

## Sura19: Maryam (Mary)

**In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy**

### **Verses 1 to 40:**

1. *Kaf. Ha. Ya. 'Ain. Sad.*
2. *(This is) A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zachariah.*
3. *When he called upon his Lord in private.*
4. *He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones became feeble and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to You.*
5. *I fear the successors after me, since my wife is barren. Give me from Your presence an heir.*
6. *Who shall inherit me and inherit (also) the house of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, acceptable (to You).*
7. *(It was said to him), "Zachariah, We bring you tidings of a son whose name is John; We have given the same name to none before (him).*
8. *He said, "My Lord, how will I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age?"*
9. *He said, "So (it will be) your Lord said, 'It is easy for Me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.'"*
10. *He said, "My Lord, give me a sign. He (God) said, "Your sign is that you will not be able to speak to the people three nights while in sound health."*
11. *Then he came out from the sanctuary to his people, and signaled to them that they should glorify God at the break of day and the fall of night.*
12. *(And it was said), "John, hold fast to the Scripture." And we gave him wisdom while he was still a boy.*
13. *And compassion from Our presence, and purity; and he was devout,*
14. *And kind to his parents, and he was not disobedient or rebellious.*
15. *Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies and the day he shall be raised to life.*
16. *And mention Mary in the Book, when she had withdrawn from her people to a chamber looking east,*
17. *And she had chosen to go into seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man.*
18. *She said, "I seek refuge in the Lord of Mercy from you, if you are God conscious.*
19. *He said, "I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may bestow on you a pure son."*
20. *She said, "How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?"*
21. *He said, "So (it will be). Your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me. And We will make him a sign for humankind and a mercy from Us, and this is a matter which has been ordained.'"*
22. *And she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place.*
23. *And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, "I wish, I had died before this. I wish I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight."*
24. *But (a voice) called to her from below saying, "Grieve not, for your Lord has made a stream to flow beneath you;*

25. *And shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward you; it will drop on you fresh ripe dates.*
26. *So eat and drink and be consoled. And if you meet any mortal, say, "I have vowed a fast to the Lord of Mercy, and I will not speak this day to any mortal."*
27. *Then she came to her own people, carrying him. They said, "Mary, you have certainly done an unprecedented thing.*
28. *Sister of Aaron, your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot.*
29. *She pointed to him. They said, "How can we talk to a young boy in the cradle?"*
30. *He said, "I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet;*
31. *And He made me blessed wherever I may be, and enjoined upon me prayers and almsgiving so long as I remain alive;*
32. *(He) made me kind to my mother, and He did not make me a tyrant nor miserable;*
33. *Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised to life."*
34. *That is Jesus, son of Mary. (This is) a statement of the truth concerning which they dispute.*
35. *It is not befitting to God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be", and it is.*
36. *Verily God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve (worship) Him. That is the right path.*
37. *But parties from among them disagreed with each other, so woe to those who disbelieved – from the scene of a tremendous Day.*
38. *How clear will they see and hear on the Day they will appear before Us, but the wrongdoers today are in manifest error.*
39. *And warn them of the Day of anguish when the case has been decided. Now they are in a state of heedlessness, and they do not believe.*
40. *It is We who will inherit the earth, and all those who are on it, and to Us they shall be returned. (19: 1 - 40)*

The main theme of this Sura is the Oneness of God and the refutation of the myth that God has a son or a partner. The concept of resurrection after death is discussed as a corroborating evidence for the concept of the Oneness of God. The Sura narrates a number of stories. It starts with the story of Zachariah and John; the story of Mariam and the birth of Jesus; and the story of Abraham and the dialogue he had with his father. There is also mention of a number of prophets. These include Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Ishmael, Idris, Adam, and Noah (PBUT).

The Sura can be divided into three parts. The first deals with the story of Zachariah and John, and the story of Mariam and the birth of Jesus. The second part deals with the story of Abraham and his father. This part also includes a reference to a number of prophets. It ends with the unequivocal proclamation of the Oneness of God. The third part deals with the concept of the resurrection after death. This part describes some of the scenes of the Day of Judgement.

