In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the universe. And peace and blessings be upon His beloved Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, his family, and his pious followers who follow his guidance.

By the grace and mercy of Allah, we have compiled notes for Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda’s class “Purified: A Study of Surah Maryam.” These notes are student notes published by Qabeelat Wasat. They have not been approved by AlMaghrib Institute or Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda. Therefore, we cannot attest to the complete accuracy of this material. Any Islamic ruling pertaining to your personal situation needs to be discussed with your local scholar. These notes are by no means a substitute for a personalized fatwa.

Any benefit you obtain from these notes are from Allah while any shortcomings are from ourselves. We remind ourselves that the only written manuscript that is completely free from errors is the Book of Allah. Therefore, we appreciate your patience with any mistakes that you may find in these notes. We kindly ask that you make du’aa for the people who worked long and hard on these notes in an attempt to serve the Ummah.

Please be aware that these notes have Arabic verses of Qur’an. If you decide to print these notes and then dispose of them, please do so appropriately. JazakamAllahu Khairan.
Introduction

INTRODUCTION FOR EVERY SURAH BEFORE WE STUDY IT
There are a few things that one needs to be familiar with when it comes to the study of the Qur’an. First and foremost, when we study the *tafseer* of a *surah*, it usually begins with an academic introduction to the *surah* itself:

1. Where is the *surah* located in the *mushaf*?
2. When was it revealed?
3. Where was it revealed?
4. What were the circumstances?
5. What is the structure of the *surah*?
6. What are the themes for the *surah*?
7. How many verses does it have?
8. Overview, primary objective of the *surah*.

Secondly, when we study any portion of the Qur’an, it is fundamentally important to understand the backstory, what exactly was happening at the time of revelation. The Qur’an is the Word of God and it’s miraculous—it’s beneficial in many different ways. The Qur’an is beneficial to you if you study the verses and reflect on them without knowing anything of the background. If you know the background, it will give you a different perspective and again prove to be beneficial. If you study a verse by itself, it’ll still benefit you. If you plug the verse into its greater context and study the verses before and after it, it’ll provide a different perspective and once again be very beneficial.

SURAHs CONNECTED TO THE LIFE OF THE PROPHETﷺ
There are certain chapters in the Qur’an that are intimately connected to certain events from the life of Prophet Muhammadﷺ more so than others. For example, *Surah al-Fatiha* was of course revealed in the life of the Prophetﷺ, so there is a connection to what was going on in his life, but it isn’t necessarily very intimately connected to one particular moment. However, *Surah al-Fath* is so connected to the very major event from the life of the Prophetﷺ called the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah that we won’t derive the full benefit from *Surah* until we educate ourselves on what transpired at the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah.

There are a number of different *Surahs* in the Qur’an that are more connected to the life of certain events from the life of the Prophetﷺ, for example:

- A section in *Surah aale-Imran* is connected to the Battle of Uhud
- *Surah al-Anfal* is connected to the Battle of Badr
- *Surah at-Tawbah* is connected to the Battle of the Expedition of Tabuk

The first part of *Surah Maryam*—about Zakariyyah, Yahya, Maryam and Isa عليه السلام—is connected to a very remarkable moment from the life of the Prophetﷺ known as the first migration to al-Habasha (Abyssinia, East Africa).
THE MAKKAN AND MADINAN ERAS

The life of the Prophet ﷺ is divided into two parts; Pre-Prophethood and Prophethood. Pre-Prophethood were the first 40 years of his life and then his Prophethood were the next 23 years. The 23 years of his Prophethood are further divided into two eras; the Makkan era which were the first 13 years and then the Madinan era which were the next 10 years. The Makkan era is then divided into three periods:

The First Period of the Makkan Era - an-Nubuwwa

The first period of the Makkan era are the first three years referred to by the scholars as an-Nubuwwa, the period of Prophethood. For the first three years, the Prophet ﷺ was commanded by Allah ﻪـ ﻲ ﺇ ﺑ ﻞ ﺟ to fully embrace being a prophet of Allah ﻪـ ﻲ ﺇ ﺑ ﻞ ﺟ , to internalize the mission, responsibility and the status of prophethood. He was commanded to build a solid core around him that he could lean upon when things would become more challenging. What signifies these three years is there were about 40 people who embraced Islam, and all of the 40 embraced Islam through personal interactions with the Prophet ﷺ. Many of them were related to him or were close friends/relatives of some of those who had accepted Islam. All of it was done through word of mouth, person to person, privately, quietly with a low profile being kept at the time.

The Second Period of the Makkan Era – ad-Da’wah

The second period of the Makkan era, referred to by the scholars as the period of ad-Da’wah, were the next seven years, from year four through year 10 where the call was made public. This period began with the Prophet ﷺ ascending the Mountain of Safaa and calling people from there to the message publicly.

The Third Period of the Makkan Era – Khaarij Makkah

The third period is the last three years in Makkah—years 11, 12 and 13—where the Prophet ﷺ explored outside of Makkah, Khaarij Makkah. This is when the Prophet ﷺ journeyed to the city of at-Ta’if, resulting in a very difficult experience for the Prophet ﷺ, but it also eventually resulted in the Prophet ﷺ meeting and interacting with and bringing to Islam farmers from a small town North of Makkah known as Yathrib which later on became known as al-Madinatul Muanawwarah.

THE FOURTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

In the fourth year of Prophethood, when Prophet ﷺ started calling people to Islam more publicly, he was met with a lot of opposition. There was a lot of violence and persecution to the point that the situation in Makkah became extremely difficult and unbearable. There were some people such as the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﺭ ﺟ ﺎ ﺑ ﺑ and others who enjoyed the protection of their prominent families and powerful tribes—they weren’t persecuted to quite an extent. However, many of the early Muslims were persecuted ruthlessly and brutally. Eventually it came to a point that some type of relief and reprieve became
necessary, and that is when the Prophet ﷺ looked to an outlet. He looked to a place where some of these early Muslims could go to and find refuge even if the locals there wouldn’t become Muslims themselves. He was looking for a place that would at the very least allow the Muslims to live unperturbed safely for a time. The place that occurred to the Prophet ﷺ as the most suitable place for this outlet was al-Habasha (Abyssinia in East Africa).

**AL-HABASHA**

The world was of great empires and great powers back then. There was the Roman empire, the Persian empire and so on, but Arabia was an anomaly with different autonomous sovereign individual tribes while the rest of the world was largely dominated by the empires. There was a smaller empire in al-Habasha that was very unique. What made this empire unique was that it was a Christian kingdom. It was allied with the Roman empire because of the common connection of Christianity, but they were independent in spite of their alliance with the Romans. They operated very differently than the Romans did.

**The Story of the Abyssinian Kingdom**

The king of Abyssinia was a ruler of his kingdom, but he wasn’t particularly ambitious and he wasn’t interested in expanding his kingdom very rapidly. However, his brother was very ruthless and ambitious, he conspired with some of his supporters and murdered the king. Some sources mention that along with his brother, he killed many other family members as well. The youngest son of the king of who was murdered was a little boy and he was snuck away and saved.

After being saved, he was hidden away in the countryside where he grew up on a farm. He lived undercover, a life of a simple farm boy. He grew up working with his hands alongside hardworking people. They ensured that this boy receive a lot of education. This prince in hiding was fluent in multiple languages, educated in the Christian tradition and grew up to be the equivalent of a Christian scholar.

His uncle was quite a tyrannical, ruthless leader and the people were restless, waiting for a change. At this time, the little boy had grown into a young man. He came back, overthrew his uncle, took over the throne that once belonged to his father and became the ruler of Abyssinia. The name of this young prince who reclaimed the throne of his father is Ashama—referred to as an-Najashi. “An-Najashi” is a title meaning “king” but his name was Ashama.

Ashama was a very different kind of a king than the world usually sees. He ruled his empire in an extremely gracious and ethical way. One of the first manifestations of his graciousness as a ruler was in al-Yemen. It’s not a new thing that world powers have fought and engaged in conflict over controlling Yemen because of its strategic location. Same was the case back then with the Roman and Persian empires fighting within Yemen to gain control. The Romans were originally in control of Yemen until the Persians came and took over after defeating the Romans. The Persian empire was brutal at that time and they oppressed the people of Yemen severely.
An-Najashi told the Roman empire, “I am going to take my army from Abyssinia into Yemen and defeat the Persians, but I am not going to claim it as an Abyssinian territory.” He liberated the country and gave it back to the people of Yemen. The person who ruled Yemen after that time was one of the famous generals who fought against the Persians. He was half Yemeni and half Abyssinian and his name was Abraha. This is where Abraha’s story starts, connected to another surah in the Qur’an (Surah al-Fil).

This is an example of how an-Najashi was a very ethical person and he gained a reputation—people knew they could go to Abyssinia as refugees if they had trouble.

DELEGATION OF THE FIRST MUHAJIRUN OF MUSLIMS

Number of People

The Prophet ﷺ gathered 11 Sahaba—eight men and three women. Among them were:

- Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها with her husband Abu Salamah رضي الله عنه (they were one of the first forty people to accept Islam)
- Ruqayyah (the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ) with her husband Uthman bin Affan

The Prophet ﷺ said this is the first time a family made Hijrah since the family of Lut, so we see here that same tradition being revived.

After sending the 11 Muhajirun, the Prophet ﷺ was very anxious about their safety. The day after they left, there was a caravan coming back from the same route. The Prophet ﷺ went to one of the women who was in that caravan, described his daughter and Uthman to her and asked if she saw them. She said yes and described that Uthman was walking while holding the rope of the camel that Ruqayyah was riding. She also mentioned that they were smiling. The Prophet ﷺ thanked Allah. This is a very touching, tender moment about the Prophet ﷺ being worried about his daughter and her wellbeing.

The Quraysh Go After the Muslims

When the leaders of Quraysh heard the Muslims were leaving, they rushed after them, but their ship had already left when they reached the port. A convoy was designated to go after the Muslims and bring them back. The Quraysh had a trick up their sleeve: a man by the name of ‘Amr b. al-‘As رضي الله عنه who led the convey. ‘Amr would go on to become Muslim 12 years after this incident, but at this point he was part of the opposition against the Prophet ﷺ. He played the role of a diplomat who would visit different leaders and build relations with them. ‘Amr had developed a friendship with an-Najashi and it is said that he would bring camel skin shawls as gifts for an-Najashi whenever he visited him. An-Najashi would always ask if ‘Amr had brought any gifts for him and he would always say yes.
‘Amr was recruited by the Makkans to bring the Muslims back so they can be tortured. They feared that if the Muslims got away, it would encourage more people to become Muslim.

Ja’far ibn abi Talib رضي الله عنه was one of the initial 11 who migrated to Abyssinia. He was the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ and older brother of ‘Ali ﷺ. Ja’far was an early convert like ‘Ali and his relationship with the Prophet ﷺ was very special, like that of a younger brother to the Prophet ﷺ. Ja’far not only looked like the Prophet ﷺ, but his character resembled his as well.

The Prophet ﷺ appointed Ja’far ibn abi Talib رضي الله عنه as the leader of the group who went to Abyssinia and gave him specific instructions:
1. Maintain a low profile in Abyssinia
   a. This was not like the Madinan migration where the goal was to expand. The goal here was survival of early Muslims.
2. To find a quiet place and live there quietly without making any trouble.

The Abyssinian people had a custom of welcoming their guests, and they did so with the Muslims. They helped the Muslims settle to the point where the Muslims started doing the normal things that Abyssinians did (fishing and farming). They quietly lived their lives while worshipping Allah and minding their own business.

**Makkans Arrive Bearing Gifts for King and Ministers**
- ‘Amr and the other Makkans went to the ministers and said they would like face time with the king and wanted the ministers to side with them
- They said to the king, “These are criminals, who ran away from us, convicted felons. We dealt with them according to how they needed to be dealt with, but they ran away, and now are acting living amongst you; they escaped justice from us.”
- King said he can’t just hand them over and needed to investigate the situation. So, he called the people asked them what was going on and shared the allegations.
  - Hearing both sides of the story is prophetic wisdom:

  حَدَّثَنَا عُمَروُ بْنُ عُوَيْنَ، قَالَ أَخَذْنَا شَرِيكَةً، عَنِ السَّمَّاَكَ، عَنِ حَنْصِ، عَنِ السَّلَمَةَ، قَالَ بَعْثَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ﷺ إِلَى النَّيْمَ قَالَ، قَالَ "وَلَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ لَيْسَ L*appName* **Najashi’s Court**

Narratd Ali ibn Abu Talib رضي الله عنه: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent me to the Yemen as judge, and I asked: ‘Messenger of Allah ﷺ, are you sending me when I am young and have no knowledge of the duties of a judge?’ He replied: ‘Allah will guide your heart and keep your tongue true. When two litigants sit in front of you, do not decide till you hear what the other has to say as you heard what the first had to say; for it is best that you should have a clear idea of the best decision.’” [Sunan Abi Dawud]

**Ja’far Makes a Statement in an-Najashi’s Court**
When an-Najashi summoned the Muslims to his court, Ja'far رضي الله عنه addresses the king and makes the following statement:

"O King! we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate the dead bodies, and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighborhood were neglected; we knew no law but that of the strong, when Allah raised among us a man, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of Allah, and taught us not to associate anything with Him. He forbade us the worship of idols; and he enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of the neighbors and kith and kin; he forbade us to speak evil of women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to flee from the vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, and to observe fast. 

We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship Allah, and not to associate anything with Him, and we have allowed what He has allowed, and prohibited what He has prohibited.

For this reason, our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forsake the worship of Allah and return to the worship of idols and other abominations. They have tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them; we have come to your country, and hope you will protect us from oppression."

[Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum]

• After hearing the case, the an-Najashi said, “I can’t hand these people over to you. These are good people and they haven’t done anything to harm us. I will not hand over free, innocent people” and refused their request.
• Makkans regrouped and returned the next day and said, “These people have left the religion of their forefathers, and these people in their belief don’t respect others belief, and you’re a Christian. These people probably speak badly about what you believe in as well.”
• King was a devout Christian and was now offended and called the Muslims up and asked them, “What do you say about ‘Isa عليه السلام?”
  - Ja’far رضي الله عنه was designated to speak on behalf of the people. They conferred and decided to speak the truth.
- He went before the king and said what we are taught about the `Isa عليه السلام in the Qur’an. That the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم delivered it and taught it to us.
- He began reciting the ayaat of Surah Maryam to the king and the king began to cry profusely. King literally told him to stop and said, “These are the most beautiful words I have heard in my entire life and everything in there about ‘Isa is absolutely true.”
- King reached down and picked up a piece of straw, branch, grass, held it up and said, “I swear by Allah, that ‘Isa is not even this much more than what you have stated him to be. He was a prophet of Allah, he was given a miraculous birth through his mother Maryam.”
- King said to the Makkans: “Take your gifts back and I want you to leave and you’re not welcome here. You people are troublemakers” and he told the Muslims, “Live here freely and if anyone bothers you, let me know, you are not only living under my land, but under my personal protection.”
- This event occurred around the end of the 4th year of prophethood
  - Muslims migrated to Ḥabasha in the beginning of the 5th year
- Scholars are confident that Surah Maryam was obviously revealed before this event, around at the end of the 4th year of prophethood—there is consensus on scholars of tafseer.

The priests weren’t pleased to see that an-Najashi reacted the way he did to Ja’far ﷺ—they feared that their king had converted to Islam—so they ushered Ja’far and the Muslims out of the court room. An-Najashi had a personal servant (who also became Muslim) who tells us the story: After hearing Ja’far, an-Najashi stood up and said, “I’m very tired and can’t continue right now. We will reconvene later.” The king got up, went to his private chamber and his servant followed him in there. Meanwhile, the priests were talking amongst each other, “What are we going to do if he (the king) has converted from Christianity?” They were talking of drastic measures, of imprisoning or killing him and making someone else king.

One of the ministers came to the king and told him that he isn’t a particularly religious person himself and doesn’t care what the king believes. He told an-Najashi that he is a good king and that he (the minister) served under an-Najashi’s uncle and knows how terrible that was. He warns the king that if the priests get their way, there would be a lot of bloodshed and the Muslims would be killed. He advised an-Najashi to believe whatever he wants to believe, but to not make a public declaration. Some narrations mention that the king secretly asked his servant to sneak Ja’far ﷺ in and they had a conversation in which an-Najashi learned that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم advised Muslims in a tough situation to hide their Islam. Ultimately, an-Najashi came to the resolution that he would keep his faith private for the sake of his kingdom.

**An-Najashi Takes the Shahada**

An-Najashi took a piece of paper and wrote on it, “Ashama testifies that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم is His Messenger and he testifies that
‘Isa is a Messenger of God and a miracle, and Allah miraculously placed him within Maryam. He then told his servant to make a pocket on the inside of his shirt by his chest. He placed the piece of paper with his testimony of faith in that pocket. He waited a little while longer before going back out into the court. All of the priests were gathered and tensions were high in the room. An-Najashi asked them, “What is the issue?” They said, “With all due respect, you abandoned our religion. You agreed with these people that 'Isa is nothing but a slave of God. We need clarity, we need to know where you stand.” He asked them, “What do you say about Jesus?” They said, “We believe that he is the son of God, that he is divine.” At this point, an-Najashi placed his hand on his chest and said, “This is what I believe.”

In the Abyssinian culture, when you ask someone a question and they give an answer and you agree with them, a way to agree with them in a powerful way is to place your hand on your heart and say, “This is what I believe.” It is an expression to show 100% agreement. An-Najashi placed his hand on the piece of paper that had his belief in Tawheed on it! He employed a concept called tawriya, something that could have two meanings. The Prophet ﷺ did this while traveling on an expedition when a spy stopped and asked him where he was coming from. The Prophet ﷺ couldn’t say Madinah, so he said, “We are from water.” The spy took that as the Prophet ﷺ being from the ocean, while the Prophet ﷺ was referring to the verse from the Qur’an:

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\text{And made from water every living thing} \] Surah al-Anbiya, 21:30

Another example of this would be when Ibrahim ﷺ told his people, “I don’t feel good” when they were going out to a festival. They thought he wasn’t feeling well physically, but unbeknownst to them, he meant he was frustrated with their shirk.

It’s this way that an-Najashi calmed the priests down while preserving his own faith. The king actually struck up a great relationship and friendship with Ja’far رضي الله عنه. An-Najashi’s servant had also become Muslim and Ja’far would visit them at night, teaching them Qur’an and how to pray.

