

Muslimah: Maryam bint Imran

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is for Allah, the One and Only Rabb of all existence.

As an inexperienced writer in this realm of literature, I am given the chance to put my fingers to work again. In this issue, I choose to tell the story of Maryam bint Imran, mother of Isa bin Maryam also known by others as Virgin Mary as an inspiration for us all InshaAllah.

Maryam was the daughter of Hinah bint Faqoud and Imran, from a well-known and respected Jewish lineage. For years, Hinah awaited for the arrival of a child but to no avail. With sincere hope, she turned to Allah SWT and prayed to Him that He bless her and her husband with a child who in turn would be entrusted to the service of Allah SWT. As stated in the Quran, Allah says:

"(Remember) when the wife of 'Imran said: 'O my Lord! I have vowed to You what (the child that) is in my womb to be dedicated for your services (free from all worldly work and obligations; solely for your worship) so accept this from me. Verily you are the All-Hearer (You hear my Du'a) and the All-Knowing (and you know my sincere intention in fulfilling this vow).'"

Then when she gave birth to her (Maryam), she said 'O my Lord! I have given birth to a female child (Ibn Abbas states that the Jews only accepted males into dedicated service).' - And Allah knew better what she brought forth (He is the Creator), - 'And the male is not like the female, and I have named her Maryam*', and I seek refuge with You (Allah) for her and her offspring from the Shaytan (Satan), the outcast.'

So her Lord (Allah) accepted her with goodly acceptance. He made her grow in a good manner and put her under the care of Zakariyya (Prophet Zachary)." Ali-'Imran: 35-37
And thus, as the Ayah above has mentioned, Allah the All-Hearer and All-Knowing granted Hinah with a daughter, Maryam whom she gave to Prophet Zakariyya as her guardian. Truly, Maryam was a chosen one. Before she turned fourteen years old, Maryam was a waliyyah (a very pious woman with a special status). She became the best of the women in the world. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that the angels said Allah chose Maryam and preferred her to the other women of the world. Allah said:

"And (remember) when the angels said: 'O Maryam! Verily, Allah has chosen you, purified you (from Shirk and disbelief and sin), and chosen you above the woman of the 'Alameen (all creation during her time). O Maryam! Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord and prostrate yourself, and bow down along with those who bow down (to Him).'" Ali-'Imran: 42-43

As a woman who is pure from a man's touch and from any impurities, the conception of Isa was a clear sign of Allah's Greatness. Maryam was in a state of disbelief when she received the news of what was to happen. Jibraeel, who sent down the news, replied,

"So (it will be), your Lord has said, 'That is easy for Me (Allah)! And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter already decreed.'" Surah Maryam: 21

And so, she stayed in Jerusalem during the early stages of her pregnancy but as signs of it began to show, Maryam moved to Bethlehem, a secluded place, away from unwanted accusations from her people. She was scared and alone in the desert. The only one she could call on to help ease her pains of birth was Allah.

"So she conceived him, and she retired with him to a remote place. 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 and out of sight!" Surah Maryam: 22-23

And Allah assured her of His presence, "Then (the babe or Jibreel) cried unto her from below her saying: 'Grieve not, your Lord has provided you a stream of water beneath you. And shake the trunk of the date-palm tree towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe-dates upon you. So eat and drink and be glad. And if you see any human being say I have vowed a fast unto the Most Gracious (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day.'" Surah Maryam: 24-26

With the power and will of Allah, Maryam gave birth to Isa without the presence of another human being that day.

Now, it was time to return to Jerusalem. Holding her newborn in her arms, Maryam walked homeward, determined to face the challenges that were bound to come their way.

"And she came to her people with him, carrying him (with her). They said: O Maryam! surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Haroun! your father was not a bad man, nor, was your mother an unchaste woman. But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle?" Surah Maryam: 27-29

As one of the two women that Allah sets as examples in Surah al Tahrim, Maryam's perseverance in the face of adversity should be a motivation for us in our race for Allah's Rahmah, InshaAllah.

"And Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh: Behold she said: "O my Lord! Build for me, in nearness to Thee, a mansion in the Garden, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those that do wrong"; And Mary the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity; and We breathed into (her body) of Our spirit; and she testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and of His Revelations, and was one of the devout (servants)." Surah al Tahrim 11-12

*literally: pure maidservant of Allah

References:

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3. www.islamworld.net
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