

The Miraculous Virgin Conception

One day as she was praying in her isolated place of worship, suddenly angels appeared addressing her;

“O Mary! Verily Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name shall be the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary held in honour in this world and in the hereafter and will be one of those near to Allah. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in manhood, and he will be one of the righteous.” (3:45–46)

The term ‘Word’ in the above ayah refers to the miraculous birth of Jesus by the divine command of “Be” as will be quoted from the Quran. Nonetheless, the amazing news of having a baby whilst a virgin and having never been touched by any man was overwhelming. She invoked the Almighty and said,

“O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?!” (3:47)

Allah revealed to her,

“So (it will be) for Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He says to it only ‘Be’ and it is.” (3:37)

The Almighty then revealed to her that her son would be a Messenger of Allah to the Israelites and he will be empowered with the miracles of healing those born blind and the lepers and bringing the dead back to life. At the time of this inspiration, Mary would have assumed that the glad tiding would be a far prophecy and she would be the mother of a Messenger of God after her possible marriage.

Time went by and the fulfilment of the promised glad tiding arrived. As a normal practice she had withdrawn into seclusion from her family to a place facing East for worship where she had also placed a screen to hide herself from people for her private devotion. In absolute privacy and seclusion, whilst immersed in an ocean of adoration, the Almighty sent His angel to Mary thus informing of her conception of Jesus.

“Then We sent to her Our Ruh (Spirit), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all

respects.” (19:17)

Upon seeing the strange man at her private place, the resemblance of chastity and modesty felt overwhelming. She immediately said to him,

“Verily I seek refuge with the Most Gracious (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah.” (19:18)

The strange man (The angel) responded,

“I am only a messenger from your Lord to gift you a righteous son.” (19:19)

Mary then felt at ease, however, she immediately developed another fear as to how she could have a child whilst she was not married. Thus, she said to the angel,

“How can I have a son when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?” (19:20)

Mary at that stage was thinking of the natural way of conceiving which could be either legitimate or illegitimate. She knew that she would not fall into either of the two categories and at the same time no one had ever heard of a girl conceiving without being touched by a man. The angel of God calmed her down with his response, he said,

“So (it will be), your Lord said ‘That is easy for Me and We wish to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter already decreed (by Allah).’ (19:21)

Mary was convinced that this was another miraculous intervention of the Almighty. The same God who had made her barren mother pregnant and has been feeding her with heavenly fruits has now decreed to miraculously make her conceive a baby boy who would be a Messenger of God. Mary had previously experienced communication of the angels with her and thus had no doubt of this divine communication.

Mary in the Furnace of Trials

Soon after the incident, Mary felt that she was pregnant and withdrew to a far-off place away from people where she could be alone with her child. While she was away, the term prior to birth was completed.

“The pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date palm.” (19:23)

Mary was alone in the wilderness with no relatives or midwives around her, nor yet any food or water. She said to herself,

“Would that I had died before this and had been forgotten and out of sight.” (19:23)

The anxiety of what was to follow this most unusual of births on the one hand, and the pains of labour on the other, overwhelmed her.

At the threshold of her trial, divine Mercy showered upon her. Suddenly, she heard a voice cry unto her from beneath her saying,

“Grieve you not! Your Lord has provided a water stream under you.” (19:24)

The heavenly voice also asked her to look at the dried tree above her how it has turned into a fruit bearing date palm. The voice continued,

“And shake the trunk of the date palm towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you. So, eat and drink and be happy.” (19:25–26)

As regarding the social consequences of her childbirth, the voice said that she did not need to talk rather that her child will defend himself.

“If you see any human being say (motion), verily I have vowed a fast unto the Most Gracious so I shall not speak to any human being on this day.” (19:26)

On seeing this beautiful child, foretold and gifted by the Almighty, Mary was pleased that she had become the mother of a Messenger of God. However, at the same time she was worried about the reaction of her people. *“Who will believe me that no man has touched me?”*

Thought this most virtuous of women. *“How can I explain this to the Rabbis of the temple and even Zachariah and his wife? I have been, all my life known as the most chaste and modest lady. What if people accuse me of being unchaste?”* Mary whispered to herself.