**An-Najashi’s Funeral**

The Muslims who were in Abyssinia had returned to the Prophet ﷺ in the seventh year of Hijrah. Shortly after that, an-Najashi—now elderly—was on his deathbed. He knew that as far as his people were concerned, he was a Christian king of a Christian kingdom, and he would get a state funeral. So he called his servant and made a request: the piece of paper with his testimony of faith be tuck into his shroud when preparing his body for burial. Islamically, it isn’t allowed for anything to be tucked into the shroud like that, but this was an exceptional scenario where he didn’t know and he needed to feel the comfort of dying with Iman. And when he did pass away, his servant did the piece of paper in his shroud. The day that an-Najashi passed away in Ethiopia, the Prophet ﷺ prayed Janazah for him in
Madinah. This is the only occasion in the whole life of the Prophet ☪ that he prayed the funeral prayer for the deceased who wasn’t present.

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah ☪ said, “Today a pious man from Ethiopia (i.e. an-Najashi) has expired, come on to offer the funeral prayer.” (Jabir said): “We lined up in rows and after that the Prophet ☪ led the prayer and we were in rows.” Jabir added, “I was in the second row.” [Bukhari]

Towards the end of the Prophet’s ☪ life, a small group from Habasha came to the Prophet ☪ in Madinah to accept Islam. When they arrived, came into the Masjid and introduced themselves, the Prophet ☪ stood up, put his shawl on the ground and asked them to have a seat. He then served them dates and water personally, because they took care of Muslims when the Muslims first migrated to Habasha.

This whole story is always mentioned at the beginning of studying Surah Maryam because the Hijrah to Habasha occurred right around the time this Surah was revealed and it played an important role in an-Najashi accepting Islam.

**Tafseer of Surah Maryam**

We begin the Surah with a few of its opening ayaat. We will read them with the translation, and then explore the deeper meanings, lessons, and reflections within them. However, it is important to note the following before one approaches the recitation of the Qur’an.

It is a well-established Sunnah to recite the istiia’dha, seeking refuge in Allah from Shaytan, before reciting the Qur’an. Additionally, Imam Al-Suyooti stated the absolute establishment of the fact that whenever the Prophet ☪ would start a surah, he would begin by saying “We start with the name of Allah who is the abundantly merciful, constantly gracious.”

**AYAH 1**

“Kaaf, Haa, Yaa, ‘Ayn, Saad”
Surah Maryam 19:1
Surah Maryam is one of the twenty-eight surahs that begin with the unique feature of the disjointed letters, known as, *al huroof al muqatta’aat*. Normally one would connect consecutive letters such as “ba”, “seen”, and “meem” to form “bismi”. However, these twenty-eight surahs begin with unique letters which are written together, yet not connected in their recitation to form words. Rather, their names are recited separately, with elongation, in the manner taught to us by the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, surah Maryam begins with, “kaaf, haa, yaa, ‘ayn, saad”.

**WHAT DO THESE LETTERS MEAN?**

There is a discussion among scholars about the meaning behind these letters. Some have proposed that they form a code or acronym, but these are largely speculative. The vast majority of commentators and scholars of Qur’an are of the opinion that the meaning of these disjointed letters is actually not known to us. It is important to refrain from saying that they don’t carry any meaning – rather the wisdom behind their existence is with Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى.

Given that we do not know what the disjointed letters mean, why have they been given to us? The first explanation given by scholars is a linguistic one. There are examples of such letters in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. In ancient Arabic, if one wanted to get the attention of a group of people, one would say, “haaaaaaa”, which is the exaggerated, elongated version of the letter. The Qur’an contains different manifestations of these disjointed letters, from a single letter, to combinations of two, three, four, and five. Accordingly, these examples in the Qur’an served to get the attention of the listeners at the time. It is noteworthy that fourteen hundred years later, the same effect holds true, and even for non-native Arabic speakers. These very pronounced and eminent letters all occur right at the beginning of the surah.

The second explanation is that in these surahs, the Qur’an is almost always mentioned immediately after. There are a few exceptions, but even then, the Mercy of Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى is mentioned. This gets our attention! Some scholars of *tafseer*, like Imam ar-Razi, bring up a profound and beautiful point by saying that these letters are a reminder to us of what we do not know.

**LEARNING TO SAY “I DON’T KNOW”**

This means that in 28 places in the Qur’an, when we start reading, we are starting by saying, “I don’t know.” Then, the Qur’an is mentioned immediately after as a reminder of the fact that we do not have any knowledge except for what Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى has taught us. What did Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى teach us? That the Qur’an is the basis and foundation of all knowledge! This is a very powerful and humbling reminder that forces us to approach the Qur’an with an empty slate and then let it teach us. People who approach the Qur’an to learn are guided by it, and their faith is increased. People who come to the Qur’an thinking that they know everything are only increased in misguidance.
THEME OF SURAH MARYAM
What about for Surah Maryam specifically? What is the theme of Surah Maryam? What is the most important point to take away from the surah? Sheikh Abdul Nasir thought about this a lot because of how many times he got asked these questions. Sheikh said that the one thing he would tell us about why we should read Surah Maryam and the translation and learn the tafseer of it is that: Surah Maryam reminds you and teaches you and makes you believe that miracles do happen. We are reminded by this surah that anything is possible, and that Allah can do anything if we believe in Him and put our faith in Him.

What did we just talk about? 11 people were tortured by their own people, fled from their homes in the middle of the night, ran away, arrived somewhere as refugees, and were living undercover secretly – think about their fate! Could anyone have ever predicted that at the end of the story, there would be a king who would become Muslim? There is no logical way to get from here to there! This is how Allah works in such a miraculous way.

Connecting the beginning of this surah with these disjointed letters is profound and insightful because what is it going to tell us? Isa ’s birth without a father: is that logical? Do you or I have an explanation? No! Zakariyyah and his wife having a child when they are of older age – there is no explanation for that! The stories we are about to learn force us to say, “I don’t know” and hand over everything to Allah and submit to Him.

AYAH 2

"This is an account of your Lord’s grace towards His servant, Zakariyyah." Surah Maryam 19:2

What does Allah say next? The word dhikr means to recall or recount. There is something very fascinating in this ayah about the pronouns used. Allah refers to Zakariyyah as HIS slave, but then says that this is the mention of YOUR Lord. See the difference? The Name of Allah is not used directly here! When Allah uses the word “Your” He is addressing the Prophet . The beginning of this story is immediately connected to the Prophet .

Allah is teaching us a principle of reading and reflecting on stories of the Qur’an. They are not stories the way we use them in English. When we use the word “story” in English, that primarily has a connotation of entertainment. Allah, right off the bat, is teaching us about the stories of the Qur’an by saying that they are not for entertainment, but for us to reflect upon and connect to our own situation.
The Prophet ﷺ is in his fourth year of prophethood, and he is preaching publicly now. The reaction from the people is still very hostile, and it is such a bad situation that the people who have become Muslim are having to hide. This is why Allah ﷺ tells the Prophet ﷺ these stories – to show how He showered mercy on Zakariyyah عليه السلام.

Allah ﷺ has certain rules because we need them. We need structure as human beings because we are nervous and finicky creatures who can be hasty and ignorant when left to our own vices. Yes, Allah ﷺ can do anything, and miracles do happen, but what is the means of reaching a miracle?

Ayahs 3-7 will show certain rules that Muslims should follow when making du’aa so that we can have miracles happen in our lives.

**AYAH 3**

> إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبُّهُ نِِّدَاءً حَفِيَّاً
> 
> “When he called to his Lord a private supplication.” **Surah Maryam, 19:03**

In *ayah* 3, Allah ﷺ says, “Remember when he called to his Lord privately.” Allahu akbar, in this *ayah* used the word *nidaa* instead of *du’a*. *Nidaa* means to call out or cry out to someone. It also involves a level of desperation from the caller. Allah ﷺ further describes that Prophet Zakariyyah’s supplication was done privately. This shows that Prophet Zakariyyah cried out to Allah ﷺ privately, in a humble and vulnerable manner.

The Prophet ﷺ said in a narration, “The best communication with God is the one that is done privately.”

*Ayah* 3 serves as a reminder as to how one should supplicate to Allah ﷺ. *Sheikh* Abdul Nasir Jangda explains that when talking to a friend it’s more intimate or personal when both are alone opposed to, when there is a group of people around. Therefore, one should strengthen their relationship with Allah ﷺ by making *du’a* privately and intimately.

An example of this is also shown in the life of the Prophet ﷺ. The night before Badr, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه walked into the Prophet’s tent, in which he saw him alone, standing on his knees, and hands in the air. He was begging to Allah ﷺ all by himself saying, “O Allah if you let these people die tomorrow there will be no one left to worship you.” This was a private moment that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه had walked in on and as the Prophet was crying out to Allah, the shawl he had on had fallen and Abu Bakr picked it up and put it back on his shoulder. He then said, “Stop, stop, Allah has accepted your *du’aa*. “
AYAH 4

"He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy" Surah Maryam 19:04

In ayah 4, Prophet Zakariyyah عليه السلام said, "rabbī (My Lord).” Notice Zakariyyah doesn’t say "ya rabbī". Ya rabbī is usually used to call on someone to grab their attention. This shows that Zakariyyah عليه السلام knew he didn’t have to get Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى attention and that Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى was already listening.

Prophet Zakariyyah says, “My bones have become weak.” This is an Arabic expression for becoming very physically weak. He’s telling Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى how weak, frail, and old he’s become. He then continues to say, “My head has caught on fire with old age.” This is another Arabic expression that means all of his hair has gone grey.

When reading the beginning part of the ayah alone, it may seem that Prophet Zakariyyah is complaining. He’s mentioned how weak, old, and grey he’s become. However, this is Prophet Zakariyyah عليه السلام expressing to Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى his own weakness and neediness before Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى. For example, nothing compares to Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى, but in human relationships when one person is the caregiver and the other person is receiving it, the caregiver at times likes to hear being needed. For instance, when a child says to the parent that they don’t need you, that statement is usually hurtful especially when they are older. Nonetheless, Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى is As Samad, completely independent, and humans are fuqara’, completely in need. Therefore, it is endearing and embodies servitude when humans present their weakness before Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى.

After Prophet Zakariyyah عليه السلام tells Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى his desperation, he doesn’t continue to complain. He balances it by mentioning the blessings of Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى. He says, "O Allah, I have never ever turned to you with my need and You turned me away.” This means he’s never regretted turning to Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى. Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَتَعَالَى has always taken care of him.

AYAH 5

وَإِذْ جَفَّتْ أَلْوَانَ الْمَوْلَىِّ مِن وَرَاءِهِ وَسَكَتَتْ أَمْرَايْ عَافِرًا فَهُبْ لَهُ مِن لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيّاً
“And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir.” Surah Maryam 19:05

In *ayah* 5, Prophet Zakariyyah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ begins to tell Allah صل الله عليه وسلم what is troubling and concerning him. He says how he’s not very confident about the people that he will be leaving behind, or that will survive him. He doesn’t think they will be able to carry on the work and doesn’t know if they’d be able to do justice to this mission.

He then says, “My wife was never able to bear children.” He says this right after to explain how he was never able to mold someone from day one to be a true successor.

Prophet Zakariyyah then makes a request. He asks Allah صل الله عليه وسلم to gift him especially as favor from Allah صل الله عليه وسلم a child, successor. Someone that will truly succeed him.

This *ayah* began with Prophet Zakariyyah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ talking about how he isn’t really confident with the people he’s leaving behind and how his wife can’t bear children. He then mentions what he is really asking for and that is a child. One may argue that it was not necessary for him to explain himself. However, a part of the etiquette of *du’a* is to make *du’a* for a long time. For example, in the life of the Prophet صل الله عليه وسلم, he would spend hours in the middle of the night praying to Allah. This shows that when one loves someone, they would want to continue to make the conversation long like a friend.

Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda challenges everyone to turn on a timer and to make *du’a* till their hearts content. Once the individual is done, look at the time and see how long it took. He said at first the number maybe disappointing, but the more effort one puts the easier and longer the conversation with Allah will last.

**AYAH 6**

"Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You].” Surah Maryam 19:06

In *ayah* 6, Prophet Zakariyyah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ clarifies as to why he wants a child. He doesn’t want a child for his own personal needs. He wants a child that may inherit from him and from the family of Ya’qub (the lineage of prophets). When he says inheritance, he doesn’t mean wealth or money. He means knowledge and prophet hood.

He also asks Allah صل الله عليه وسلم to make his child someone that is pleased with what Allah صل الله عليه وسلم has given him, someone who will strive to please Allah صل الله عليه وسلم and someone that will inspire others to please Allah صل الله عليه وسلم as well.
AYAH 7

"[He was told], "O Zechariah, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be John. We have not assigned to any before [this] name." Surah Maryam 19:07

In ayah 7, Allah answers Prophet Zakariyyah's request. He says, "O Zakariyyah, we bring you the good news of having a son. His name is Yahya." Allah named him! This is Allah confirming it and seals the deal by giving him a name. It may seem unbelievable due to the fact they are old and were never able to have a child. Therefore, by Allah naming him it's making it official, no doubt about it that they will have child and he's already name.

Then Allah says, "We never made anyone before him samiyyaa." Samiyyaa means no one was named similarly to him before. It can also mean that no one before him that was quite like him. He was very unique and distinct than others.

Ayahs 3-7 show the significant and the power of du'a. It highlights how necessary it is and how Allah can make the impossible possible. These ayaat also teach the etiquette, adaab, and usool of du'a. Prophet Zakariyyah is a good example as to how one should reach out to Allah and to firmly believe in Him because Allah can make miracles happen.

Introduction to Surah Maryam

STUDY OF TAFSEEER

When studying Surah Maryam, we first begin with a formal introduction. Different areas of Islamic study exist, one of them being tafseer. This class is called Tafseer Surah Maryam. The word tafseer comes from the Arabic word fasara which means to expose, unpack, unfold, and open. In essence, we are unpacking the words of Allah in order to better understand the Qur'an. Another area of Islamic studies exists called Usool at-tafseer, also known as principles of tafseer, which addresses the methods of doing tafseer of the Qur'an. At some point in time, we have all come across a very strange explanation of the Qur'an on the internet. Even a Muslim who is not very knowledgeable can recognize that such an explanation makes little to no sense. When we listen to a qualified individual discuss the verse or read the tafseer of Ibn Kathir, we find a much more cohesive and well-structured explanation.

We must realize that both correct and incorrect tafseer exist. One way we can distinguish between the two is by analyzing whether the proper usool were followed, including the
principles, methodology, and processes. This involves another area of Islamic studies called 'Uloom al-Qur'an, literally translated as the science of the Qur’an. Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda does not personally support such a translation as it can be slightly misleading. Such a discipline does not deal with scientific miracles of the Qur’an but rather how the Qur’an was revealed and how it was preserved. It also encompasses the following pertaining to the Qur’an: documentation, compilation, transmission, and sequence.

We will introduce Surah Maryam from the perspective of 'Uloom al-Qur'an, and it will cover placement of the surah in the Qur’an, when and how it was revealed, documentation, and other academic-based analysis.

WHEN WAS IT REVEALED?
As previously explained, scholars are of the opinion that Surah Maryam was revealed during the 4th year of Prophethood. When we hear the year number, we usually think in terms of Hijra. Keep in mind that we are talking about the 4th year after Iqra was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ in Makkah.

WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?
The surah was revealed in Makkah while the Muslims were a very small minority of around 100. In the first 2.5 to 3 years, there were only about 40 Muslims as the message had not yet gone public. However, in less than a year of the message going public, the number of Muslims had tripled; in each subsequent year, the number would double and triple.

The Muslims started to face a lot of opposition, in addition to persecution, torture, violence, and oppression. Publicly expressing one’s Islam posed as a great difficulty at the time. The Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr رضيـ عليهـ، and many others freely went about, but they faced harassment, insult, and verbal abuse. They were not physically assaulted, but they did face verbal assault. The family of the Prophet did not necessarily protect him from such abuse; some of his extended family members carried out the verbal abuse themselves!

A narration explains that while the Prophet ﷺ walked around, Abu Lahab would walk behind him and throw pebbles at the back of his head. Abu Lahab would tell people not to listen to his crazy nephew. We see the irony: an old man following someone around, throwing rocks at him, and calling him crazy.

The Muslims would congregate, but they would do so secretly, quietly, and usually at night. They would meet in the home of Al Arqam ibn Abi Arqam رضيـ عليهـ، also known as Daarul Arqam.

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE SURAH?
This question ties in with the following question: what are some of the themes, subject matters, and topics mentioned in the surah? Many themes and topics may present themselves in a single surah, however, scholars explain how a central idea of the surah often manifests itself. This central idea is called hadaf as-surah.
What is the hadaf of Surah Maryam? Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda mentions the concept of miracles prevalent in the surah. Classical scholars typically explain the hadaf as rahma (mercy), specifically rahmatullah (the Mercy of Allah (سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى)). ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ud explains that the name of this surah is Surah Maryam. Sometimes, surahs can have multiple names. Classical scholars also use the name Surah Rahma. The attribute of Allah’s Mercy is mentioned the greatest number of times in this surah, even more so than Surah Ar-Rahman. So, the hadaf manifests itself as mercy.

Some scholars explain that one of the main topics and themes is Tawheed, the Oneness of God. Some will actually argue that Tawheed remains the primary objective in the surah. The various manifestations of mercy through the stories of Zakariyyah, Yahya, ‘Isa, and Maryam exist because of Tawheed. How were such miraculous scenarios possible? Through Allah (سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى).

Some people have unfortunately taken the miraculous story of ‘Isa in Surah Maryam and made it the basis of associating partners with Allah (سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى). They distorted the proper beliefs. Tawheed remains the most central objective to remind us that the miraculous birth of ‘Isa does not detract from the Oneness of Allah.

**ASBAAB AN-NUZOOL**

An area of study exists within Usool at-tafseer called Asbaab an-Nuzool, often translated as causes of revelation. Asbaab is the plural of sabab (cause). Shaykh Abdul Nasir Jangda is not very fond of this translation and instead prefers circumstances of revelation. That is, what was going on at the time? For example, a narration explains that when the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions came back from Uhud, certain verses were revealed. Or someone would come to the Prophet and ask such and such, so certain verses came down. Taking into consideration the circumstances of revelation remains an important aspect of studying tafseer.

Interestingly enough, such narrations don’t exist for every single verse in the Qur’an. So, there may not be a particular event or specific interaction that serves as the sabab of revelation. When studying Surah Maryam, we will not hear any sabab until the end. We are not neglecting or ignoring this aspect; there are simply no authentic narrations for Asbaab an-Nuzool until the very end. The first ¾ of this surah is basically stories that Allah (سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى) revealed for us to learn and reflect upon. It was not from a particular circumstance or interaction.