*"Kaf. Ha. Ya. 'Ain. Sad."* The Sura starts with letters from the Arabic alphabet, the common language of the Arabs. This was meant to be a challenge, daring the Arabs to compose a book similar to the Quran using the language that they were familiar with. The subsequent verses narrate the story of Zachariah (PBUH). The story starts with a mention of God's mercy, *"A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zachariah."* This is quite appropriate since the main theme of the story of Zachariah (PBUH) revolves around God's mercy. He called upon his

lord, *“When he called upon his Lord in private. He said, ‘My Lord, indeed my bones became feeble and my head is shining with grey hair, and I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to You. I fear the successors after me, since my wife is barren. Give me from Your presence an heir;*

*who shall inherit me and inherit (also) the house of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, acceptable (to You).”* He called upon his Lord in solitude, beseeching God to comfort his sorrow. He was old, his body became weak and his hair became gray. He confessed to God that he never was disappointed when he called upon Him before. He explained his problem. He was nearing the end of his life; he could not entrust the legacy of prophet-hood to any of his apparent successors. He had no sons to entrust his legacy to one of them because his wife was barren. He asked God to give him a successor who can carry the responsibility of prophet-hood and continue the legacy of Zachariah and Jacob (PBUT). Zachariah (PBUH) defined the trait that he wished his successor to have, *“And make him, my Lord, acceptable (to You).”* God responded favorably to Zachariah’s (PBUH) prayer, *“(It was said to him), ‘Zachariah, We bring you tidings of a son whose name is John; we have given the same name to none before (him).’”* This was a response that embodied the divine generosity. Not only he will be given a son but the son will be unique.

Zachariah (PBUH) must have been overwhelmed with the response. He could not but ask, *“My Lord, how will I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have reached infirm old age?”* He knew that God’s promise will be fulfilled but the question was how will this happen. The answer to the question was delivered, *“So (it will be) your Lord said, ‘It is easy for Me, and indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.’”* It is not difficult for God to create. God made a barren woman unable to conceive and an old man unable to have children. He is able to reverse the process and allow the barren woman to conceive and the old man to have children. Zachariah (PBUH) was anxious, he wanted a sign. God told him that the sign is that he will not be able to speak for three days. There was nothing wrong with him; there was no physical reason to prevent him from speaking but nevertheless he will not be able to speak. This was the sign he asked for, *“He said, ‘My Lord, give me a sign.’ He (God) said, ‘Your sign is that you will not be able to speak to the people three nights while in sound health.’”* He wanted his people to join him in expressing gratitude to God, *“Then he came out from the sanctuary to his people, and signaled to them that they should glorify God at the break of day and the fall of night.”*

The narrative now turns to address John who grew up and became a young man, *“John, hold fast to the Scripture.”* It is a divine address that shows John’s (PBUH) status in the sight of God. This is a confirmation for Zachariah’s (PBUH) request that his successor would be worthy of carrying the legacy of Prophets Zachariah and Jacob (PBUT). John’s (PBUH) first task was the preservation of the Scripture (the Torah), the implementation of its teachings, and the conveyance of its message. He was commanded to be steadfast and to carry out his duty relentlessly. God prepared him to fulfill this trust, *“And we gave him wisdom while he was still a boy.”* This was the training that John (PBUH) received from God to be able to undertake the responsibility. Not only he was given the wisdom at an early age but he was also given, *“And compassion from Our presence, and purity; and he was devout, and kind to his parents, and he was not disobedient or rebellious. Peace on him the day he was born, and the day he dies and the day he shall be raised to life.”* Compassion is not an acquired trait but it is a gift from God. It is a necessary trait for a prophet to enable him to guide the people to goodness. He was pure in heart and in body, such purity opened up a channel of communication with God. This made him

devout and always conscious of his Lord.

The narrative then moves to the story of a birth which was more miraculous than the birth of John (PBUH), the story of the birth of Jesus (PBUH). John's (PBUH) mother was barren but Jesus' (PBUH) mother was a virgin. The creation of Adam (PBUH) was a miracle that was not witnessed by humans. But people did witness the birth of Jesus (PBUH). This makes it the most miraculous event in the history of humanity. Having been unable to witness the first miracle of creation, the divine wisdom willed that the normal law of procreation be broken to provide humanity with an evidence of the power of the Creator.

