



UNIS

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The Pious Ladies of Islam

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS (PEACE BE UPON THEM):

Muslims love Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary receives the most attention of any woman mentioned in the Quran even though all the Prophets with the exception of Adam had mothers. Of the Quran's 114 chapters, she is among the eight people who have a chapter named after them. The nineteenth chapter of the Quran is named after her, Mariam. Mariam means Mary in Arabic. The third chapter in the Quran is named after her father, Imran.. Mary (peace be upon her) is the only woman specifically named in the Quran. An authentic Haddith states that the Prophet said, "The superiority of 'Aisha to other ladies is like the superiority of Tharid (i.e. meat and bread dish) to other meals. Many men reached the level of perfection, but no woman reached such a level except Mary, the daughter of Imran and Asia, the wife of Pharaoh." (Bukhari 4.643). Indeed, both Mary and Pharaoh's wife are an example (Quran 66:11-12). The Virgin Mary plays a very significant role in Islam. She is an example and a sign for all people.

In the Quran, Mary's story begins while she is still in her mother's womb. The mother of Mary, said: "O my Lord! I do dedicate into Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: So accept this of me: For Thou hearest and knowest all things." (Quran 3:35).

She wanted the baby in her womb to serve only the Creator. When Mary was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female

child!" (Quran 3:36). She had expected her baby to be a male child who would grow up to be a scholar or religious leader. However, God had a better plan. God is the best of planners. Quran 3:36 continues "...and God knew best what she brought forth- 'And no wise is the male like the female. I have named her Mariam, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from Satan, the Rejected.'" Mariam literally means "maidservant of God."

In Quran 3:37, God states that He accepted Mary as her mother had asked. He made Mary grow in purity and beauty. She was assigned to the care of a priest named Zacharias. This is interesting considering few women were given this opportunity. "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.'" (Quran 3:37). Upon hearing Mary's answer, "There did Zakariya pray to his Lord, saying: 'O my Lord! Grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure: for Thou art He that heareth prayer!'" (Quran 3:38).

Although his wife was barren and he was very old, God blesses Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth with John. John is known as "John the Baptist" in the Bible. Zacharias was skeptical after the angels announced John's birth. The response to his skepticism was "Doth God accomplish what He willeth" (Quran 3:40). John would become a noble and chaste Prophet as the angels had stated (Quran 3:39).

The Quran discusses Mary's miraculous conception as well. "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 her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects." (Quran 19:16-17). After seeing the angel, she said: "I seek refuge from thee to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear God." (Quran 19:18). The angel Gabriel responded: "Nay, I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a pure son." (Quran 19:19). Her next response is expected. She asked: "How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?" (Quran 19:20). The Angel Gabriel 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." (Quran 19:21). Mary then becomes pregnant.

Jesus is a Prophet and a Messenger. A Messenger is a Prophet who is given revelation from God. Whereas the Torah was revealed to Moses, the Gospel was revealed to Jesus. Messengers are a mercy, guidance, and sign from God. "And God will teach him (Jesus) the Book and Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel, and (appoint him) as a messenger to the Children of Israel, (with this message):

'I have come to you, with a Sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a

bird by God's leave. And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead into life, by God's leave; and I declare to you what ye eat, and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a Sign for you if ye did believe. (I have come to you) to attest the Torah which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you. I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear God, and obey me. It is God Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a Way that is straight." (Quran 3:48-51).

God appointed messengers to help us answer questions such as: What happens after I die? What's right and wrong? Does a supernatural world exist? What's the purpose of my creation? Jesus was calling people to the worship of only God. Only by God's leave was Jesus able to perform miracles.

"When Jesus found unbelief on their (the disciples) part he said: 'Who will be my helpers to (the work of) God?' Said the disciples: 'We are God's helpers: We believe in God, and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims.'" (Quran 3:52). After conceiving Jesus, Mary went away with the baby to a distant place (Quran 19:22). "And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She cried (in her anguish): 'Ah! would that I had died before this! would that I had been a thing forgotten!'" (Quran 19:23). "But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm-tree): 'Grieve not! for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee; And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree: It will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to (God) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being.'" (Quran 19:24-26).

