

\*We always say Alayhis Salaam when we mention the name of a Prophet. Meaning May ALLAH'S (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala's) blessings and mercy be on him.

Dear Children,

In the previous issue we read about Nabi Zakariya, who was a very pious person and always reminded his people to worship the ONE and ONLY GOD. When he reached old age, he yearned for a son that would continue his noble work in the community. In his old age he was indeed, blessed with a son, Nabi Yahya (John the Baptist). Nabi Yahya was however, tragically killed and his head was presented to Salome, daughter of King Herod. Nabi Yahya's father, Nabi Zakariya, also met with a violent death after the people made some false accusations against him. These were amazing examples of how people hung on to the truth and were firm in their faith, even if it meant losing their lives. We learn that Nabi Zakariya also played a very prominent and caring role in the life of a well-known Prophet, which we are going to discuss in this issue.

Nabi Zakariya's wife had a niece named Hannah. Hannah and her husband, Imran, were very pious people. As their marriage was childless, Hannah always looked longingly at other women who were pregnant, as she also longed to have a child. She believed that one day ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) would bless her with a child, whom she would love dearly and shower all her motherly love upon. She and her husband never gave up hope and in their prayers promised, if they were to have a child, to dedicate it to the service of GOD (3:35). When her prayers were answered and she learnt that she was pregnant, she and her husband went on their knees and

thanked the LORD for HIS mercy and kindness towards them.

### **BIRTH OF MARIAM**

A few months later, Imran passed away and Hannah wept bitterly as her husband had not seen the child he had so eagerly waited for. When the child was born, Hannah again experienced another setback as she gave birth to a baby girl. Hannah realised that a girl would not be easily accepted into the temple, as it was customary at that time for a male to fit into this position. Remembering her promise to GOD, she turned in prayer to HIM. "O my LORD I have delivered a female child and the male is not like the female and I have named her, Mariam (Mary) and I entrust her and her offspring to YOU for your mercy, care and protection from all evil including the rejected and cursed one." (Qur'an 3:36).

### **MARIAM TO THE TEMPLE**

She wrapped baby Mariam in a shawl and handed her over to the temple elders to fulfil her promise. The elders accepted Mariam and were keen to take care of her, as she was the child of Imran, their leader who had passed away. It was Nabi Zakariya (alayhis salaam) who stepped forward and said, "I am the husband of her maternal aunt and her nearest relative in the temple, therefore I will take care of her." They all agreed and made him the guardian of Mariam (3:37).

### **SPECIAL ROOM FOR MARIAM**

Nabi Zakariya (alayhis salaam) built a separate room in the temple for Mariam, to ensure that no one had

access to her (19:16). Mariam was quite happy and content to spend her time in this lovely room in the temple, where she spent most of her day in prayer and devotion to the ONE GOD(3:43). Nabi Zakariya (alayhis salaam) was her daily visitor to see to her needs and also spent time teaching and strengthening her faith in the Creator. On one of his visits he was surprised to find some fresh fruit, which was out of season, in her room. He asked her how the fruit got there, as he was the only person who had access to her room. When she replied, “These provisions are from ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) and HE gives to whom HE wills (3:37),” Nabi Zakariya (alayhis salaam) realised that the status of Mariam had been raised above that of all other women. He spent more time with her in guiding her to glorify the Creator.

#### **VISIT BY AN ANGEL**

One evening when Mariam was in prayer in her room, an Angel appeared in front of her. At first she was terrified and retreated to the corner of the room from where she called out, “I seek refuge from you with ALLAH, the Most Beneficent LORD. Do not come near me if you fear ALLAH (19:18)” The Angel replied, “Fear not as I am a messenger from your LORD to announce to you the gift of a pure and righteous son (3:45 & 19:19).” Marian in her surprise said, “How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste,” (3:47&19:20). The Angel reassured her of the power of the LORD. “This is easy for your LORD as HE creates what HE wills (3:47), has appointed your son a messenger (3:49), called Masih Isa (Christ Jesus), son of Mary, held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter and of those nearest to

ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala). It is a matter already decreed by the LORD.” (3:45 & 19:21). He will also be endowed with the gifts of speaking to people whilst in infancy (3:46) and will teach the Torah and the Injeel (Gospel) (3:48).

