

Quran Appreciation - Fall Term (Sep - Dec 2017) The Story of Lady Hannah and Lady Maryam (a)

Dua of Nabi Zakariya

Verses for the session

هٰنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

Thereat Zakariya prayed to his Lord; he said: My Lord! grant me a good progeny from You; Surely You listen to prayers.

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا
بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

The angels called to him as he stood praying in the sanctuary, that Allah gives you the good news of Yahya verifying a Word from Allah, and honorable and chaste and a Prophet from among the good ones.

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ
مَا يَشَاءُ

He said: My Lord! when shall there be a son (born) to me, and old age has already come upon me, and my wife is barren? He said: even thus does Allah what He pleases.

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا ۗ وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ
كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

He said: My Lord! appoint a sign for me. Said He: Your sign is that you should not speak to men for three days except by signs; and remember your Lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning.

(Sura Aale Imran, verses 38-40)

Reflections

- why does Nabi Zakariya pray at that time?(when he sees the miracle of the fruits with Lady Maryam?)

- how must he have reacted to the news given to him by the angels? What may have pleased him the most?
- imagine speaking only with gestures. How would people have reacted?

Cross reference verses

- 1) Receiving news about the birth of Nabi Yahya. 19:2-15
- 2) Nabi Zakariya and Nabi Yahya - 21:89-90

Tafsir

Nabi Zakariya had prayed for a child for many years. When he was in charge of looking after Lady Maryam (a) and he saw the miracles that happened with her regarding the fruits she received, he immediately was filled with hope that he too could receive a miracle from Allah. So he prayed for a child, rather for a progeny that is good. Note the way he prayed to Allah; grant me from You - he does not seek fulfillment of his prayers from anyone else. He also called on Allah as the One who hears prayers. Even though he had been praying for many years he had not given up hope. Allah loves those who do not despair of His mercy. He says;

When Nabi Zakariya was worshipping Allah in the mihrab as he usually did, Jibraeel and some other angels came and gave him the good news. He would have a son Yahya who would have the following five qualities;

- 1) Verify (believe in, accept) the Kalimah of Allah - referring to Nabi Isa (a). Nabi Yahya who would be born to Nabi Zakariya (a) would be six months older than Nabi Isa and was the first to accept him as a Messenger. Since Nabi Yahya was well known and respected, people followed his lead.
- 2) A chief and leader
- 3) Pure and chaste
- 4) A Prophet of God
- 5) A good person, righteous.

Nabi Zakariya was delighted to hear the news but he could not hold back his wonder. He asks how he can have a child when he is so old and his wife has not been able to have a child. It is not that he does not believe in the power of Allah, but he wants to see how Allah would do it. He wants to know and witness the miracle. It is similar to the story of Nabi Ibrahim who asks Allah to show him how He gives life to the dead (2:260). Allah tells Nabi Zakariya that He does what He wishes, it is possible for Him even though it may seem impossible.

A point to note is that although Prophets are great people, they are very humble and don't see themselves as worthy of being answered so quickly.

Nabi Zakariya asked God for a sign to increase his certainty and remind himself about the fulfillment of God's promise. He was told that he would not be able to speak to the people for three days and would speak with gestures. Nabi Zakariya was delighted. He stepped out of the temple and went out to the people. From his face they could see that something had happened. They asked him about it but he gestured that he could not speak to them for three days. Through gestures he told them to glorify Allah day and night.

Nabi Yahya

The name Yahya is derived from the word hayat meaning life. The name means one who remains alive and it was chosen for him by Allah. Nabi Zakariya was told about the name of the child when he was given the news.

Prophet Yahya, even in his childhood, was very wise and knowledgeable. In his young age he kept himself away from worldly affairs busying himself only with the worship of God and leading a life of purity and righteousness. He worked very hard. He remained aloof from the material world. God granted him Messengership in his childhood. So he began to call people to God's worship. The Bani Israel used to make him their arbitrator for settling disputes.

Important Lessons

- 1) Never give up hope in Allah. He listens to prayers and answers when, and how, it is best.
- 2) Allah has power over all things and can make the impossible happen.

Ideas

- 1) Let children speak out the conversation between Allah and Nabi Zakariya after the news was given to him.
- 2) Children can write the story of Nabi Zakariyya, or illustrate it. Discuss his emotions and write down various adjectives to describe how he must have felt.
- 3) The five qualities of Nabi Yahya described in these verses could be written out as a baby announcement for a special baby to be born.

Sources:

Tafsir Namune, Ayt. Nasir Makarim Shirazi

God's Emissaries, Sh. Rizwan Arastu