Joseph, the magi, and manger are not mentioned in the Quran. God was Mary's only Provider. Muslims do not accept the virgin birth of Jesus as evidence of Jesus' divinity. "The similitude of Jesus before God is as

that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: 'Be.' And he was." (Quran 3:59). Adam's creation was even more miraculous because he was born without father and mother. When she brings the baby to her people, they said: "O Mary! truly a strange thing has thou brought! O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!" (Quran 19:27-8). Mary then points to the baby. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?" (Quran 19:29). Then a miracle occurs that is not mentioned in the Bible. In defense of his mother, Jesus said: "I am indeed a servant of God. He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; And He hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me Prayer and Charity as long as I live; (He hath made me) kind to my mother, and not overbearing or unblest; So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!" (Quran 19:30-33).

The virgin birth of Jesus was a sign. "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." (Quran 21:91). All previous Prophets confirmed the oneness of God, Tawheed. Whereas the Holy Trinity is the fundamental concept of God in Christianity, Tawheed is the fundamental concept of God in Islam. God exists independent of religion. Muslims do not believe in the concept of Holy Trinity (Quran 5:73). God is not Jesus (Quran 5:72). On the Day of Judgment, when Jesus is asked if he had called people to worship him and his mother as two gods, Jesus will say: "Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, Thou I know not what is in Thine. For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden." (Quran 5:116).

People should not worship any of God's creation, including Jesus and Mary. We must not assign any of God's creation His divine attributes and characteristics. "He is God the

Creator, the Maker, the Shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." (Qur'an 59:24).

Although God can do all things, He only does things that are consistent with His fundamental nature. Begetting a son is not consistent with God's magnificent nature (Quran 19:92, Quran 19:35). Consistent with His fundamental nature is forgiveness. Although Adam and Eve could no longer live in the Paradise, God forgave Adam and Eve for their sin after they sincerely repented (Quran 2:35-37). We are responsible for our own deeds and will not be punished for the deeds of another person (Quran 53:38-42). Therefore, Muslims reject the doctrine of original sin. Although Adam and Eve were punished, God would still be merciful by sending Guidance to mankind. "We said: 'Get down all of you from this place (the Paradise), then whenever there comes to you Guidance from Me, and whoever follows My Guidance, there shall be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.'" (Quran 2:38).

When people hear the term *Islam*, they naturally tend to think of the organized religion of Islam which started in the 7th century CE with prophet Mohammed. However, in Arabic the word *Islam* comes from the root "salema" which means peace, purity, submission, and obedience. In the religious sense, Islam means peace and purity achieved by submitting to the will of God and obedience to His law. *Muslims* are those who submit. Muslims believe that all those who submitted to the will of God in line with divine revelation received before the advent of formal Islam with prophet Mohammed, were themselves also Muslim. So coming from this understanding, Muslims believe that we are part of one continuing faith community with Jesus and Mary. Mary, Jesus, and the disciples were all "Muslims" because they submitted to God.

"Behold! the angels said: 'O Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee

- chosen thee above the women of all nations. O Mary! worship thy Lord devoutly: Prostrate thyself, and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down.” (Quran 3:42-43).

Another Prophet with a message similar to Jesus’ would later be born in Arabia in the sixth century. He also called people to the worship of only God. Although unable to read and write, Muhammad (peace be upon him) would recite beautiful verses of the Quran as they were revealed to him. The Quran is a beautiful miracle, a sign, a mercy, a warner, and a guidance for all people. Muhammad is the last Prophet from a line of Prophets that included Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them). All Prophets were models for righteous living. Muhammad’s sunnah, his sayings, example, and traditions, is also considered revelation. His sunnah is expressed in various books of Haddith.

“Indeed in the Messenger of God you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) God and the Last Day, and remembers God much.” (Quran 33:21).

God created all people to worship Him and to live life based on His teachings and guidance. “And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God’s favor on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth God make His Signs clear to you that ye may be guided.” (Quran 3:103).

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost.” (Quran 3:85).

We accomplish this by bearing witness to God’s oneness and accepting His final revelation in our daily lives. “O ye who believe! Fear God as He should

be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.” (Quran 3:102).

There is none worthy of worship but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.