When studying the objective of revelation, it helps to take into account the context of the surah. Such an understanding gives us the proper framework to better understand and appreciate its meaning. However, if we become fixated on the events and circumstances happening at that time, the surah can become a story about some people a long time ago in a faraway place; it becomes a historical fact that holds no relevance or connection to us here today. We need to balance historical context with present-day application. After all, the Qur’an was revealed for all of humanity for all of time.
We also need to ensure that we do not take the verses of Qur’an out of context or else we will misapply its teachings. For example, the following verse needs proper contextual understanding or else the application will be very problematic:

“And kill them wherever you find them…” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:191

In addition to context, we need to understand the verse applied in our own life as it still holds great relevance; it is a kind of balancing act within the study of tafseer. Some of the most notable of *mufassiroon* include Ibn Kathir, Imam Qurtubi, Razi, Ibn ‘Ashoor, and Sh. Sha’rawi. Part of what makes their work so remarkable is their ability to strike this balance. They possess scholarly knowledge of context and narrations, but they also possess knowledge of Qur’anic application in our lives. So, this ultimately helps us find a connection as well.

**PLACEMENT WITHIN THE MUSHAF**

When it comes to Qur’an, two sequences exist: *Tarteeb an-Nuzuli* (sequence of revelation) and *Tarteeb al-Mushafi/Jami’i* (sequence of compilation). Sequence of revelation refers to the order in which the Qur’an was revealed. Sequence of compilation refers to the sequence in which the *surahs* are organized in the Qur’an.

Part of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an is how verses revealed in one sequence are compiled in a different sequence. For example, *Surah Al-Baqarah* was revealed later on in Madinah, however, it is the second *surah* in the Qur’an. *Surah Al-‘Alaq* and *Surah Ad-Dhuha* were revealed very early in Makkah, yet they are found in the 30th *Juz*. How can something with two different sequences all fit together perfectly in the Qur’an? It is a miracle from Allah ُنصره وَعَزَّهُمَا Both sequences are perfect, miraculous, and divinely ordained. A difference of opinion exists whether the compilation was divinely ordained, but the majority of scholars say it was.

*Surah Maryam* was revealed in the 4th year of Prophethood, and it is *surah* number 19. *Surah Kahf* comes before it while *Surah Taha* comes after it. *Surah Kahf* discusses some very powerful stories of remarkable people, and it emphasizes how there are some things that we just don’t understand. *Surah Maryam* continues to tell stories, not just about remarkable people, but also miraculous situations; the focus is on faith and belief in Allah ُنصره وَعَزَّهُمَا His Oneness, power, might, and majesty. *Surah Taha* continues to talk about amazing people such as Musa and Harun and then turns the attention to the followers: Fir’aun, the magicians, and Bani Isra’il. So, *Surah Taha* stresses the responsibilities of people when they come across the message.

**EARLY MAKKAN REVELATION**
Surah Maryam contains 98 verses, and it is an early Makkah surah. As such, there is little to no fiqh discussed, not because we are avoiding it, but simply because early Makkah surahs did not address fiqh. Rather, the verses focused on building faith. There exists one technical discussion that the surah alludes to which pertains to the father of Ibrahim عليه السلام. We will in sha Allah discuss this later on.

**THEMES OF MAKKAN SURAHS**

Makkah revelation has some very explicit themes:

1. **Belief in Allah**

2. **Belief in the Prophets**

3. **Belief in the Hereafter**

So, we will see these themes manifest themselves in Surah Maryam.

**STYLE OF MAKKAN SURAHS**

Makkah revelation also has a particular style. Not to generalize, but the verses are often very quick and sharp in their tone. They also tend to be very rhythmic and short. For example:

"By the star when it descends. Your companion [Muhammad] has not strayed, nor has he erred. Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed. Taught to him by one intense in strength." *Surah An-Najm, 53:1-5*

"By the mount. And [by] a Book inscribed. In parchment spread open. And [by] the frequented House. And [by] the heaven raised high. And [by] the sea filled [with fire].”  
*Surah At-Tur, 52:1-6*
“And they ask you about the mountains, so say, ‘My Lord will blow them away with a blast.’ And He will leave the earth a level plain; You will not see therein a depression or an elevation.” *Surah Taha, 20:105-107*

Such a style of Makkani revelation was conducive to the introduction of Islam to the Arab people, many of whom were quite skeptical. A big part of their identity was tied to language; so, such a powerful tone of Makkani verses helped in trying to win them over and pull them towards faith. Also, skeptical individuals will not listen for long, so the short verses helped to deliver the message in a quicker style. It’s almost like you had 30 seconds to make your point, not 30 minutes. When people are interested, then they will sit for hours and listen. Thus, longer discussions came in Madinan revelation.

The only exception to the quick and short verses of *Surah Maryam* is stories: when there is a story being told, the verses may get longer. The first ¾ of this surah deals with stories and may have some longer verses. The end of the surah talks about themes and returns to a more rapid-fire style.

**MORE DISCUSSION FOR THE BEGINNING**
The classical *tafsir* of *Surah Maryam* by Ibn Kathir is approximately 90 pages. 60 of those pages will cover the first 40 verses or so while the next 25-30 pages will cover the remaining 58 verses. Ibn ‘Ashoor also spends much more time discussing the earlier verses than the latter verses in his *tafsir*. And it’s not because they were in a rush!

The end of any surah is covered faster than the beginning because the beginning develops the foundation and premise of discussion. Also, you explain certain concepts the first time they arise, but you don’t explain them every time after that. For example, the first time *salah* or *zakah* is mentioned, you explain them. However, you don’t explain them again and again in the future verses. That would be redundant! So, the second half of the surah always takes less time than the first half. The only exception to this rule is *Surah Al-Baqarah* because it contains extremely complicated, technical issues in the second half such as *riba*, business, contracts, etc.

In *Surah Maryam*, the second half takes even less time than the average surah. The first half outlines detailed stories and historical accounts; this takes time to discuss because we are
not familiar with them. The second half reiterates the following three themes: Oneness of Allah، Prophets of Allah، and belief in the Hereafter.

**VIRTUES OF SURAH MARYAM**

The ultimate virtue of the Qur'an is the benefit it provides us in our lives. At times، certain explicit narrations exist about the reward or benefit of a surah. There is no authentic narration from the Prophet ﷺ which describes the virtues of Surah Maryam. There exists a narration from ‘Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضي الله عنه in which he refers to these surahs (i.e. Maryam، Taha، Anbiya) as old treasures that are his resources. The verbiage of “old treasures” alludes to the ancient stories that are mentioned therein. The concept of “resources” refers to the strength، conviction، hope، and inspiration that he finds during difficult circumstances or situations.

**Tafseer of Surah Maryam (cont.)**

**AYAH 8**

"He said، ‘My Lord، how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren، and I have reached extreme old age?’" **Surah Maryam 19:8**

After Zakariyyah عليه السلام receives news that he will have a child، he is overwhelmed and astonished. He asks، how? Zakariyyah عليه السلام asks this question because he was almost blown away by this very powerful moment. It is not because of doubt، disbelief، or skepticism. The word anna is translated as how، but that does not fully communicate the meaning. It is not used to express doubt or skepticism؛ instead، it is used to express lack of knowledge and understanding with a desire to understand better. As in، I don’t understand how this works، so how is this possible?

This is similar to the conversation between Ibrahim and Allah سبحانه و تعالى:

وإذ قال إبراهيم ﷺ: رَبِّ أَرْنِي صَيْفَتَنَّى تَحْيَى الْجُنُونَ قَالَ أَوَلَمْ نَوْمَنَّ قَالَ ﷺ: قَالَ بَلِيْ وَلَكُنَّ ليَطْمَمُنَا قَلِبِيْ
Ibrahim did not harbor doubts. Rather, he simply wanted to understand and internalize the concept better. Imagine a surgeon about to operate on you. He explains the procedure, but you don’t understand. However, you still trust him to carry out the operation properly.

Zakariyyah states that his wife was never able to bear children and that he is very old, to the point of falling apart. He is at the last point. They were not able to have children when they were young, and now he is being told they will have a child in old age.

This ayah demonstrates the admittance of humility. Zakariyyah is embedding a concern that he has. Naturally, people are going to be very skeptical of this miracle. If Zakariyyah cannot wrap his head around it, even though he believes, how will the people respond?

**AYAH 9**

> “He said, “This is what your Lord has said: “It is easy for Me: I created you, though you were nothing before.”” Surah Maryam 19:9

Allah responds to the concerns of Zakariyyah. In this ayah, the word *kadhaalika* can mean “it is what it is” – as if Allah is telling Zakariyyah not to worry about how this works. All he needs to know is that Allah is Merciful!

The scholars of Arabic language and *tafseer* explain that when we use the word “easy” it implies that there is something that can be difficult. When this type of language is used by Allah, it is for our sake and not His. Of course, we know that nothing can be difficult for Allah. Allah speaks to us at our level.

Once again, this demonstrates the mercy of Allah that He wants good for us, and that He wants us to understand for our benefit.

Allah is reminding Zakariyyah that He has done this numerous times in creation! There is no reason for anyone to be skeptical of this. Allah made Zakariyyah out of nothing, and He can make Yahya out of nothing as well.

**AYAH 10**

> “And [mention] when Ibrahim said, ‘My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you not believed?’ He said, ‘Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied.’” Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:260
“He Said, ‘Give me a sign, Lord.’ He said: ‘Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to anyone for three full [days and] nights.’” Surah Maryam 19:10

Use of the word ‘Ayah’
Allah سبحانه و تعالى says: Qala Rabbi, “My Lord”, ij’al li ayatan, “make for me a sign” – the word ayah is a very important and foundational word. In literal translation it means a ‘sign’, but ‘alam and ‘alaamah are also words for ‘sign’. The difference between the words is quality. ‘alam and ‘alaamah are like regular street signs and ayah is like a giant billboard with flashing neon lights. Ayah is a sign you can’t help but notice and can’t ignore.

Verses of the Qur’an are also ‘Ayah’
We know that one of the usages of the word ayah is for the verses of the Qur’an.
Types of verses:
- a letter
  - Qaaf (50:1)
  - Saad (38:1)
- a group of letters
  - Alif Laam Meem (2:1), (3:1)
- one word
  - Al-Rahmaan (55:1)
- a phrase or incomplete sentence
  - wal Asr “by the time”(103:1)
  - wad Duha “I swear by the daybreak” (93:1)
  - wa kitaab al-mastoor “and [by] a book inscribed” (52:2)
- a complete sentence
  - khalaqal insaan, “He created the human being” (55:3)
- a couple sentences put together, a paragraph
  - subhanalladhi khalaqal azwaaja qulaaha mimma tubitul ardhou wa min fuusihim wa mimma ya’lamoon “Limbless in His glory is He who created opposites in whatever the earth produces, and in men’s own selves, and in that of which [as yet] they have no knowledge.” (36:36)
- an entire essay
  - ya ayuhul lathina aminoo ... (2:282)

As you can see, there are many different types of verses or ayahs. Refer back to the original meaning of word ayah: ‘an obvious sign’. What do you do when you see a huge neon powerful sign? You stop and stare, you read it, you look at it, try to understand what it means and why it’s there. This is also what you need to do with verses of the Qur’an: it doesn’t matter the relative size or shape, in any and all cases, every ayah(verse) should be contemplated. Through calling the verses of the Qur’an ayaat, Allah سبحانه و تعالى is instructing us to pause and reflect on each of them.
Zakariyyah and the sign

When Zakariyyah is asking for a sign, it is not out of disbelief. He is excited, he is wondering when is this blessing going to become manifest? He is asking Allah to give him a sign so that he can start really preparing himself to deal with the natural understanding, curiosity, questions, that occur with such a miracle. – Allah says to Zakariyyah that ‘you won’t be ABLE TO speak to people’.

Ayyatukka "Your sign" alla yatakalluan naasa “is that you will not be able to speak to people"

Sometimes this is incorrectly translated as “you should not talk”. ‘You should not talk’ would be a prohibition, and a prohibitive form of wording wasn’t used here. Instead, the word form used here means ‘to lose the ability to converse when you open your mouth’. Therefore: Allah says to Zakariyyah that ‘you won’t be ABLE TO speak to people’.

The use of three nights vs. three days

The last part of the ayah is thalatha layalin sawiyya “for three nights consecutively” In Surah Ale-Imran the words used are thalatha yamin “for three days consecutively”. In Arabic nights and days are used interchangeably. One of the reasons that the scholars point out as to why day is used instead of night in Surah Ale-Imran is because of the tone of the Surahs. Surah Maryam has a more personal intimate tone, since it started out with Zakariyyah in private praying to Allah during the night time.

Three nights: End of pregnancy vs length of pregnancy

What is the exact timing of the three nights? Some of explanations in the tafsir say that it means there were three nights left before the delivery. When someone is expecting, there are many ways to not be private about it: the way you dress, interacting with people and going out less, making the excuse of not feeling well, so on and so forth. Other people can also assume that one is just gaining weight. On the other hand, there is really no way to hide the fact that there is now a newborn child suddenly in your home. Everyone knows Zakariyyah, he lived in the Qsa compound and had been there for 50 years. Everyone knew that, as amazing that he and his wife were, they did not have children. If one day people walk by their home and hear a baby crying from inside, it would be an absolutely new thing and there’d be no way to conceal it. People are going to ask questions and one needs time to prepare for that.

A lot of the mufasiroon explain that yes, the time someone is born is in the hands of Allah however Zakariyyah needed to know before the baby arrives so he could brace himself and prepare for all the feelings and consequences.

Another intriguing explanation that some of the mufassiroon give is that the duration of the pregnancy of Zakariyyah and his wife went through was a total of three days. This is an impossible time, but it is equally impossible that a pair of 90 year olds have a baby.

Side Note:
Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda was in Aqsa, visiting the sights of Nazareth, Bethlehem, and studying the story of Maryam عليه السلام and Isa عليه السلام some time back. They were had traveled to al-Quds (Aqsa), Nazareth, Bethlehem, and these related places, and they were discussing the distances. There’s one version of the story in which Jibreel عليه السلام came and told Maryam عليه السلام she’d be going into labor soon and then she traveled to Bethlehem and gave birth. One of the people on Sheikh’s trip asked how that was possible, they were so far, and Sheikh said ‘let’s not talk about what’s possible when you have a child being born without a father – you are way past the conversation of what’s practical or possible at that point’. Plus, she is escorted by Jibreel عليه السلام and the Prophet ﷺ did al-Isra’ wal-Mi’raj (the miraculous night journey) in one night.

There is an explanation from some mufassiroon that says because of older age and mercy of Allah يَا‏اللَّهُ مَالِكِ الْعُمُورِ that this was a miraculous birth where she basically was pregnant for three days and baby was born, Allah يَا‏اللَّهُ مَالِكِ الْعُمُورِ knows best – majority go with first explanation that it was an indicator of a pregnancy coming to an end

AYAH 11

“He went out of the sanctuary to his people and signaled to them to glorify and remember [Allah] in the morning and evening” Surah Maryam 19:11

The Mihrab
Fakharaja ’ala qawmihi “He entered out and faced the people/met the people” min al-mihrabi “from the mihrab”.

In modern Arabic, we have come to understand mihrab as referring to the area or cutout that’s usually in the front of the masjid- the place where the imam leads prayer from. However, in the classical Arabic definition of the word, it refers to a private room, nook, or corner. A space that is separated from the general area. If someone was an imam, leader, or teacher, they would have a private space where they could read, reflect, or prepare themselves before approaching the people. If they went into this area, it was understood as a ‘do not disturb’ sign and if they were out of this mihrab it was understood that they were available for consultation.

Side Note -
What’s interesting is that in al Quds (Aqsa), there are a couple of locations that are commemorated as “mihrab”. These were not meant as exact places, but more like memorials. They were symbolic of where Zakariyyah عليه السلام and Maryam عليه السلام would sit and privately worship. The mihrab of Zakariyyah عليه السلام is on the left hand side all the way at the front of the eastern side of the Aqsa compound, facing the Qiblah. At the front of that area is a masjid known as Masjid Qibli or Masjid Omar, where the congregational prayer usually occurs, towards front there is a little bit of a nook and there is a very ornate mihrab that is made there and commemorated as mihrab of Zakariyyah عليه السلام.

Also, even though it’s not explicit in this surah, the mihrab of Maryam عليه السلام is mentioned in Surah Ale-Imraan (3:37). The symbolic place for her mihrab is built in one of the older areas of Aqsa that basically is underground at this point. A masjid was built in the Aqsa compound by the son of Marwan (One of the later Muslim rulers), and dedicated to his father, Marwan ibn Abdul Malik. In that masjid there is a corner that is set aside and commemorated as being the mihrab of Maryam عليه السلام.

Zakariyyah عليه السلام inability to speak and Allah’s سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى command

So now it is in that three days before arrival of child, Zakariyyah عليه السلام comes out to face the people, since he is the imam of the people, and reminds them to pray because, as we see in narration of the al-Isra’ wal-Mi’raj, Musa عليه السلام says prayers that were obligatory upon Bani Isra’il were two: morning and evening – our equivalent of Fajr and Asr.

As Zakariyyah عليه السلام comes out of his mihrab, people are trying to talk to him and get his advice, and he can’t talk!

Fa’uwha ilayhim “He gestured to them” an sabbihu bukratan wa’ashiyyya “that it’s time to pray”.

A powerful learning point the scholars mention from this is that at very critical moments it’s important to invest some of our energy and time into focusing on just talking to Allah سبحانه و تعالى instead of everyone else. For example we can go back to reference the nigh before the battle of Badr. The Prophet ﷺ was always encouraging everyone but instead of staying out that night, he went to his tent and said he just needed time with Allah سبحانه و تعالى.

Also, when you don’t have any answers to give to the people, talking more isn’t necessarily going to make things better – in fact it could actually make things worse. Knowing the appropriate times to be quiet is very important.

**Side note**

People often have misunderstandings about the Prophet ﷺ and how he interacted with others. Some people are under the assumption that he was very serious all the time. We get that from badly translated narration that says the Prophet ﷺ never
laughed and only smiled, this is factually incorrect – half a dozen narrations exist that literally say: fa dahiki an nabi sallallahu alayhi was salaam, that the Prophet ℓﷺ laughed. There is one narration that even says “he laughed so hard I could see the back of his mouth”. Some people translate that particular hadeeth as him having a very interesting smile instead of laughing, but what kind of smile lets you see the back of someone’s mouth? The Prophet ℓﷺ laughed and he was a human being!

Sometimes people believe that religion is supposed to be morbidly serious, like death all the time, with no laughter, therefore they project these biases on the Prophet ℓﷺ.