The verses narrate the story of the conception of Jesus (PBUH), *“And mention Mary in the Book, when she had withdrawn from her people to a chamber looking east, and she had chosen to go into seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said, ‘I seek refuge in the Lord of Mercy from you, if you are God conscious.’ He said, ‘I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may bestow on you a pure son.’ She said, ‘How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?’ He said, ‘So (it will be). Your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me. And We will make him a sign for humankind and a mercy from Us, and this is a matter which has been ordained.’”* The verses describe the scene of a young virgin, a saint who was dedicated by her mother - while she was still a fetus in the womb - to the service of God. She was known for her purity and piety. She was in seclusion when she suddenly saw a perfect man standing in front of her. She was frightened. It was natural for her to seek the help of God. In addition, she tried to implore the man standing in front of her to be conscious of God. The fear gave way to surprise when she heard the man saying, *“I am only a messenger of your Lord; that I may bestow on you a pure son.”* One can only imagine the thoughts that went through her mind at that time. Could she trust this man? Was he really God's messenger? And how can she become pregnant while she had not been touched by a man before? She expressed her doubts, *“How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?”* Her question indicates that she was not able to think outside the box. She never thought that the law of normal human procreation could be broken. But there are other ways that this could be achieved, *“Your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me. And We will make him a sign for humankind and a mercy from Us, and this is a matter which has been ordained.’”* This was the miracle that Mary did not expect to happen. God wanted this miracle to be a sign for people, a sign showing the power of God. Jesus (PBUH) was sent as a mercy to the Children of Israel and to the whole humanity.

The narrative continues to describe what happened to Mary, *“And she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said, ‘I wish, I had died before this. I wish I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight.’”* The narrative did not explain how the conception occurred; or how long it took. Did the fetus go through the normal growth process? Or was the process completed in a miraculous way? However, these questions are not relevant to the objective of the story. One can imagine Mary alone thinking about the consequences of this situation. How will she face her people? What kind of scandal will she face? Her thoughts were diverted by the pains of delivery. She rested her back to the trunk of a palm tree. She wished that she was dead before this had happened. She was yet in for another surprise, a voice that addressed her, *“Grieve not, for your Lord has made a stream*

*to flow beneath you; and shake the trunk of the palm-tree toward you; it will drop on you fresh ripe dates. So eat and drink and be consoled. And if you meet any mortal, say, 'I have vowed a fast to the Lord of Mercy, and I will not speak this day to any mortal.'"* How much amazed must have she been to hear the voice of her newly born baby to speak to her, consoling her, reminding her of God's mercy, and directing her to the food and water which God provided for her survival and the survival of the baby. The voice also gave her an advice, how to deal with her people. One can imagine how bewildered must have she been when she heard this voice. It must have taken her a while before the advice had sunk in. Having seen God's provision, she must have felt reassured of God's support. She must have realized that she had the proof of her chastity, a newly born baby who speaks, *"Then she came to her own people, carrying him. They said, 'Mary, you have certainly done an unprecedented thing. Sister of Aaron, your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot. She pointed to him. They said, 'How can we talk to a young boy in the cradle?' He said, 'I am indeed a servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet; and He made me blessed wherever I may be, and enjoined upon me prayers and almsgiving so long as I remain alive; (He) made me kind to my mother, and He did not make me rebellious or miserable. Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised to life.'"* When she brought her baby to her people, they chastised her for having had a baby out of wedlock. They did not imagine how a virgin who was dedicated to the service the temple can do a thing like that. She came from a good home and she was chaste. Then they were surprised by her request to speak to the baby, but their surprise must have been greater when they heard him actually speak. Jesus (PBUH) made it clear that he was neither a God nor a son of God as claimed by some, but he was a prophet and a servant of God. He was blessed by God who commanded him to be kind to his mother and to establish prayer and almsgiving as long as he lived. So he was a human being with a limited span of life. He was born, he will die, and he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment. The verses do not report the people's response to Jesus' (PBUH) statement. However, the episode ends by a statement of the lesson to be learnt from the event, *"That is Jesus, son of Mary. (This is) a statement of the truth concerning which they dispute. It is not befitting to God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is. Verily God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve (worship) Him. That is the right path."* It is not befitting to the majesty of God that He would have a son. Mortals need children for their lineage to continue and weak people need children to support them in their fights. God is infinite and is powerful. If He says to a thing "Be" it will happen. Jesus (PBUH) made a clear and unequivocal statement, *"Verily God is my Lord and your Lord. So serve (worship) Him. That is the right path."*

