

# THE QURANIC STORY OF MARY: DOES RETHINKING THE TEXT SUPPORT WOMEN PROPHETHOOD?

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**Abstrak:** Women prophethood has always been an alien concept to Islamic theology. According to modern as well as mediaeval mainstream Islamic schools of exegeses, jurisprudence and even according to everyday schools of fatwa: women are either too inferior, too weak, or even not pure enough to meet the requirements or handle the challenges associated with prophethood. However, rethinking the Quranic text, in isolation from mediaeval gender biased narrow preferences, proves this view to be wrong. In this paper I provide a unique linguistic analysis of the Quranic story of Maryam, the mother of Jesus and the only woman mentioned by name in Quran. Maryam as I argue, is acknowledged in Quran as a female prophet: chosen equally to all chosen men, i.e., male prophets and above all women. In addition, a logical analysis in favor of Maryam's prophethood will be provided. The juxtaposition of both evidence supports women prophethood.

**Keywords:** Women Prophethood, Quran, Maryam.

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## A. Introduction

Maryam, the mother of Jesus is the only women referred to by name in Quran. Not only was she repeatedly mentioned in Quran, a whole chapter is devoted to her and holds her name, which is chapter 19. In this paper, I carefully study what Quran tells us about this exceptional woman. To anticipate one conclusion, Maryam as supported by the Quranic text is a female prophet, chosen equally to all chosen men and prophets, and above all women.

## B. The Quranic Linguistic Evidence of Maryam's Prophethood

In Quran we read about Maryam as a chosen as well as a purified woman. As Quran confirms, Maryam was chosen in so many ways, first as we see in chapter 3, she descends from an anointed family, "*Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran*

*over the worlds*” (3:33)<sup>1</sup>. Then comes a special type of annotation for Maryam where she seems to have been anointed not once but twice: “*And when the angels said, “O Maryam, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.”*” (3:42)<sup>2</sup>.

One question that deserves to be asked here is regarding this repeated anointment of Maryam. But before we deal with the unexplained repetition in the verse, another linguistic peculiarity in the same verse is to be mentioned; because as Al-Sharawi accurately noticed, in the same verse the preposition “*ala*” which means “above” follows only the second type of anointment. In his interpretation of the verse and in his explanation to the absence of this preposition in the first anointment he says,

When God says “Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.” We find ourselves here in front of two kinds of anointment. The first was mentioned not followed by the word “*ala*” [which means above] and the second is followed by “*ala*”. What is meant by the first anointment is informing Maryam that she has been made special due to her faith and good manners, but since this anointment is void from any reference to “*ala*”, this means that she can share with others this type of anointment. [...] After that comes the second anointment, which says “and chosen you above the women of the world”, this means then the exclusion of men from this type of anointment; and this is because the reason the anointment is made for is not related to muscularity; since she out of all the women of the world will be exclusively the woman who will give birth to a baby without a male, no female will share her this ability.<sup>3</sup>

However, while we see this opinion accurately explaining the dual anointment process that can be sharable in one respect and exclusive in the other, Al-Sharawi doesn’t move with his discussion to its logical

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<sup>1</sup> <http://quran.com/33>

<sup>2</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

<sup>3</sup> Tafsir Al-Sharawi, 1997, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

conclusions; because if we agree that Maryam shares the special rank of other annotated human beings, the next logical question to be asked is who are those anointed human beings? And who can they be other than prophets! If unnecessary repetition is not a stylistic semantic tool in Quran, which is not the case, then the repetition must be referring to a two stage anointment process or to a special kind of anointment or purification, unique to Maryam.

Maryam was first chosen the way prophets are chosen; this stage of anointment places Maryam in a rank clearly equal to the rank of prophets. The next anointment which comes after purification is exclusive to women. This means that Maryam was chosen like all male prophets and she is neither superior nor inferior to any of them regarding this kind of anointment, but when we reach the second step of Maryam's anointment we see the text clearly placing her above a specific category, i.e., women of the worlds.

This means that Maryam was chosen like all chosen male prophets, but she still holds a unique rank as the best of all women of all times. What matters the most is the gender egalitarian reference in the first step of anointment that leaves no doubt to any sexist thinking that Maryam -due to her gender- is less than any anointed prophet. Furthermore, the fulfillment of this special anointment as we see in the same verse involves a third step which consists of a special process of purification that was left with no much explanation. However, what matters is the fact that this needed purification for a female to be able to miraculously conceive from no male comes after the successful initial process of anointment that makes Maryam equal to all anointed men.

