

# The Great Messengers

HAZRAT ZAKARIYA عليه السلام



Published By:



**DARUL IHSAN**  
HUMANITARIAN CENTRE  
GUIDANCE • UBUNTU • EMPOWERMENT

# HAZRAT ZAKARIYA عليه السلام

Zakariya عليه السلام is mentioned by name seven times in the Qur'an in four Surahs. He is mentioned by name in one Surah as being amongst the prophets and in the other three more details are mentioned about his life.

## Lineage

The Zakariya mentioned in the Torah is not the Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام mentioned in the Qur'an. The Zakariya (Zachariah) mentioned in the Torah lived during the reign of Darius. The Torah states, "It was in the 8th month of Darius's second year that the word of God reached Zachariah, the son of Barachias (Barkhiyah), who was the son of Addo (also spelt Ido)."

The Persian King Darius lived approximately 500 years before Hazrat Isa عليه السلام and ascended the throne of Persia in the year 521 B.C. The Zakariya referred to in the Qur'an was Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام, who was the guardian of Hazrat Isa's عليه السلام mother Maryam (Radiyahallahu Anha). He was therefore a contemporary of Hazrat Isa عليه السلام and also the father of Hazrat Yahya عليه السلام.

Historians differ about the name of the father of Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام. Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Rahimahullah), Allamah ibn Katheer (Rahimahullah) and the historian Ibn Asakir have listed various opinions. What is certain, however, is that he was from amongst the descendants of Hazrat Sulayman عليه السلام.

## His Noble Life

Some parts of the life of Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام have been mentioned in the Qur'an and much has also been reported in the books of history. There were priestly men from each tribe of the Bani Israeel who were specially appointed to enact the rites that took place in Masjidul Aqsa. These men were greatly revered by the people and took turns

to do their duties. Amongst them was Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام, who is listed amongst the high-ranking messengers عليهم السلام in the Qur'an.

Allamah ibn Katheer (Rahimahullah) states that Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام was indeed from the progeny of Hazrat Dawud عليه السلام and his wife Eesha (Elizabeth) was from the progeny of Hazrat Harun عليه السلام.

It has always been the practice of the messengers to earn their own living even so that the people should never have to bear the burden of supporting them. It is for this reason that the Qur'an quotes them as saying to the people, "I do not ask you for any payment for this (for preaching Tawheed to you). My payment (reward) is the responsibility of Allah, the Rabb of the universe".

A Hadith related from Hazrat Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه makes it evident that Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام earned his living as a carpenter.

## Guardian of Masjid Aqsa

There was a pious man from the progeny of Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام by the name of Imraan bin Naashi. He and his wife Hanna bint Faaqood were pious people but had no children. She therefore made a vow to devote the child she bears to the service of the Masjid. When a daughter was born to her, her husband had already passed away. The child therefore had to be handed over in custody to one of the guardians appointed to serve the Masjid. The guardians clamoured to have custody of this blessed little girl, so lots had to be drawn to decide who will have the privilege. Each time lots were drawn, it was drawn in favour of Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام. He was also best suited to be her guardian because his wife Eesha (Elizabeth) was the real sister of Hanna. Hazrat Maryam عليها السلام therefore grew up in the care of her maternal aunt.

When Hazrat Maryam عليها السلام came of age of understanding, Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام allocated a room close to the Masjid for her to use as a place of seclusion for the purpose of Ibadah and from where she could go to spend time with her aunt Hazrat Zakariya's عليه السلام wife. One day he

noticed that there was fruit in her room, which was not in season. When he asked her where the fruit had come from, she replied that it was from Allah, Who provides as He pleases (and is not restricted to seasons).

## Du'a for Children

The years had rolled on and taken their toll on Zakariyah عليه السلام. He was now old and bent with age, in his seventies. Despite his feebleness, he went to the Masjid daily to deliver his sermons. Zakariyah عليه السلام was not wealthy, but he was always ready to help those in need. His one disappointment in life was that he had no children, for his wife was barren and there appeared to be no hope of them ever having a child. This worried him, for he feared there was no one after him to carry out his work. The people needed a strong leader, for it they were left on their own, they would move away from Allah's teachings and change the Holy Laws to suit themselves.