There is a hadeeth that mentions that “He smiled more than he laughed”, and most certainly, the Prophet ℓﷺ was not a frivolous person who was laughing all the time. Instead, he smiled all the time and laughed when something was funny. According to the Sahabah, the Prophet ℓﷺ was very outgoing i.e he wasn’t the kind of person who only spoke when he was spoken to. The Sahabah remembered that he would always say salaam first, would remember people’s names, ask about their relationships, and he would always engage people. At the same time, he would not speak unnecessarily – on occasion he was quiet for an extended period of time, maybe an hour went by and he didn’t say anything. Overall, he was very balanced. This also relates to the powerful idea that sometimes when you are in a critical situation, staying quiet is the best course of action. Balance is needed.

There is another narration relating to this concept of taking a quiet moment. During battle of the trench, the news reached the Muslims that Banu Quraytha had broken the treaty and had tossed away constitution of Madinah. When the Prophet ℓﷺ heard this he was upset, but instead of lashing out, he used the shawl he had to covered his face and laid down. Instead of lashing out, he took a quiet moment, and once he had gathered himself, he sat up then got up to deal with the situation.

In conclusion, it is helpful to take a moment to pause upon having a stressful situation, and that, in essence, is what Allah ℓﷻ by taking away his ability to speak right before the birth of Yahya ℓﷺ gave to Zakariyyah ℓ صلى الله عليه وسلم.

AYAH 12

"[We said], ‘John, hold on to the Scripture firmly.’ While he was still a boy, We granted him wisdom.” Surah Maryam 19:12
**Storytelling in the Qur’an**

We learn something here about the style of storytelling in the Qur’an. ‘O Yahya’, khuth al-kitaba biquwwatin ‘hold onto the revelation of God very firmly’.

In the previous verses we saw Zakariyyah عليه السلام dealing with people days before Yahya عليه السلام was going to be born and now we are talking about Yahya عليه السلام as a young man. In this part of the ayah, Allah ﴿سَبَحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى﴾ is talking to Yahya عليه السلام as if He is instructing him as a prophet – to hold onto the Scripture. The expression in the Arabic language that is being used means something like: This scripture is your code, this is your principle, this is what you live by and act on. This shift in topic is effectively a fast-forward in the story. The storytelling is not for entertainment – It is there for us to gain benefits and lessons. “It is for you to find inspiration within” – there are no extra fillers or long drawn out transitions, instead there is wisdom and to-the-point details.

Where do we get more details about stories from the past? We get them from three places:

1. **Other places in the Qur’an itself**
   
   Many times, there are more details mentioned elsewhere in the Qur’an, and we know for sure that the Qur’an is the most authentic source.

2. **Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ**
   
   The Prophet ﷺ sometimes gave more details about certain stories and prophets.
   
   For example, in an authentic narration found in Sahih Bukhari, the Prophet ﷺ tells us two personal details about Younus عليه السلام.

3. **Isra’iliyyaat (Judeo-Christian sources)**
   
   These sources come from the Christian and Jewish communities. When it comes to these sources, the Prophet ﷺ said three things:

   (1) After the hijrah to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ came into the masjid once to find Omar رضي الله عنه sharing some information with the companions that he had gotten from the Old Testament after interacting with the local Jewish community. The Prophet ﷺ walked in and saw them huddled around, and he was upset in his demeanor and tone. He asked, “Is the book of Allah ﴿وَ تَعَالَى سَبَحَانَهُ﴾ not enough for you?” It seemed like he disapproved!

   (2) In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ says, “We cannot ascertain the authenticity of the information, so we do not confirm it, nor do we deny or reject it.” This seems more neutral.
(3) In a third narration, in Sunan Nasa’i, the Prophet ﷺ says, “You can mention some of the details of the stories from Isra’iliyad, and there is no harm.”

In the first narration, he seems to disapprove. In the second narration, he seems to take a neutral position. In the third narration, he seems to approve. Which one is it?

The Prophet ﷺ is saying that when details come from the third source of the Isra’iliyad:

(1) This should not come at the expense of reading and understanding the Qur’an. In the first situation, the Prophet ﷺ got upset because they were still in the timeframe of early Madinah, and were new to Islam. People still had to learn the basics. The reason that the Prophet ﷺ disapproved was because they were studying the Old Testament when they did not even know the Qur’an well enough yet. If any of the Judeo-Christian sources conflict with the Qur’an says, we reject them.

(2) We can mention these sources (when they are not contradictory) as a possibility, but not a fact. Remember that the second narration presents this point in a neutral way.

**AYAH 13**

وَحَنِانًا مِّن لَّدُنَا وَزَكْوَةً وَكَاتِبًا ثَابِتًا

“Tenderness from Us, and purity. He was devout…” *Surah Maryam 9:13*

The word *Hanaan* means for someone to be very tender, gentle, soft, and kind - a person who has a good, soft, light touch (like handling something with gloves). Someone who possesses this quality is called *Haneen* or *Hanaan*. This is the quality that Yahya عليه السلام possesses.

The next wording “...from Us...” specifies that Yahya عليه السلام had an extra special level of gentleness and softness as a gift from Allah - beyond the natural tenderness that a person might demonstrate in a situation.

Yahya عليه السلام was blessed with the qualities of wisdom, gentleness, tenderness, and softness because he had elderly parents. We know this from the verse which talks about being gentle and merciful towards one’s parents, Zakariyyah عليه السلام admits that he and his wife are extremely elderly.
“...be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say no word that shows impatience with them, and do not be harsh with them, but speak to them respectfully.”

Surah Al-Isra' 17:23

Since Yahya عليه السلام had elderly parents from early on, this meant that by the time he reached his teenage years (a typically rebellious, troublesome phase) his parents would require even more patience, gentleness, and mercy from him. So as a mercy, Allah removed this element of rebelliousness completely. This example of Hanaan (even though it was especially miraculous for Yahya) is still a reminder for us of the importance of embodying that level of gentleness and kindness with elders, particularly our parents.

Zakaat literally translates as purity or to purify something. That’s why its called tazkiyatun nafs the purification of the soul. However the word zakat is also used for the charity we give – this word zakat, scholars differ whether it refers to purity or charity as it can be translated either way. Some argue that it must translate to mean purity as the mandate of zakat was not revealed until Medinah. Helping the poor and needy was instituted in Makkah, but the structure (2.5%, etc.) was instituted in Madinah.

Similar Example: The five times daily prayer was given after al-Isra’ wal Mi’raj but the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Muslims prayed before then - it was the structure that came in al-Isra’ wal Mi’raj (five times a day) – important to differentiate!

Taqiyya (God-conscious) comes from taqwa (to be cautious), to be conscious of Allah constantly. Allah purposely mentions these things together in the same ayah because they are related: being tender with elderly parents, zakaat, and that he was conscious of God. They are related to one another by the fact that even when you don’t have the motivation to be nice or gentle with someone the only thing that can still motivate you is consciousness of Allah. To be charitable with someone even when you feel like, “It’s not like I’m well off! Why should I give?” the motivation comes ultimately from your relationship with Allah.

These are also symptoms for how to tell the state of your relationship with Allah. If you notice that your relationships with the people closest to you (immediate family) is starting to deteriorate and your charitability is decreasing - then your relationship with Allah is getting problematic. Use this as a way to check, grade, and critique yourself - not to judge others. But these symptoms can be used as a filter for the people we also to influence us.

Paradise is prepared for the people of taqwa (God-consciousness) this is the goal; a Muttaqi is a person of taqwa - the standard for being good is to have a good relationship with Allah (by having taqwa). So we need to check and grade our taqwa periodically at the end of the day, month, year, etc. We can do this by asking:
1) What is your relationship like with your people immediately around you - parents, spouse, kids, siblings - how do they feel about you? What is your quality of relationship?

2) Charitability - where do I stand when it comes to helping other people (Don’t forget: quality of contribution over quantity)?

AYAH 14

"...kind to his parents, not domineering or rebellious." Surah Maryam 19:14

Allah continues describing Yahya عليه السلام saying, "He was kind to his parents, birr (dutiful)." The word birr refers to dry land compared to water (bahar and barr). Birr can also mean stability, solid, and is also the word to describe being pious, dutiful, reliable, and good. So Allah is saying that Yahya عليه السلام was very, “dutiful, good and mindful of his parents” and that he was never jabbaar. Jabra means to have the ability to exert strength, to apply pressure. That’s why a cast is called a jabeera it applies pressure. So Yahya عليه السلام was not jabbaar (domineering); he had elderly parents, so he could have exerted his will over them as he became a young man but he never did. He was never ‘Asiyya (rebellious) or ‘Asyaan (Disobedient) in the least bit!

Anecdote: Shaykh Abdul Nasir was frustrated as a teenager because he was always busted by his mother, but later on he sees his little brother getting away with everything now that his parents were older! He reflected that a young child with older parents have an added responsibility at that stage to not take advantage of their parents.

AYAH 15

"Peace was on him the day he was born, the day he died, and it will be on him the day he is raised to life again." Surah Maryam 19:15

Allah is honoring Yahya عليه السلام by saying peace was on him the day he was born because it was a miracle from Allah. Peace was on him the day he died because he became shaheed after he refused to endorse the injustice and atrocities being committed by a tyrannical ruler, as narrated by Bukhari. And Yahya عليه السلام will have peace upon him the day he is resurrected.
In the structure of Surah Maryam, there is a philosophy of education and tarbiyah (character building). By the end of Surah Maryam, you should be instilled with a strong, resilient, confident faith and belief in Allah’s oneness, greatness, majesty, and power. Allah builds this faith through these stories - one of the fundamental stories in that process is the story of Isa عليه السلام and Maryam. The story of Maryam and Isa is a high level story because in it Isa عليه السلام is born without a father, so instead Allah started with a story that is less abnormal/extraordinary which is the birth of Yahya عليه السلام. Yahya عليه السلام who is born to a set of parents past the age of conception. The philosophy of education and character building in Surah Maryam is that you must begin with people gradually and build. Ali used to say, “Talk to people in accordance with their level of understanding at that time” - build people up to a particular level, this is the philosophy of gradualism.

Another example of gradualism in Islam: At the end of life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, people of Banu Thaqeef of Ta’if came to Madinah to become Muslim. When they came, they wanted to negotiate some terms - the sahabah were turned off by this. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told them to relax and be patient. The people proposed a term that they would become Muslim but that they wouldn’t pray. The Prophet ﷺ responds by saying, “There is no good in adeen in which you do not pray.” They proposed more terms:

1) We will become Muslim and we will give charity, but do not send someone from Madinah to collect it or else we will feel insulted - we will collect and send it.
2) If you go into battle, we will come and join you, but do not send someone to come recruit us or else we will feel insulted - we will fight but don’t recruit.
3) We have seen that you appoint a leader to communities that accept Islam - we insist that you appoint a leader from among us - not an outsider.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ agreed to all of these terms, so the group left to talk and agreed to come back later. The companions sitting around were uncomfortable with what had transpired. They disagreed that these people were dictating terms when they should just submit and accept the message! The Prophet ﷺ responded, “Let them become Muslim first, they’ll gladly give their charity and they’ll come marching in the battlefield once they taste the sweetness of faith.

There is a transition and connection here from this story to the next: Zakariyyah عليه السلام was married to the aunt of Maryam. Her mother and Yahya عليه السلام’s mother (Zakariyyah عليه السلام’s wife) were sisters. This is what the majority of Judeo-Christian sources mention, which makes Yahya عليه السلام a cousin of Maryam; and in a sense, makes Yahya عليه السلام and Isa عليه السلام kind of like an uncle and a nephew. In the old Arabic language, they were still referred to as second cousins. Like that relationship, they were closer in age as well. There is a hadith of the Prophet ﷺ from Israa’ wal Mi’raaj where he goes to the second stage of the Heavens and meets Yahya عليه السلام and he describes them as cousins.

Maryam’s mother had taken an oath that she would dedicate her baby to the service of religion. We know from Surah Aale-‘Imraan that she wondered how her daughter would be able to serve because she had envisioned a son who could live and pray in the masjid. The fact that she has a daughter, though, opens up other possibilities. Maryam has the capacity
to do things that a son would not be able to do, and she can be the vessel to bring such a great miracle into the world.

Ultimately, when it was time for her to study and learn her religion, she was put under the custodianship of her uncle, Yahya عليه السلام and his wife. She went to Al Quds, and lived there and studied there. Sura Aale-'Imraan tells us that Zakariyyah عليه السلام comes in at one moment (as her teacher) and finds her eating something out of season and out of region. He asks, “Wow! How did you get that? Where did it come from?” She says, “Allah سبحانه و تعالى provides without any limitations or restrictions.” So Zakariyyah عليه السلام went up to his mehraab and made dua to Allah for a child, inspired by his own student! That is when Allah سبحانه و تعالى gifted him with Yahya, and shortly thereafter would occur the miracle of Isa عليه السلام with Maryam as well.

**AYAH 16**

وَأَذْكُرْنَاهُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُرَّمًّا إِذَا أَنْبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مِكاَنًا شَرَفِيًا

“Mention in the Qur’an the story of Mary. She withdrew from her family to a place to the east.”

_Surah Maryam 19:16_

The second passage of Surah Maryam is the story of Maryam and Isa عليه السلام, and it mainly focuses on Maryam and her experiences. The verbiage in this _ayah_ is quite distinct and unique. The word _wadhkur_ here is commanding us to reflect upon the story of Maryam because the word _dhikr_ has an element of reflection within it. Then, when Allah mentions the Qur’an, He is commanding us to reflect on the story of Maryam, based on how it is told in the Qur’an.

The reason why Allah سبحانه و تعالى uses such strong and clear verbiage here when telling us to reflect upon these stories is because Maryam and Isa عليه السلام might be individuals about whom the most amount of misinformation has ever existed. What did the Jews believe about them? They called them both liars and criminals, and they persecuted them. What did the Christians believe? They said that they were divine, and they deified them. When it comes to the story that we are about to embark upon, it is very important and critical for us to root our understanding of these two very significant individuals within the Qur’an.

As for the actual story, we are picking it up from the place where Maryam was in Quds. She was there in Jerusalem at Aqsa, studying, learning, and growing in her knowledge and her understanding of scripture – under the tutelage of Zakariyyah عليه السلام.

Maryam felt a sentiment that she needed to further her life, and with Aqsa being the center of religious communities and a busy and bustling place, she felt this need to withdraw from there and go to a more isolated place. This need was of course, divinely inspired. There are
different opinions among historians about where Maryam went. Some are of the opinion that she went to a place outside of Al Quds, but still in that region. Some hold the opinion that she only withdrew from her family, and not the people – where was her family from? Her ancestral home was in a city called Nazareth, and there is no difference of opinion about that.

Many scholars are of the opinion that she went from Al Quds back home to Nazareth, and secluded herself there. Allah knows best, and this does not affect the outcome of the story.

Allah inspired this need within her for isolation, to prepare her to embrace such a profound miracle, and the responsibility of bringing Isā into this world. We actually see a similar situation occurring in the life of the Prophet ﷺ in the fact that he went away to the Cave of Heraa prior to receiving revelation. This is a valuable idea because the Prophet ﷺ did not have that luxury of “going away” later on in his life. However, he still took moments here and there with Allah. This is why the time of tahajjud is so valuable! It is contradictory to Islam to completely run away from society, but we try to find little pockets when we get some time to pray to Allah and reflect alone.

The I’tikaaf of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was not in isolation, rather he used to do it in the masjid. Masjid an Nabawi is where everyone prayed, not in an isolated setting like a cave! I’tikaaf was simply a confinement within the parameters of the masjid, therefore if someone would like to emulate that sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, know that it is more like a giant sleepover per se, rather than a time of true isolation.

This is why the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ loved the night prayer so much, even in battles he would pray a little before people woke up, to find that private time with Allah. Allah inspired this within Maryam to have some solitude with Allah to prepare herself for what was to come ahead, there was value in that and that’s why the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would spend moments in reflection before embarking on any big endeavor, a lot of benefit in that.

**AYAH 17**

"And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel, and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man.” *Surah Maryam 19:17*

This verbiage is also very interesting. If she removed herself from her family, then why would she need a screen? This is why majority of the Christian scholars and Muslim
scholars historically do believe that she was in the place of Nazareth, what they all the Church of Annunciation. This is because when she was there, she did not go out into the wilderness or leave the compound, but took a place in the eastern corner of the compound and hung a curtain there.

We know that “rooh” can mean the soul, or even spirit, however, here it is Angel because it is not mentioning the word rooh by itself. When you use it in conjunction with another word it can have another meaning. For example, if the word “ameen” is used, that is referring to Angel Jibril because Roohul Ameen is one of the names Allah ﻲَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَ~bestowed upon Gabriel. Here, Allah ﻲَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَ~ says “our Rooh,” meaning he sent Angel Jibreel to Maryam.

Angel Jibreel represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man, He did this for her benefit, for Maryam’s sake. As we know from ahadith mentioned in the collections of Imam al Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ saw Jibreel in his true physical form twice and both times it shook him, feet were on the ground and head was in the clouds. When he opened his wings, one wing was in the east and one in the west and there were 600 such wings, which was so overwhelming. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to prefer that Jibreel would come to him the form of a human being, and he would often come in the form of a sahabi named Dihya al Kalbi ﻪـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَ~

AYAH 18

“She said, "Indeed, I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you, [so do not approach], if you should be fearing of Allah.” Surah Maryam 19:18

Maryam mentions “Al-Rahman” here instead of saying “Allah” – part of the theme of the Surah that was discussed was that of mercy, and this is another reminder of that.

There is even wisdom in invoking the mercy of Allah ﻲَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَـَ~ to remind someone else to be merciful.

If you are God conscious – “do not approach” can incorrectly be translated as IF you are a God-fearing person, then do not approach. However, the way it is used in the Arabic language is implying that the person should not approach, and if they are not God fearing, then they should be, and not approach.

When we literally translate from one language to another, this can cause problems. One of the fundamental rules of Usool al-Tafseer is the sensitivity about translating the Qur’an. A principle in relation to this is that “We do not translate the Qur’an literally, we translate it based off of what sentences put together mean.” If you translate it literally, broken up word
for word, it won’t make any sense. There are expressions, idioms, euphemisms, have to be sensitive to that.

“In kunta taqiyya” is putting someone on their heels. As in, “If you are a good person, you know not come here. And if you still came here, then be a good person and do not come in.”

**AYAH 19**


cال إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولٌ رَبِّكَ لَأَهْبَ لِكَ عُلَمًا رَظِيكَا

“He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord to give you [news of] a pure boy.”” Surah Maryam 19:19

The Angel speaks from the door. The word “Messenger” here is not being used in the technical sense (as in a messenger or prophet). It is being used literally as representative, to bring a message, or courier. We see this in Surah Fatir (35) as well, where Allah ﷺ refers to angels in the same way as messengers but not prophets. They are couriers who deliver and fulfill tasks but not prophets the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Note the wisdom in the wording of the statement, so that it gives her confidence. The Lord the Angel speaks of, is the Lord who Maryam has put her trust in! “Zakiyy” here means pure, as in a pure child.

