

For Fast 18

Chapter 18

- 23 And do not say of anything: I will do that tomorrow,
24 unless Allah please. And remember your Lord when you forget and say: Maybe my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this.

Note: The words here, “unless Allah please”, give rise to the phrase *in-sha’-Allah* (if Allah please). Though this guidance is general, there seems to be a special prophetic reference to the Holy Prophet’s Flight and his taking refuge in a cave. He had entirely to trust in Allah, Who was to bring it about as He thought best for him.

In the words “a nearer course” it was also indicated to the Holy Prophet that while the persecution of early Christians lasted three centuries, the Muslims would not be persecuted for long.

- 28 And keep yourself (O Prophet) with those *who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill*, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world’s life. And do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful of Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case exceeds due bounds.

Note: The Holy Prophet is told to keep company with those who turn to Allah, those who have *moral* wealth and beauty, and not to be attracted towards those who have *material* wealth and possessions. We too should follow the same guidance. Note that by saying “those who call on their Lord morning and evening” are meant those whose *hearts* are mindful of Allah’s remembrance, who remember Allah from their hearts, and who refrain from low desires, since the opposite type of person is described as one whose *heart* is unmindful of God and follows his low desire.

Chapter 19

- 2 A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zacharias —
3 when he called upon his Lord, crying in secret.
4 He said: My Lord, my bones are weakened, and my head flares with whiteness (of hair), and I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to You, my Lord.
5 And I fear my kinsfolk after me, and my wife is barren, so grant me from Yourself an heir
6 who should inherit me and inherit from the Children of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, acceptable (to You).
7 O Zacharias, We give you good news of a boy, whose name is John: We have not made before anyone his equal.

Note: V. 3 —The word for “call” and “cry” here is the same in Arabic — *nida*. “Crying” here just means calling. It was a secret prayer, i.e. unheard by others.

V. 4 — Zacharias was never *unsuccessful* in his prayer. This is his attitude of mind, whether all his prayers were literally accepted or not.

V. 5 — He fears that the relatives he was leaving behind would not be righteous.

V. 6 — His true heir, for whose birth he prays, should be one who inherits his qualities and his mission of preaching the truth, and who is accepted by God. Prophets only ever prayed for being given offspring who would continue their mission.

V. 7 — Zacharias is informed of the fulfilment of his prayer.

Mary gives birth to Jesus:

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 had been a thing quite forgotten!

24 So a voice came to her from beneath her: Do not grieve, surely your Lord has provided a stream beneath you.

25 And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates.

Note: These verses show that Mary gave birth to Jesus in the normal way in which babies are born. She suffered pangs of childbirth. As she was travelling, revelation from God pointed her attention to the direction where something to eat and drink were available.

V. 25 — The mention of fresh, ripe dates shows that this was sometime in the late summer or autumn, indicating that Jesus was not born in December.