THE STORY OF SACRIFICES OF WOMEN FOR ISLAM:

The companions of the prophet Muhammad (SAW) were the first people who believed in Allah and in the divine mission of Muhammad (pbuh), defending him and lending him their support. Among them were rich and poor, men and women, young and old, black and white, all ordinary people becoming extraordinary in earning their livings in their service and devotion to Allah. In service to Allah, they held nothing to be dear: neither their loves and lives, their prestige nor their wealth. The mission of the Companions was to carry the message of Islam to all humanity, and to accomplish this mission they exiled and separated from their families and loved ones. Allah Almighty therefore described the companions in the Quran: " But they never lost heart if they met with disaster in Allah's way, nor did they weaken (in will), nor give in." (Al-Imran:146) One of the greatest proprieties of the Companions was to understand the message of the Prophet (pbuh). In this way they were able to transmit Islam to the following generations as completely as they had received it from the Prophet. There is no space here for relating all of those virtuous qualities and deeds of the Companions. We will be discussing below few events of the women’s sacrifices in Islam.

THE STORY OF ASIYAH BINT MUZAHIM:

In the Quran the story of Asiyah Bint Muzahim is mentioned. She was the wife of Fir’awn (the Pharaoh). Fir’awn was the most tyrannical among the people of the earth and the most disbelieving. His wife was not affected by her husband’s disbelief, because she obeyed her Lord. She was a pious lady and bore many tests with patience and with hope in the mercy of Allah. The wife of Fir’awn was tortured under the sun and when

Fir’awn would finish the torture session, the angels would shade her with their wings. She used to pray “My Lord! Build for me a home with in Paradise, and save me from Fir’awn and his work, i.e. ‘deliver me from him, because I am innocent of his actions.” She was shown her house in Paradise. Fir’awn’s wife used to ask, ‘Who prevailed’ When she was told, ‘Musa and Harun prevailed’, she said, ‘I believe in the Lord of Musa and Harun.’ Fir’awn sent his aides to her and said to them, ‘Find the biggest stone. If she insists on keeping her faith, throw the stone on her, otherwise she is my wife.’ When they came to her, she looked up to the sky and was able to see her house in Paradise. She persisted on the faith and her soul was then captured. The stone was thrown on her lifeless body. The scholars mention that she was one of the women who reached a very high level in Islam.

STORY OF SUMAIYYAH:

Sumaiyyah (radhiallaho anha) is the mother of Ammar (radhiallaho anho) and wife of Yasir ([radhiallaho anho](#)). Just like her son and husband, she patiently bore the hardships in different forms in the cause of Islam. She would not dwindle in her love for and devotion to Islam in spite of all these afflictions. One day Sumaiyyah (radhiallaho anha) was standing when Abu-Jahl passed that way. He flung all sorts of dirty words at her and then put his spear through her private parts. She died on account of the wound. She is the first one to die for the cause of Islam.

AISHAH’S (THE WIFE OF THE PROPHET SAW) SPENDING IN THE PATH OF ALLAH:

Once Aishah (radhiallaho anha) recieved a gift of two bags containing 1,00,000 dirhams (currency of that time). She started distributing these among the poor till by the evening not a single dirham was left with her. She was keeping fast that day. Her maid servant brought her a loaf of bread and a little olive oil for Iftar and remarked. ‘I wish we had kept one darham for ourselves to get some meat for Iftar.’ Aishah

said: "Don't be sorry now. If you had told me at that time I would have perhaps given you one darham." Once she was fasting and had nothing for her Iftar except one piece of bread. A poor man came and begged for some food. She asked her maid to give him that piece. The maid said: "If I give him the piece of bread, there will be nothing left for your Iftar." She said: "Don't mind. Let him have the piece."

