, in order to save them before the coming of a new prophet⁵⁸. Noah died aged 950 and was buried near Karak⁵⁹. Others say at the age of 1,450⁶⁰. He is called *abū bašār* (the father of humanity) and *Ādam al-ašğar* (Adam the younger)⁶¹. According to some Muslim authors, his language was Syriac⁶². He was the

⁵¹ See al-Bakrī, *Muğam* I, 403; Yāqūt, *Muğam* II, 179-180. Some say that al-Ġūdī is one of the mountains in Paradise (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 598). God ennobled three mountains for three people: Mount al-Ġūdī for Noah; Mount Sinai for Moses; and Mount Ḥirā' for Muḥammad (al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* IX, 42). Stones from Mount al-Ġūdī (and from Mount Lubnān, Ṭūr Zītā, Ṭūr Sīnā, and Ḥirā') have been used to build the Ka'ba (al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* I, 37).

⁵² See al-Bakrī, *Muğam* I, 344-345; Yāqūt, *Muğam* II, 84.

⁵³ See Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif* 24.

⁵⁴ See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 42.

⁵⁵ According to al-Mağlisī, however, he was the first to wear woollen clothes, possibly considering him as the first Ṣūfī (*Bihār* XI, 341).

⁵⁶ See al-Kāšānī, *Tafsīr* II, 454; al-Mağlisī, *Bihār* XI, 286.

⁵⁷ See at-Ta'labī, *Arā'is* 60.

⁵⁸ See al-Mağlisī, *Bihār* XI, 288-289.

⁵⁹ According to other versions, he is buried at Sūq at-*Tamānīn*, on Mount Būd in India, at Mecca beside the prophets Hūd, Šālīḥ and Šu'ayb, or at Babel (Sibt Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mir'āt* I, 244). Even today Noah's *mawlid* is celebrated at Karak, near his mausoleum, on the sixth day of Rabī' I (see Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich, 1960: I, 239 and Abb. 127, with a picture of his huge grave).

⁶⁰ See al-Ibšīhī, *Mustatraf* II, 75. at-Ṭabarī maintains that all these calculations are more the work of Jews, rather than Muslims, who only calculate time from the *hiğra* onwards – except for the Year of the Elephant or the *ayyām al-ʿarab* (*Ta'riḥ* I, 193).

⁶¹ See ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* XVIII, 7-8.

⁶² *suryānī*. See Hūd, *Tafsīr* II, 225; ad-Dīnawarī, *Aḥbār* 2; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 73. About the multiplicity of languages after the Flood, see Goldziher 1994:44-46.

first of the *mu'ammārūn*⁶³, more long-lived than Mattušalah (Methusalem). The various peoples found their origin in the dispersion of Noah's three sons on the earth. Ibn Sa'd explains the differences between the various races by the colour of their skin: Shem was reddish-white, Ham black with a bit of white, and Japheth reddish-brown (*Ṭabaqāt* I, 41).

3.1. Indians and Magians maintain that their territory was not subject to the Flood, which they limit to the land of Babel⁶⁴. Egypt, however, was not only submerged – it regarded the Flood, as predicted by astrologers, as the very reason for the construction of the Pyramids and their temples. The story of Noah was incorporated into the medieval Arab literature of *Mirabilia* (*ʿağāʾib*). The version that follows is taken from a work of this kind, *Badāʾiʿ az-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ ad-duhūr*, a cosmology attributed either to Ibn Iyās (author of the homonymous history of Mamlūk Egypt, d. c. 1528) or to as-Suyūṭī (d. 1505)⁶⁵. It also displays many similarities with *Aḥbār az-zamān* attributed to al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Waṣīf Šāh⁶⁶. The main difference of these works in respect to the Stories of the Prophets is that Egypt takes a primary role: in the specific case of the story of Noah, the Pyramids and the temples of Upper Egypt, built by Hermes (identified with Enoch/Idrīs)⁶⁷, are saved from the Flood.

