

## Quran Appreciation - Fall Term (Sep - Dec 2017)

### The Story of Lady Hannah and Lady Maryam (a)

#### Nabi Zakariya

##### Verse for the session

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ط قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ  
هَذَا ط قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Whenever Zakariya entered the sanctuary to see her, he found food with her. He said: O Maryam! from where does this come for you? She said: It is from Allah. Surely Allah gives to whom He pleases without measure.

(Sura Aale Imran, verse 37)

##### Reflections

- what did Nabi Zakariya think when he saw the food with Lady Maryam?
- what does the reply of Lady Maryam show (her faith and closeness to God, her understanding of His Power and Kindness . . .)

##### Cross reference verses

- 1) **Nabi Zakariya is put in charge of Lady Maryam.** Picking names - 3:44

##### Tafsir

When the mother of Lady Maryam brings her to the temple she asks that one of the priests be in charge of her. Because there were signs of greatness in the new baby and she came from a noble family, all the priests were eager to take her under their care. There were five priests in particular who wanted this responsibility. Although it was natural that Nabi Zakariya should have the responsibility as he was her uncle, they did not agree. They eventually decided to cast lots and see whose name came up.

All the candidates wrote down their names on pens (or wooden writing instruments), and put them in the river. The pen that would stay afloat would win the guardianship. It was the pen of Zakariya that won. God's will was done and Nabi Zakariya became the guardian for Lady Maryam.

As she grew up it became more and more evident that Lady Maryam was very special with God. She would spend her days fasting and her nights praying. She perfected her character and knowledge and outdid many of the members of the temple in her spirituality.

This verse tells us that when Nabi Zakariya would come to visit her he would see that she had food with her. This was not ordinary food. According to some hadith it was fruits that were not in season. It would be placed by the worship place of Lady Maryam through the command of God.

The food that was found by Nabi Zakaria (a) with Maryam (a) evoked wonder. This can be verified by certain factors in the verse:

- a) The fact that the word is indefinite (rizqan) shows that it was a strange type of food.
- b) Nabi Zakaria (a) asks about it, showing that he was surprised to see the food.
- c) Maryam (a) replies that it is from God. All food given to human beings is from God. But this is not a normal granting of sustenance. The fact that Nabi Zakaria does not ask who brought it for you reveals his immediate realization that this was a special grace given to Maryam (a) from the Almighty.

### Nabi Zakariya (a)

The story of Nabi Zakariya (a) as we know it begins in his late adulthood, when he was elderly. He was a Prophet of the Bani Israel. He is a direct descendant of Nabi Dawood (a) and Sulayman (a) and his activities were centred in Bait-al Muqaddas where the temple of Nabi Sulayman (a) once stood. Nabi Zakaria was a carpenter by profession.

Although he lived a simple life, Nabi Zakariya (a) was very grateful to Allah, and was very humble. Similar to his ancestor Nabi Ibrahim (a), he and his wife had already reached an extreme old age without having any children. He later had a son, Nabi Yahya. (details to follow in coming lessons)

### A Story

One day the Holy Prophet (s) entered the home of his daughter Fatima (a). For many days there had been no food in the house. Suddenly this time he saw food that seemed fresh and delicious in the house. The Prophet (a) asked her; “where did you get this?” and she replied “It is from Allah, He grants to whoever He pleases without accounting” . The Prophet then said; ‘this story is like the story of Zakariya at the mihrab when he asked Maryam where the food came from.’

### Important Lessons

- 1) Whoever sets out on the path of God, the Almighty takes care of all his affairs of the world. The mother of Maryam (a) dedicated her child to the temple, without worrying about what would happen to her child. Allah took care of her growth and progress, entrusted her supervision to Nabi Zakaria (a), and provided her with sustenance from Heaven.
- 2) Good upbringing has many conditions. In the story of Maryam (a) we can see the following factors at play:
  - a) Noble birth
  - b) Guided growth
  - c) Wise trainer
  - d) Pure food

### Ideas

- 1) Act out the conversation between Nabi Zakariya and Lady Maryam in this verse. Let children take turns to speak, using the words from the Quran (some could try Arabic).
- 2) Let children draw or do a craft on the mihrab and the food from Heaven for lady Maryam.

### **Sources:**

*Tafsir Namune*, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

*God's Emissaries*, Sh. Rizwan Arastu

<http://hadithoftheday.com/prophet-zakariya-as/>