**AYAH 20**


cالَّذِي يُقْبَلُ لِي عَلَمًا وَلَمْ يِمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكَّدِي بِيْنَا

“She said, "How can I have a boy while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?”” Surah Maryam 19:20

We see a natural human response of shock, and here the shock and astonishment is completely justified, and qualified. The only way she can fathom being pregnant is through 1. Marriage or 2. Illegitimate relations. Meaning, it would require physical contact that is either legitimate, or illegitimate. Note the verbiage, which is a euphemism that denotes very dignified language, referring to being unmarried. The word “baghiyy” comes from “baghawa” which means to rebel. Specifically, in old Arabic, sins of lewdness and shamelessness are referred to as “baghiyya” or rebellion.
A topic that is important for us to understand is our desensitization to sexual misconduct. A common issue is that the word “insaan” meaning ‘human being’ is popularly known to be from the word “nasija” which is to forget, this is actually incorrect! This is a minority opinion, and linguistically weak. The correct understanding linguistically, of insaan, naas, etc. is that it comes from the root “uns, mu’aanasa, anees, anas, aneesa,” the root of that word actually means to be a social creature, an emotional, social creature. Relationships, to be emotionally affected, all of this encompasses that meaning. Human beings are influenced by their surroundings and especially the people around them.

We are always affected by our environment, and we all suffer from a level of bias that is fed and fueled by our surroundings and our environment. A lot of times when you see the very strong language used about zinaa in the Quran, or it being paired with shirk and murder. It makes us think, “Is that not an odd pairing?” Here, “baghaawa” or rebellion is being used, and that can be astonishing. We are desensitized and live in a world where there is a watering down of the implications and repercussions of sexual misconduct. Since it is watered down and all around us, we start to negotiate how severe it may or may not be. For a moment, if we try to put everything aside, and think about how severely detrimental it is, or if we were to make a list of all the evils, ills, and problems in society that come from sexual misconduct, we would find it shocking.

Beginning with fornication, shamelessness occurring in society, broken relationships, children being abandoned, abortions, STDs, adultery, financial issues – when you start to compile all of these harms, you start to realize that after shirk and murder, you can’t really think of anything that is more detrimental than this. This is all surrounding us, we cannot escape it, and it naturally desensitizes us. As Muslims, we know it is “bad” but even as a Muslim who’s trying hard, you read Quran and sometimes it feels like a little over the top, however, IT IS NOT!

There is very strong wording Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى uses when talking about zinaa, but it is extremely justified.

AYAH 21

"He said, "Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.' " Surah Maryam 19:21
The Angel responds with, “It is what it is.” “This is the decree of God,” he tells her very respectfully. He then explains, “Your Lord has said that this is very easy for Me.” It is astonishing, how will a child be born without a father? But for Allah it is very easy! Be and it is! Just as it was easy for him to create Adam عليه السّلام, this is easy for him too.

He, himself physically will be the manifestation of a miracle. “He will be a mercy from Us.” Prophets receive revelation, which is mercy for the people.

The last part of the ayah is an emphasis on the fact that this is a decision that has been made by Allah سّببناّ و تعالى a long time ago. It is to further give strength and conviction to Maryam. In this whole narrative, the biggest sacrifice is being asked of Maryam and it is a profound sacrifice to ask of anybody. That is why it is clarifying that this is a decision that has been made and confirmed.

**AYAH 22**

“So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place.” *Surah Maryam 19:22*

She carried him, meaning she that she was pregnant with him. In a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from Ja’far ﷺ: “Allah ﷺ placed Isa within Maryam.”

There is a difference of opinion on this: some Christian and Muslim scholars say she came back to Jerusalem. This opinion, however does not make a lot of sense, since later on the Surah says that “she then came to her people, with him.” If she was there, she would have been “amongst” the people.

The majority of Christian scholars and Muslim historians hold the opinion that that the place she withdrew was Bethlehem. She withdrew to this place to be in isolation because it’s a drastic situation to experience in front of people.

**AYAH 23**
“And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten."

**Surah Maryam 19:23**

This is obviously a very challenging moment for a young woman, by herself, all alone, giving birth to a child. She was very well-versed and knowledgeable in religion even thought she was young. She was brilliant and received instruction from a prophet, so she is very knowledgeable about the religion and has a certain responsibility within her people. Although she is fully aware of the fact that this is ordained by Allah سَبِيلَةَ وَ تَعَالَى , a command, and a gift of Allah سَبِيلَةَ وَ تَعَالَى - the fact that she is about to give birth to a child without a father is going to create some type of backlash, and she knows it.

In this moment of overwhelming circumstances, she expresses this idea that if Allah سَبِيلَةَ وَ تَعَالَى had called her back prior to this, she would not be in this crucial, critical position, not so much responsibility would rest on her shoulders. She knows how serious this is, so she is expressing that she's not sure if she can live up to this responsibility.

**SUBTLETIES OF LANGUAGE**

We need to be very careful and mindful when translating, keeping in mind the nuances and subtleties of languages. Projecting our certain understandings or thoughts onto people of the past, especially in a language that many people do not fully understand, we need to be very careful and sensitive about that.

Today, when you have someone who actually is not well, emotionally, psychologically, and due to not being well, and they are having suicidal thoughts – for us to take that and connect it to Maryam, that is a very problematic connection that has implications. That would basically mean that the woman that Allah سَبِيلَةَ وَ تَعَالَى chose, to be a part of one of the greatest miracles (the birth of Isa), was mentally and emotionally not fit. That is not to take away any empathy from those who are suffering, that should be a primary concern of our community, but we aren't doing those people who need help any favors, nor are we doing justice by the Qur'an or Sunnah when we start to project our understandings onto her.

She is expressing a real concern, and also expressing that if someone better could have done this job, she would rather they would have so that she did not fail. Many people point to a hadith about the Prophet ﷺ when revelation was paused, and he would go to a mountain and call on Allah سَبِيلَةَ وَ تَعَالَى, saying that he wanted to throw himself from the mountaintop. The Prophet ﷺ never actually said that – the Companion never said that either! It was added by a later narrator, meaning that the Prophet ﷺ never authentically expressed that.

Some people try to draw these correlations between the statement of Maryam and mental health crises, but the language does not accommodate this. She never states that she wants to end her life, or this process. There are very problematic implications here when making connections when they are incorrect.
AYAH 24

"A voice cried to her from below, “Do not worry, your Lord has provided a stream at your feet.” Surah Maryam 19:24

AYAH 25

"And if you shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you, it will deliver fresh ripe dates for you." Surah Maryam 19:25

This is someone who is expecting a child, so the task of shaking a date palm tree seems like it would be challenging. What we have to remember here is that in the command, effort is what is being emphasized – just try! Why even include this idea, though? Why not just make the dates fall? This is a very fascinating discussion that is found in multiple places in the Qur’an. This Dunya is known as the world of assuming the means, which is why we see stories of the prophets in which Allah provides His help after action is shown first. For example, in the story of Musa, Allah told Musa to strike the ocean with his staff. Is the staff going to split the ocean? No, Allah did! Why did He say this then? This is a symbolic message to do your part, then Allah will take care of the rest.

AYAH 26

So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, 'Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.' “ Surah Maryam, 19:26

Eat and drink, gain your strength back, and relax! What’s the word used? Coolness of the eyes – it is usually used to talk about family, like in the famous du’aa:
And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous."

Surah al-Furqan, 25:74

By using the verbiage it tells you who has arrived? Isa عليه السلام is born now! The Qur’an alludes to birth of Isa عليه السلام in a very subtle and beautiful way – now recover and recuperate, enjoy your baby.

“If you see any people, say to them, “I have taken a vow of abstinence” what is this about? Today I shall not talk to any human beings – the vow of silence – this is something that used to be part of the tradition of the prophets of the past, authentic explicit hadith in a narration of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, he told us that there is no vow of silence allowed for his Ummah – there’s no virtue in it, no reward in it, in fact if anyone takes a vow of silence, they’re supposed to violate it, break it, and pay a penalty.

Nevertheless it was allowed in the previous teachings of prophets – in the case of Maryam it was needed.

**AYAH 27**

Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented.

Surah Maryam 19:27

She brought the child to her people – verbiage is very unique, now it says ‘her people’, comes to Al Quds, to Jerusalem – carrying the baby, tells you that she didn’t come years later, she came days or weeks later at the most, baby is still an infant – “They said, “O Mary! You have done something terrible!” Fariyya, like blasphemy – that’s how they attacked her from the moment they saw her – these were skeptics who had slandered prophets in the past, not about to spare Maryam.

**AYAH 28**

O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste.”
Surah Maryam 19:28

They referred to her as the sister of Haaroon, why? There are two explanations for this: the dominant explanation, there is actually reference in the Judeo-Christian sources – Maryam in her family had a cousin, an older cousin named Haaroon, known as a rabbi of the community, priest, khatib, “imam” etc... people loved him, fond of him – he was a well-known leader and it was Maryam’s cousin – so that’s why they called her sister of Haaroon meaning you come from such a noble home – your cousin (your brother) is this great imam, how could you have done such a thing? The second opinion is reference to idea that a lot of times they would refer to the young, unmarried women of the community (Bani Israel), they would refer them as the daughters of Ibrahim and the sisters of Haaroon, verbage they used to use – that’s why they’re using that language, specifically pointing out that she’s not married and not supposed to have a baby. Imam ar-Razi says that these skeptics from Bani Israel who slandered Maryam, they called her this and were also making a reference to the idea of Haaroon عليه السلام because when Musa عليه السلام had been called by Allah علیه السلام to the Mountain of Tur, while he was gone they ended up worshiping the golden calf, when Musa علیه السلام came back and admonished them, they tried to blame it on Haaroon عليه السلام, they slandered Haaroon عليه السلام and now they’re slandering Maryam because they’re slanderous people.

AYAH 29

فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالَوْا كِيْفَ نَكْنِمُ مِنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيبًا

So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child?"

Surah Maryam 19:29

They started verbally attacking her, what do you have to say for yourself?! She pointed at the baby – they became upset, how are we supposed to talk to an infant?! A baby that’s still being held in your arms? How do we converse with an infant, are you mocking us?

AYAH 30

قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَتَدْنِى الْكِتَابَ وَجُعِلْتُ نَبِيًّا

[Jesus] said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. Surah Maryam 19:30

‘Isa عليه السلام responded, “I am a slave of Allah علیه السلام, He has granted me Scripture, and He has declared me a Prophet.

AYAH 31
And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive. **Surah Maryam 19:31**

And He has declared me to be blessed wherever I may be, and He has firmly commanded me to establish prayer and charity as long as I am living.

**AYAH 32**

And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. **Surah Maryam 19:32**

And He has commanded me to be dutiful and righteous and attentive, loving with my mother — the specificity of “my mother” — and He has not made me domineering (not taking advantage of any weakness on the part of his mother as a single parent, with Yahya عليه السلام, it was because his parents were elderly) — here it says *shaqiyaa* — to be wretched, to really be evil — the reason this word is used here and switched from disobedience is because disobedience of the father and both parents with the father in the picture is disobedient and rebellious at most but disobedience particularly towards the mother, is not just disobedience, there’s something more nefarious, wretched, evil and graceless about it, because the Prophet ﷺ when asked in the famous hadith, who is the most deserving of my honorable treatment? He said your mother, then who, he said your mother, then who, he said your mother, then who, he said your father.

In the Qur’an every single time Allah سبحانه و تعالى talks about being good to the parents, *ihsaan* is used, and every time *waalidayn* is used, not *abawayn* (alludes more to the father), *waalidayn* alludes more so to the mother and even when Allah tells us to respect parents, two places in the Qur’an, the mother is emphasized because of the sacrifice she makes and the pain she endures and the nourishment and love she provides. Not being appreciative of that shows an extra level of gracelessness and wretchedness and evil and that’s why the verbiage is powerfully reflective here in this ayah.

**AYAH 33**

And peace is on me the day I was born and the day I will die and the day I am raised alive."
Surah Maryam 19:33

And peace was on me the day I was born, and it will be on me the day I die, and it will continue to be on me the day I am raised to life again.” One very interesting thing here is that if you go back to Verse 15 and then compare 15 and 33, what is the difference? Third person vs. first person. No alif laam, Ayah 15 is common, what is described as nakirah not definitive. The first difference is that in verse 15, there is no “the” it’s not proper it’s common but in verse 33, it’s proper, why? Verse 33 has more emphasis, the GREAT PEACE, the ultimate peace was upon me – more emphasis in this one on the word peace – added here to give more distinction and honor to ‘Isa عليه السلام and one of the profound reason is Yahya عليه السلام wasn’t being slandered but ‘Isa while some people deified him, some people called him a liar and imposter and slandered him, to absolve him from all this, Allah put more emphasis on the peace being showered upon ‘Isa عليه السلام. From verse 30 to 33, the baby is talking.

There are actually about five different narrations from the Prophet in which he speaks about children speaking in infancy – infants who have spoken miraculously. In one narration, he said four infants spoke miraculously, in another narration, the Prophet says, there have been five infants who spoke miraculously. One narration mentions four, one five, so total six. Which one is it? Is it 4, 5, or 6? All of the above – in these types of narrations whenever the Prophet gives a number, he’s not using it exclusively, it’s an example – established miracle is that there have been infants who have spoken, for example... in total there are six or seven examples, if you look in the Qu’ran, authentic narrations – ‘Isa عليه السلام, infant at the time of the monk – Jurayj, the witness who testified to Yusuf عليه السلام, and so on...infant who spoke to absolve Musa عليه السلام from the slander.

How were they speaking? Were they words put onto their tongue, or were they actually comprehending? Generally speaking, in Ashab ul-Ukhdood, the daughter of chambermaid of the daughter of Fir’aun, the baby – the chambermaid dropped something so she cursed Fir’aun and the daughter of Fir’aun figured she was one of those people, they started killing her family in front of her, and then they finally had the infant, when woman was about to break, the infant spoke up and said stay firm on your Deen. There’s all these remarkable stories, most of the cases, seems like Allah عليه السلام put something on their tongues but in the case of ‘Isa عليه السلام, that might be the one exception where he might have possessed that level of intelligence even as a baby.

AYAH 34

ذَلِكَ عِيسَى عِبْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلُ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتِرُونَ

That is Jesus, the son of Mary - the word of truth about which they are in dispute.
**Surah Maryam 19:34**

Very interesting, still part of the same passage, but it definitely is a transition where now, this part of it is no longer telling the story of Maryam and ‘Isa عليه السلام, but more so presenting a conclusion from the story – that is ‘Isa, the son of Maryam, a statement of the truth, this is the true story, of which they are in doubt and being skeptical and this refers to both sides, those who create doubt or are in doubt about the legitimacy of ‘Isa عليه السلام and Maryam and those who are also taking things too far in venerating and revering ‘Isa عليه السلام and Maryam – both sides.

**AYAH 35**

It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, “Be,” and it is. **Surah Maryam 19:35**

It is not appropriate, not suitable, does not make any sense for Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى to have taken a son, He is above and beyond that – very important thought here, think back to beginning of Surah, the Surah started with someone begging, asking, praying for a child because he was getting old, not very confident in the people he was going to leave behind, and again not in a critical way because he’s a Prophet of God, but in a real human way, needing and wanting a child, at some level is a human weakness – that’s why it’s saying it does not suit God to want a child, He is above and beyond that, He is perfect, when He declares something to be, He says, Be and it is.”

**AYAH 36**

[Jesus said], "And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path." **Surah Maryam 19:36**

God is my Lord, and your Lord, so serve Him, this is a straight path – most definitely, Allah is MY Lord, and YOUR Lord, so worship only Him – “worship” here: the etymology of the word, the word ‘ibaadah comes from the same root ‘abd, slave/ servitude, worship ultimately is an expression of that servitude towards Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى – worship only Him, serve only Him, this is the Straight Path, this is the correct way to live your life.

To those who rejected ‘Isa عليه السلام, don’t enslave yourself to your thoughts. And to those who deified him, don’t enslave yourself to your sentiments, to your culture but rather to Allah.
AYAH 37

Then the factions differed [concerning Jesus] from among them, so woe to those who disbelieved - from the scene of a tremendous Day. *Surah Maryam 19:37*

But factions have differed among themselves, this is the nature of deviation, once you get off the proper course, more and more divisions and factions and fractions occur from there as you deviate from the path – continue to split off, one from another – what suffering will come to those who obscured the truth, who disbelieved, the word “wayl” is an expression of remorse, regret, tragedy, sadness. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas has another opinion, mentioned by Imam Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir that wayl is the name of a deep pit in hell – that pit is reserved for those who disbelieved - how unfortunate is the situation for those who disbelieved.

When a dreadful day arrives, on the day those who disbelieve in regards to the reality – mashhad means the reality, what will be witnessed, 'adheem is greatness in how scary, how terrifying, how dreadful the punishment will be for those people who reject the reality of the Day of Judgement - a terrible fate awaits them.

AYAH 38

How [clearly] they will hear and see the Day they come to Us, but the wrongdoers today are in clear error. *Surah Maryam, 19:38*

How sharp of hearing, how sharp of sight they will be – this is a very interesting rhetorical device that is used in classical Arabic called fi’lun ta’ajjub – how beautiful is something, how well does he recite, etc. – So here it means, wow, look how amazing their hearing is now? Look how clearly they see everything now! When is this “now”? The day they are presented before Us, on the Day of Judgement, they’ll all be yes sir, no sir, absolutely – very compliant and agreeable – on the Day of Judgement, it’s too little, too late! Although now, they are clearly off course, however, these wrongdoers, today, in this world, they are completely immersed within their clear misguidance – what they’re doing is wrong, and they even know it’s wrong but they refuse to poke themselves out of this bubble, this delusion and see reality. When Allah talks about guidance, he uses the preposition “ala” because being on guidance and having clarity is like standing up on a platform – you can see everything clearly, better vantage point – when it talks about misguidance, it uses the preposition fee, inside of – living inside of a delusion, being trapped.

AYAH 39
"And warn them of the Day of regret, as the Command is decreed, for they are heedless and do not believe." **Surah Maryam 19:39**

The word *andhir* is often translated as “warn” which is the best word to use. However, it does not fully communicate the meaning. What this word implies is warning someone because you want good for them and are trying to protect them.