3.2. According to an Egyptian tradition, Farʿān wrote to Darmašīl, king of Babel, asking him to get rid of Noah who was threatening the cult of the idols. The head of his priests, Iflīmūn (Philemon, Polemon), carried the letter. He had had a vision in which the city of Amsūs was destroyed and the idols toppled. In a second vision a white bird had invited him to join the believers. Iflīmūn left with his family, but did not carry out his mission to Darmašīl: instead, he remained with Noah until the Flood arrived, and embarked on the Ark thus saving himself⁶⁸. He handed down the knowledge contained in the sacred Egyptian books. The first post-diluvian town in Egypt was called *Talāt* īn (as opposed to *Tamānīn* in the east). But how was the

⁶³ See as-Siğistānī, *Muʿammārīn* 2 and LXXXIX.

⁶⁴ See Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil* I, 73. al-Mutahhar objects to all those who place doubts on the reality of the Flood, that it is stated by the word of God. Aristotle and Plato maintain that several floods of one or two days occurred, but certain philosophers do not recognize its universality (*Badʾ* III, 18-19).

⁶⁵ *GAL* II, 202²⁸⁸, 380²; *GAL* SI, 616¹³ (al-Bakrī), II, 196-197²⁸⁸. The book is also known as *Marğ az-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ ad-duhūr* (*GAL* II, 380¹; SII 405¹).

⁶⁶ Or as-Suyūṭī. Cf. *GAL* I, 145; *GAL* SI, 22; Carra de Vaux 1898: Introduction 31-33.

⁶⁷ al-Masʿūdī relates that, according to the Sabeans, "Aḥnūḥ – the prophet Idrīs – is no other than Hermes" (*Murūğ* I, 50).

Hermes" (*Murūğ* I, 50).

disapproval expressed in the Qur'ān for the Pharaoh⁶⁹, or Noah's curse on his son Ham, the forefather of the people of the Nile, to be overcome? Ibn Iyās presents the Egyptian version of the facts. Having grown old, Noah climbed up a mountain and called his sons. Shem came and was blessed. Ham did not respond to the call and his offspring was condemned to serve Shem. Nonetheless, Ham's son, Miṣrāym, heard Noah and went to him. Noah placed his hands on Miṣrāym and said, "Oh God, he has responded to my call. Bless him and his offspring, and give him a home in the blessed land, mother of all countries and haven of men, whose Nile is the greatest of all rivers". Thus, Miṣrāym set up home in the land that took his name (Miṣr, Egypt)⁷⁰.

3.3 As Haarmann writes, "All efforts on the part of Egyptian writers to balance this bleak image of Egypt's pagan past within the *Heilsgeschichte* of Islam were bound to have only limited effects" (1979:56). On the basis of research by A. Fodor, it would seem that the particular development in Egypt of stories like those of Noah and of Hermes was not owed so much to an Egyptian *šū'ūbiyya*, aimed at reaffirming the country's role in the history of civilization, as to an attachment, in the land of the Nile, to Hermetic ideas of Mesopotamian origin⁷¹. To these are to be added local traditions of Coptic origin. Thus, the Pyramids would have been built not only for the eternal glory of the Pharaoh, but to preserve, together with the temples, the heritage of ancient sciences and techniques contained in the papyri and pictured on walls and columns⁷².

THE STORY OF NOAH, PEACE BE UPON HIM⁷³

Then God revealed to him, "Make thou the Ark" (Qur. 11:37). Noah asked, "Oh Lord, what is the Ark?" He replied, "It is a wooden house that flows on the surface of the water". God ordered him to plant a sapling of teak – some say of ebony – in the land of Kūfa. He planted it and he remained there for forty years until the tree was mature. God ordered the sky not to let rain fall and the earth not to let plants sprout. For the whole period not a

⁶⁹ E.g. Qur. 3:10-11, "...those – they shall be fuel for the Fire like Pharaoh's folk, and the people before them, who cried lies to Our signs; God seized them because of their sins; God is terrible in retribution".

⁷⁰ See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 79.