*"But parties from among them disagreed with each other,"* The emperor Constantine convened the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea. The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the nature of Jesus (PBUH). The attendees had different points of view regarding the nature of Jesus (PBUH) and they argued vehemently among themselves about this issue. Those who adopted a view that deviated from the doctrine of the Oneness of God were warned, *"Woe to those who disbelieved – from the scene of a tremendous Day."* During their lives they neither listened to nor used their eyes to see the truth when the listening and seeing would have been beneficial. On the Day of Judgment their listening and their sight will be very sharp but they will be listening and hearing humiliating things, *"How clear will they see and hear on the Day they will appear*

*before Us, but the wrongdoers today are in manifest error.”*

*“And warn them of the Day of anguish when the case has been decided. Now they are in a state of heedlessness, and they do not believe. It is We who will inherit the earth, and all those who are on it, and to Us they shall be returned.”* Warn them that on the Day of Judgment, the day that will be full of anguish, there anguish will be of little avail. On that Day they will see the consequence of their heedlessness. Everything will return to God, the only Heir.

### **Verses 41 to 65:**

- 41. And mention in the Book (the story of) Abraham. He was a man of truth, a prophet.*
- 42. When he said to his father, “My father, why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, and will not benefit you in the least;*
- 43. My father, indeed there has come to me knowledge which has not come to you, therefore follow me, I will guide you to an even path;*
- 44. My father, do not worship Satan. Indeed, Satan is a rebel against (God) the Lord of Mercy.*
- 45. My father, I fear that a torment from the Lord of Mercy should afflict you and you become a companion of Satan.”*
- 46. He (the father) said, “Abraham, do you reject my gods? If you do not desist, I shall certainly stone you. Leave me for a long while.”*
- 47. Abraham said, “Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. He is to me Most Gracious.*
- 48. And I will leave you and those whom you invoke besides God. I will call on my Lord and trust that my prayer is not in vain.”*
- 49. When he left them and those whom they worshipped besides God, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each one of them We made a prophet.*
- 50. And We bestowed of Our mercy on them, and We granted them a high and true renown.*
- 51. And mention in the Book Moses. He was indeed chosen, and he was a messenger (and) a prophet.*
- 52. And we called him from the right side of Mount (Sinai), and brought him near to Us.*
- 53. And, out of Our mercy, We gave him his brother Aaron, (also) a prophet.*
- 54. And mention in the Book Ishmael. He was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of God), a prophet.*
- 55. He enjoined on his people prayers and almsgiving. He was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord.*
- 56. And mention in the Book Idris. He was a man of truth, (and) a prophet.*
- 57. And We raised him to a lofty station.*
- 58. Those were some of the prophets on whom God did bestow His Blessing, of the posterity of Adam, and of those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the revelations of (God) Lord of Mercy were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostration, adoring and weeping.*

59. *Now a later generation has succeeded them. They ruined worship and followed sensual desires, so they going to meet perdition.*
60. *Except those who repent and believe, and do good deeds, these will enter the garden and will not be wronged in the least;*
61. *Gardens of Eden, which the Lord of Mercy promised his servants in the unseen. His promise is ever sure of fulfilment.*
62. *They will hear therein no idle talk, but only peace; and therein they have sustenance both mornings and evenings.*
63. *Such is the garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who are God conscious.*
64. *(The angels say), "We do not descend except by the command of your Lord. To Him belong what is before us and what is behind us, and what is in between. Your Lord never forgets.*
65. *The Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is in between them; so worship Him, and persevere in His worship. Do you know of any who is worthy of the same Name as He?" (19: 41 – 65)*