A Talking New Born

Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and finally returned to her people. Upon her arrival people were stunned to see her with an infant. Those who knew about her chastity and modesty were struck with awe and others who were jealous of her began to sneer. They said,

“O Mary, indeed you have brought a strange thing.” (19:27)

It was customary among the Jews that when they wanted to praise the virtues of a person they would refer to them as the brother/sister of Aaron, therefore they addressed Mary,

“O sister of Aaron! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!” (19:28)

Accusations and questions were thrown at her from all directions. She quietly pointed to her baby, meaning that the infant would explain himself. People were even more outraged and assumed that she was mocking them, thus, with contempt they questioned,

“How can we talk to one who is a child in the crib?” (19:29)

To everyone`s amazement the infant began to speak. He said,

“Verily, I am a slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I be, and has enjoined on me prayer and charity as long I live. And dutiful to my mother and made me not arrogant, unblessed. And peace be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive. Such is Jesus son of Mary. It is a statement of truth about which they dispute.” (19:30–33)

The Miraculous Virgin Conception in Judeo-Christian Tradition

The Jews have denied, entirely, the miraculous virgin conception of Prophet Jesus. They have, even further, accused the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) of unchaste.

Christians hold various stands regarding this miracle. Disbelief in the virgin-birth has been referred to by many early Christian writers such as Origen as *‘Madness and blasphemy’*, and *‘Heresy’* by St. Augustine. Modern liberal Christian theologians, however, have generally rejected the virgin conception and classify it as a religious myth. They argue that St. Paul has never mentioned the virgin birth anywhere in his writings.

Also, the genealogy of Jesus according with Matthew, it is stated that he is of the seed of David (Matthew 1) and this is confirmed by St. Paul in Romans 1. Though in both Matthew (1) and Luke (3) it is shown that he is from the line of David, but through Joseph, not Mary. Among the Gospels only Matthew and Luke dealt with the story of the virgin birth, though with some differences.

Some theologians argue that the original text of the third Gospel (Luke) began with our present third chapter, the first two chapters being a later addition. The same is suggested for the first chapter of Matthew.

Most Catholics, however, still believe in the doctrine of the virgin conception of Jesus. Once again, thanks be to the Almighty Allah that in His Glorious Quran He revealed the true story of the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) with no obscurity.

Science & the Miraculous Virgin Conception

The concept of the miraculous virgin-birth of Prophet Jesus is an article of faith for the Muslims. Faithful people acknowledge the fact that the laws of nature are created by the Almighty and are subjugated to His Might. Thus, miracles occur in nature by the Will of Allah. The creation of Jesus without a father is easier to comprehend than the creation of Adam from soil. Thus, the holy Quran states:

“Verily, the likeness of Jesus before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust,

then (He) said to him: “Be!” and he was.” (3:59)

Nonetheless, modern embryology has proven this so-called ancient fable to be a possible fact. The term for the virgin birth is referred to in biology as *‘Parthenogenesis’*. Parthenogenesis is the production of new individuals from virgin females by means of ova which have the power of developing without the intervention of the male element. It is the production, without fertilization.

This type of production occurs naturally in some insects and reptiles. Until the new discovery in April 2004 embryologists used to believe that it does not naturally occur in mammals. On 22 April 2004 ABC broadcasted news of the world’s first mammalian virgin birth. A team of Japanese and Korean scientists announced that their laboratory mouse, reproduced without the aid of a father.