#### **MARIAM GIVES BIRTH**

This visit and message by the Angel made Mariam feel uneasy, nervous and very concerned. The more she thought of it, the more troubled she became as to what explanation she would give the people for her pregnancy, especially as she had no husband. As the months passed, she became tenser with these thoughts. When she felt life kicking in her, she left the temple room to stop the tongues wagging about her honour. She travelled to Nazareth, a nearby town to Jerusalem. Here she became restless and so left Nazareth to escape the depressing atmosphere (19:22). As she walked, trying to overcome the tension and worries, she suddenly felt the childbirth pains beginning (19:23). She sat down under a dry date palm tree and while resting against the trunk, she gave birth to a beautiful son in this remote place (19:22). Her feeling of happiness was interrupted with feelings of apprehension. She was happy to have given birth to a healthy and beautiful son. Her disappointment rose in her when she realised the difficult and bleak future her son, Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam - Jesus Christ – may peace be upon him) would face from the people who would accuse him of not having a father. She called out, “I wish I had died before this happened and had vanished from the face of the earth (19:23).”

#### **HER INFANT TALKS**

To her great surprise, the comforting voice of her infant son, Nabi Isa, gave her the assurance that she would

overcome her concerns. “Grieve not, your LORD has placed a rivulet near you for water (19:24) and shake the dead tree for some fresh date fruit (19:25). So eat, drink, cool your eyes (19:26) and regain your strength you have lost, and be happy, for what you see is the power and blessing from your Creator. He has made the dry palm tree produce fruit to provide food for you.”

After she regained her strength, she decided to make her way back to the city. However, she still had some concern of what explanation she would provide to the people. Again her baby comforted her with; “If you meet any person, indicate to them that you have made a promise to the Beneficent to stop talking to anyone for a few days (19:26).”

### **MARIAM ARRIVED BACK HOME**

When she arrived back in the city (19:27), as expected, her newborn son attracted the curiosity of the people. They gathered around her and some nasty ones even scolded her. “You have committed a terrible sin. How do you explain this, as your father and mother were very pious and noble people in the community? (19:28)” She lifted her finger to her lips to indicate her silence and when she pointed to her baby they were further angered by her action. “How can we speak to a child in the cradle? (19:29)” However, to their total amazement, the child began to speak clearly (5:110), “I am ALLAH’S (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala’s) servant. HE has given me the Book

(5:46) and has made me a Prophet (19:30), and has blessed me wherever I may be, and has commanded me to pray and give to the needy as long as I

live (19:31). HE has made me dutiful to my mother (19:32). HE has made me humble and blessed me. Peace be on me from the day I am born, to the day I die and until the day I shall be raised to life again (19:33).” Most of the people accepted this miracle baby and also recognised Nabi Isa as their Prophet, knowing full well that the Creator had the power to do anything. This incident made the life of Mariam and her baby Isa, more comfortable in Nazareth.

However, there were still some people who did not accept this miracle birth of Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam). It was Yusuf – Joseph the Carpenter, who asked Mariam if it was possible to have a child without a male partner. She confidently replied that Adam, the first man, was born without a father or a mother (3:59). The opposition towards Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) grew stronger among people who felt threatened by his knowledge and truthfulness. When he was 12 years old he accompanied his mother to Jerusalem. When they arrived there he wandered into a temple and joined the adult audience listening to the Priest. Although he was a teenager, he joined the discussion and asked many questions and when he was not happy with the answers, he gave his own opinion. The learned Priests were disturbed by his boldness and more troubled by some of the questions they could not answer. They even tried to silence him but it was of no avail, as he continued to express his views.

