

Lessons from the Life of Maryam Umm 'Eesaa



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Surely all praise is due to Allah the Lord, Evolver, Maintainer of all that exists; the One who caused the Book to descend upon the heart of His servant and messenger, Muhammad, and made him (the Book) a guide and a source of mercy for those who are convinced of Truth. With him, He takes us out of the darkneses into the Light. We ask of Him every good and every virtue and we seek refuge with Him from every evil and every sin. We glorify Him with praise, we ask him for all good and we seek refuge with Him from every evil. Then, we bear witness that there is no god except Allah and we bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

About The Quran

الرَّ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢﴾
نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنَّ
الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣﴾

Alif, Laam, Ra; These are the signs of the Book, clear and clarifying. Certainly We caused him to be sent down as a Noble Recitation in Arabic, eloquent and expressive, so that you (all) will develop intellect. We recount to you the most excellent narratives by revealing to you this Quran and before him you were among the heedless. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 12: ayaat 1 – 3)

The letters that open this Surah also appear as openings to 4 others – 10, 11, 14, 15. Then in the first three ayaat we find three expansive truths in description of the Book of Allah, the Quran.

1. He is a Book with clear messages that bring clarity to previous misconceptions, confusion and misinformation. This is a book that does not contain secrets, but rather in him matters are described in a clear and unequivocal manner. Because of this dual meaning of “*mubeen*”, which is the consensus of the “*classic commentators*”, Muhammad Asad states that it is necessary to note this in the translation. However, most interpreters do not.
2. With the plain statement that this is “*Quranan Arabiyyan (A Noble Recitation in Arabic)*” Allah ta’alaa is equally stating a fact of the pure Arabic language as He is emphasizing the eloquence and expressiveness of the text and of noble communication in general, which is something to strive for in our speech whatever our language may be.

This Quran is to be read, to be recited, to be contemplated and to be taught to others. The

ayaat are directed to all humanity, to all believers and to the initial recipients – the Messenger, his wives and his companions. Mawdudi’s commentary states that the eloquence has the capacity of **“transmitting in a word or concept much significance to whomever can understand and desires to acquire wisdom”**. In fact, Allah ta’alaa says that the fact of this recitation being sent to humanity in Arabic is so that the intellect, reason and understanding will be stimulated and developed. When one examines the root of the word **‘ta’qiloon’**, they will find the words **“to bind; to hold back; restrain”** as well as **“be intelligent; become wise; understand”**. The intellectual development caused by respectful interaction with and humble submission to the education of the Quran, the Noble Recitation, enables one to have the wisdom and ability to restrain the self from sinful, demeaning actions, thoughts and speech. (For another reference see Surah 43: ayaat 1 – 3.)

3. The final truth is that the Book is the best, most perfect of narrations. The word **‘qasas’** is frequently given in English as **“stories”**, which I think is an injustice. The qasas are much more than stories, they are exact narrations or recounting of events and emotions and statements by One Who is Witness to all that occurs, all that is said, all that is thought and all that is felt.

And in the final ayah of this Surah (12) Allah says:

لَقَدْ كَانَتْ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِن تَصَدِيقَ الَّذِي
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١١﴾

Indeed there is in their narration lessons of instruction and examples (by which you may pattern the self) for those endowed with deep understanding. These are not unfounded narratives but a confirmation of what came before him (the Quran) and detailed explanations of all things and guidance and mercy for people who believe. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 12: ayah 111)

The qasas in the Quran are valuable lessons by which we are able to shape and form our own behavior. In fact, we will find in them all that we need for our spiritual well being and for correcting and refining our character and conduct. For that we are deeply in need of the other two qualities or attributes given here – guidance and mercy.

The Prophet was sent to perfect the human character. He was given the Quran so that this guidance and wisdom could be conveyed to those of his time and remain for all who would come after him. His uswat (exemplary behavior) and the Quran give us all that we need to achieve the final goal successfully, which is the pleasure of Allah and a happy return to the Garden.

Lessons from the Life of Maryam Umm ‘Eesaa

A: Blessed Lands; Blessings of Ancestry; Importance of Duah

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Surely Allah has chosen Adam and Noah and the family of Ibraheem and the family of ‘Imraan above all created beings. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3:33)

Maryam Umm Eesaa is descended from a line of Prophets, Messengers and blessed women, from families chosen and given special blessings because of their righteousness, sincerity and patience.

Prophet Nuh and his people are from the south of ‘Iraq (near the city of Kufah) between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and Prophet Ibraheem is also from this area (the city of Ur). In some writings it states that Adam was here first before going to the Makkan area and also that these two rivers have their origins in the Jannah, the original home of our parents, Adam and Hawwa.

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

And We delivered him (Ibraheem) and Lut to the land, which We endowed with blessings for all beings (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 21:71)

Prophet Ibraheem made Hijrah from here and, after several pauses, settled in southern Palestine, the area called Ash Sham. These lands have been **“a bone of contention between all the great kingdoms and empires of Western Asia and Egypt and European interest in it dates from the most ancient times and continues until today”**. (Commentary of Yusuf Ali to the ayah above.)