⁷¹ Fodor 1970. Also see Cook 1959, Haarmann 1979 and his edition of Idrīsī's *Anwār*.

⁷² A. Fodor writes, "The basis for the Arabic pyramid legend thus was supplied by the combination of two motifs: that of the hiding of knowledge with the Jewish Flood-story. This resulted in a new Flood-story in which the part of the Biblical Ark was played by the ancient Egyptian monuments, especially by the pyramids, and the place of Noah, the Ark-builder, was taken by Hermes, the builder of the pyramids" (1970:342).

⁷³ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 67-78.

drop of rain did fall, and neither did a blade of grass grow, neither did women or any female animals domesticated or wild give birth, and neither did birds have offspring. It was a sign for the people of the punishment that was about to be inflicted upon them. God ordered Noah to go to Kūfa carrying the teak. Noah was confused as to how to transport it. God let it be known that it would be ʿUḡ b. ʿAnaq who would carry the wood.

al-Kisāʾī tells that ʿUḡ's mother ʿAnaq was one of Adam's daughters, and had repugnant looks and an ungraciating figure. She was a skilled sorceress; she died a hundred years after the birth of ʿUḡ. He grew to enormous proportions: he was 600 old cubits high – one and a half times the current cubit – and equally wide. When the floods came, the water went no higher than his neck. When he was sitting on the top of a mountain, he could reach out his hand to the sea and catch fish, which he roasted against the heat of the sun. If he was angry with the inhabitants of a village, he urinated on them until they drowned. (...) It is said that he lived for 4,500 years, until the time of Moses⁷⁴.

According to al-Kisāʾī, God revealed to Noah that ʿUḡ would carry the wood from Kūfa to Ḥīra, a village near Baghdad. Noah went to ʿUḡ and asked it of him. ʿUḡ told him he would only be prepared to do it if he satiated his hunger with bread. Noah had three loaves of barley bread and gave him one of them. ʿUḡ laughed, "Not even a mountain of this bread would contain my hunger! How could you think that one loaf would be enough?" Noah broke it in half and said, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Eat!" He ate the bread. Noah offered a second loaf, but only a half was needed, such that he could eat no more. In one go ʿUḡ carried all the wood from Kūfa to Ḥīra.

When the wood was with Noah, he said, "Oh Lord, how can I build this ship?" God the Highest sent Gabriel to teach him how to do it. Noah cut up some planks, he put them together each with the other and he nailed them with iron nails. He made the head (*raʾs*) of the Ark like the head of a peacock, the tail (*ḍanb*) like the tail of a cockerel, the beak (*minqār*) like the beak of a falcon, the wings (*aḡniḥa*) like the wings of an eagle, and the face (*waḡh*) like the face of a dove. He made three floors – some say seven.

Ibn ʿAbbās says that the length of the Ark was 1,000 cubits, the width 600 and the height 300. It is told that Noah took forty years to build it. People derided him: "Oh Noah, you have left your mission as a prophet to be a carpenter?" al-Kisāʾī tells that fire was applied to the wood of the ship, but it had no effect. This was said to be fruit of Noah's magic. When the ship was by now almost complete, Noah spread pitch and bitumen on it. Then God had him put four nails into its sides, upon which he had engraved an eye⁷⁵. Noah said, "Oh Lord, what is the purpose of this?" God revealed to him that these were the names of Muḥammad's companions: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUtmān, and ʿAlī – God be satisfied with them⁷⁶. The ship was not complete without them. Noah carried out what had been ordered and finished the ship. God the Highest gave it voice and the Ark spoke clear-

⁷⁴ When Moses entered the desert with the Banū Isrāʾīl, ʿUḡ lifted up a mountain, wanting to throw it against them. But God sent a hoopoo with an iron beak which pecked at the rock until it opened a crack. The rock fell on top of ʿUḡ paralyzing him. So Moses hit him with his rod and killed him. In the land of the Tartars there is a bridge that is said to be one of his ribs (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* 67).

⁷⁵ An eye for the ship 'to see' where it was navigating, or for protecting it from misfortune and shipwreck (a common tradition in Egypt); another possible interpretation is as a letter ʿayn.

