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ANSWER: Al-Jūdiyy

SŪRAH HUD: VERSES 41-44

And he said, "Embark it. With the name of Allah it sails and anchors. Surely, my Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful." [41]

And it was sailing with them amidst the waves like mountains. And Nūḥ called out to his son, who was at an isolated place, "O my child, come on board with us, and do not be in the company of the disbelievers." [42]

He said, "I shall take shelter on a mountain which will save me from the water." He said, "There is no savior today from the command of Allah, except the one to whom He shows mercy." And the waves rose high between the two, and he was among the drowned. [43]

And it was said, "O earth, suck in your water, and O heaven, stop." And water subsided, and the matter was over. And it (the Ark) came to rest on the Jūdiyy, and it was said, "Curse be upon the wrongdoers." [44]

COMMENTARY

Etiquette of boarding boats and other modes of conveyance

The first verse (41) teaches the etiquette of boarding boats and other modes of conveyance. One should board by saying: **(With the name of Allah it sails and anchors)**. The word: (*majrā* pronounced according to the reading (*qirā'ah*) of Imām Ḥafṣ as '*majrāy*' with *fathah* on the letter *mīm* and a major *Imālah* [inclination] on the letter *rā*) means to sail or to move, and (*mursā*) means to stop or anchor. The sense is that the moving of this mode of transport owes it- self to the power of Allah, and is with His name alone, as well as its stopping which is also subservient to nothing but His power.

Every conveyance moves and stops only with the power of Allah Ta'ālā

Even a little thought would show that no conveyance, a boat or any other mode of transport that moves on land (or flies in the air) is really within one's own power, neither its creating and making, nor its moving and stopping. A shallow view of things leads man to assume that he is the one who has manufactured it and made it move. The reality lies elsewhere. It does not take much to realize that man has not created iron, wood, brass, aluminium etc. which serve as raw material that go into the making of these modes of conveyance. And it is also clear that it does not lie in his control to create on his own a gram of iron or a foot of wood. Then, who gave them the intelligence to design and produce all sorts of mechanical parts and instruments? How did he do that? Did he create his own intelligence? Had it been within the power of man, no one in this wide world would have remained dumb. Everyone would have been a Plato and

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Aristotle in his field. So, man puts together wood and iron and mechanical support from all sides, makes the body and frame for the conveyance. Now he needs to haul tons of weight easily and quickly on the land or in the air. He needs power to do that. It may come through petrol, gas or hydroelectricity. Has man created any of these? Did he create the petrol or gas, or water, or oxygen, or hydrogen?

If we were to look at things impartially, we will realize that even in this age of great scientific advancement, the helplessness of man is still visible and it is true that the moving and stopping of every conveyance rests within the ultimate control of the creator of this universe.

The process of inventing things and making them work makes inventors self-centred. They start living in a hall of mirrors. They congratulate themselves to the limit that they lose touch with the reality of things on a canvass larger than what they invent. Allah Ta'ālā tells them through his prophets that there is more to their making that they fail to see: **(With the name of Allah it sails and anchors)**. This is the reality. A brief statement, but very comprehensive. In fact, it is a key to a door. Once he enters it, he lives in this mortal world but turns into a citizen of the spiritual universe - seeing the beauty of the Lord everywhere in it.

From here unfolds the difference between the world of a believer and the world of a disbeliever. Both ride. But, when a believer steps in there, the conveyance does not simply shorten his travel distances on the land, it introduces him to the one higher, more sublime.

As stated in the second **(42)** and third **(43) verse**, when the whole family of Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām had boarded the ark, a son whose name has been reported as Kin'ān (Canaan) was left out. Out of his paternal compassion, Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām called out to him asking him to come on board and warning him that he should not stay in the company of disbelievers otherwise he would be drowned with them. This young man was already in league with those disbelieving enemies, in fact, was himself a disbeliever. But, in all likelihood, Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām did not know that he was a disbeliever. And even if he did know that, the good counsel he gave to his son to board the boat and leave the company of the disbelievers was in the spirit of asking him to repent from disbelief and enter the fold of faith. But, the unfortunate son still took the flood to be something that will pass away and told him not to worry about him for he would be safe from the flood by climbing a mountain. Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām warned him again that nothing was going to save anyone, not even a mountain, from the punishment of Allah on that day and that there was no way one could remain safe from it unless Allah Himself were to show mercy to him. This father-son dialogue was on from a distance when rose a wave of the flood and took him down and away. Historical reports say that the level of the Flood was fifteen yards above the highest mountain peak and according to some other reports, it was forty yards high.