In the previous section the story of Jesus (PBUH) was narrated in which the myth of God's son has been refuted. Now we move to the story of another prophet, Prophet Abraham (PBUH) which also deals with the myth of associating partners with God. The following verses describe Prophet Abraham's (PBUH) character, emphasizing the trait of contentment and his gentle nature. The dialogue with his stubborn father reflects his gentle nature. The Quran describes him as a man of truth and a prophet. This description is a true depiction of his character, "*And mention in the Book (the story of) Abraham. He was a man of truth, a prophet. When he said to his father, 'My father, why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, and will not benefit you in the least;'*" He spoke to his father in a very gentle tone trying to guide him to the goodness of guidance. He addressed his father in an endearing way, "*My father.*" He questioned his father religious practices, pointing to the fact that idols which do not hear nor see are not worthy of being worshipped. He then followed his question with a statement about the knowledge that he received but his father did not have, "*My father, indeed there has come to me knowledge which has not come to you, therefore follow me, I will guide you to an even path;*" This knowledge which came from God made the young Abraham (PBUH) see the truth. It is not unheard of that an older man would follow the guidance of a more knowledgeable but younger man. Abraham continued to explain the risk of following Satan, "*My father, do not worship Satan. Indeed, Satan is a rebel against (God) the Lord of Mercy. My father, I fear that a torment from the Lord of Mercy should afflict you and you become a companion of Satan.*" Satan seduces people to worship idols. The worship of idols is tantamount to the worship of Satan. Satan disobeyed God. Abraham (PBUH) warned his father that his religious practices will incur the wrath of God. God will punish him by making him a follower and supporter of Satan. God's guidance is a blessing; following and supporting Satan will deprive a person of this blessing. These kind and gentle words did not reach the hard hearted father. Kindness is countered by a threat, "*He (the father) said, 'Abraham, do you reject my gods? If you do not desist, I shall certainly stone you. Leave me for a long while.'*" His father expressed his amazement that Abraham (PBUH) had the audacity to request him to abandon idol worship. He even threatened that he would stone him if he persisted. But Abraham (PBUH), being the gentle and kind son,

does not lose his patience and his kindness, *“Abraham said, ‘Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. He is to me Most Gracious. And I will leave you and those whom you invoke besides God. I will call on my Lord and trust that my prayer is not in vain.’”* Abraham’s (PBUH) response was quite peaceful, he did not blame his father nor did he argue with him. He even told him that he will pray God to forgive him and to guide him to the straight path. Abraham (PBUH) promised to stay away from his people and their bad religious practices and to continue to worship God alone. All what Abraham (PBUH) was asking from God was to bestow His blessings on him.

God did not leave Abraham (PBUH) alone when he abandoned his people, *“When he left them and those whom they worshipped besides God, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each one of them We made a prophet. And We bestowed of Our mercy on them, and We granted them a high and true renown.”* Isaac (PBUH) was Abraham’s (PBUH) son and Jacob (PBUH) was his grandson. Abraham (PBUH) raised the two of them according to his religious practices. This gift from God was a mercy that He bestowed on Abraham (PBUH) and his progeny. They were respected by their people.

From among Abraham’s (PBUH) progeny Moses is mentioned, *“And mention in the Book Moses. He was indeed chosen, and he was a messenger (and) a prophet. And we called him from the right side of Mount (Sinai), and brought him near to Us. And, out of Our mercy, We gave him his brother Aaron, (also) a prophet.”* The Quran states that Moses (PBUH) was chosen by God. He was also a prophet and a messenger of God. A prophet is a person who receives a revelation from God but is not assigned the task to call people to his religion, while a messenger is assigned the task of delivering the message to his people. God assigned a number of prophets from the Children of Israel after the time of Moses (PBUH) and entrusted them with the task of applying the laws of the Torah.

God spoke to Moses (PBUH) when he was on the Mount of Sinai. This was an honor that was exclusive to Moses (PBUH). We believe in the truth of the statement that God spoke to Moses (PBUH) but we have no way of knowing how this communication took place. God bestowed His mercy on Moses (PBUH) by responding favourably to his request to appoint his brother Aaron (PBUH) a prophet to support Moses (PBUH) in his mission.

The second branch of Abraham’s (PBUH) progeny was then mentioned, *“And mention in the Book Ishmael. He was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of God), a prophet. He enjoined on his people prayers and almsgiving. He was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord.”* Ishmael (PBUH) was reputed for honoring his promises.

Finally, Prophet Idris (PBUH) is mentioned, *“And mention in the Book Idris. He was a man of truth, (and) a prophet. And We raised him to a lofty station.”* It is not known what time period Prophet Idris (PBUH) lived in. The Quran simply described him as a man of truth and a prophet.