What does heedlessness mean? If you have a light that will not turn on, and you are trying to figure out why, you trace it back and find out that it is cut off from its battery, or that the battery is dead, or that it is turned off. How do you fix it again? You reconnect it. *Ghaflah* is essentially the idea that when something is unplugged, it needs to be plugged back in. In a spiritual context, what is the remedy for being disconnected from Allah ﷺ? Dhikr! Remember Allah ﷺ to reconnect!

These people are so disconnected that they have become content with it. They are in a state of blissful ignorance and apathy. On top of that, they do not believe. What does that mean? Is Allah ﷺ saying they will never believe? No – Allah ﷺ does not change the condition of the people until they decide to change what is within themselves. They have to want something real for Allah ﷺ to open their hearts.

**AYAH 40**

"It is We who will inherit the earth and all who are on it: they will all be returned to Us."  
**Surah Maryam 19:40**

What does this mean? Inheritance is meant figuratively here, not literally. This is a concept within eloquence where you mention something, and what you intend is the inevitable conclusion. Inheritance is inevitable and undeniable as a right, so Allah ﷺ is using inheritance here as an example to show that inevitably, the ownership of the Earth is with Allah ﷺ. Everything we own ultimately belongs to Allah ﷺ.

**PREFACE TO THE NEXT PASSAGE**

This verse concludes the second big passage of Surah Maryam. This is such an important passage, as is the next one:
There is a very significant understanding from the *usool* that Sheikh Abdul Nasir tries to teach his students from the very first year of study: there are rules within our religion, and there are exceptions to every rule. **However, we do not make rules out of exceptions.**

The fact that there is one God? There are no exceptions to that. The fact that the Prophet ﷺ is the last prophet? There are no exceptions to that.

Salah can have exceptions, for example, if someone is in a comatose state. What if someone has a broken leg? They can pray sitting down. What if someone is sick in Ramadan? They can make up their fasts. There are exceptions to these rules.

However, it is very important in our communities to be aware of the fact that there can be exceptions. When we do not allow for exceptions when they need to exist, we break people, and we lose them. At the same time, we do not make rules out of these things because if we do that, we will break the religion and the community.

A very important rule that we have already seen more than one reference to is *silatur rahim*, which refers to maintaining good family relationships. The secret to success is to take care of your relationship with Allah ﷻ and to take care of your relationship with your family. When the Prophet ﷺ came to Madinah, he gave his vision for the Ummah: “Spread peace, share your food, and strengthen your families.” This is a very profound rule of Islam.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS**

Within good family relationships, what is at the top of the list? *Birrul waalidayn*, or *ihsaan* with parents – good, honorable, respectful, kind, loving treatment of one’s parents. Can there be exceptions to this rule? Yes – but they have to be determined on a case by case basis.

When it comes to family relationships and the rights of parents, there can be exceptions to this rule. In the Qur’an, Allah ﷻ says numerous times to be good to your parents. We are shown the amazing parent and child relationships of Ibrahim ﷺ with his sons, Ya’qub ﷺ with Yousuf ﷺ, Dawud and Sulayman, Maryam and her son Isa ﷺ, Zakariyyah ﷺ and his son, Yahya, etc. There are also examples of amazing parents who have dealt with not so amazing children – Nuh ﷺ and his son, Ya’qub ﷺ and his other sons, etc.

**A PROFOUND QUR’ANIC EXAMPLE**

There is one place in the Qur’an, though, where Allah ﷻ tells us about bad parents, thereby placing one very central example to remind us that this is still an exception. We do have to be aware that this exception can exist. There is this illusion of the perfection of parents, but this passage that we are about to read is so powerfully placed after examples of such great families to show us a highly problematic and dysfunctional family situation where a father is very wrong.
Sheikh Abdul Nasir increasingly comes across situations that are so heartbreakingly difficult. Children can be miserable and spoiled and ungrateful, but there is this profound level of trust on their part that “my parents will never harm me.” No matter how old your children get, they still cry and call out for their mom and dad. When that trust is violated, it is the worst thing, and is so detrimental to a person’s psyche.

This is why the Qur’an is so amazing: we have an example of a bad parents so that those who need to find comfort can find it in the Book of Allah. This is a preface to this next passage that Allah’s Plan is very important, and principles are important. Through this process and plan, people are given principles on how they can conduct themselves with dignity through difficult situations.

**THE NEXT PASSAGE**

The passage of Surah Maryam that begins with Ayah 41 is a unique story and discussion within the Qur’an. When it comes to the stories of the prophets, many times the same story is presented in slightly different ways with a few additional details in different places in the Qur’an. Ibrahim عليه السلام is very unique in how he is presented in the Qur’an. Every time Ibrahim عليه السلام is mentioned, he is mentioned with different moments from his life. For example, in Surah Baqarah, Allah سبحانه و تعالى tells us about him establishing the Ka’bah. In Surah Saaffaat, Allah سبحانه و تعالى tells us about him seeing the dream of having to sacrifice his son and what occurs within that. In Surah Ibrahim itself, he is mentioned again, but in this case Allah سبحانه و تعالى tells us about when he was commanded by Allah to leave his family. In Surah Ambyaa, Allah سبحانه و تعالى tells the story of when he destroyed the idols of the people, who then threw him into the fire before he was protected by Allah سبحانه و تعالى. Every time his story is mentioned a little bit more significantly, and it is usually discussing a completely different event. This is a very unique feature of the mention of Ibrahim عليه السلام and it demonstrates wisdom. The Prophet ﷺ also referred to himself as the fulfillment of the legacy of Ibrahim عليه السلام.

Because Ibrahim عليه السلام was such a central figure in the mission of the Prophet ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ was joined with the name of Ibrahim عليه السلام, even with the salawaat we read during our prayer in Tashahhud. There is a very significant connection here which seems to be a part of the wisdom of why Allah سبحانه و تعالى so uniquely and powerfully tells the story of Ibrahim عليه السلام.

**AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE**

What is so remarkable and unique about this passage? Pay attention to this powerful and at times necessary exception to a very fundamental rule of our religion. When it comes to family values, respect, and honoring parents, in this passage is mentioned a very delicate, sensitive, but nonetheless important potential exception that can exist when things are not normal. If one finds themselves in such a predicament, it is still imperative, if someone is God-fearing and striving to practice their religion properly, for them to conduct themselves
with a certain set of values and principles.

One of the most fundamental rules of the religion is the sanctity of life. Human life is precious and sacred and the Prophet ﷺ has spoken about this. Exceptions to this may exist but they are very delicate, sensitive, and painstakingly taken into consideration.

Even in desperate situations of having to take up arms to defend oneself, there are still rules and principles that govern that. There is a famous hadith and story of Abu Jandal, who was a warrior and war hero of the Madinan people, even before Islam. When Islam came to Madinah, he became Muslim. He brought a lot of his prowess to the battlefield of the Muslims. When the Battle of Uhud occurred, the Prophet ﷺ said, “I have this sword, who will take it and utilize it properly in the battlefield today?” Many wanted to, but were nervous. Abu Jandal stepped forward and said that he would. He fought that day with the sword of the Prophet ﷺ. One soldier of the other side was fighting quite ferociously and defeating a lot of the Muslims. He saw this warrior on the other side and went over, and started to engage the enemy combatant in battle. He was ultimately able to disarm the enemy combatant. Eventually, the covering on the enemy combatant’s face flew open, and Abu Jandal saw that it was Hind bint Utbah, wife of Abu Sufyan, whose father, husband, and uncle were killed in Badr. She came to Uhud to avenge the death of her family members. She was a skilled fighter who concealed her identity but was eventually discovered. The Prophet ﷺ taught that we do not kill women and children in battle. When Abu Jandal raised his sword, he realized that he was not just fighting, but that he was fighting on the side of the Prophet ﷺ. He lowered his sword and walked away, and could not continue even though he was fighting for a good reason. He would not do it the wrong way.

This teaches us that even when we are justified, there are still principles that govern our behavior. This ultimately is the focus of this passage.

**AYAH 41**

> “Mention too, in the Qur’an, the story of Abraham. He was a man of truth, a prophet.” Surah Maryam 19:41

In Ayah 41, Allah ﷺ says to reflect on the story of Ibrahim عليه السلام as it is specifically mentioned within the Qur’an, and that he most definitely was a man of truth and a prophet. The word *sidq* means truthfulness, honesty, and integrity. One of the words for “friend” in the Arabic language comes from this root, and the idea behind it is that this person is a truthful friend, and someone who will tell you the truth – not someone who will
support you regardless of what you are saying. Allah ﷺ gives this title to Ibrahim عليه السلام and the Prophet ﷺ gave this title to Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه because he had such conviction in his faith.

When the Prophet ﷺ came back from Israa’ wal Mi’raaj, the Quraysh started questioning him. A couple of them had been to Aqsa, so they asked him to describe it. The Prophet ﷺ was of course there for a brief time in the middle of the night, so it is not like he was there to study the architecture. He paused, and Angel Jibreel opened his wing, and the structure of Aqsa was projected onto it. Angel Jibreel pointed to different things as the Prophet ﷺ was describing it in such intricate detail. The Quraysh were baffled, as Abu Bakr ﷺ kept saying, “Correct, correct, correct.” The Prophet ﷺ turned to him and said, “You are a truthful man of faith.” Here, Allah ﷺ describes Ibrahim عليه السلام in the exact same way.

AYAH 42

إِذْ قَالَ لَآيَةٍ رَبِّي يِبَأَسْتِ لَمْ تَعْبُدَ مَآ لَا يُسَمِّعُ وَلَا يُصِيرُ وَلَا يَعْيَنُ عَنْكَ شَيْئًا

“He said to his father, “Father, why do you worship something that can neither hear nor see nor benefit you in any way?” Surah Maryam 19:42

Ayah 42 is the start to a final conversation between Ibrahim عليه السلام and his father. As Surah An’aam (6) tells us in Ayah 74, Ibrahim عليه السلام’s father was named Aazar. Some narrations mention that he not only worshipped idols, but that he used to make them as well. This is a reminder to us that even though Ibrahim عليه السلام’s father was a less-than-good person, it does not take anything away from Ibrahim عليه السلام himself.

We can in fact find more benefit in saying that Ibrahim عليه السلام came from such a challenging background, but was still the person he was.

When Ibrahim عليه السلام speaks to his father, recognize his tone. First, he refers to him as yaa abati. It would have been enough for him to say yaa abi, but he adds the letter taa, which represents softness and gentleness in his tone. It is as if Ibrahim عليه السلام is saying, “My dear beloved father.” He then asks about his father’s worship – what is he criticizing here? He is criticizing the idols, and by extension, his father’s actions. It is very important for us to note the wisdom in the structure: he does not say, “Father, are you not thinking straight?” or “Father, what you are doing makes no sense.” Instead, he points the criticism towards the idols, and not towards his own father.

AYAH 43
Ibrahim addresses his father as, “my dear beloved father” for a second time even though he already has his father’s attention at this point in the conversation – why? This illustrates more of an emotional plea, letting him know that Ibrahim is not only showing his love and affection for his father, but he is also appealing to him with sincerity and concern that he should now follow the path of guidance. Ibrahim uses the words, *min al ‘ilm*, meaning a part of something, to indicate that he has been granted a portion of knowledge – and not all of it. He does not claim to know everything!

Sheikh Abdul Nasir narrated a personal story to further illustrate the importance of maintaining respect toward one’s parents, even and especially when one has been given knowledge and authority to teach. His parents are practicing Muslims who did not receive formal Islamic education. They have never had a problem with their son “maybe knowing a little bit more” than they do, and are accustomed to asking him questions. However, the *adab* taught to our Sheikh by his teachers is that even if one’s parents are easygoing, there is a more nuanced way with which to answer them. Rather than saying, “I learned” or “here is the answer,” humility and respect are more appropriately expressed in saying, “our teacher taught us.” The purpose of this is to acknowledge the fact that one is speaking to the very people who taught him how to be! Seemingly a small gesture, this can make a world of difference to them.

The eloquence in this ayah beautifully expresses Ibrahim’s sincerity. He is saying, “Most definitely, there came to me, some knowledge that has not yet reached you, so please listen to me in this, I will guide you to an even path”. This contains a sense of, “follow me and I will guide you” because he is a prophet at the end of the day. When it comes to any one of us finding ourselves in this position of sharing advice with a parent, we would not say, “follow me” – rather, we would say, “follow the Prophet of Allah and obey Allah”. 

**AYAH 44**

“Father, do not worship Satan – Satan has rebelled against the Lord of Mercy.” Surah Maryam 19:44

In Ayah 44, Ibrahim refers to his father as “My dear father” for the third time in one conversation! Ibrahim’s father did not necessarily worship Shaytan, so in this case, the word “worship” denotes the idea of obeying, following, and trusting. Ibrahim’s father
The father is telling his father to not be in the service of Shaytan. Again, he does not point the criticism towards his father, but at Shaytan instead. Ibrahim عليه السلام is never confrontational. This is all part of wisdom and detail. Essentially, Ibrahim عليه السلام is saying to his father, “Do not be tricked by Shaytan, he is trying to take advantage of you!”

**AYAH 45**

"Father, I fear that a punishment from the Lord of Mercy may afflict you and that you may become Satan’s companion [in Hell]." *Surah Maryam 19:45*

Again, for the fourth time in a row, Ibrahim عليه السلام addresses his father with such softness. This is a reminder to us to air on the side of caution, mercy, respect, and sincerity when addressing the people we care about. In this ayah, Ibrahim عليه السلام is saying that he is afraid that even any small punishment will touch his father. The word mass means “to lightly make contact.” Ibrahim عليه السلام invokes the mercy of Allah سبحانه و تعالى عليه السلام quite deliberately as a reminder to his father. When he says, “I am afraid of even the slightest bit of punishment even lightly touching you” – look at the generosity in his tone. This is Ibrahim عليه السلام’s plea to his father in such an honest and sincere way.

**AYAH 46**

"His father answered, “Abraham, do you reject my gods? I will stone you if you do not stop this. Keep out of my way!” *Surah Maryam 19:46*

Notice the difference in tone between Ibrahim عليه السلام and his father. Ibrahim عليه السلام’s father asks, “Are you saying that you do not like my idols?!” He does not call him “son” let alone “my son.” Instead, he threatens him! Then, realizing that he is crossing the line, he changes his tone slightly. He tells Ibrahim عليه السلام to leave him for a long period of time, and to go to a place somewhere far away (the word maliyy means “very far”). In classical Arabic, this is an expression one would use to say that they do not want to see someone again. Ibrahim عليه السلام’s father disowns him on the spot!

Remember: this passage starts off with the child (younger person) having a very important and valid point to make to an elder, and a parent, who is clearly in the wrong. It does not benefit anyone in any relationship to make their point in a rude, obnoxious, arrogant, or conceited way – nor does this align with the teachings of Islam. Ibrahim عليه السلام makes his point very respectfully, and he deliberately repeats his respect four times! After he makes his point in such a way, his father responds in a harsh, threatening, and violent manner.
Ibrahim’s father is absolutely in the wrong. This is an exceptional situation in which we are not going to see Ibrahim practicing traditional and conventional *silatur rahim*, or family relationships. This is not realistic or practical in this situation, and Ibrahim will be the exception. However, he STILL has principle. He never compromises his dignity or honor.

**AYAH 47**

> “Abraham said, Peace be with you: I will beg my Lord to forgive you – He is always gracious to me.”” *Surah Maryam 19:47*

Imam al-Qurtubi explains the beginning of this ayah as an expression as if to say, “I have no ill will towards you, and I am not going to respond the way that you did.” Ibrahim mentions the forgiveness of Allah for his own confidence as well. This, once again, shows his dignity.

Our Deen tells us to be humble, but never requires us to humiliate or debase ourselves. We should be honorable as human beings because Islam elevates us. There is a big difference between humility and humiliation.

Ibrahim does not take the humiliation! He stands with dignity, but does not go to the opposite extreme either. Instead, he maintains his principles.

**AYAH 48**

> “But for now I will leave you, and the idols you all pray to, and I will pray to my Lord and trust that my prayer will not be in vain.” *Surah Maryam 19:48*

Ibrahim essentially says, “You want me gone, so I will leave.” The difference between humility and humiliation can be seen here once again: Ibrahim does not fight with his father, but leaves respectfully instead. In this ayah, Ibrahim is demonstrating the fact that he still holds onto hope and prayer, even in a time of difficulty.

**AYAH 49**
"When he left his people and those they served besides God, We granted him Isaac and Jacob and made them both prophets." **Surah Maryam 19:49**

Here, Allah tells us what happened with Ibrahim. We would expect that everyone made up and got together and lived happily ever after, but that was not the case! In this scenario, they did not reconcile. Ibrahim’s father did not take back what he said, and things did not get better between them.

The fact that this scenario CAN exist (not to make a rule out of this) needs to be in our collective psyche as a community so that when someone is dealing with a terrible situation, we do not pass judgment on them; or compound their grief and sorrow for something that is not their fault.

Allah (S) Gave Ibrahim a new family! He Gifted Ishaq and Ya’qub to Ibrahim and Made them all prophets. Ibrahim went from being in a home where idols were worshipped to being in a home where he was not even the only prophet. Divine inspiration was in that home.

**AYAH 50**

"We granted Our grace to all of them, and gave them a noble reputation." **Surah Maryam 19:50**

The word *lisaan* literally means “tongue” and in this case, it refers to an elevated and truthful tongue. This expression denotes a very honest and elevated reputation. We still talk about Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya’qub today, right? Allah elevated them, and raised Ibrahim up out of such a predicament.

Remember that this is an early Makkah surah, so there is not a lot of *fiqh* discussion. However, there is one important ruling that needs to be addressed - the issue of praying for the forgiveness of someone who rejects faith in Allah.

**SEEKING FORGIVENESS**

The general ruling that this is not permissible, yet Ibrahim is saying he will seek forgiveness for his father. Allah clarifies in another place in the Qur’an that the reason why Ibrahim prayed for forgiveness initially was because of the promise he made in a difficult emotional moment, during which he was leaving his father, and was overcome with emotion. However, when he realized that his father had rejected belief in
Allah ﷲ and was not going to correct his beliefs, he chose to disassociate from his father; meaning he no longer prayed for his forgiveness. Allah ﷲ further clarifies the issue in the Qur’an in order to ensure there is no ambiguity left in regards to it, when He informs us that it is not permissible for the Prophet ﷺ nor for the believer to pray for the forgiveness of those who have rejected belief in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى and leave this world in that state. The ruling from Allah ﷲ in the Qur’an is definitive and indisputable.

