Familiarization with Quranic Sūras
Month of Ramadan 1440 – Day 5
Sūrat Maryam, No. 19

Sūra Information

Sūra Maryam. No.19. Revealed in Makkah, 98 verses.

- The sūra is named after Lady Maryam *'alayhas-salām* whose story is given in detail in it. This is the only sūra named after a female figure, and Lady Maryam ﷵ is the only woman mentioned by name in the Quran. She represents a unique point of connection between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, being born into a Jewish family, giving birth to Jesus, and playing a significant role the history of Islam.
- Sūra Maryam has an important part in the early history of Islam. When the early Muslims migrated to Abyssinia Ja'far bin Abu Talib recited from it for King Negus who wanted to know more about Islam. The King was greatly touched by the passage on Lady Maryam ﷵ and Prophet 'Īsā ﷵ.
- The sūra has a distinct linguistic rhythmic pattern. It is one of the longest sūras to have such a clear pattern; 67 of its 98 verses end with the same sound.
- The Divine name **al-Rahmān** is mentioned 16 times in this sūra, a third of the number of times the name is mentioned in the Quran, apart from the opening *basmalahs* of sūras.

Sūra Significance

Whoever recites Sūrat Maryam constantly, through the blessings of this sūra Allah will make him needless in his self, his wealth, and his children, so long as he lives in the world. Imam al-Sādiq ﷵ (*Tafsīr Majma'ul Bayān*). Note: *Tafsīr Namūne* says that the needlessness would come due to reflection of the contents of the sūra which become ingrained in the thoughts and actions of the reciter.

Synopsis of contents

1) A big part of the sūra talks about the stories of the past;
a) Prophet Zakariyya ﷵ and Prophet Yahya ﷵ
b) Lady Maryam ﷵ and Prophet 'Īsā ﷵ
c) Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷵ
d) Prophet Mūsā ﷵ
e) Other Prophets mentioned briefly
2) The Day of Judgement
3) A rejection of claims that God has a child.

Some Lessons from the Sūra

1) What seems impossible for us is easy for Allah to do (verses 9, 21)
2) God is with those who are in pain and helps them when they help themselves (verses 24-25)
3) There is no-one like God who deserves worship and steadfastness from us (verse 65)
4) Allah enhances the guidance of those who are guided (verse 76)
5) All creatures are but servants of the al-Rahmān (verse 93)

Important Messages

1) Supplication to God is very powerful for the fulfillment of desires.
2) The days of birth, death, and life again are significant indicators of the stages of human life.
3) Divine Messengers are from a blessed progeny.
4) Human beings throughout history have always been skeptical about life after death.
5) Sins and false utterances can influence the systems in the universe.

Select verses from the Sūra to know (learn, reflect, memorize)

1) 19:4 - *He said, 'My Lord! Indeed my bones have become feeble, and my head has turned white with age, yet never have I, my Lord, been disappointed in supplicating You!*
2) 19:33 - *Peace to me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive.'*
3) 19:62 - *Therein they will not hear vain talk, but only 'Peace!' Therein they will have their provision morning and evening.*

Activities for self-study

1) Cross reference – Compare the story of Lady Maryam ﷺ in this sūra (verses 16-29) and in Sūra Āli Imrān, verses 35-48. What details do each of these passages cover?
2) What are some common elements in the four main stories mentioned in this sūra (Nos.1 a-d in synopsis of contents?
3) There are many repeated themes in the sūra; separation from people/world, silence, speech, the greeting salaam, man created from nothing, etc. Choose one theme to explore in the sūra.

Sources Āyatullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirazi (Ed.), *Tafsir Namūne*; Organization of Quran and Itrah Nūr al-Thaqalayn, Zikre Mubarak; S.H. Nasr (Ed.), *The Study Quran*

Sūra Familiarization for Ramadan 1439 available at:
www.academyofislam.com/resources/quran/sura-familiarization/

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