

Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ

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First written for Dar al Islam Institute Alumni News Letter, Spring 1999

The name of Mary (Maryam), appears 34 times in the Qur'an. Twenty-three (23) times it is mentioned after the name of Jesus and eleven (11) times in direct description of her own experience. She is described as one of the two "Examples", among all the women in history, for the believers (Surah Al Tahrim (66), Aayah 11). Those who uttered words of "grave slander" against her were condemned by setting a seal on their heart "for Blasphemy" (Surah Al Nisa' (4), Aayah 156). She is described as having been born on the prayer of her mother (called the 'woman of 'Imran' and believed to be a descendent of Moses or Aaron) who wanted a son to dedicate to the service of the Temple. When a girl was born, the concern of Mary's mother was allayed by a message from God telling her that this is a special girl who would serve the Temple well. As Mary grew older, there was competition amongst the elders as to who would be responsible for her care during her service in the Temple. Zakariyya, a relative of Mary, was selected. Mary was in seclusion in an "eastern" chamber of the Temple when an angle appeared to inform her of the coming birth of Jesus. An entire chapter in the Qur'an is named after her.

The following verses are a selection from the Qur'an describing the story of Maryam.

A. Surah Maryam (19), Aayat 16-21:

Relate in the Book (the story) of Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: "I seek refuge from thee to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear God". He said: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son" She said: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me and I am not unchaste?" He said: "So (it will be): thy Lord saith, 'That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a Mercy from Us' It is a matter (so) decreed."

B. Surah Aal 'Imran (3), Aayat 35-37 and 42-47:

35. Behold! A woman of 'Imran said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate unto Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: so accept this of me: for Thou hearest and knowest all things."

36. When she was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!"—and God knew best what she brought forth— "And no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from the Evil One the Rejected".

37. Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty: to the care of Zakariyya was she assigned. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?" She said: "From God: for God provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure".

42. Behold! The angel said: “O Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee—chosen thee above the women of all nations”.
43. “O Mary! Worship thy Lord devoutly; prostrate thyself, and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down”.
44. This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which We reveal unto thee (O Apostle!) by inspiration: thou wast not with them when they cast lots with arrows, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary: nor wast thou with them when they disputed (the point).
45. Behold! The angel said: “O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God;
46. He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity, and he shall be (of the company) of the righteous”.
47. She said: “O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?”
He said: “even so; God createth what He willeth; when He hath decreed a plan He but saith to it ‘Be’ and it is!”
- C. Surah Al Nisa’ (4), Aayah 156:
That they rejected Faith; that they uttered against Mary a grave false charge.
- D. Surah Al Anbiyaa (21), Aayah 91:
And (remember) her who guarded her chastity: We breathed into her of Our Spirit, and We made her and her son a Sign for all peoples.
- E. We note: that the Qur’an talks about Jesus being created of “a Word of God” and from God breathing into Mary “of Our Spirit”. Similar words are used for the creation of Adam.

For example, Surah Al Sajda (32), Aayahs 7, 8, 9 say of the first human:

7. He Who made everything which He created Most Good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay,
8. And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature a fluid despised.
9. But He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks do ye give.