Question for Discussion: *Do you think that Blessed Lands have importance for the spiritual strength and virtuous development of a people?*

Maryam Umm Eesaa

It is in these Holy Lands and from this blessed lineage that Maryam (as) emerges. It is from Prophet Ishaq (son of Ibraheem) that we get the Family of ‘Imraan. ‘Imraan is the name of the father of Prophet Musaa (as) and also the name of the father of Maryam (as).

The mother of Maryam (as) is Hannah bint Faaqudh (Anne / Anna daughter of Faaqudh). Muhammad bin Ishaq, a historian, mentioned that Hannah was unable to have children and one day saw a bird feeding her chick and wished she could have a child to whom she could show such tenderness. For her, this was a sign of maternal love and this experience generated a duah in which she asked Allah to give her a child. Her duah was accepted. Then, when she became aware of her pregnancy, she made a duah we find in Surah Ali ‘Imraan.

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

And as the wife of ‘Imraan said, ‘My Lord, indeed I dedicate to You what is in my womb for exclusive service. So, accept this from me for You truly are the One Who Hears, The One Who Knows.’ (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: 35)

This is pre-natal consciousness of a faith-based mother.

Her Birth and Assignment to Service

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

Then when she delivered her, she said, ‘My Lord, indeed I have delivered her, a female child.’ And Allah knew what she had delivered for the male is not like the female. ‘And, indeed, I have named her Maryam and I am sincerely putting her and her descendants in Your protection from the cursed Shaitan.’ (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: 36)

Being aware of the possible dangers awaiting her daughter and her descendants from the unseen world, Umm Maryam was inspired to make the duah found above. This is one we need to teach our daughters, nieces and all women who will bear children or care for them.

Assignment: Try to become aware of special times such as the experience of Hannah as she watched the bird feeding the chick, and take opportunities to ask Allah for that which you long for.

Lessons

1. Blessed Lands – There will always be people of high, noble character and products of esteemed quality and notable events coming from these places.

2. Lineage – Ancestry matters. What you create of your life and pass down -genetically and energetically- matters. You are connected to righteousness and purity, even if you have to go back many generations to make that connection. Even if it means going back to Adam and Hawwa.
3. Consciousness Matters – In all situations we much seek to be aware of important, related truths and communicate with Allah. Be aware of the ayaatu Allah (signs of Allah) as the bird was for Hannah.
4. Learn to Use Powerful Communication – Duah - Learn specific times when particular duah are of great importance. It is good to memorize as much as possible from Quran and Hadith.
5. Be Vigilant – Take refuge with Allah from Shaitan, who became so because of his aversion to us. He refused to accept that a creature made from earth and water could deserve his bowing. Those influenced by Shaitan are all around us. Try to never be careless.

B: Personal Spirituality in Relation to Family and Environment

فَنَقَّبَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا
كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَمْرِئُومُ إِنِّي
لَلَّيْ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ
حِسَابٍ

So, her Lord accepted her with a gracious and beautiful acceptance and caused her to grow in beautiful manner and placed her in the care of Zakariyyah. Every time Zakariyyah entered her area, he found provisions with her. He said, ‘Oh Maryam, from where did this come for you?’ She said, ‘This is from what is with Allah. Surely Allah provides for whomever He wills without measure.’ (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3:37)

Maryam is honored as we see the Prophets being honored – as members of families, as part of a group and as individuals. As an infant and young child, she is under the care of her mother and then, at a certain age, the responsibility shifts to Zakariyyah, who was a priest in the Temple. Her circumstances were so unusual, that the decision as to who would be responsible for her care and education was made by casting “aqlaam” (reeds or pens). (See Surah 3: ayah 44)

She is being presented as an individual of great spiritual quality distinct from those around her. This is evidenced here by:

- The ‘Provision’, which we may assume included both her physical needs and spiritual food coming to her from the “*ghraib*” (invisible world).
- Her awareness of and comfortable knowledge of the nature of Allah beyond what she was being taught.

Note that in her answer she is brief, giving the essential information of the Truths which she has.

Zakariyyah saw astonishing miracles occur with her that left him in awe. He knew her as one devoted in worship and constant in her goodness but he was still amazed at what he witnessed in her presence. After she answered him with, “This is from what is with Allah...” he was moved to supplicate for his own need:

هٰنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ، قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً
إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

Right then and there Zakariyyah called on his Lord. He said, ‘My Lord grant me from Yourself pure descendants. Surely, You hear the supplication.’
(interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: ayah 38)

In witnessing Divine providence, he realizes the immediate presence of the blessings of Allah and asks for himself. He is inspired by what he sees and understands that what would seem impossible to human logic is easy for Allah. His duah is answered, but that is another story.