In other words, as the verse asserts, there is nothing in the nature of Maryam as a woman that could prevent her from getting chosen similarly and equally to men. What she needed was a special purification not to enable her to be chosen equally to all chosen men, but to make her a one of a kind woman, and to make her superior to all women of all times. In other words, the purification was only needed to allow her to conceive from no male partner. But was this clear gender egalitarian message well appreciated by mainstream Islamic exegetes? Unfortunately as we will see, the majority of available Quranic interpretations will leave

behind this pioneer feminist revolution against the way women used to be thought of with no much reflection. As we read through Quranic interpretations, many times, the double step anointment process will be confused for one process and no effort will be made to provide an explanation to the repetition.

Alternatively, so many other times, sexist readings of the verse will completely overlook the rich content of it and jump to unjustifiable opposite conclusions. To see what I mean let's consider some readings of the verse. In tafsir Al-Tabari, we read, "*Maryam was locked in the church with a young man named Yousef. His parents mad him locked inside as a vow. They were both together there, and they used when getting out of water to go to the spring and bring some water*"<sup>4</sup>. In addition to this unjustified insertion of details not supported by the Quranic text -that never mentions Josef once-and in addition to neglecting the indication of the repetition, the anointment of Maryam was clearly restricted by Al-Tabari to women, as he says in his commentary,

The meaning of the saying, "has chosen you" refers to choosing you for obeying him and choosing you for his miracle. And the meaning of the saying, "purified you" means, purifying your religion from suspicions and impurities that can exist in the religions of women. The meaning of "has chosen you above the women of the worlds" means choosing you above the women of the time due to your obedience.<sup>5</sup>

In tafsir Al-Tabrasi, not only the predilection of Maryam appears to be with no intrinsic gender egalitarian content, also, the interpreter takes one step back by limiting Maryam's superiority only to women of her time and not to all women of all times as the verse seems to be clearly asserting. Alternatively, his interpretation nominates another woman to that one of a kind rank, namely, Fatima, the daughter of Muhammed. He says, "*Has chosen you above the women of the worlds*" means *the women of your time, because Fatima the daughter of the prophet is the lady of all worlds' women*"<sup>6</sup>. To

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<sup>4</sup> Tafsir Al-Tabari, 922, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Tafsir Al-Tabrasi, 1153, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

support his interpretation that clearly contradicts what is plainly stated in Quran, he resorts to the prophetic tradition by using the saying, *‘Khadija was preferred to women of my nation the way Maryam was preferred to women of the worlds’*.

Now, regardless of the many problems with the mentioned hadith, and the fact that this particular hadith is talking about Khadija and not Fatimah in the first place, in addition, the hadith that is cited by Al-Tabrasi to reach conclusions contrary to the verse is still asserting the same meaning of the verse, i.e., Maryam is preferred to all women of the worlds. If the hadith said that Maryam was preferred only to women of her time, then it should be cited as a good ground to oppose to the meaning clearly mentioned in the verse. This interpretation is not only an example of how the accuracy of the Quranic text was hijacked according to what I refer to as “the unauthenticated contrasting of Quran by Sunnah” which is commonly found in Quranic commentaries, rather, it doesn’t even make a good example of doing that, since the used Hadith was repeating the meaning of the verse and not contradicting it.

Even for exegetes who never failed to recognize that there must be a reason to be sought of this repetition of *“has chosen you”*, some suggested explanations totally detached from the gender egalitarian message of the verse in question, like Al-Razi who says, *“Since declaring a repetition is not appropriate, it is a must to say that the first anointment means all the good things and events that took place in her early life and that the second anointment means what took place lately in her life”*<sup>7</sup>. But if this was the case, I mean if the verse is merely indicating difference in time or a mere periodical order, then Quran would have used a specific linguistic tool to show that.