It is important to clarify that while we know this to be the ruling, it is also important to show empathy in such circumstances. The Prophet ﷺ had people near and dear to him who left this world without believing in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى, such as his uncle, Abu Talib. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَ تَعَالَى even addressed this in the Qur’an. Yet, it is quite remarkable that the Companions chose not to bring this up to the Prophet ﷺ. We have one reported incident when Abu Bakr’s ﷺ father accepted Islam. Imam Bukhari said that his father was so elderly that all of his hair had turned white and that he was also blind. Abu Bakr ﷺ brought him to the Prophet ﷺ to accept Islam. When his father placed his hand in the hand of the Prophet ﷺ and became a Muslim, Abu Bakr ﷺ started crying, at which point the Prophet ﷺ asked him, “are these tears of joy?” Abu Bakr ﷺ replied, “Oh Messenger of Allah, they are tears of sadness – what sadness! I cannot help but think, in the blink of an eye, I would trade the place of my father for your uncle. I still remember the pain it caused you that day.”

A SITUATION OF SENSITIVITY

Notice the level of empathy, compassion and mercy. The ruling exists, but one should be very careful to refrain from any semblance of a callous response. Both empathy and understanding are lacking and much needed in our communities! Sheikh Abdul Nasir Jangda has a very close personal childhood friend who became a Muslim in middle school. Sheikh remembers the time when his friend called him to inform of his mother’s passing. After talking to him and finding out how he was doing, he realized that his friend just wanted to have a conversation about his concerns about the afterlife. Sheikh realized the sensitivity of the situation, and offered to connect his friend with another close friend and colleague who is a scholar, who also had gone through a similar situation. This was because Sheikh felt that he would not be able to fully empathize in the same manner as that of one who could speak from a proper place of knowledge and empathy. The last thing we want to do is harm or damage someone’s Iman.

In the event the person is still alive, one is to pray that Allah will change their heart toward guidance and Islam.

The next passage of Surah Maryam has a different style. The previous passages went into a lot of detail with Zakariyyah عليه السلام, with Yahya عليه السلام, then with Maryam and Isa عليه السلام; then told one particular story of the life of Ibrahim عليه السلام. This next passage includes quick and rapid mentions of different prophets. The focus is not to tell their stories, but to mention the great tradition of prophethood.
AYAH 51

“Mention too, in the Qur’an, the story of Moses. He was specially chosen, a messenger and a prophet.” Surah Maryam 19:51

The story of Musa عليه السلام is often the subject of misinformation, which is why, once again, we are told to reflect on it specifically as it is mentioned in the Qur’an. There are two accepted ways to translate the word mukhlis here in this ayah: it can refer to the fact that Musa عليه السلام was specifically and especially chosen, and it can also refer to the fact that he was very sincere in his servitude.

Here, Musa عليه السلام is being referred to as a rasool (messenger) and a nabiyy (prophet). What exactly is the difference between the two? There are many discussions on this topic by Ibn Taymiyyah, Imam Razi, and others. Ibn Taymiyyah says that there are eight different scholarly points about the difference between messengers and prophets. The vast majority say that the most fundamental difference is that messengers bring a major update to the actual code of the religion or law.

This is why we often hear that messengers are sent with books. Prophets, on the other hand, come to enforce the code that is already in place. They may have one or two minor updates, but they are mostly there to reiterate and bring people closer to the code of law that has already been presented.

AYAH 52

“We called to him from the right-hand side of the mountain and brought him close to Us in secret communion.” Surah Maryam 19:52

This ayah refers to the fact that Allah سُلَيْمَانَ عليه السلام called Musa عليه السلام to the mountain to have a private and intimate conversation. Why is the right-hand side mentioned specifically? Some scholars mention that this could just be a historical thing, or a historical reference to the location. However, there is another translation for the phrase “right-hand” that can refer to something good or blessed.
For example, when the Prophet ﷺ says that Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی loves the “right-hand rows of prayer,” this is not meant to be taken literally – it is meant to figuratively convey that Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی loves the rows that are straight and lined properly with no gaps. This verbiage is not literal, rather, it is meant to refer to virtue and goodness.

This description of the mountain can also refer to a blessed and sacred place. If Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی spoke to Musa عليه السلام there, of course it is. On the night journey of Israa’ wal Mi’raaj, Angel Jibreel stopped at certain places and requested the Prophet ﷺ to pray. Whenever he prayed and they got ready to leave again, Angel Jibreel would ask, “Do you realize where you just prayed?” He would then tell him, and one of the places he told him to pray was at the Mountain of Toor, where Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی spoke to Musa عليه السلام.

AYAH 53

وَوَهَبَنَا لَهُمْ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ أَخَا هَدْرُونَ نِعَمًا

"Out of Our grace We granted him his brother Aaron as a prophet." Surah Maryam 19:53

Musa عليه السلام was surrounded by the people he loved when he needed support. This serves as a reminder that Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی will provide for us! The Prophet ﷺ dealt with this as many of his own people abandoned him. Allah ﻭ ﺧﺎلی then surrounded him with better people in his wives and companions. Similarly, Ibrahim عليه السلام was given a family full of prophets after he was threatened by his father. In this case, Musa عليه السلام had to face a tyrant and an empire, but he was not alone – even physically.

AYAH 54

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقًا أَوْلَدًا وَكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا

"Mention too, in the Qur’an, the story of Ishmael. He was true to his promise, a messenger and a prophet." Surah Maryam 19:54

The story of Ishmael عليه السلام is also subject to a lot of misinformation. The Makkans and Quraysh painted him in the light of their paganism, and Bani Isra’il said that he was not a legitimate son of Ibrahim عليه السلام or a prophet.

In this ayah, the idea that Ismail عليه السلام was a truthful man is emphasized. This is beautiful because one of the primary qualities of the Prophet ﷺ was his honesty and integrity. Anas bin Malik رضي الله عنه, who served the Prophet ﷺ for ten years, said, “The Prophet ﷺ never ever addressed us publicly without saying the following words: There is
no *imaan* for the person who is not trustworthy. There is no *deen* for someone who cannot keep their word.” Ismail عليه السلام embodied this quality of honesty.

**AYAH 55**

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلْوَاتِ وَالْزُّوُرَةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًا

“He commanded his household to pray and give alms, and his Lord was well pleased with him.” Surah Maryam 19:55

The word *kaana* refers to consistency and continuity, which – in this ayah – means that Ismail عليه السلام used to regularly remind his family to pray and give charity. This brings up an interesting point because we often presume that there was no prayer prior to the structure of the five daily prayers. However, the Prophet ﷺ prayed before that! The prophets of the past all prayed as well.

Was the prayer conducted similarly among the prophets? It was similar to some extent with aspects like *rukoo’* and *sujood* and *qiyaam*. In terms of the structure itself, only Allah سبحانه وتعالى knows.

Everyone prayed, not just the prophets – we are not the first Ummah that ever prayed! By nature, when the prophets were given something, they took action right away. What was unique in this case was when prayer was prescribed five times daily.

**AYAH 56**

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

“Mention too, in the Qur’an, the story of Idris. He was a man of truth, a prophet.” Surah Maryam 19:56

**AYAH 57**

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًا

“We raised him to a high position.” Surah Maryam 19:57
The Prophet Idris سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى is a prophet of Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى who is mentioned two or three places in the Qur’an. No details about him are mentioned. There are some narrations that say he was the first one to write, but they have not been authenticated. Given all of this, why does Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى mention him in this manner?

Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى is reminding us that many prophets came, some of which we know a lot about, some of which we know a little bit about, some of whose names we know, and some of even whose names we do not know. Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى always sent someone to look after people. The real idea here is that Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى sent many prophets throughout time. It is important for us to appreciate this blessing of Allah سَيْبَاحَةَ وَتَعَالَى that we are recipients of this great tradition of guidance and revelation.

**AYAH 58**

"These were the prophets God blessed – from the seed of Adam, of those We carried in the Ark with Noah, from the seed of Abraham and Israel – and those We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Lord of Mercy were recited to them, they fell to their knees and wept."

**Surah Maryam 19:58**

Ayah 58 is mentioned by many scholars of *tafseer* as the central ayah (thematically) of the surah, along with Ayah 59. These two ayahs are described as the nucleus of the surah from a thematic perspective.

This ayah is essentially referring to the remarkable spiritual heritage we have, and of which we are the inheritors. Imam Ghazali and Imam an-Nawawi said something interesting: the child of a doctor is not automatically a doctor, and the child of a scholar is not automatically a scholar. We may have a heritage that is good, and that is very beneficial, but that does not necessarily mean that we are going to be able to do something with it – unless we decide to do something with it. Yes, this is our spiritual heritage, and while there are benefits to that, it does not ensure success or salvation by itself; unless we decided to partake in it and actively do something about it.

What happens when we take the legacy we have inherited for granted? Or when we let it spoil us or delude us into thinking that we are all set because of where we come from? This is a very famous issue and cliché in the Muslim community. There is a level of delusion, overconfidence, privilege, and self-assuredness that comes with “the son of the Imam” mentality.
This is exactly what Imam Ghazali and Imam an-Nawawi were talking about! Many times, in a position like that of the son of the Imam, even more work is required. This legacy is a blessing, but it is also a responsibility.

**AYAH 59**

“But there came after them generations who neglected prayer and were driven by their own desires. These will come face to face with their evil.” *Surah Maryam 19:59*

Allah now tells us what happens when things go wrong, and when people neglect the legacy they have been gifted with. Often times, there are very good people who are succeeded by not so good people – people who take this succession for granted, abuse it, and neglect it.

Somewhere along the way, there comes a generation that ruins the legacy – but how do they do that? The Qur’an is such a mercy and a guidance that it tells us how things become bad and deteriorate, so that we can learn not to make those exact same mistakes:

1. **They neglect and waste their prayers.**
   This happens over time when the quality drops, then the performance dissipates, then the relationship with Allah weakens. This ultimately leads to abandonment of the fundamentals.

2. **They are driven by their own desires.**
   They start to succumb to every little desire, and become creatures driven by whatever they feel like doing, regardless of the consequences.

It is our soul that usually helps us resist these base animal instincts, but that soul is weakened when it is not connected to Allah. Then, the beast comes out of its cage.

Eventually, they live their lives in such a regrettable fashion that ultimately when their soul is leaving their body, and they are entering the Afterlife, they will come face to face with the evil they did – and there is no denying the truth.

This is why Ayahs 58 and 59 are considered the core of the Surah. We are told about the amazing place we come from, and the amazing place we are headed. In between, we are reminded that we have to do something to be a part of it. If we do not, we are not going to be the ones responsible for ruining it because someone else will carry it forward! We will only deprive ourselves. Allah will always bring another group of people to carry on that work.
VERSES OF PROSTRATION

Ayah 58 presents a technical point about the sajdah included within it. This refers to the prostration of recitation, which means that it is one of the ayahs within the Qur’an for which we have to make a sajdah after reading or listening to it. There are 16 such verses in the Qur’an.

How do we perform this sajdah? If we are standing up, we can do it from standing. If we are sitting down, we can do it from sitting. The first step is to say Allahu Akbar, and then to go straight into sajdah. There is no salaam necessary after this sajdah, and there is only one sajdah per verse.

Do we have to make this sajdah immediately? Based on the example of the Prophet ﷺ, we can either do it right away, or later on. One time, the Prophet ﷺ was giving the khutbah and recited a verse of prostration. He got down in the middle of the khutbah and performed the sajdah, so everyone did it with him. Another time, he was giving a sermon and recited, but continued on and then made the sajdah after he was finished.

What if we hear someone read an ayah of sajdah, but we do not read it ourselves? We still need to make the sajdah because listening is included in this as well.

What if the ayah is being taught or memorized? In one setting like this, we would say the ayah multiple times, but would only make the sajdah once per setting.

Is it necessary to have wudu? There is a difference of opinion, but the majority says that the answer is yes because the Prophet ﷺ did it this way. A minority (Ibn Taymiyyah and some others) say that the answer is no because it is not a full formal prayer.

Should we be facing the Qiblah? Yes, in a normal circumstance, meaning that if we are in travel, we would be facing the direction in which we are headed.

How do we know about these 16 verses specifically? They all mention prostration, but it is these specific verses for which the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated the sajdah and pointed it out.

AYAH 60

 إلاَّ مِنْ تَأَبٍّ وَإِنْ أَمَنَّ وَعَمِلَ صَلِيحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا

“But those who repent, who believe, who do righteous deeds, will enter Paradise. They will not be wronged in the least.” Surah Maryam 19:60

The previous ayah seemed like doom and gloom! But, Allah ﷻ provides hope as He always does in the Qur’an – even when we find ourselves in such a predicament. Maybe we
have not lived up to our legacy, or our opportunity. However, there is still a way to turn things around. The word *tawbah* in old Arabic means that when someone has gotten off the path, they turn around and get back on course.

The people mentioned in this *ayah* will not be oppressed, nor will anything be taken from them. They will not be deprived of anything because Allah Almighty is Just.

**AYAH 61**

> “They will enter the Gardens of Lasting Bliss, promised by the Lord of Mercy to His servants – it is not yet seen but truly His promise will be fulfilled.” *Surah Maryam 19:61*

There is a level of testing here in this *ayah* because we have not seen the Eternal Gardens, but are being told by the One who gave us everything that He promises we will get it. These Gardens are more mind-blowing than anything we have ever seen before! In a *Hadith Qudsi*, Allah Almighty says, “I have prepared for My righteous slaves, what no eyes have ever seen and no ears have ever heard, and no mind can comprehend.”

Even though we have not seen it, we have to rely upon our conviction. Allah Almighty has never broken His Promise, so it will come to fruition.

**AYAH 62**

> “There they will hear only peaceful talk, nothing bad; there they will be given provision morning and evening.” *Surah Maryam 19:62*

The beginning of this *ayah* brings up a remarkable point that we will not have to deal with any of the negativity that we are dealing with right now in our lives! Practicing Islam and being firm with our values can be difficult and challenging.

We often have to deal with nonsense and negativity from either the people around us, or in society in general. This is a consolation and a comfort that the only interactions we will have to deal with will be pleasant and peaceful.

We also have a lot of obligations and responsibilities within our lives, and sometimes it is nice to take a deep breath and be free of those obligations. Good people do not mind their responsibilities, but being less weighed down is a very fascinating thing. Allah Almighty is
saying here that there will not be anything bothering us, or trying to get our attention. We will only hear salaam as people walk by.

What does “morning and evening” refer to in this ayah? In the Arabic language, this expression means “all the time” – morning, evening, and everything in between them.

**AYAH 63**

> تَلَكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورُثُ مِنْ عِبَادَةٍ مَّنْ كَانَ تَقِيٌّ

> “That is the Garden We shall give as their own to those of Our servants who were devout.”

**Surah Maryam 19:63**

**AYAH 64**

> وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ مَا بَسِينَ أَبْدِينًا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبِّكَ نُسيًّا

> “[Gabriel said], “We only descend [with revelation] at your Lord’s command – everything before us, everything behind us, everything in between, all belongs to Him – your Lord is never forgetful.”

**Surah Maryam 19:64**

This ayah comes with a narration of a circumstance of revelation that provides some context. There is a hadith in Sahih Bukhari in which the Prophet asked Angel Jibreel, “How come you do not visit us more than you already do visit us?” The Prophet teaches us about positivity in the way he asks this question. He does not ask, “Why don’t you visit?” or say, “You do not visit me enough.” Instead, he essentially says, “Please visit us more than what you already do!” Angel Jibreel was silent out of respect, and Allah revealed Ayah 64.

This ayah serves as a reminder that if a little bit of time does go by, remember that Allah has not forgotten you. Sometimes, there may be certain blessings that we need or want, which we ask Allah for. If we do not receive those blessings, it is not that we cannot have them, or that they will not be given to us – but it is more the idea that for whatever the wisdom of Allah is, it is not decreed at that time. The important thing to remember in all circumstances is that our Lord has not forgotten us. If we connect this back to where we first started in early Makkah with the torture and complete persecution, we see how the Muslims kept their faith. There was a delay, but the promise of Allah would come. 15 years later, they would march back into
Makkah and reclaim the Ka’bah for the worship of Allah. They could not lose hope.

**AYAH 65**

“He is Lord of the heavens and earth and everything in between so worship Him: be steadfast in worshipping Him. Do you know of anyone equal to Him?” *Surah Maryam 19:65*

To be steadfast means to be consistent and continuous with something, and that really is the crux of the lesson in this ayah. Our relationship with Allah has to begin somewhere, and we are often so afraid of what the end result is supposed to be that we prevent ourselves from ever getting started. As long as we start our journey, the only place it needs to end up is in a place of consistency.

Quality is of course the objective, but one of the ideas in achieving consistency is that sometimes, there may be highs or lows in quality, but that consistency should never be compromised – that is part of the struggle. When we are consistent, we automatically have both quality and quantity when we persevere. Consistency in our relationship with Allah will always be worth it.

**AYAH 66**

“Man says, “What? Once I am dead, will I be brought back to life?”” *Surah Maryam 19:66*

Now, we start building towards the end of the surah. We still have a ways to go, but these 30 ayaat are short, quick verses. They are straightforward in their meaning, and they have more of a rapid-fire style. We are going to begin discussing spirituality, and how reflecting on these stories can help us reflect on our own condition.

**AYAH 67**

“But does man not remember that We created him when he was nothing before?” *Surah Maryam 19:67*
Allah answers the skepticism in this ayah by reminding us of our miraculous and blessed existence. Ayahs 66 and 67— the disbelief, the skepticism, and the response—contain a pattern that is mentioned in many places. Allah constantly reminds us about our creation being the greatest refutation of this skepticism.

**AYAH 68**

"By your Lord [Prophet] We shall gather them and the devils together and set them on their knees around Hell." **Surah Maryam 19:68**

Here, Allah takes an oath by Himself, which is very powerful because Allah is the Ultimate Truth. He swears by His Greatness and Majesty.

When Allah consoles, comforts, and supports the Prophet , He demonstrates such love, compassion, and mercy upon him. Not only was that a source of comfort for the Prophet , but also is for us as his followers. This is a reminder to us that Allah comes to the aid of those who believe.

Allah not only takes an oath by Himself, but He swears by Himself by calling Himself the Lord of the Prophet . Allah takes oaths in the Qur’an, not to prove His truthfulness, but to demonstrate emphasis. There is no doubt with Allah , and the only doubt resides within the minds of human beings.

Allah says, “We, without a doubt, shall gather them (the skeptics) and the devils, who made trouble and dissuaded people from believing in Allah, then take them around the opening of the Hell Fire.” The word jithiyy refers to sitting on one’s knees like a prisoner—standing on one’s knees. This is a very scary scene being painted for us on the brink of Hell Fire.