⁷⁶ The 'rightly guided' caliphs. Also see ad-Diyābakrī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 69.

ly as the people listened: "There is no god but God, God of the first and the last. I am the Ark which will bring to safety all who board me, while those who stay away will perish!" "Now do you believe it?" asked Noah. But they replied that it was an act of his magic. God's anger grew against those who disobeyed Him; He ordered Noah to carry food for six months into the Ark and to build a tank of drinking water. Then He made a pearl come down from Paradise, whose light was like that of the sun. Thus Noah could recognize the times [of prayer] of both day and night and the passing of the hours. He asked his Lord permission to carry out the pilgrimage and God conceded it to him. When he reached Mecca, its inhabitants wanted to burn the Ark. God ordered his angels to lift it up between the sky and the ground. This they did as the people were watching. Noah made seven ritual circumambulations around the Ka'ba, then he prayed for his people and God received his prayer. When he returned from Mecca, He made the Ark descend to the ground. Then God the Highest ordered him to climb up the mountain and to call out with all his voice, "Oh beasts, birds, reptiles and everything that has the breath of life! Make hast towards the entrance of the Ark, for the punishment is close!" The call reached the East and the West and beasts, birds, domesticated animals and reptiles came in groups. Noah said, "I have been ordered to take a couple [from every species of animal] with me." Then God commanded him to carry all plants and the bodies of Adam and Eve. He placed them in a coffin (*tābūt*). Furthermore He ordered him to carry the Black Stone and Adam's rod descended from Paradise, together with the coffin, the leaves (*subūf*)⁷⁷ and the food. The total number of people who entered with him into the Ark was forty men and forty women. They were housed on the first floor. On the second floor Noah placed the wild and domesticated animals and the livestock [and on the third the birds]. It is told that the last of the animals to enter was the donkey. Iblīs 'the cursed' held on to the tail and stopped it from proceeding. Noah thought that the donkey had stopped out of stubbornness, and told it, "Come in you cursed thing!" In this way the donkey entered together with Satan. When Noah saw him, he asked him who had allowed him to enter. He replied, "You did it, didn't you say 'come in you cursed thing'? There is no cursed creature if not me!" It is told that Noah, when he boarded the Ark, prohibited men and animals to have intercourse for fear of them multiplying, spbeing limited. They all obeyed, apart from the dog, who copulated with his bitch. The cat informed Noah of what the dog had done, but the latter denied it repeatedly. Noah cursed them all for the reproachable act. From that day hostility was born between dogs and cats, just like their shameful behaviour during copulation. The following verse has been said of them: "The cat said words of great meaning, / 'I neither want to see the dog nor him to see me'". When the animals' excrement in the Ark became unbearable, they would complain to Noah. God inspired him to squash the elephant's tail. Noah did this and a couple of pigs appeared, which started to eat the excrement. From the sneeze of the pig God created a couple of mice, which multiplied and started to chew at the walls of the Ark. The inhabitants of the Ark complained about this and God instigated the cats against the mice. These started to eat them devouring them from first to last. From that day was born the hostility between cats and mice.

⁷⁷ Adam received twenty-one leaves, Seth twenty-nine, and Idrīs thirty (see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūğ* I, 50).