In other words, the verse would read something like: *“God has chosen you and purified you then has chosen you above the women of the worlds”*, instead of, *“God has chosen you and purified you and has chosen you above the women of the worlds”*. In tafsir Al-Mawardi<sup>8</sup>, again the successful distinction of two steps or types of anointment leaves behind any reference to gender equality. For him, the second anointment was mentioned either as a kind of affirmation of the first one, or as being made exclusively for

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<sup>7</sup> Tafsir Al-Razi, 1209, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

<sup>8</sup> Tafsir Al-Mawardi, 1058, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

giving birth to Jesus while the first anointment was made for mere worship. In addition to this view, Ibn Al-Jawzi mentions another explanation to the repetition that still insists that Maryam was chosen exclusively and solely above women; but while the first step was made above “a group of unspecified righteous women” the second step he argued, “includes women of the worlds.”<sup>9</sup>

One logical conclusion of the reading I have already provided is the reconsideration of Maryam as a prophet. This conclusion, albeit being supported only by some scholars and despite contradicting the main stream consensus is what my analytic reading of the verse clearly suggests. What remains to be resolved is the superficial conflict with another verse in Quran that is wrongly interpreted as negating women prophethood. This verse is in chapter 16, “*And we sent not before you except men to whom we revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of the message if you do not know.*” (16:43)<sup>10</sup>. Resolving the conflict is not that difficult of a task, since it can be immediately noticed that a distinction between the case of Maryam and the generalization in verse (16:43) exists.

This distinction is between the concept of prophethood and messengerhood. A prophet can be or can't be a messenger. A messenger is a prophet who is appointed with a message to be conveyed to others. For Example, Muhammad is considered a prophet and a messenger. However, even with this confusion cleared up we see very few theologians like Ibn Hazm and Al-Qurtubi arguing for Maryam's prophethood. The majority either refused this view or kept a suspicious attitude of the concept of women prophethood. Even those who supported her prophethood, they referred to reasons other than the clear linguistic evidence I used for my argument.

In his interpretation of (3:42) Al-Qurtubi says, “*Maryam is a prophet, this is the sound opinion. Because Allah reviled to her by using an angel as a medium, the same way he did to the rest of prophets*”<sup>11</sup>. More famously, Ibn Hazm defended the same opinion by saying, “*As for the mother of Jesus and Mosus and Isiq, Quran mentioned addressing some of them by a revelation. And for some they*

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<sup>9</sup> Tafsir Ibn Al-Jawzi, 1200, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

<sup>10</sup> <http://quran.com/16>

<sup>11</sup> Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, 1272, available online at <http://www.altafsir.com/>

*were given news about what will be taking place before it takes place. Which is the same meaning of prophethood and there is no prophethood beyond that. Therefore, their prophethood is sound according to the Quranic text*<sup>12</sup>.

It is also relevant to mention that the modern Islamic scholar Rashid Al-Ghanushi, reached the same conclusion about Maryam's prophethood in his study of women in Quran<sup>13</sup>. However, unfortunately, the dominating view -as Barbara Stowasser makes clear- is still in denial of this conclusion, "*consensus-based Sunni theology rejected this doctrine and labeled it "heretical innovation"*"<sup>14</sup>

### **C. Maryam's Quranic Logical Evidence of Her Prophethood**

Prophethood includes with no doubt a vast realm that might include but not be limited to: receiving revelations, experiencing or even bringing about miracles and interaction with supernatural creators or powers. In this section I will investigate what the Quranic story confirms about Maryam. The logical conclusion will be in favor of supporting her prophethood.

#### **1. Her miraculous Upbringing**

Quran tells us the story of Maryam's birth. As her mother vowed to God her unborn baby, she got surprised later on when found that her baby is going to be a baby girl. The story continues with accepting Maryam by God with no reference made of any kind to any difficulty involved in accepting a female servant of the temple, contrary to the traditions. This acceptance comes with no doubt as clear indication that the gender of the baby was an issue to her mother and to her people, but was never the same to God. "*So her Lord accepted her with good acceptance*" (3:37)<sup>15</sup>. When it comes to Maryam's life, some interesting facts about her early life were mentioned as the following: first, as we have seen, she was accepted by God regardless of her gender, contrary to customary norms

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<sup>12</sup> Ibn Hazim Al-Andalusi. *Alfasil*. volum4, Al-Tamadun, 1903, p 11.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Ghanushi. Rashid. *Woman between Quran and the reality of Muslims*. The Moroccan center of research and translation, 2000, p34.

<sup>14</sup> Stowasser. Barbara. *Women in the Quran: traditions and interpretation*. Oxford University, 1994, p77.

<sup>15</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

that used to make the temple service assigned exclusively to men. Second comes the way she was raised, “*Her God grows her a good growth*” (3:37); while she was placed by God under the care of Zechariah.

More importantly, Quran is quick to mention an extraordinary fact about the way she was raised, “*Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, “O Maryam, from where is this [coming] to you?” She said, “It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.”*” (3:37)<sup>16</sup>. But what is this type of providing for Maryam that puzzled her guardian Zechariah? According to Al-Tabarai, “*Zachariah used to find fruit out of its season in her sanctuary*”<sup>17</sup>.