*“Those were some of the prophets on whom God did bestow His Blessing, of the posterity of Adam, and of those whom We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the revelations of (God) Lord of Mercy were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostration, adoring and weeping. Now a later generation has succeeded them. They ruined worship and followed sensual desires, so they going to meet perdition.”* The narrative stops at milestones in the history of the prophets that God sent to guide the humanity. They were Adam’s (PBUH) progeny, some were the progeny of those who believed with Noah (PBUH), some were from the progeny of Abraham and Jacob (PBUT). These prophets together with those who followed them had this unique trait that, *“Whenever the revelations of (God) Lord of Mercy were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostration, adoring and weeping.”* But after these people who were extremely conscious of their Lord came other generations of people who went astray. They will be punished. However, the door of repentance will always be open for those who wish to repent, *“Except those who repent and believe, and do good deeds, these will enter the garden and will not be wronged in the least; Gardens of Eden, which the Lord of Mercy promised his servants in the unseen. His promise is ever sure of fulfilment. They will hear therein no idle talk, but only peace; and therein they have sustenance both mornings and evenings. Such is the garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who are God conscious.”* True repentance is the basis for the renewal of faith and performing good deeds. God promised those who repent the Garden of Eden. God’s promise is always fulfilled. In the gardens of Eden there will be neither idle talk nor arguments. An atmosphere of peace and comfort will prevail. Provisions will be given in abundance. This will be the reward for those who remain conscious of God.

*“(The angels say), ‘We do not descend except by the command of your Lord. To Him belong what is before us and what is behind us, and what is in between. Your Lord never forgets. The Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and of all that is in between them; so worship Him, and persevere in His worship. Do you know of any who is worthy of the same Name as He?’”* Several stories mentioned that this verse was revealed in connection with Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) impatience when Gabriel (PBUH) was late in coming. God commanded Gabriel (PBUH) to tell the Prophet (PBUH) that the angels move according to the command of God. God has sole control over them. God does not forget. He sends His revelation according to His plan. He is the Lord of heavens and earth so the Prophet should persevere in worshipping Him. God’s worship in Islam does not only consist of the rituals but it goes beyond this to encompass all human activities. Islam is a way of life that requires the human being to be continuously conscious of God. Each and every thought, feeling, emotion, movement, and activity should be made while being conscious of God.

## **Verses 66 to 98:**

66. *Humankind says, “When I am dead, shall I then be raised up alive?”*
67. *Does not humankind call to mind that We created him before, when he was nothing?*
68. *So, by your Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together, and the devils, then We shall bring them, crouching, around hell.*
69. *Then We will certainly drag out from every sect all those who were most stubborn in rebellion to the Lord of Mercy.*

70. *And We certainly know best those who are most worthy of being burned therein.*
71. *There is not one of you but shall approach it. That is an unavoidable decree of your Lord.*
72. *Then We shall save those who were God conscious, and We shall leave the wrongdoers therein, crouching.*
73. *When Our clear revelations are recited to them, the disbelievers say to those who believe, "Which of the two groups is better in position? And best in association?"*
74. *How many generations before them have we destroyed, who were more imposing in respect of gear and outward appearance.*
75. *Say, "As for him who is in error, the Lord of Mercy will verily prolong his span of life until, when they see that which they were promised, whether it be torment (in the world), or the Hour (of doom), they will know who is worse in position and who is weaker as an army.*
76. *And God increases in guidance those who seek guidance. The good deeds which endure are better in your Lord's sight for reward, and better for resort.*
77. *Have you then seen the (sort of) human being who rejects Our revelations, yet says, "I shall certainly be given wealth and children?"*
78. *Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the Lord of Mercy?*
79. *Nay, We shall record what he says, and We shall add and add to his torment.*
80. *To Us shall return all that he talks of and he shall appear, single and alone, before Us.*
81. *And they have taken (for worship) gods other than God, to give them power and glory.*
82. *Instead, they shall reject their worship, and become adversaries against them.*
83. *Do you not see that We sent the devils against the disbelievers, to incite them with fury?*
84. *Therefore, do not be in haste against them; We only countdown to them the number (of days).*
85. *On the day when We shall gather the God conscious to the Lord of Mercy, as a goodly company.*
86. *And We shall drive the sinners to Hell, like thirsty cattle driven down to water.*
87. *None shall have the power of intercession, except him who has made a covenant with his Lord.*
88. *They say, "The Lord of Mercy has begotten a son."*
89. *Certainly you have made an abominable assertion.*
90. *Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins,*
91. *That they ascribed a son to the Lord of Mercy.*
92. *For it is not befitting to the majesty of the Lord of Mercy that He should beget a son.*
93. *Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant.*
94. *Verily, He took an account of them (all), and has numbered them (all) exactly.*
95. *And each one of them will come, single and alone, to Him on the Day of Judgment.*
96. *On those who believe and do good deeds, the Lord of Mercy will bestow love.*
97. *So have We made the (Quran) easy in your own tongue, that with it you may give glad tidings to the God conscious, and warnings to people given to contention.*
98. *And how many generations before them have We destroyed? Can you find a single one of them (now) or hear (so much as) a whisper of them? (19: 66 – 98)*