In the fourth **verse (44)**, the recession of the flood and the return of things to normal conditions has been

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described in a particular manner. Addressing the earth, Allah Ta'ālā commanded: **(O earth, suck in your water)**. The sense was that the amount of water which had bulged out from the earth was to be taken back in by the earth. The sky was commanded to stop raining. The water from rains that had already accumulated on the earth, nature channelled it into rivers and streams for human beings to benefit by it. (Tafsīr Qurṭubī, Mazharī)

In this verse, Allah Ta'ālā has given His commands by addressing the heaven and the earth, although these are no sensate entities, at least outwardly. Therefore, some commentators have taken it in a figurative sense. But, the fact of the matter is that, in terms of our perception, things in the world which appear non-conscious, insensate, and lifeless are, in all reality, live and conscious. Yes, their consciousness and perception are not of a level as given to humankind and others, therefore, by declaring them to be inanimate, they were not obligated with the percepts and injunctions of the Sharī'ah. Many verses of the Holy Qur'ān confirm it, such as: **(and there is no such thing which does not glorify Him with praises - 17:44)**. And it is obvious that the glorification of Allah Ta'ālā depends on knowing Him, and knowing, on reason and consciousness. This tells us that everything has reason and consciousness according to its respective capacity. From it, it recognizes its creator and whatever it has been assigned to do by Him. Everything knows it fully well and keeps doing it staunchly as due. The verse of the Qur'ān: **(gave each thing its form then guided [it] – Ṭāḥā, 20:50)** means exactly this. Therefore, in this verse, if the address to the heaven and the earth is taken in the real sense, it does not matter. Sage Rūmī said:

خاك و باد و آب و آتش بنده اند

بامن وتو مرده باحق زنده اند

Dust, air, water and fire are all 'servants'

For you and me, dead, but with Him, live.

At the end of the fourth **verse (44)**, it was said that the heaven and the earth obeyed the orders and the matter of the flood was all over. The Ark of Sayyidnā Nūḥ 'alayhis salām came to rest on the Mount Jūdiyy and it was declared that the unjust people have been cast far 'away from the mercy of Allah' - (which is what curse is).

Mount Jūdiyy still stands there by that name. Geographically, it is located on the border of Armenia near Ibn 'Umar Island north of Mousil in 'Iraq, the real home of Sayyidnau Nūḥ 'alayhis salām. This is a mountain range, part of which is called Jūdiyy. Another part of it is known as Ararāt. In the present Torah, the place where the Ark came to rest has been identified as Mount Ararāt. As obvious, there is not much of a contradiction in these two reports. But, well-known old historical accounts also say that the ark of Sayyidnau Nūḥ 'alayhis salām had come to rest on Mount Jūdiyy.

These accounts also mention that pieces of this ark are still there at many places in 'Iraq. These are kept

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and used as a relic.

According to Tafsīr at-Ṭabarī and al-Baghawī, Sayyidnau Nūḥ ‘alayhis salām had embarked the Ark on the tenth of the month of Rajab. For six months, this ark sailed on the waters of the flood. When it reached the spot where Baytullah was, it made seven circuits. Allah Ta‘ālā had raised His House higher from being submerged. Then, on the tenth of Muḥarram, the day of ‘Āshūrā’, the flood subsided and the ark came to rest at the Mount of Jūdiyy. Sayyidnau Nūḥ ‘alayhis salām observed a thanks-giving fast on that day and asked everyone on the ark to do the same. Some reports say that even animals that had shared the ark fasted on that day. (Mazḥarī and Qurṭubī)

The importance of the day of ‘Āshūrā’, that is, the tenth of Muḥarram, has been recognized in all religious codes of the blessed prophets. In early Islam - before the fasts of Ramaḍān became obligatory - fasting on the day of ‘Āshūrā’ was *fard*. It is no more *fard* after the revelation of the obligatory status of fasting in Ramaḍān, but it continues to be a practice of prophets, and a source of reward forever.

COMMENTARY – TAFSĪR IBN KATHĪR

The End of the Flood

(44. And it was said: "O earth! Swallow up your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain)." And the water was made to subside and the decree was fulfilled. And it rested on (Mount) Judi, and it was said: "Away with the people who are wrongdoing!")

Allah, the Exalted, informs that when the people of the earth were all drowned, except for the people on the ship, He commanded the earth to swallow its water, which had sprang from it and gathered upon it. Then He commanded the sky to cease raining.

(And the water was made to subside) This means that it (the water) began to decrease.

(and the decree was fulfilled.) This means that all of those who disbelieved in Allah were removed from the people of the earth. Not a single one of them remained upon the earth.

(And it (the ship) rested) This is referring to the ship and those who were in it.

(on (Mount) Judi.) Mujāhid said, "*Judi is a mountain in Al-Jazirah (Northwest Mesopotamia) where the mountains sought to tower above each other on the day of the drowning. On that day of destruction, all the mountains sought to be higher (to avoid being overcome by the water). However, this mountain (Judi) humbled itself for Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, and therefore it was not drowned. This is why Nuh's ship anchored upon it.*" Qatādah said, "*The ship rested upon it (Mount Judi) for a month before they (the*

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people) came down from it. " Qatādah also said, "Allah made Nuh's ship remain on Mount Judi in the land of Al-Jazirah, as a lesson and a sign." Even the early generations of this Ummah saw it. How many ships are there that have come after it and have been destroyed and became dust

(and it was said: "Away with the people who are wrongdoing!") means destruction and loss for them. The term "away with" here implies being far away from the mercy of Allah. For verily, they were destroyed to the last of them, and none of them survived.

This concludes the commentary for Day 6.