However, it sounds from the way Zechariah asked about the resource of providing for Maryam that an extraordinary or even a miraculous explanation might be relevant. In his inquiry, Zechariah uses the question tool: “Anna” which can tell a lot; because while “Anna” is a question tool in Arabic that can be used to ask different purpose questions, In Quran it is commonly used in an anticipation of a supranational or strange fact to be involved in the explanation. For example in (2: 259)<sup>18</sup> we read, “*Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a village which had turned into empty ruins. He said, “How will Allah bring this to life after its death?”*”

Interestingly enough, the question the man asked by using the same question tool “Anna” similarly anticipated a strange or a supranational answer. In other words, Zachariah must have seen something unusual to ask for the source providing Maryam. In addition, what supports more the conclusion that the way food was provided must have included a miraculous intervention is Zechariah’s turning to God immediately after hearing Maryam’s answer with a prayer for another miracle to take place, the way righteous people turn to God after witnessing a miracle, “*It’s from God*” ( 3:37)<sup>19</sup> she said, “*At that, Zechariah called upon his Lord, saying, “My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring.”*” (3:38). It is as if the occurrence of this miracle gave him hope of an

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<sup>16</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

<sup>17</sup> Tafsir Al-Tabari, 922, available online at: <http://www.altafsir.com>

<sup>18</sup> <http://quran.com/2>

<sup>19</sup> <http://quran.com/3>



occurrence of another miracle, i.e., to be granted a son, he who has grown old with a barren wife as he described himself later on. *“He said, ‘My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?’ The angel said, ‘Such is Allah ; He does what He wills.’”* (3:40)<sup>20</sup>.

As the story goes on, Zechariah was blessed by a baby boy named, John. But what matters the most for my discussion now is the psychological unmistakable relevance here between witnessing a miracle and asking God for performing another one, as someone realizes the power of God or suddenly come across one of his powerful messages. Regardless of the authenticity of the interpretations which diverge concerning the nature of Maryam’s provided food, what matters is the confirmation of something extraordinary used to take place. Probably Maryam needed a deferent kind of nutrition, or a unique physical and biological preparation to be able to conceive from no male partner. What matters is something unusual taking place, something miraculous.

Also, there is another kind of confirmation not to be neglected here, this confirmation is not related to the kind of food she was provided as much as it is related to the way she was provided. As we have seen, Maryam didn’t have to do anything to earn that food. She didn’t have to leave her sanctuary to look for food, which is by itself another miracle that goes beyond usual earthly norms for providing humans had to follow since Adam and Eve left their paradise, i.e., intensive labor. Maryam didn’t have to do anything. Her food was provided while she was devoted to worship.

This means that the absurdity could extend to include the effortless way of gaining that food. This providing seemed to have lasted at least as long as Maryam was in what can be best understood as the biological extraordinary preparation for an extraordinary event which is the virgin birth of Jesus. Because as we will see later on, the same moment Jesus was born Maryam would be directed to go back to a more normal life style, a life style that requires her to do something to earn her food or to take care of herself instead of simply be heavenly taken care of. As we see when it comes to the details mentioned in Quran about the

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<sup>20</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

birth of Jesus. We see Maryam asked to do something for providing for herself the minute she was in labor. Although what she was asked to do is to approach and shake a trunk of a palm tree to get down some dates, the order to do something to get food is a clear reference to a change that must have taken place the moment Jesus was born. This change is a shift from being provided for in a special way to embracing more human like ways, i.e., to be self-supported. “*And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates.*”(19:25)<sup>21</sup>

The secret that remains unrevealed is the exact timing of this shift. An explanation was suggested by exegetes like Al- Qurtubi, who comments on the verse by saying. According to our scholars; when her heart was devoted only for God she didn't have to care about providing for herself. But when she gave birth to Jesus and her heart got attached to what he was saying [as the verse is interpreted by him, Jesus was immediately able to communicate with his mother the minute he was born], then God made her go back to the normal norms of life [working to provide] <sup>22</sup>

In addition, many exegetes tended to describe the palm tree as a dead palm tree that was miraculously brought back to life as Maryam was inspired to shake it and get herself some dates. However, there is no sufficient evidence from the verse to support the insertion of any extraordinary element to the scene. On the opposite, as far as I can see, receiving the order to do something like grasping the tree trunk and shake it to get down the dates is an indication of the absence of any extraordinary providing for Maryam the minute her baby was born.