**AYAH 69**

"We shall seize out of each group those who were most disobedient towards the Lord of Mercy." **Surah Maryam 19:69**
It is very interesting that in such a terrifying and horrific scene, Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى is being referred to as Al-Rahman. Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى gave them everything they have, all of their blessings and opportunities, and sent a reminder to their doorstep over and over. Everything came to them! However, they refused to believe in spite of this.

Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى tells us what is right and what is wrong, and exactly what the tests are going to be, and exactly what we need to do in those scenarios. We have a book of answers within the Qur’an – everything is right here! It is baffling that when people fail after all of this, they somehow blame God. This is why Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى uses Al-Rahman here: He has truly given us everything, and nothing compares to His Mercy.

AYAH 70

"We know best who most deserves to burn therein." Surah Maryam 19:70

AYAH 71

"But every single one of you will approach it, a decree from your Lord which must be fulfilled." Surah Maryam 19:71

Some of the great companions of the Prophet ﷺ and some of the great scholars of the past have said that this is the most frightening verse of the Qur’an. Abdullah ibn Mas’ud said that he never read a verse more overwhelming. Hasan al-Basri said that he could not sleep at night!

In this ayah, Allah سُبْحَانَاهُ وَ تَعَالَى says that every single one of you, in some way, shape, or form, will experience the Fire of Hell. Waarid is a very powerful word here because the word mawrid used to be used for a watering hole specifically for animals. This analogy is meant to show the inevitability of this situation. It is inevitable that an animal will be thirsty and need water.

When we read this ayah on a surface level, it causes fear. However, there is an explanation: The Prophet ﷺ said that each and every single person will “experience” the Hell Fire at some level. What this means is that on the Day of Judgment, there are those who are to be
deemed criminal, who rejected anything and everything Allah gave them, and will be tossed into the Fire of Hell. Those who are not immediately sent to the Hell Fire will be made to pass on a bridge over the Hell Fire (called As-Siraat). The Prophet said in a narration that it is thinner than a hair and sharper than the edge of a blade. Those whose evil was dominant over their good, they will fall. Those whose good was dominant over their evil, they will pass over it at the speed of light. Even coming close to the Hell Fire is such a scary thought, which is why this shook the companions.

AYAH 72

“We shall save the devout and leave the evildoers there on their knees.” Surah Maryam 19:72

After that, We will save those who are conscious of God – they will be able to pass right over because they lived a life of goodness. We will leave the wrongdoers in the Fire of Hell on their knees.

AYAH 73

“When Our revelations are recited to them in all their clarity, [all that] the disbelievers say to the believers [is], “Which side is better situated? Which side has the better following?”” Surah Maryam 19:73

After all of this, Allah tells us how delusional some people can be. The delusions of this world can be so severe that when people find themselves in any temporary situation of power, numbers, abundance, or opulence, they can become so deluded by it that despite everything being laid out clearly for them, they only focus on their power and wealth.

AYAH 74

“We have destroyed many a generation before them who surpassed them in riches and outward glitter!” Surah Maryam 19:74
What they fail to understand: how many people before them did We destroy and annihilate, who were better than them in these luxuries? *Athaath* refers to material things. Allah is demonstrating the intoxication of worldly temptations! This *ayah* is clearly talking about the disbelievers.

Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas, a companion of the Prophet ﷺ and a *mufassir* said: When you read verses about disbelievers and put them aside, saying, “It is about them, not us,” that is a huge error. That level of disbelief is not something that just appears overnight – it festers over time. Everything has a starting point, and this is a reminder for us to catch even the slightest manifestation of sin.

**AYAH 75**

"Say [Prophet], “The Lord of Mercy lengthens [the lives] of the misguided, until, when they are confronted with what they have been warned about – either the punishment [in this life] or the Hour [of Judgment] – they realize who is worse situated and who has the weakest forces.”

**Surah Maryam 19:75**

What is the wisdom of mentioning the punishment of worldly life versus the Day of Judgment? Many times, it seems like people who are disbelievers just keep getting their way. However, even when we do not see the big picture, justice is always accomplished. When we see someone who is doing wrong seemingly doing well, we should keep in mind that this is simply an extension being granted by Allah سبحانه و تعالى, either because they will be turned around and used as an asset for good, or because a case against them is being built or solidified. Ultimately, justice shall be achieved.

**AYAH 76**

"But God gives more guidance to those who are guided, and good deeds of lasting merit are best and most rewarding in your Lord’s sight." **Surah Maryam 19:76**

In this beautiful *ayah*, Allah سبحانه و تعالى teaches us that no good deed goes unrewarded. Even though doing the right thing is harder right now, Allah سبحانه و تعالى will increase you in
your guidance – this is always a better long-term investment. In this *ayah*, we are reminded of something very important: the way to achieve the ability to do more good is to fulfill and work on what is in your capacity at the moment. We all have aspirations and dreams, but the way we are given the capacity to achieve those dreams is by working on what is in front of us.

For example, someone may say that their goal is to build a whole masjid for the sake of Allah, which may cost a million dollars from start to finish. They do not have a million dollars right now, but they do have ten dollars. They continue to walk by a box that is labeled “Masjid Construction Fund” while they also continue to talk about how they will build a masjid when they get that million dollars.

We may have the goal to memorize the whole Qur’an, but we might not have the capability to do that right now. We keep putting it off based on this fantasy scenario that one day, we will be free of all other responsibilities, and will sit in the masjid for 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and finish memorizing in two years. We do not have that kind of time right now, but we do have eight minutes each day to memorize one line. We are not doing that when we could be!

Doing what is in your capacity in the moment is the way to be blessed by Allah to be able to do more. This is an extremely powerful lesson.

**AYAH 77**

> أفرءيت الّذى حكّف معكَ بنينه وقلت لأوتيبك مالاً وولدًا

"Have you considered the man who rejects Our revelation, who says, “I will certainly be given wealth and children?”"  *Surah Maryam 19:77*

**AYAH 78**

> أطلّع أم أتخذ عند الرحمي عهداً

"Has he penetrated the unknown or received a pledge to that effect from the Lord of Mercy?"  *Surah Maryam 19:78*

**AYAH 79**

Has he looked into the Afterlife? Does he have insider information? Allah is calling them out! This person rejects everything, then says they will be fine! Either they
know something the rest of us do not know, or they have some side deal worked out with Allah ﷺ. This is said mockingly and sarcastically.

“No! We shall certainly record what he says and prolong his punishment.”

Surah Maryam 19:79

Translation from Sheikh Abdul Nasir: “Absolutely not! This is preposterous! We will certainly record everything this person says, and then We will extend his punishment accordingly.” Every time this person disbelieves, then only worsens that by talking in this foolish way, they keep digging themselves into a deeper ditch.

These last three ayahs (77, 78, and 79) are being provided as a consolation to the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions because they were dealing with such arrogant, ignorant fools. Allah ﷺ is saying, “Let Me deal with them, do not worry about them. You do your job, and I will deal with them.”

AYAH 80

“We shall inherit from him all that he speaks of and he will come to Us all Alone.”

Surah Maryam 19:80

The Prophet ﷺ said that every single human being will have to stand before Allah ﷺ and answer about how they lived their life, with no intermediaries or representatives. Allah ﷺ will ask about how they lived their life. The hadith says, “The feet of the person will not move from their place until they answer about four things: (1) How did you spend your life? (2) How did you utilize your time of youth? (3) How did you earn and spend your wealth? (4) How much of your knowledge did you practice? When they cannot answer, they will look to the right and the actions will become a barrier, trapping them in. They will look to their left, and their deeds will box them in. They will look to the front and see the fire of Hell,” and there is no escaping that.

The man who mocked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the people who tortured him – they will have to come alone and answer.

AYAH 81
“They have taken other gods beside God to give them strength.”

Surah Maryam 19:81

They delude themselves! When you do not do the right thing, you try to look for other shortcuts and ways to compensate for it. In this case, they look for other ways they might be able to get more strength.

AYAH 82

“But these gods will reject their worship and will even turn against them.”

Surah Maryam 19:82

The same things they worship other than Allah will reject their worship, and will even turn against them to testify against them in front of Allah. Allah mentions that even inanimate objects made of stone and rock will be given the ability to speak on the Day of Judgment. They will say, “We have nothing to do with these people! They knew they were wrong, and they still did it.”

In the overwhelmingness of this, it is important to remember one thing: perfection is not what is being asked or demanded. What is being asked is a level of honesty and sincerity. The lack of perfection is not what has gotten these people into so much trouble. Their trouble comes from their unwillingness to be able to admit their wrong and repent when they make a mistake.

AYAH 83

“Have you [Prophet] not seen how We send devils to incite the disbelievers to sin?”

Surah Maryam 19:83

Allah says in the final passage, “Have you not realized that We have unleashed devils upon those who rejected belief in Allah to rile them up, to incite them?” We are familiar with the fact that doing good leads to more good, right? In this case, the evil of these people only leads to more evil.

AYAH 84
“There is no need for you to be impatient concerning them: We are counting down their [allotted] time.”  
_Surah Maryam 19:84_

**AYAH 85**

“On the Day We gather the righteous as an honoured company before the Lord of Mercy.”  
_Surah Maryam 19:85_

Think about how a noble delegation is welcomed and received with respect and honor!

**AYAH 86**

“And drive the sinful like a thirsty herd into Hell.”  
_Surah Maryam 19:86_

Allah contrasts the previous ayah by saying, “And We will drive the criminals to the fire of Hell like hungry, thirsty beasts.” This creates the imagery of livestock, or big animals, being pushed from behind.

**AYAH 87**

“No one will have power to intercede except for those who have permission from the Lord of Mercy.”  
_Surah Maryam 19:87_

No one will be able to vouch for them, unless Allah allows it and honors someone to intercede. This brings up the very fascinating discussion of the concept of _shafaa’ah_ (intercession). Some people overindulge in this topic, and think that people just have intercession cart blanche. Some start to venerate people to an unreasonable level, while others completely deny that intercession exists.
Intercession absolutely does exist, and the concept is mentioned in both the Qur’an and Hadith. There will be a group of people that Allah chooses to forgive, but also honors them by calling forth one of his beloved slaves and allowing them to raise these people up. Allah will call the Prophet ﷺ to intercede, to vouch for them. This is the concept of shafa’ah, which only happens by the permission of Allah ﷺ.

**AYAH 88**

> وَقَالُواٌ أَثْنَىِّ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَٰنَ وَلَدًا١٨٨

*“The disbelievers say, ‘The Lord of Mercy has offspring’.”* Surah Maryam 19:88

There are some people for which no intercession will be allowed, and amongst those are people who so terribly distorted their belief in Allah ﷺ.

**AYAH 89**

> لَقَدْ جَسَّمَ شَيْئًا إِذَا١٨٩

*“How terrible is this thing you assert.”* Surah Maryam 19:89

The word *idda* refers to something that we do not even have any precedent for, something beyond reproach.

**AYAH 90**

> تَسَكَّبَ الْسَّمَّوَاتِ يَفْطَرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخْرُجُ الْلَّيْبَالُ هَذَا١٨٩

*“It almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces.”* Surah Maryam 19:90

In this powerful ayah, Allah ﷺ says that the Heavens want to rip open, the Earth wants to rip open and swallow them, and the mountains want to come crashing down and annihilate them – why? Why are they so infuriated and offended?

**AYAH 91**
“That they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy.” **Surah Maryam 19:91**

The creation of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى is so offended by this – that they would dare attribute a child to God, to the Most Merciful; that they would say He has the weakness and the need and desire for a child (which is such a human frailty). This is why the Prophet ﷺ says that when someone seeks knowledge, and practices it, and teaches it, the creation of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and the Heavens and the Earth, even the fish in the ocean and the ants on the ground – they all pray for that person and wish good for them.

**AYAH 92**

“*It does not befit the Lord of Mercy [to have offspring].’* **Surah Maryam 19:92**

**AYAH 93**

“There is no one in the heavens or earth who will not come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant.” **Surah Maryam 19:93**

There is not a single thing in the Heavens and the Earth except that it will be brought to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, and that it will have to come before the Most Merciful as a humble servant. Every single creature and element of creation will eventually come before Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى subserviently.

**AYAH 94**

“He has counted them all: He has numbered them exactly.” **Surah Maryam 19:94**

*Ahsaa* here means that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى has full grasp of them, and that he has them numbered and lined up.

**AYAH 95**
And they will each return to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone.” **Surah Maryam 19:95**

**AYAH 96**

“And the Lord of Mercy will give love to those who believe and do righteous deeds.”  **Surah Maryam 19:96**

Allah concludes the surah by reaffirming and consoling the Prophet ﷺ and the believers in saying: “Without a doubt, those who believe and did righteous deeds, very soon, Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی will make for them love.”

This is beautifully stated here because the ayah does not specifically say that Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی will love them (which He will), or that they will love each other (which they will). It simply says that Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی will create love for them, which means: in all aspects! They will love Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی, the Prophet ﷺ, the people around them, and vice versa. What this means is that they will experience love in all aspects of their lives. Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی gifts love to these people, and that is a power, a blessing, and a reward.

One of the greatest tragedies that people are suffering through today is the test and trial of their closes and most relationships no longer remaining as such. There is deterioration of relationships and homes, and the loneliness and isolation that comes with it. Many times, people face the absence of love and a sense of community. However, when people commit themselves to righteousness, Allah سَبِيعَانَہُ وَ تَعَالَی provides this love for them as a gift.

**AYAH 97**

“We have made it easy, in your own language [Prophet], so that you may bring glad news to the righteous and warnings to a stubborn people.”  **Surah Maryam 19:97**

Allah says here that the Qur’an has been made to flow from the tongue of the Prophet ﷺ so that he may use it as a resource to encourage and give good news to the people who are God-conscious and righteous. The Qur’an is his resource for supporting
people, strengthening them, and keeping them consistent. It is also a resource to warn and precaution the people who are stubborn.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH QUR’AN**
The Qur’an is both the greatest resource for the righteous to stay righteous, and the greatest tool to wake up people who might be disconnected. This Qur’an needs to be at the core and the heart of all of our *da’wah*, our activity, our education, our community building, and whatever other work we do. If we are trying to bring about some type of good and trying to decrease the bad in the world, our actions have to be fueled and fed by the Qur’an. If our work is void of the Qur’an, what we are doing is either not correct, or it will not be very sustainable. If we look at the history of the Ummah, the work that still continues today is that which has always been rooted deeply within the Qur’an.

If we do not have a relationship with the Qur’an, it is important that we pick it up and read it. How can we claim that what we are doing is rooted within the Qur’an if we have no connection to it? Our personal education is necessary and mandatory, no matter what else we are doing.

We do not see good work as a competition for other good work, but this needs to be clear. To take an example: if someone does a lot of humanitarian work, that is wonderful. It is so important, desperately needed, beautiful and generous work. But, if they are preoccupied with that for 12 or 14 hours a day, to the point where they are not making time to nourish their soul through the Qur’an, they will at some point lose track of what they are doing. **Our work does not somehow absolve us of our need to fuel our souls through Qur’an.**

**QUR’AN IN OUR LIVES**
This concept can be applied to any kind of work we do in life. Even when it comes to Islamic scholarship: if someone is so preoccupied and overindulged in *fiqh* to the point where they are always involved in *fiqh* discussions, and they become disconnected to the Qur’an, they will lose their way.

Imam al-Shaafi’i wrote books on *usool ul fiqh* and *usool ul hadith*. At one time later in his life, he was staying at the home of his student and mentee, Imam Ahmad. After dinner and Isha’ prayer, Imam Ahmad left a glass of water outside of Imam Shaafi’i’s room because he knew his teacher’s habit to wake up before Fajr to pray Tahajjud and then Fajr. Then came Fajr time, and the Salah was about to start at the masjid next door. Imam Ahmad went to the door, and the glass of water was untouched. This seemed unusual, and Imam Ahmad wondered what had happened. When Imam Al-Shafi’i opened the door, he was shocked that it was already Fajr time! Why?

When he went to his room for the night, he sat down to read some Qur’an. He started to read Surah Fatiha and began reflecting on it. He lost track of time, and spent eight hours on the Qur’an that night! Imam al-Shaafi’i was one of the highest legal minds – look at his relationship with the Qur’an.
When Ramadan would come, Imam Malik would close his book of hadith and tell all of his students (especially senior students) to go read Qur’an. He would say that there are to be no more fiqh discussions for a month!

Imam an-Nawawi wrote an entire book just about the etiquette of how to behave with the Qur’an! Imam Ibn Katheer wrote tafseer in the last two to three years of his life. He spent his whole life being a historian, a jurist, and a faqih, but in those last three years, he only focused on Qur’an.

Connection with Qur’an is everything, and everything has to tie back to it. That is what Allah is saying here.

The fact that this ayah mentions people who are stubborn is also very important. We have the tendency to write people off, but the mention of this in this ayah is a reminder to not give up on people.

**AYAH 98**

> وَكَمْ أُهْلِكْنَا فِي مَذْهَبٍ مِّنْ قَرْنَاءِ هَلْ يُسْتَمَعُ لَهُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدِ أَوْ يُسْتَمَعُ لَهُمْ رَكَّةً

“How many generations We have destroyed before them! Do you perceive a single one of them now, or hear as much as a whisper?” **Surah Maryam 19:98**

Surah Maryam ends with such a warning that the Prophetﷺ will be very compassionate and merciful, and the Qur’an will give us chance after chance, but if we continue to be disrespectful, we should know that the wrath and anger of Allah is not something to be taken lightly.

**Connection to Qur’an**

How can we continue our study of the Qur’an, and deepen our understanding of it?

1. **Read a translation of the Qur’an in full**
   It is very necessary for us to read a translation of the Qur’an from cover to cover, no matter how long it takes. Sheikh Abdul Nasir recommends Abdul Haleem, Oxford University Press, and the Glorious Qur’an.

2. **Try to better your recitation of the Qur’an**
   Start trying to recognize letters, and sit with a tutor or teacher if need be. Learn the proper pronunciation of letters, and try to develop more fluency in reading and reciting.
3. **Start memorizing from the Qur’an**
   Begin memorizing something, anything, from the Qur’an. A few small surahs or verses, or a surah that you like are all great places to start. If Allah ﷺ gives you the tawfeeq, He will grant you the ability to maintain it as well.

4. **Start learning the Arabic language**
   Learning Arabic can be intimidating, but we now have so many resources for it! Start somewhere and keep chipping away at it. It is important to find the program or curriculum that works best for you, and take it one step at a time. If we clarify our intention, find the right situation, and find the right environment for learning, this is absolutely possible.

5. **Try to access lectures and videos of tafseer online**
   Take advantage of any and all lectures, videos, and podcasts you can find! Try to find a tafseer class that you can regularly participate in – this is a lifelong journey. This is not the last step – it is the first one!