The detailed news was also printed in the 22 April 2004 issue of the renowned scientific journal of Nature. The Australian embryologist, Professor Patrick Tam, who co-wrote a commentary in the same issue of the journal said: *“I was amazed because this hasn’t been possible before.”*

The Immaculate Conception

The Roman Catholic Church has proclaimed a dogma called *‘Immaculate Conception’* since the 19th century. According with this dogma Mary was conceived without original sin. They further teach that Mary was also freed from actual sin by a special grace of God.

Catholics confirm their dogma with a couple of Israelite hadith narrated in Bukhari and Muslim. According with these hadith Abu-Hurayrah allegedly narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (S): *“No children of Adam are born but Satan has touched them, save Mary and her son!”*

The finger print of Satan is so obvious in these hadith. The implication of the above forged Hadith is that all the Messengers of God including Prophet Muhammad (S) as well as any other human being are all born sinful except Prophet Jesus and his mother.

This narration is in absolute contradiction of various Ayaat of the Quran as well as that of common sense. It is also obviously the cultivation of the Christian dogma of Original Sin. I refuted the dogma of *‘Original Sin’* in the story of Prophet Adam.

The Date and the Place of the Birth of Jesus

According with the Gospel of Luke, Mary and Joseph left Galilee for Bethlehem to register for tax. *“While they were in Bethlehem her days were completed to give birth, and she bore her first-born son, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”* (2:7)

A *‘Manger’* is a trough or a container usually in a barn or stable from which cattle or horses feed.

Although Luke is not explicit as to whether, they were accommodated in a stable or not, for two reasons this is the most likely. Firstly, Luke indicates that there was no room for them in the inn and secondly the baby is placed in a trough. Therefore, according with Luke Jesus is believed to be born in a stable beside the cattle!

The Quran, as is its usual style, does not mention any details of the place and the date of the birth of Prophet Jesus. The place of the labour, however, according with the Quran was under a dried date-palm tree that miraculously became a fruit-bearing tree for Mary. Thus, the birth of Jesus must have been in an outdoor place somewhere away from the town, out of sight of her people. The holy Quran mentions no human companion with Mary at the time of her delivery.

The Date of Jesus' Birth

The Gospels date the birth of Jesus somewhat 10 years apart. Matthew in his second chapter states that Jesus was born when Herod (The King of Judea) was still alive, no later than 3 or 4 BC. Luke, on the other hand, in his second chapter states that Jesus was born when Quirinius was the governor of Syria, which did not take place until at least ten years after Herod's death.

Christians in justification of the above contradiction suggest that Quirinius was appointed twice as a governor. Unfortunately, history does not support this suggestion. Thus, historically there is no evidence that so far 2004 years have passed since the birth of Prophet Jesus.

Was Jesus Born on 25 December?

Most Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on the 25 December of every year except the Armenian Christians who celebrate it on 6 January. Unfortunately, neither of the above celebrations have biblical proof.

According with Luke at the time of the birth of Jesus, the shepherds tended their flocks in the fields at night. *"Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields."* (Luke2:8)

December in Bethlehem is in the middle of a freezing, cold and rainy winter and no shepherds would have kept their flock outdoors. Keeping the flocks in the field would be more possible sometime in August or September. The holy Quran also confirms that the birth of Jesus could not be in the winter season, since Mary gave birth outdoors under a date-palm.

According with a Tradition narrated from Imam Ridha' (a.s) Prophet Jesus was born on 25 of Thol-Qa'dah which will be on 26 June. The month of June in Bethlehem is the middle of the summer season and hence the above date in the Hadith of Imam Ridha' (a.s) is in accordance with the Quran and the Biblical record.

In the northern hemisphere, the last days of December are the longest nights of the year, the most

suitable time for parties. The celebration of the birth of Jesus on 25 December and the New Year five nights afterward would give the best opportunities for the Christians to get caught up in parties, drinking, driving and an increase of the death toll. At best, Christmas is mainly a period of celebrations and a family time. This, it must be acknowledged, has made Christmas more of a holiday than a holy day!

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