The question however, is regarding the timing of this shift, because if Maryam was provided for out of God's merciful nature, then a woman going into labor alone- as the Quranic scene elaborates- would be the best time to keep that merciful supplement. Could it be the case –as I mentioned before- that Maryam's miraculous pregnancy required a special heavenly nutrition that was not needed anymore by the time Jesus was born? Probably, such line of argument would still make more sense than suggesting punishing Maryam for getting emotionally attached to her

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<sup>21</sup> <http://quran.com/19>

<sup>22</sup> Tafsir Al-Qurtubi, 1272, available online at <http://www.altafsir.com/>

new born baby as indicated by the previous interpretation that fails to appreciate one of the most innate feelings that can never be separable from childbirth and from the nobility of becoming a mother. Contrary to what is suggested by Al-Qurtubi, in Quran, human feelings in their uniqueness, individuality and even in their weakness are never negatively judged or devaluated. To the contrary, the Quranic message starts and ends by the full acknowledgment of the human needs, desires and even human limitations.

## 2. Maryam's Miraculous Fertilization, Pregnancy And Childbirth

The prodigious and mysterious fertilization of Maryam was mentioned in Quran in four scenes. First, we read the scene from chapter 3,

*"When the angels said, "O Maryam, Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you out of the women of the worlds, O Maryam obey your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow. That is from the news of the unseen which we reveal to you, and you were not with them when they cast their pens whom would sponsor Maryam. Nor were you with them when they were disputing that. When the angels said O Maryam God is boding you a word from him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Maryam. He is prestigious in this world and the Hereafter and among those brought near. He will be speaking to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous. She said, "My Lord, how come I will have a child and no human has touched me?". He said such is Allah; He creates whatever he wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (3:45-48)<sup>23</sup>*

Second, comes a scene that is commonly misunderstood to be repeating what we find in the previous scene, which is not the case as I will make it clear,

*"And mention, in the Book Maryam, when she withdrew herself from her family to an eastern place. Then she pulled herself away from them by a burier. Then we sent to her our soul then he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man. She said, "I would seek refuge in the most merciful from you, if you fear Allah". He said, "I am only the messenger of your Lord*

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<sup>23</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

*to give you a pure boy.” She said, “How come I can have a boy, while no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?” He said, “Thus said your Lord “It is easy for me”, and we will make him a miracle to the people and a mery from us. And it was an already determined matter” (19: 16-22)<sup>24</sup>*

The third scene comes immediately after praising the Al-Imran family and God’s blessing Zechariah by a son. “*And the one who guarded her vulva, then we blew into her from our soul and we made her and her son a miracle for the worlds.*” (21:91). <sup>25</sup>The fourth scene comes with a more specific description of the fertilization process. “*And Maryam, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her vulva, then we blew into it from our soul and she believed in the words of her Lord and his books and was of the obedient.*” (66:12)<sup>26</sup> Some reflection on the four scenes and particularly on the differences between the first two scenes can reveal some interesting facts; in the first scene, the scene starts with a dialogue between the angels and not one angel like what we have in chapter 19.

This suggests that we have might two different scenes and not one scene that is described in two different places: in chapter 3, the scene describes a group of angels and not only one angel telling Maryam the good news of conveying of the word of God. Also, the name of this kid was provided by the angels to Maryam. In addition, we see Maryam, who got the news while praying to God showing her amusement of a kid conception without being touched by a man.

In Chapter 19 however, we read about one angel, probably Gabriel, addressing Maryam after taking a human shape by a dialogue that seems as if repeats what we see in chapter3, however, this time she looks more scared, not only she shows her surprise for the possibility of conserving, she seeks refuge in God from the strange man telling her that he is there to give her a pure boy. Finally, only the second scene however, was immediately followed by “*then she conceived him*” (19:23). Now, if we exclude the unneeded repetition as a plausible Quranic stylistic possibility,

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<sup>24</sup> <http://quran.com/19>

<sup>25</sup> <http://quran.com/21>

<sup>26</sup> <http://quran.com/66>

then there must be something behind the two scenes. According to tafsir Al-Sharawi (2007), in chapter 3 when the angels told Maryam that her son will be called the son of Maryam she knew that this child will be born from no father, since it was not the custom for kids to be named after their mothers.

