

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



ALI 351 – Session 1

**Nabi Yahyā (a) in the Quran**

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## Quranic Ayat 3: 38 - 39

هٰذَا لَكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿37﴾ فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿38﴾

## Translation verses 3: 38 - 39

(3:37) Thereat Zachariah called upon his Lord, saying, “My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication.” (3:38) So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, “Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of John, confirmer of a Word of Allah, eminent and chaste, a prophet, among the righteous.”

## Discussion on verses 3: 37 & 38

- Read the verse before (3: 36) to know the context of the story
- **Q:** Reflect on the supplication of Zakariyyā and note down the lessons we can derive
- Angels called him whilst he was saying prayers in miharāb
- ‘Allah gives you the good news’ say angels
- The angels also come with name of the child
- **Q:** List down the qualities of Nabi Yahyā

## Reaction of Nabi Zakariyyā (a)

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنِّي يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي الْكِبَرُ  
وَأَمْرَاتِي عَاقِرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ

3: 40 *He said, 'My Lord, how shall I have a son while old age has overtaken me and my wife is barren?' He said, 'So it is that Allah does whatever He wishes.'*

**Q:** Why would Nabi Zakariyyā question the ability of his Lord? Why did he pray in the first place when he was aware that his wife was barren & he was very old.

# Imam Ridha (a) on this event

Al-Rayyān bin Shabīb narrates that once he visited Abul Hasan Ali al-Ridha on the first of Muharram. The Imam asked him, “are you fasting, O Ibn Shabīb?” “No,” said Ibn Shabīb. So the Imam said, “this is the day when Zakariyyā (a) prayed to his Lord, Mighty and Sublime, saying: *O my Lord, grant me from You a good offspring. You are indeed the All-hearer of invocation* [Q 3:38]. So Allah accepted his supplication and commanded the angel who called upon Zakariyyā *while he was standing in prayer in Mihrāb (saying): Allah gives you glad tidings of Yabyā* [Q 3:39]. Therefore, he who fasts on this day and invokes Allah, Mighty and Sublime, Allah will accept his supplication the He accepted the supplication of Zakariyyā.” *(Nafasul Mahmūn)*.<sup>6</sup>

## Tafsīr on verse Q 3:38

A thing is good (*tayyib*) if it is suitable for the purpose it is required for. A good offspring is a child who, in his attributes, qualities and activities, would fulfil the hopes, and satisfy the ambitions of his father. Zakariyyā prayed for a good offspring when he saw the grace of Allah on Maryam, seeing how great her prestige was before the Lord. He was so overwhelmed by that experience that he could not refrain from praying that he too be granted similar bounty. (*Al-Mizan*, 5:261)

## Tafasīr on verse Q 3:39

Allah (swt) named him Yahya; also see Q 19:7.

He was sent to verify a Word of Allah, i.e. Isa as Allah refers to him such in Q 3:45. It also shows that Yahya was a harbinger of Isa. *As-Sayyid* (honorable and noble) is the one who manages people's affairs related to their lives & livelihood. It is also understood to mean learned, devout, wise, generous & reverent to God. *Al-Husur* (chaste) is one who abstains from women and forsakes all worldly desires. (*Al-Mizan*, 5:264 & *The Study Quran*, p. 143).

# Imam Husayn & Nabi Yahya

It has been reported that Imam al-Husayn (a) frequently remembered Nabi Yahya during his journey to Karbala. Both of them were born in six months after the conception. Imam Husayn was martyred for opposing the tyrant Yazid and so was Yahya killed by declaring that what the King did was wrong (*The Holy Quran*, translation & commentary by S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, p. 944). Both were named by Allah, and before them none was named Yahya or Husayn. The heavens cried for both of them ([www.shiachat.com](http://www.shiachat.com))

# John the Baptist in Christianity

*Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist* (Matthew 11:11) St John was a preacher & religious figure during Jesus' lifetime. Baptism rituals in the Jordan River were an important part of his ministry. Encyclopedia Britannica, "All four Gospels recognize in John the start of the Christian Era, and each in its own way tries to reconcile John's precedence in time and Jesus' acceptance of his message and of a baptism of repentance from his hands, with the author's belief in Jesus as Messiah and son of <sup>10</sup>God."

## Nabi Yahya(a) was a fervent preacher

Was fully aware of Divine commandments in Tawarat. Used to teach the fundamental principles & solve their problems. He never missed any opportunity to preach. He was strict in ensuring that people follow the rules. He openly condemned the King Hirodutus' intention of marrying his niece, Herodya. She once danced for the King in an entertainment party. The king became infatuated & offered anything she would demand. She asked for the murder of Yahya

# Story of Zakariyya in Surat Maryam

ذَكَرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾ إِذِ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا  
﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ  
أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَٰ مِن  
وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾  
يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ﴿٦﴾ يَا  
زَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِن قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا  
﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ  
بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ  
هَيِّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٩﴾

## Translation Q 19: 2-9

[This is] an account of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zachariah (2) When he called out to his Lord a secret supplication. (3) He said, “My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, yet never have I, my Lord, been disappointed in my supplication to You. (4) And indeed, I fear my kinsmen after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir (5) Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You].” (6) [He was told], “O Zachariah, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be John. We have not assigned to any before [this] name.” (7) He said, “My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?” (8) [An angel] said, “So shall it be. Your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, for I created you before, while you were nothing.’” (9)