The verses describe a scene of a human being wondering about the concept of resurrection, *“Humankind says, ‘When I am dead, shall I then be raised up alive?’”* This was a question that was raised by many people over the span of many generations of humanity. The question expresses a rejection of the concept of resurrection. The rejection shows that humankind is oblivious to how he was brought to being. Where was he? What was he? He was not there but he came to being. Resurrection is easier to imagine than the first creation, *“Does not humankind call to mind that We created him before, when he was nothing?”* God is certainly able to resurrect not only all human beings but also those devils who used to whisper to them and to tempt them, *“So, by your Lord, without doubt, We shall gather them together, and the devils, then We shall bring them, crouching, around hell.”* They will be gathered and will be made to kneel around Hell fire in a humiliating posture. Their leaders in tyranny will be pulled and dragged out, *“Then We will certainly drag out from every sect all those who were most stubborn in rebellion to the Lord of Mercy.”* God knows who is the most deserving of His punishment, *“And We certainly know best those who are worthiest of being burned therein.”* The believers will witness this terrifying scene, *“There is not one of you but shall approach it. That is an unavoidable decree of your Lord.”* Then those who were God conscious will be saved and the wrongdoers will be left kneeling there, *“Then We shall save those who were God conscious, and We shall leave the wrongdoers therein, crouching.”*

The verses move from the scene of the Day of Judgement to a scene in this worldly life. This is a scene where the disbelievers look upon the believers in disdain and brag about their wealth and power, *“When Our clear revelations are recited to them, the disbelievers say to those who believe, ‘Which of the two groups is better in position? And best in association?’”* The rich and powerful gather together to celebrate and boast their worldly possessions; posing the greatest temptation for others. On the other side the believers are modest and steadfast. They call people to join the procession of the belief in God. They do not have money to tempt people with nor do they have glamour to dazzle them; they only have their faith to offer. Their route entails hard work which leads to God.

The same scene repeated itself at the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when the chiefs of Quraish looked upon the poor believers in disdain. They used their worldly material standards to determine who is better among people. They posed the question, *“Which of the two groups is better in position? And best in association?”* Who is better in position, the rich and powerful disbelievers or the poor and weak believers? God reminded the idolaters Arabs of those who posed that question before them. Their wealth and power did not avail them anything, *“How many generations before them have we destroyed, who were more imposing in respect of gear and outward appearance.”*

God then commanded His prophet to challenge the disbelievers, *“Say, ‘As for him who is in error, the Lord of Mercy will verily prolong his span of life until, when they see that which they were promised, whether it be torment (in the world), or the Hour (of doom), they will know who is worse in position and who is weaker as an army.’”* Let them claim that they are more guided than those who followed you (Muhammad). God will certainly let those who chose misguidance to indulge in their lost way and He will increase the guidance for those who believe, *“And God increases in guidance those who seek guidance. The good deeds which endure are better in your*