Ibn Waṣīf Šāh said that amongst the kings of Egypt there was no reacher than King Sūrīd⁷⁸. He had a vision, 300 years before the Flood. The sky had turned upside down towards the earth, as if to open a large pit. The stars seemed to fall, the sun and the moon seemed to approach the world. He saw white birds kidnap people and throw them between two mountains. He saw the earth become obscured by the darkness, and his people gathered together, asking him for help. The king awoke from his sleep full of terror. When morning came he called all his priests; there were a hundred of them and they gave no judgements without consulting the stars and their ascendants. He withdrew with the priests and recounted all that he had seen. They said that his vision had descended from the sky and that the whole world and all that was to be found upon the face of the earth would perish. The king asked them to calculate the position of the stars. When they had been observed, they said, "We have discovered the moon within the constellation of Cancer, near to Pisces. The cataclism will come due to a flood, a mass of water from the sky". The king asked them, "Observe if the calamity is to afflict our land". They said yes, the land [of Egypt] would be in ruins for many years. The king then asked, "Observe if it will return as prosperous as before". They replied that it would return even better. So King Sūrīd ordered the construction of the Pyramids. Their foundations and heights were of equal dimensions. The king said, "We will make them as coffins and tombs for our bodies". Many riches were carried there, together with precious stones, arms, marvellous statues and extraordinary vases of every metal. Talismans were written upon them, as well as the knowledge of the stars which described all that would be until the end of time, including those who would reign over the land, both believers (*muslimūn*) and heathens. The priests announced that the Flood would not last for long on the earth, for forty days. The king built the Pyramids imprisoning the air according to wise dispositions, and amassing the mentioned riches. He said, "If we are saved from the Flood we will return to our reign finding all our riches; if we perish, these Pyramids will be tombs for our bodies, refuges that will preserve them from decay". Each of his ministers, sages, and dignitaries built a pyramid for himself to preserve his body from the Flood (...)⁷⁹.

God revealed to Noah: "Oh Noah, when the oven boils in the house of your son Shem, board the Ark!" Shem was his eldest son and was then 300 years old. He was married to a woman called Raḥma. Noah went to his son's house and said, "Oh Raḥma, the beginning of the Flood will take place in this oven in which you make your bread. When you see the oven boil, immediately come to me and tell me!" The oven was of black stone. On Friday the tenth of Raḡab, Raḥma was cooking at the oven; when she came to the last loaf, then did the water boil, as the verse says, "Until, when Our command came, and the Oven boiled" (Qur. 11:39). As soon as Raḥma realized, she shouted, "God is the greatest! The punishment promised by the Lord has arrived! Noah, the prophet of God, said the truth." She ran to Noah and informed him that the oven was boiling. He exclaimed, "There is no power and no strength save in God the Highest and the Omnipotent!"⁸⁰

⁷⁸ For Sūrīd's legend, see al-Mas'ūdī, *Aḥbār* 134 ff.; Carra de Vaux 1898:179 ff.; Fodor 1970:347-349.

⁷⁹ Extensive quotations follow from al-Mas'ūdī, Šihāb al-Ḥiḡāzī and Abū r-Rayḡān al-Bīrūnī on Egypt and the Pyramids (*Badā'ī* 71-74).

⁸⁰ An expression frequently uttered by Muslims, following the example of the Prophet Muḡammad (al-Buḡārī, *Sunan* II, 208 no. 613 [*Adān* 7]) and before him that of Adam (al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* 35).

Noah had already prepared as much food as was necessary in the Ark to feed the animals. When Raḥma told him, he went to Shem's house and watched the water boil from the oven, such that it covered the floor of the house and left by the door like an impetuous river. Then Noah ran towards the Ark shouting, "Oh people, let us save ourselves!" Forty men and forty women reached the Ark. Then Noah said to his son Kan'ān: "Embark with us, my son, and be thou not with the unbelievers! He said, 'I will take refuge in a mountain, that shall defend me from the water'. Said he, 'Today there is no defender from God's command but for him on whom He has mercy'. And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned" (Qur. 11:43-43). God informed him that his son was not a believer. Wahb b. Munabbih tells that Kan'ān drowned before reaching the mountain. According to Ibn 'Abbās, when the oven boiled the doors of the sky opened with rain without there being clouds, and darkness fell upon the earth. The angels of fury beat the face of the sun with their wings, whilst the skies said, "If it were not for the limit placed by God the Highest, water would penetrate down to the seventh earth". Men were walking along the roads as water gushed from under their feet; women at home saw water gushing underneath them and boiling as if from pans. The same took place in every region of the earth. When the water boiled in the city of Amsūs, King Sūmrīd was on his throne and heard his people shouting. He went by horse with his dignitaries up to a high mountain to see the conditions of his subjects, concerned about all the water. Without realizing, the water began to boil under his horse's hooves. Then he returned to his palace and found nothing but water, a great wave like a mountain, and no more could be seen on the earth. Wahb b. Munabbih tells that the beginning of the Flood took place in Kūfa, where the oven boiled over. When 'Uḡ b. 'Anaq saw these fearful things he went to the Ark and placed his hand upon it. Noah asked him, "What do you want oh enemy of God?" Whereupon he replied, "Do not be afraid oh prophet of God! Allow me to come with the Ark, grasping hold in friendship, so that I can hear the angels' hymns of praise to God". The Lord said to Noah, "Have no fear of 'Uḡ and allow him to proceed with the Ark wherever it goes". Then Noah closed the doors of the Ark, "and He said 'Embark in it! In God's name shall be its course and its berthing'" (Qur. 11:41). The Ark moved on with its passengers between waves as high as mountains. God the Highest said, "Lo, when the waters rose, We bore you in the running ship" (Qur. 69:11).