### **PRIESTS RULED ON SABBATH DAY**

The Priest in the community ruled on a strict observance of the appointed Sabbath day with all the strict rules to observe. The Sabbath day was a day of complete rest where, no fires could be lit or extinguished; females could not

plait their hair; self defence or calling a doctor was unlawful; they were prohibited from undertaking a journey of more than 1000 yards; they were not allowed to pick any fruit and many more prohibitions were announced. One Sabbath day, Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) was on his way to the temple, when he broke the law by picking some fruit for a hungry child and lighting a fire to warm an old woman from the cold winter air. When he entered the temple, he observed that a very large number of Priests earned their living from trading in the temple. There were lots of sheep and doves that were sold to the people as offerings to their gods. This confused Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) as he could not understand this offering inside the temple, while thousands of people were starving outside the temple. He also could not accept the materialistic age of gold where everything revolved around money and luxury. At the time when Nabi Zakariya and Nabi Yahya (alayhis salaam) were put to death by the Pharisees and Saducees, a revelation descended upon Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam). When he began his call to the children of Israel to change their ways, his life changed from one of ease and comfort to the discomforts of a life filled with disagreement, confrontation and conflict with the Priests and those who upheld the law.

#### **THE WORSHIP OF ONE GOD**

He openly preached and invited the people to worship the ONE and ONLY GOD. "It is ALLAH WHO is my LORD and your LORD. Then worship

HIM. That is a way that is straight," (3:51) He also invited them to purify

their hearts and souls and to occupy themselves with the affairs of the Hereafter, which would be everlasting. Some commentators of the Glorious

Qur'an mentioned some of the miracles that Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) performed with the power of the Creator to convince the people of his mission. He restored the sight of the blind (3:49), cured the lepers (3:49), blew his breath into a clay model of a bird and gave it life and even brought people back from the dead (3:49). Some even challenged him to bring back to life the son of Noah who had died a long time ago. When the grave of Sam was pointed out to him, Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) invoked the power of ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) to bring him back to life. Sam emerged from the grave and made his appearance. Another miracle was the table spread from heaven. At the end of the 30 days fast, his disciples asked Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) to ask the LORD to send them a table spread from Heaven, to celebrate this occasion (5:112). A great table appeared from the clouds and landed in front of them with the best food and the tastiest of dishes with an aroma and fragrance that they had never experienced before (5:115). There were many more miracles performed by Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam). These miracles and his continuous teachings were annoying the Priests, as most of the poor and downtrodden who were convinced of the power of the LORD started drifting away from the temples and it was also exposing their evil ways. He only enjoyed 3 years of Prophethood.

#### **ACCUSATIONS AGAINST NABI ISA**

The Priests started to plot against Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam -3:54) by reporting him to those who upheld the law with lies and false accusations of magic, of attachment to the devil and also of disobeying the laws of the community. The Priests had secret meetings where they plotted on the best means of

killing him. They approached the government and convinced Pilate, the Roman Governor, that Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) was a security threat to the Roman Empire and urged him to take immediate action against him. The council of high Priests passed the death sentence on him.

The Roman Governor became furious and sent out his troops to arrest Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam) so that they could torture and crucify him. When they surrounded his home and were convinced that they were going to capture him, ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) saved him by raising him to heaven. The Glorious Qur'an affirms this incident in chapter 3, verse 55 & 4:157 that he was not captured. "When they boastfully said, 'We killed Isa, the son of Mary and the Messenger of ALLAH,' but they killed him not, nor crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts with no (certain) knowledge but only conjecture to follow. For a certainty they killed him not," (4:157, & 3:55). The LORD saved him from his enemies and, "Raised him up unto Himself. And ALLAH is Exalted in Power, Wise," (4:158). According to Ibn Kathir in his commentary of the Glorious Qur'an states that, 'ALLAH (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) put the image of Isa (alayhis salaam) on a man who was in the house. When the unjust people went into the house, which was still in darkness, they captured this man thinking that he was the Prophet, (Tafseer of Ibn Kathir Volume 2 page 168)

### **CONCLUSION**

The many references in brackets give one a clear indication that Nabi Isa (alayhis salaam –Jesus Christ –may peace be on him) has been mentioned many times in the Glorious Qur'an.

Special chapters entitled Al Imran (the family of Imran) and Mariam (Mary) also appear in the Glorious Qur'an. We would encourage you to read these passages to gain a better understanding of this great Prophet and his family's background.