During one of his visits to the masjid, he went to check on Maryam (Radiyah Anha), who was living in a secluded room of the temple. He was surprised to find that Allah provided fresh out of season fruit in her room. Besides him, no one had entry to her room. This completely contradicted the norms. When he inquired, she told him that the fruit was from Allah. She found it every morning. But why was he so surprised, she asked him. Did he not know that Allah provides without measure for whom He wills?

This noble girl had opened his eyes to a startling idea. Could he not ask his Lord to bless him with a child in his old age? Even if his wife was past childbearing age, nothing was impossible for his Gracious Lord!

It was then that he made du'a to Allah saying, "O my Rabb! My bones have weakened (aged) and my hair has turned white because of old age. I have never (before) been unfortunate (unsuccessful) in my du'a to You (I therefore have great hopes that this du'a will also be accepted). I fear for my relatives after me (I fear that they may forsake the Deen after I die). My wife is barren (unable to bear

children), so grant me an heir (a son to help me in propagating the Deen), who can inherit (my knowledge) from me and inherit from the family of Ya'qub ﷺ (so that he can guide my people if they stray from their Deen). And, O my Rabb, make him beloved unto You, (by making him a person who practises the knowledge of Deen that he possesses)".

The du'a of a Nabi is never self-centred. This du'a of Hazrat Zakariya ﷺ was made for the benefit of his people since they required someone to continue the work of reformation and Da'wah. This du'a was accepted by Allah and an angel delivered the good news to him when he was engaged in Ibadah that he shall have a son by the name of Yahya. Hazrat Zakariya ﷺ asked the angel how the du'a will reach fulfilment since this could be done by his wife made fertile or by him regaining the vigour of youth. The angel advised that the details were not important, but that it was certain that the child will be born because Allah had decreed it. Furthermore, such a task, as strange as it may seem, was very easy for Allah to accomplish.

## Request for a Sign

Hazrat Zakariya ﷺ then asked Allah to show him a sign to indicate that the process has begun. Allah then informed him that the sign would be when he will be unable to talk to anyone for three days. His only means of communication during the time will be by making gestures to people. When this sign appeared, he was to increase glorifying and praising Allah.

The day came when he was unable to speak for three days. The people assumed that he was fasting since a fast of silence was a common form of Ibadah during those days. During these days he continued to exert himself in Ibadah and also managed to instruct the people using gestures and signs. This occurrence was a source of tremendous joy for him as well as for the Bani Israeel because it would ensure that they have someone after him to continue his efforts.

## A Sunnah of the Messengers

Despite the fact that the messengers were the most pious and abstinent of people, they also desired to have children as all people do. However, it is not just an empty desire for children that one should have, but a desire for pious children. It is for this reason that Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام prayed for pure (pious) children who will fulfil all the injunctions and responsibilities of Deen. People who believe that having wives and children conflicts with piety are misinformed.

### A Fine Point

The incident of Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام being blessed with a child reveals that Allah gives those who ask from Him. However, Allah also grants His favours to those who do not ask from. If Allah gave only when people asked, then there would have been tremendous shortages in this world and people's lives would be severely constrained.

When Hazrat Zakariya عليه السلام made du'a for a child at the end of his life, his focus was upon the power of Allah and not on the apparent means and resources, since these were all opposed to his wish.

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Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre provides education, guidance, social, empowerment and welfare services to the community. In providing this service, we adopt a holistic approach, that gives due importance to basic needs as well as human rights and dignity of those that we serve.

## Founding Philosophy

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre is a multi-purpose, humanitarian-services providing organisation. 'Ihsan' means compassion towards mankind and to act with excellence. The Centre was established in the year 2000 with the primary objective of serving humanity and alleviating poverty and hardship locally and abroad. Since its inception, it has developed and established many humanitarian projects and provides a variety of free services to the community.

## Key Objectives

One of the key objectives of the Centre is to promote a better understanding of humanity and peace, thereby serving as a bridge-builder between faiths and communities. Through guidance, Ubuntu and empowerment, the organisation hopes to train and develop the youth to become torch bearers of hope, peace and compassion to humanity.