It is told that God the Highest, when he sent the Flood, lifted up the Inhabited House which he had sent down in the time of Adam. It was of red ruby. When the waters rose God made it ascend into the sky and it was called the Inhabited House 'made free' (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr al-'atīq*)⁸¹, given that it had been saved from the Flood. When the Ark reached the site of the Ka'ba, it circumnavigated (*tāfat*) around it seven times; then it went to the site of Jerusalem and paid 'the visit' (*fa-zārathu*). No place was passed by the Ark without saying, "Oh Noah, this is such and such a place". It toured around, easterly to westerly. There were ninety thousand angels around the ship who protected it from the punishment sent down by God. It flowed through the water like the moon in the firmament. Hardly a brief moment of time had passed before the water had covered the mountains, extending forty cubits higher than their peaks, and it spread across every land and high ground. No living creature remained upon the surface of the earth that had not perished, except those

⁸¹ *'atīq* is traditionally translated as 'ancient'.

in the ship together with ʿUḡ b. ʿAnaq. No city or village remthat had not been destroyed, no ruins remained except the Pyramids and the [Egyptian] temples (*al-barābi*)⁸², that were of sound construction (...)⁸³. There is no agreement on the duration of the water's permanence on the earth, whether six months or 150 days.

God ordered to the earth, "Earth, swallow thy waters; and heaven, abate! And the waters subsided, the affair was accomplished, and the Ark settled on al-Ġūdī" (Qur. 11:44). It was related that al-Ġūdī was a mountain near Mosul and the ship grounded there. According to at-Taʿlabī this took place the day of the ʿāšūrā, the tenth of Muḥarram. Noah fasted in thanks to God the Highest, and ordered that all those with him do the same for the grace received. It is told that even the angels, beasts and domesticated animals fasted on that same day. Then Noah took out the food that was left and put together seven types: onion, lentils, broad beans (*ful*), chick-peas, wheat, barley, and rice. He mixed them together and cooked them and from that day they have become "Noah's *summa* (tradition)", a much-loved dish.

Then Noah opened the doors of the ship, saw that the sun and the clouds were apart and that a rainbow (*qaws quzah*) had appeared on the Earth. It is said that before then it had never appeared, and it was a sign of the rescinding waters. But it was in pain that Noah saw all of this, as it was for all his companions, because his eyes could not confront the light of the sun. They complained to Noah, who ordered them to apply antimony to the edges of their eyelids, used from that day on to strengthen the eyes. It is told the God's Messenger said, "Whosoever applies the *kuḥl* on the day of ʿāšūrā' will not suffer from disease of the eyes for the whole year".

Noah opened all the doors of the ship: the sun entered, the birds flapped their wings, the animals began to move, and the plants bowed [towards the sun]. When ʿUḡ saw that the ship had grounded he left it and went off where his desire took him immersed in the water. al-Kisāʿī tells that the first mountain to appear was Abū Qubays, at Mecca; the site of the Kaʿba also came to light, having turned into a hill of red earth. No village was saved except for Nahāwand⁸⁴, which was found intact under the water. The Pyramids were also saved as well as the temples of the Saʿīd (Upper Egypt), which were built by Hermes the first. He had deposited the secrets of astrology and astronomy inside. They were found in their original condition.

