

THE TAFSĪR OF SŪRAH MARYAM
Commentary of Sūrah Maryam
(The 19th Chapter of the Glorious Qur'ān)

SHEIKH ABDUR RAHEEM

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Alhamdulillah, by the grace of Almighty Allāh ﷻ, the tafsīr of Surah Maryam is now ready. May Allāh ﷻ accept the efforts put into this publication and may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with everyone who has contributed towards it.

This tafsīr has been through a long journey. My Ḥaḍhrat, Sheikhul Hadith, Hadhrat Maulānā Yūsuf Motala Ṣāhib (May Allāh ﷻ grant him a long life) instructed me to write the tafsīr of Sūrah Yūsuf which I did, he then instructed me to write the tafsīr of Sūrah Nūḥ which was published several years ago and now finally I have also been given the opportunity to write the tafsīr of this sūrah.

It was nearly completed a few years ago. The work was then left behind. Some of it went missing too. Then my dear friend, (Maulana) Belal Isakjee literally pushed me into completing it.

Sūrah Maryam has many lessons in it, firstly, it has stories of many Prophets. Stories that strengthen the hearts make our beliefs stronger and also teach us many lessons that we can refer to.

Secondly, the main theme of this sūrah revolves around Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ and his mother, Maryam ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ explains to us in the most beautiful way possible that He did not take Prophet 'Īsā ﷺ as His son; He is not in need of any offspring. All the prophets humbled themselves before Allāh ﷻ including Ḥaḍhrat 'Īsā ﷺ. They all knew that Allāh ﷻ was their ultimate goal. To Him they turned in supplication. In His oneness they had firm belief. To the tawheed, they would always invite people. They offered their ṣalāh and zakāh for seeking His pleasure.

This is a lesson which humanity still needs today. This is the only way to attract Allāh's ﷻ attention and this is the only path to solve all our problems. Read on and correct your faith. May the Almighty

grant us complete Īmān and keep us steadfast upon the correct beliefs. May He also give us the opportunity to write more books in the future. Āmīn.

I did not make my own translation. I used Tafsīr-e-Mājidī on most occasions. Sometimes, I combined it with A.Y.Ali's translation. Later on, Mufti A.H. Ilyas's translation from South Africa became available and so I used that.

For tafsīr, I used Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ma'āriful Qur'ān, Khandelwi and Tafsīr Mājidī on a regular basis. Occasionally, other available tafsīr books were also taken into account.

May Allāh ﷻ shower His mercy upon all those who did the khidmah of the Holy Qur'ān.

May Allāh ﷻ reward all those who helped in typesetting, page making, printing and publishing of this treatise. May Allāh ﷻ give us the tawfīq to do more. Āmīn.

Verse 4

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ

شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا (٤)

He said, “O My Lord! Surely the bones in my body have weakened, and the head is blazing with the fire of white hair, (i.e. I have become weak and old), however, I have never been disappointed in my prayer to You.

“Surely the bones have weakened in my body.” Zakariyyā’s ﷺ secret prayer starts with these words. First, he mentions that the bones of his body have weakened. Bones are the pillars of the body. When they become weak, the rest of the body follows.

Secondly, he says, ***“The head is blazing with the fire of white hair.”*** There is great eloquence in these words. There is a difference between saying ‘*the fire was blazing in the house*’ and ‘*the house was blazing with fire.*’ Similarly, instead of saying ‘*my hair has become grey,*’ the words chosen here portray the eloquence of the prayer. These words draw special attention and mercy upon the person who is supplicating.

Thirdly, he says, ***“I have never been disappointed in my prayer to You...”*** This means that in the past whenever I needed You, You were there for me. You have never rejected my prayers. That was my youth. Now I am old, weak and frail. I am more in need of Your assistance. I have high hopes in your grace O My Lord, that You will not reject me at this time of need.