The removal of the wondering was by God saying “*Such is Allah, he creates whatever he wills?*” (3: 48)<sup>27</sup> which is the saying of Allah himself as it is supported by tafsir Al-Tantawi<sup>28</sup>. So the scene in chapter 3 is between the angels and Maryam who was told about granting a child and turns to God asking while praying how can that happen. In chapter 19, as tafsir Al-Shanqiti (1073) makes an extremely important note, Maryam in the dialogue seems to have added to her wonder not only the fact that no man has ever touched her, but also that she has never been a prostitute. But what does that additional sentence mean? Well, while tafsir Al-Shanqiti stops by making this note, this note appears as the key to understand the difference between the two scenes and the first step to unearth the reason for what looks like a repetition of the same scene as I will do in the following.

First, in chapter 3, Maryam was told by the angles that she will be given a child. Although she was surprised by the news she was never scared or warred. But in chapter 19, Maryam who suddenly saw a man standing in front of her, telling her that he is a messenger sent from God to continue the mission, was concerned not about the news she already knew but about the way this kid will be given to her. Did she suspect any intimacy involved? Probably, as a woman in isolation addressed by the intention from a man-like figure, this might have been one of her concerns.

Despite the fact that she had already been prepared by the angels then, she suspected that this strange man-like figure would ask for a sexual intercourse with her and therefore, she immediately sought refuge in God by saying, “*She said, “I would seek refuge in the most merciful from you, if you fear Allah” (19:18)*”<sup>29</sup>. Then she reminded him that she is not a woman

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<sup>27</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

<sup>28</sup> Tafsir Al-Tantawi, 2009, available online at <http://www.altafsir.com/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://quran.com/19>

who can allow unlawful intercourse by saying that she was never a prostitute. Having clarified the confusion between the two different scenes. My search can switch to the way she was conceived of Jesus, which is mentioned in two places, “*And the one who guarded her vulva, then we blew into her from our soul and we made her and her son a miracle for the worlds.*” (21:91) And: “*And Maryam, the daughter of Imran, who guarded her vulva, then we blew into it from our soul and she believed in the words of her Lord and his books and was of the obedient.*” (66:12).

The mechanism mentioned in both verses refers to blowing from the soul of God. Interestingly enough, the same mechanism is mentioned elsewhere in Quran in the way Adam the first person ever was created. “*And when I have proportioned him and blew into him from my soul, then fall down to him prostrating.*” (15:29)<sup>30</sup>. This clear indication of the similarity included in the way both Jesus and Adam were found is also affirmed in another verse that openly draw the analogy between the two cases in a way that leaves no room to suspect any divinity involved in the process of creating Jesus or the nature of Jesus who would have been divine if Adam who was created the same way from no father has been divine himself for that mere reason. “*Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, “Be,” and he was.*” (3:59)<sup>31</sup>

Immediately after the soul visited Maryam we read about her pregnancy and in no long time comes the scene of giving birth to Jesus,

*“So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a remote place about her experience of having her baby alone and far from anyone to help. And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, “Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten. But he called her from below her, “Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates you a stream So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, ‘Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man Then she brought him to her people, carrying him. They said, “O Maryam, you have certainly done a thing unprecedented. O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was*

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<sup>30</sup> <http://quran.com/15>

<sup>31</sup> <http://quran.com/3>

*your mother unchaste. So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child? [Jesus] said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah . He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet." (19: 22-30)<sup>32</sup>*

So Maryam under a dry palm-tree. Alone with no support, said as she felt devastated by the child birth pains: I wish I had died before this day and had become forgotten and abandoned and never mentioned! Comforting words came from beneath her, some said these words were Jesus' words and some said those words were Gabriel's. However, what can be confirmed is the miracle that she needed for proofing her innocence as she returned to her people holding the new born baby to face their suspicious looks and overt accusations.

According to the Quranic narrative, Maryam didn't have to say a single word to defend herself, since the new born baby as the Quranic text affirms, spoke immediately to reveal the reality, "*So she pointed to him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is in the cradle a child? He said, "Indeed, I am the servant of Allah . He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.* With the birth of Jesus, an end of a story launches the beginning of a new story. What remains clear though, is the undeniable strong message the story of Maryam suggests. Maryam, is a one of a kind woman whose status acknowledged gender equality before anyone did and asserted women prophethood as an Islamic faith, contrary to the collective unintentional negligence and the deliberated patriarchal consensus. As I argued in this paper, Maryam as the Quranic text suggests is linguistically proven to be a chosen prophet, in addition, she is logically proved to be a prophet due to her miraculous providing, her multiple interactions with angels, and her supernatural one of a kind pregnancy.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://quran.com/19>

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