Noah wanted to know if the water had liberated the earth or not. He sent the raven to uncover its state, but when the bird saw a corpse it stopped to devour it and was seven

⁸² See Yāqūt, *Muʿğam* I, 362. Hermes the first "was afraid that science would perish in the Flood and so he built temples, that is, the mountain which is known as al-Birbā, the temple of Akhmīm. In them he engraved all the crafts and craftsmen. He drew all the tools of the craftsmen and showed in the drawings the characteristics of the sciences to those who would come after him and feared that their traces might vanish from the world." (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa *K. ʿuyūn al-anbāʾ*, Cairo 1882: I, 16, quoted in Fodor 1970:336. For the three Hermeses, see Plessner 1959.

⁸³ Ibn Iyās tells the story of the mother who tries to save her little boy – the last child still alive. However, he inserts a terrifying element – when she was submerged by the water she placed it under her feet to resist a little longer until both perished. It became a proverbial fact, indeed, one says "if the flood comes, a man will even put his son under his feet" (*Badāʾiʿ* 75).

⁸⁴ See Yāqūt, *Muʿğam* V, 313-314.

days late in returning to inform Noah. He invoked God against the raven, which from then on moved carelessly without staying still in any single place. Then Noah asked the other birds, "Who will bring me news of the water without behaving like the raven?". The dove replied, "I will do it oh prophet of God!" It flew off and was absent for an hour. Then it returned with a green leaf in its beak. When Noah saw this leaf he said, "It is an olive leaf!", and realized that the water had not yet uncovered the earth. After a short while he sent the dove once more. An hour afterwards it returned with its feet painted red. The reason for this was that the first thing to emerge from the water had been the site of the Ka'ba, turned into a hill; the dove had landed on top and had stained its feet in the red mud, and it found itself with a collar. Noah invoked God in its favour, "Oh God, make the dove the most blessed of all birds, with numerous offspring, beloved by all people". The ship remained for forty days on the mountain until the earth dried and every species of grass began to grow. God revealed to Noah, "Get thee down in peace from Us, and blessing upon thee and on the nations of those with thee" (Qur. 11:48). Then God ordered him to release the birds and all the other animals. The birds flew off into different directions as they had once been. God the Highest made both night and day appear, as well as the sun, the moon, and the stars as they were before. Afterwards, He sent down the 'rain of mercy' and made the floodwater pour from the earth as saltwater. Noah took heart from this and was happy for the favour shown by God the Highest.

It is told that Noah, when he stepped down from the Ark, saw the earth all white and marvelled to himself. The angel Gabriel went to him and asked, "Do you know oh Noah what this whiteness is that you see?" "What is it?" "These are the bones of your people". Then Noah heard a great noise. Gabriel informed him that it was the sound of the chains with which people were kept in Hell, "And because of their transgressions they were drowned, and admitted into a Fire" (Qur. 71:25). When Noah left the ship with the eighty people who were with him, he founded a village for them and called it Qaryat at-Tamānīn. It was the first village to be built on the earth after the Flood. When they set up in the village God brought death upon them and they perished. None of them survived except for Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives. They were seven in all. "And We made his seed the survivors" (Qur. 37:77). All people descend from Noah, peace be upon him; he is the second father of humanity. Wahb b. Munabbih says that the beginning of the Flood took place in the month of Raġab and its conclusion in the last days of *Dū l-ḥiġġa*. According to Abū Ma'shar, there is a space of 1240 years between Adam's repentance and Noah's Flood, and 3744 years between the Flood and the Prophet Muḥammad's *hiġra*.

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1. Tunisian folk print of Noah's Ark. Tunis c. 1970. (Qur. 11:41-41)



2. Egyptian folk print. Cairo c. 1970. (Qur. 11:48,41)