*Lord's sight for reward, and better for resort.”*

*“Have you then seen the (sort of) human being who rejects Our revelations, yet says, ‘I shall certainly be given wealth and children?’”* The verse portrays an example of the audacity of the disbelievers. It has been narrated that this verse was revealed in relation to a specific event, which involved one of the believers by the name of Khabab bin Al-Arrat (RA). He said, *“I was a blacksmith. A man by the name of Al-‘Ass bin Wael owed me a sum of money. I came to him to ask for my money, he said that he would not repay his debt to me until I denounce Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and reject his faith. I replied that I would never reject Muhammad’s (PBUH) faith even after you die and you are resurrected again. Al-‘Ass answered sarcastically that I should wait until he dies and is resurrected, then he would pay his debt to me.”* The verse addressed such people sarcastically, wondering if they truly knew the unseen, or did they have a covenant with God, *“Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the Lord of Mercy?”* A firm answer to the disbelievers’ claim is given. It is an answer full of rebuke, *“Nay, We shall record what he says, and We shall add and add to his torment.”* Everything will be recorded no one will be able to dispute the record. God will take their wealth and children and on the Day of Judgement they will come alone without wealth, children, or support of any kind, *“To Us shall return all that he talks of and he shall appear before Us bare and alone.”*

*“And they have taken (for worship) gods other than God, to give them power and glory. Instead, they shall reject their worship, and become adversaries against them. Do you not see that We sent the devils against the disbelievers, to incite them with fury? Therefore, do not be in haste against them; We only countdown to them the number (of days). On the day when We shall gather the God conscious to the Lord of mercy, as a goodly company. And We shall drive the sinners to Hell, like thirsty cattle driven down to water, none shall have the power of intercession, except him who has made a covenant with his Lord.”* The disbelievers worshipped idols, the angels, or jinn thinking that their gods will give them honor and will support them in life. However, on the Day of Judgement these gods will denounce the disbelievers. Then the verse addresses the Prophet (PBUH) asking him to be patient. God is giving them a short reprieve. All their deeds are recorded and counted accurately. They will be held responsible for what they committed during their lives on earth. On the other hand, the believers will be honored. The believers will be led in a procession to meet their Lord, while the disbelievers will be driven like cattle to Hell fire. Only those who did good deeds will have the power of intercession. Those who did good deeds will receive what God promised them. They will get their reward in full; God never breaks His promise.

The verses move to another false claim, *“They say, ‘The Lord of Mercy has begotten a son.’”* This is truly, *“an abominable assertion.”* The whole universe abhors this false claim; it erupts expressing its anger, *“Whereby the heavens are almost torn, and the earth is split asunder and the mountains fall in ruins, that they ascribed a son to the Lord of Mercy. For it is not consonant with the majesty of the Lord of Mercy that He should beget a son.”*

An unequivocal statement is made in response, *“Not one of the beings in the heavens and the earth but must come to the Lord of Mercy as a servant. Verily, He took an account of them (all), and has numbered them (all) exactly. And each one of them will come, single and alone, to Him on the Day of Judgment.”* All beings in the heavens and earth are God’s servants. They will come to their Lord in submission. He neither has an associate nor a son. None of the beings of the heaven and earth will be able to escape this gathering. There is an accurate account of all of them. They will all come to the gathering individually bare of any help or support. Each one has his/her deeds to account for personally.

But those who believed and did good deeds will receive God’s blessings, *“On those who believe and do good deeds, the Lord of Mercy will bestow love.”* The Love of God will touch their souls and will fill their hearts with tranquility. God’s love will over flow and fill the whole universe.

It has been narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *“When God loves one of His servants, He would say to Gabriel, ‘Gabriel, I love this person.’ Gabriel will also love this person and will call those in heaven saying, ‘God loves this person, so you should also love him/her.’ Those in heaven will then love that person. And the people on the earth will accept him/her. However, when God hates one of His servants, He would say to Gabriel, ‘Gabriel I hate this person.’ Gabriel will also hate this person and will call those in heaven saying, ‘God hates this person, so you should also hate him/her.’ Those in heaven will then hate that person. And the people on the earth will also hate him/her.”*

The previous verses brought glad tidings to the believers and a warning to the disbelievers. This is the objective of this Quran. God has made this Quran easy to understand, *“So have We made the (Quran) easy in your own tongue, that with it you may give glad tidings to the God conscious, and warnings to people given to contention.”*

The Sura ends with a scene that exhorts the heart to reflect and the inner conscious to tremble, *“And how many generations before them have We destroyed? Can you find a single one of them (now) or hear (so much as) a whisper of them?”*