Imām Qurṭubī رحمته الله says that it is Mustahab (desirable) to show humility and mention the bounties of Allāh ﷻ when praying to Him. The first two sentences are to show humility and the third is to express recognition and gratitude of Allāh’s ﷻ favours. One person in need said to a generous person, ‘*I am the same person to whom you showed kindness at such and such a time.*’ The generous man replied, ‘*Welcome to the person who came to us through us.*’ Then he fulfilled his need. ²³

Verse 5

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي

عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا (٥)

And I fear my relatives after I am gone, and my wife is barren, so grant me an heir by Thy grace.

“And I fear my relatives after me.” Nasafī رحمته الله writes: This refers to his brothers and his cousins. He feared that they might alter and distort the religion and would not prove to be proper successors for him. So he supplicated for a child of his own who would follow in his footsteps in the revival of the true deen.

Here the word مَوَالِيَ has been used. It is the plural of ‘Mawlā.’ The roots of this word are ‘Wilāyah’ (to be friends with, to become a leader), ‘Walāyah’ (to be in charge, manage, to have power, be in command) and ‘Walā’ (Devotion, loyalty). Keeping this in mind, the word ‘Mawlā’ has several meanings. In his footnotes on ‘Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī’, Ḥaḍhrat Maulānā Idrīs Kāndhalwī رحمته الله narrated seventeen meanings for this word. A few are mentioned here: (1) The Lord (2) The owner (3) The leader (4) The benefactor (5) The one who freed a slave (6) The helper, Aid (7) The one who loves (8) The follower (9) The neighbor (10) Cousin (11) One who has entered a peace treaty (12) Client (13) Slave (14) Freed slave.

²³ Qurṭubī 11:77

The word ‘*Mawlā*’ has been used for many different meanings in the Quran and Hadith, for example:

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلٰى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَاَنَّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ لَا مَوْلٰى لَهُمْ ﴿٢٤﴾

“This is because Allāh is the Guardian of those who believed, whereas the disbelievers have no protector.”²⁴

وَرُدُّوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقِّ ﴿٢٥﴾

“And they were taken back to Allāh, their truthful owner.”²⁵

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوْلٰى مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدٰنِ وَالْاَقْرَبٰنِ ﴿٢٦﴾

“And for each (man and woman) We have appointed heirs for that (inheritance) which parents and relatives leave.”²⁶

In the Ḥadīth, it is said:

من كنت مولاة فعلى مولاة اللهم وال من والاه وعاد من عاداه

“Whoever’s beloved I am, ‘Alī is also his beloved, O Allāh! Befriend he who befriends ‘Alī and bear enmity to he who holds enmity with ‘Alī.”

In another Ḥadīth:

لا يقول احدكم اطعم ربك وضىء ربك

ولكن يقول سيدى ومولاى

“None of you should say, ‘Feed your Rabb, assist your Rabb in performing wudhū, rather one should say, ‘My master and my benefactor.’

²⁴ Sūrah 47, Verse 11

²⁵ Sūrah 10, Verse 30

²⁶ Sūrah 4, Verse 33

This is in reference to a slave addressing his master – so he should use the terms ‘sayyed’ or ‘maula’ but he should not use ‘Rabb’.

In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to Zaid ibn Ḥārithah ؓ :

انت اخونا ومولانا

“You are our brother and our friend.”

This proves that using the words سيدنا ومولانا with the name of our Prophet ﷺ is allowed because he is our leader and our master. In fact Ramalī ash-Shāfī and Ibn ‘Ābidīn al-Shāmi have declared it ‘*mustahab*’ to use these titles for our beloved Prophet ﷺ. Similarly, the title ‘*Maulānā*’ has been in use for our religious leaders for a longtime. In this modern day and age, some ignorant people make fun of this title as well as of those to whom this title is given. These people should check their Īmān for they are at a risk of losing it. May Allāh ﷻ help them and guide them. Āmīn.

Verse 6

يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ ۗ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا (٦)

Who can inherit from me and inherit from the family of Ya’qūb, and make him O My Lord! Well-pleasing.

“Grant me an heir who shall inherit from me.....” Zakariyyā ؑ was not a wealthy person. He was a carpenter who had to work hard for his daily bread. Furthermore, he was a Prophet of Allāh ﷻ. The rule is that after the death of a prophet, all his assets must be distributed in charity. In a Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth it is narrated: