

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, not the Mother of God

Of the twenty-five texts in the Quran where Jesus is mentioned, in sixteen of them he is called ‘*The son of Maryam (Mary)*’, whereas only one text in the Gospels, has referred to Jesus as ‘*Son of Mary*’ (Mark 6:3). Quranically the appellation ‘*Son of Mary*’ is added to the name of Jesus to denote the humanity of Jesus on the one hand, and to acknowledge his miraculous birth without a father, on the other. The biblical text in Mark, however, reports that it was scathingly used by those who rejected his prophethood.

Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, however, pay a special homage and veneration to Mary. They refer to Mary as ‘*The Mother of God*’ (Theotokos). They not only believe that she is the mediatrix (A female mediator) of all graces, but they also believe in Mariolatry, a term used since the Reformation to mean the worship of Mary.

Thus, recitation of the rosary has been among the most popular expressions of Marian devotion. The internet encyclopaedia of Encarta explains the history of the divinity of Mary as follows:

“As early as the 2nd century, Christians venerated Mary by calling her Mother of God, a title that primarily stresses the divinity of Jesus. During the controversies of the 4th century concerning the divine and human natures of Jesus, the Greek title theotókos (Mother of God) came to be used for Mary in devotional and theological writing.

Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (Present-day Istanbul), contested this usage, insisting that Mary was mother of Christ, not of God. In 431, the Council of Ephesus condemned Nestorianism and solemnly affirmed that Mary is to be called theotókos, a title that has been used since that time in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.”

It is nearly impossible to find a Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Church wherein it is not filled with carved or molten images and/or statues of Jesus and Mary. Most of these images and statues are placed in the prominent places of the Prayer Halls of the churches for veneration and worship. Most of the

congregation will kneel, worship, venerate and pray before these images as an inherited tradition.

They refer to Jesus as their God and to the Virgin Mary as the *'Mother of God'*! Many devoted Catholics also have statues of Mary in their homes for her veneration. The Protestants, however, who separated from the Church of Rome in the 16th century, do not believe in the divinity of Mary.

Almighty Allah in denying the divinity of Jesus and his mother narrates some of the human aspects of their lives, such that ***"They both used to eat food"*** (5:75) while God does not eat. Almighty Allah, also, in a rhetorical question narrates the renunciation of such titles from Prophet Jesus himself.

"And when Allah will (on the Day of Judgement) say: O Jesus; son of Mary! Did you say unto men: Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He will say: Glory be to you! It was not for me to say what I had no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly, only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden. Never did I say to them aught except what You did command me to say: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them; and You are a Witness to all things." (5: 116-117)

As indicated in the above Ayaat, Prophet Jesus begins his answer firstly with the glorification of God as an expression of monotheism and then affirms that never would he countenance such sacrilege – stating that he spoke only that which Allah had commanded; That he, while living with his community would ensure that they did not worship other than the Almighty God.

Moreover, even the present Bible quotes from Jesus in his response to the devil: *"It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him alone."* (Luke 4:8) However, some four centuries after his ascension, deviation occurred among his followers.

In general, the Jews and the Christians have all confused the position of the holy Mary in their own peculiar ways. The Jews accused her of committing illegal sexual intercourse. The holy Quran regarding their horrible accusation states:

"And because of their (Jews) disbelief and uttering against Mary a grave false charge." (4: 156)

Whilst among the Christians, the Catholics have exalted her, calling her The Mother of God! They have also pronounced worship of her as an article of faith.

However, she holds no special status for the Protestants other than being the mother of Jesus.

[The Virtues of Mary in Islam](#)

1. One of the Four Best Ladies

Of all ladies of the world, Mary is one of the four most honourable. It is narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S): *“Verily, Allah has chosen from among women four ladies: Asiyah the daughter of Mezahim, the wife of Pharaoh; Maryam the mother of Jesus; Khadijah the daughter of Khowaylid, and Fatima the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad who is the most honourable of them all.”*

2. Her Name

Maryam (Mary in English) is the only female name mentioned in the entire Quran. Her name is repeated sixteen times in the Quran and Chapter nineteen of the Quran is named after her. Mary is a Hebrew name (Miriam) which literally means a female worshipper and devotee.

3. The First Female Divinely Chosen

Holy Mary’s spiritual status, although she was not a prophetess, was higher than some of the prophets such as her guardian Prophet Zachariah insomuch as she had been chosen by Almighty Allah for an immaculate task, in the same way in which He had chosen His messengers.

4. Virgin Mother

Mary was also uniquely chosen over all the women of the world for the miraculous birth of her holy son whilst still a virgin, never having been touched by any man. It is regarding this virtue that the Almighty God states,

“O Mary! Verily Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of mankind.” (3:42)

Mary is the only lady in history who, without human male intervention in any form, became pregnant with Jesus.