STORY OF FATIMAH THE DAUGHTER OF THE PROPHET

SAW: Ali (Radhiyallahu anho) once said to one of his pupils: "Shall I tell you the story of Fatimah (radhiyallahu anha) the dearest and the most loved daughter of the Prophet (SAW)?" When the pupil replied in the affirmative he said: "Fatimah (radhiyallahu anha) used to grind the grain herself which caused corns on her hand. She carried water for the house in a leather bag which caused scars on her breast. She cleaned the house herself which made her clothes dirty. Once some war-captives were brought to Madinah. I said to her, 'Go to the Prophet and request him for an assistant to help you in your home work.' She went to him but found many people around him. As she was very modest, she could not be bold enough to request the Prophet (SAW) in the presence of other people. Next day the Prophet (SAW) came to our house and said, 'Fatimah! What made you come to me yesterday? She felt shy and kept quiet. I said, 'O, Prophet of Allah! Fatimah has developed corn scars on her hands and breast on account of grinding and carrying water. She is constantly busy in cleaning the house and in other domestic job, causing her clothes to remain dirty. I informed her about the captives and advised her to go to you and request for a servant.' The Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wasalam) said, 'Fatimah! Fear Allah. Acquire Piety and keep doing your service to Allah and attending to your domestic jobs. When you go to bed recite *Subhanallah* (All Glory be to Allah) 33 times, *Alhamdulillah* (All Praise be to Allah) 33 times and *Allahoakbar* (Allah is the Greatest) 34 times. This you will find, more helpful

than an assistant. Fatimah (radhiyallahu anha) remarked, ' I am content with Allah and His Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasalam).'" This is known as Fatimah's tasbih.

THE STORY OF ZAINAB: Ummul Mominin Zainab (radhiyallahu anha) was a cousin of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasalam). She accepted Islam soon after its advent. Later she was married to the Prophet (SAW) himself. Barazah (radhiyallahu anha) narrates: "Umar (radhiyallahu anho) decided to pay annual allowance to the Ummahat - ul- Mominin from the Baitulmal. He sent 12000 darhams to Zainab (radhiyallahu anha) through me as her share. She thought that it was for all of them and said to me, ' Umar should have asked somebody else to distribute this money.' I said, ' It is the annual share for you alone.' She asked me to throw it in the corner of a room and cover it with a piece of cloth. Then she mentioned the names of some poor persons, widows and her relatives and asked me to give one handful to each of them. After I had distributed as desired, some money was still left under the cloth. I expressed a desire to have something for myself. She said, ' You take the rest.' I counted the money. It was eighty four darhams. Then she lifted her hands in prayer and said, 'O, Allah keep this money away from me for it brings temptation, 'She died before the allowance for the next year could be paid to her. When Umar (radhiyallahu anho) came to know of what she had done with the money he sent her another 1,000 darhams for her personal needs but even those she spent in no time. Although during the last portion of her life the Muslims were conquering territory after territory and wealth was pouring into Madinah yet she left no money or any wealth after her except a residential house. She was called Mawa-al-Masakin (refuge of the poor) due to her lavish spending in charity."

STORY OF ASMA-BINT - ABU BAKR: Asma (radhiyallahu anha) is the daughter of Abu Bakr (radhiyallahu anho), mother of Abdullah-bin- Zubair (radhiyallahu anho) and step-sister of

Aishah (radhiyallahu anha). She was the eighteenth person to embrace Islam. She was 27 years old at the time of Hijrat. After the migration from Mecca, when the Prophet (s.a.w) reached Madinah safely they sent Zaid (radhiyallahu anho) and some other Sahabah to bring their families to Mecca. Asma came to Madinah with Abu Bakr's family. When she reached Quba she gave birth to Abdullah-bin-Zubair (radhiyallahu anho) the first Muslim baby born since emigration. Asma (radhiyallahu anha) had a very large heart for spending in charity. In the beginning she used to spend with measure and weight. Once the Prophet (s.a.w) said to her: "O, Asma don't be so frugal. Spend in the path of Allah without measuring and without weighing. Spend as much as you can." After this she started spending most generously. She would advise her daughters and house maids: "Don't wait for any surplus or excess of requirements for spending in the path of Allah. As the requirements go on increasing the chances of having something excess will become more and more remote, and time for spending in the path of Allah will never come. Remember that you don't lose by spending in charity."

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Allah says in the Quran " By the Time. Verily Man is in loss, Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allah's Cause during preaching His Religion of Islamic Monotheism , etc.)".
(Al-Asr = The Time)

Assalamu Alakium

The brothers and sisters of UNIS wish you and your families a very Happy Eid Mubarak

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