5. Pure

Mary was also the first *‘Batool’* meaning pure from menstruating. God had made her pure from menstruating so that she could devote her entire time to the service of the temple. Among Christian sects, most of the Protestants do not believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

6. The First Sinless Female (Ma’soomah)

Almighty Allah had purified her from any sin in as much as Prophets were purified and hence, she was the first impeccable or immaculate female in human history.

7. The Devout Female

As we shall learn from her biography, Mary`s mother had made a vow before her birth to dedicate her to the service of the temple and hence she was named Maryam. She herself fulfilled the vow throughout her entire life being the person she was. According with a Prophetic tradition, Jesus resurrected his mother and asked if she would like to live on earth again. Holy Mary replied, *“Yes but only if I may offer prayers during the cold nights of winter and fast the long days of summer.”*

8. Fostered by the Almighty Through Prophet Zachariah

According with the holy Quran, Almighty God made Mary grow in a goodly manner under the care of Prophet Zachariah (3:37). Her sustenance had also been provided from heaven as witnessed on many an occasion by Prophet Zachariah.

“Every time he (Zachariah) entered her praying place to visit her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: O Mary! From where have you got this? She said, this is from Allah, verily Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit.” (3:37)

9. Al-Mohadatheh (A female spoken to by Angels)

The Holy Quran clearly states that the angels would descend and communicate with the Virgin Mary. Thus, on more than one occasion quoting from the angels addressing her we read in the Quran,

“When the angels said O Mary...” (3:42,45)

10. Mostajabatul Da`wah (A female whose prayers are granted)

Her Titles

Mary is also referred to in the Quran as the Sign of Allah (23:50), Siddiqeh (A very truth telling female) (66:12, 5:75), Qaniteh (An obedient lady to Allah) (66:12), Mohsineh (A chaste woman) (66:12), Mohadatheh (Spoken to by Angels) (3:42), Ma`soomeh (Divinely protected and immaculate from sin) (3:42).

Her Biography

According with Islamic traditions Hannah (Anna) and Ashyaa' (Elizabeth) were two sisters. The first married Imran who was one of the outstanding figures among the Israelites. Some traditions suggest that he was even a prophet or a saint. Her sister Ashyah was married to Prophet Zachariah. Hannah was barren and for several years after her marriage, did not fall pregnant.

One day, while sitting under a tree, she observed a bird on the top of the tree feeding her chicks. The

scene brought her to tears and maternal love brought pain to her heart. Simultaneously, from the depth of her soul she invoked Almighty God to grant her a child. Her sincere invocation was accepted and soon after she fell pregnant with Maryam.

At the same time, Almighty God revealed to her husband Imran that there would be a blessed boy in his family who would heal the terminally ill and would revive the dead by the permission of God.

He will also be a Messenger of God to the Israelites. In fact, the inspiration was referring to their grandson, Jesus, but once Imran shared the inspiration with his wife she assumed that she was pregnant with a baby boy. Thus, as a gesture of thanksgiving she made a vow to free her baby for the cause of God and to be the servant of God in His House.

“When the wife of Imran said, O my Lord! I have vowed to You what is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services (free from all worldly work), so accept this from me. Verily You are the All-Hearer the All-Knower.” (3:35)

The service of the temple was a masculine task and therefore when the baby born was a girl, she was baffled as to what she should do. She had already made a vow to free her baby for the service of the temple and at the same time no girl would be accepted by the temple authorities for any type of service. Nevertheless, she called her baby girl Maryam (A devout female) and prayed to God to keep her and her offspring aloof from Satan the Outcast.

Maryam’s father had died prior to her birth and therefore once she was old enough her mother took her to the temple and offered her as a gift to be the servant of the House of God. She also requested that one of the Rabbis or the Saints should look after her upbringing. Her beauty and innocence provoked competition amongst the Rabbis as to who should be her guardian.

Finally, they agreed that they would cast lots with their pens as to which of them should be given the position of the career of Mary. By the will of God, it so happened that Zachariah won the lot and he became the custodian of Maryam.

In fact, he was the most suitable person to look after the Virgin Mary for not only was he a Prophet but he was also her uncle. Prophet Zachariah enjoyed a special high respect in the temple and hence Maryam’s devotion to the temple by his request was accepted by other authorities.

“So, her Lord accepted her with goodly acceptance. He (Allah) made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zachariah.” (3:37)

Thus, Maryam grew up in the temple indulged in the worshipping of God and engulfed in her devotion. Maryam was only nine years of age when she was fasting throughout the days and praying throughout the nights. She soon became renowned for her devotion, chastity and piety more so than all the men and women of her time.

During this period of her life her sustenance was provided from heaven. The holy Quran regarding this blessing states:

“Every time he (Zachariah) entered her Mehrab (Worshipping room) to visit her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: O Mary! From where have you got this? She said: This is from Allah. Verily, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills without limit.” (3:37)

Her devotion elevated her to such a height that soon she was in the presence of angels. In the holy Quran, we read,

“And when the angels said O Mary. Verily Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary! Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord and prostrate yourself, and bow down along with those (angels) who bow down.” (3:42-43)

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