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَأَصْطَفَاكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

And when the Angels said, ‘Oh Maryam, surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above all the women who have been created throughout time. ‘Oh Maryam, devote yourself to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow down in submission.’ (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: 42 – 43)

From this ayah we can see clearly that Angels were coming to Maryam and speaking to her prior to the major revelation. Allah sent her messages, knowledge and material provisions. She was chosen prior to her mother’s awareness and duah, she was purified in-vitro, as an infant and as a child by duah, guided care and careful attention. She was “***commanded by the Angels to increase and keep permanent her devotion to Allah and her acts of worship so that she could receive what Allah had decreed for her***”. (Tafseer of Ibn Katheer)

She is being brought out of the group and distinguished as an individual and purified as an individual and prepared for her personal, specific assignment

Lessons

1. The great importance of duah will permeate her story and that of every one whose Qasas is found in the Book.
2. The virtuous outcome of an individual child is definitely affected by the one to whom their care is entrusted, and the caregiver can only withdraw when it becomes obvious that something / someone greater and better is influencing the child's development.
3. Divine provision was exclusively emphasized in Maryam's life without the hands of others. Divine provision is present in all of our lives and is most obvious with infants in the milk of the mother. Allah is Ar Razzaq and looks to the needs of His servants.
4. There are special, extra-special times for duah. The example here is when you see a miracle of Allah being manifested to you in your life or through that of another servant. Then, take the time to supplicate, ask, or beg for your heart's desire or your great need.
5. Be aware of the presence of Angels and understand that even though they may not speak to you directly and clearly as they did with Maryam, they are in constant duah and communication with Allah on your behalf. See Surah 40: ayaat 7 – 9.

C: Divine Revelation, Divine Provision and Allah's Development of the Soul and Body

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ
 الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾
 وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾
 قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسَّسْنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ
 مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾
 وَيَعْلَمُ الْكِنُوزَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَانَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾

“When the Angels said, ‘ Oh Maryam, indeed Allah gives you good news of a Word from Himself. His name is The Maseehu Eesaa, son of Mary, honored in this world and in the final one and (he will be) of those who are close (to Allah). And he will speak to the people in the cradle and as a mature man and (he is) of the righteous.’ She said, ‘My Lord, how can there be a son for me and no man

has ever touched me?’ He (an Angel) answered, ‘Thus it is that Allah creates whatever He wills. When He decrees a matter, then He only says, ‘Be’ and then it is. And He will teach him the Book and wisdom and the Torah and the Injeel.’” (translation of Surah 3: ayaat 45 – 48)

There is an incredible amount of information here, but first we should note that Angels were being sent to Maryam and they brought her messages from Allah. Here the emphasis is on the spoken message. Pay special attention to all that is said and understand that this communication precedes the coming of the Ruh.

The one who will evolve from the Kalimah (Word) is *Al-Maseeh*, the Anointed One, the Frequent Traveller, the One Who Touches and Heals. He is given a title for this world – *wajeelan* – that puts him in a place of honor above others, and he is given a position for the next life. Maryam is overwhelmed. Take note of her question above and the answer. Her question is one that continues to be asked by many, even today. She only needed to be reminded of Allah’s power, many others cannot get beyond what they comprehend on the physical level.

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾

“The example of ‘Eesaa with Allah is like the example of Adam. He created him from earth and then said to him, ‘Be’ and then he was.” (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 3: ayah 59)

So, in ayah 45 Maryam is provided with:

- The sex of her child
- His qualities and attributes
- His position with his Lord
- An introduction to his miracles
- His position in this life and the next

Then we move into the Surah titled with her name:

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ
حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ
مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ أَنَّى
يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَىٰ هِينٍ
وَلِنَجْعَلَهُ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾

And remember Maryam in the Book as she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. Then she placed a veil between herself and them. Then We sent to her Our Ruh (Spirit / Life Breath) and he appeared to her as a man in every way. She said, “Certainly, I take protection with the Merciful One from you, if you are one reverently conscious.” He said, “I am only a messenger from your Lord to bestow on you the gift of a pure son.” She said, “How can there be a son for me and no man has ever touched me and I am not an unchaste woman?” He said, “Thus it is.” Your Lord said, “It is an easy matter for Me. And (it is), so that We can make him a sign for humanity and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed.” (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 19: ayaat 16 – 21)

Here again we witness Allah emphasizing Maryam as an individual undergoing special circumstances. In this section of her story she is more secluded, more isolated than before and her personal mission and personality emerge with greater clarity. She went into a private retreat separate from her family and from all others, withdrawing into deep prayer and devotion. It was in this state that the Ruh was sent to her.

Take a moment to compare her state and her physical condition to that of Muhammad (saw) at the time revelation began with him. Also, remember that this message is not new to Maryam. The messenger is different and she needs to confirm his validity. He is not one to bring the preliminary message but to bring *the “gift”* and complete the assignment. Also, note that in the ayaat from Surah 3 she did not mention her chastity. There is a great difference in the conversations because now she is speaking to one who appears to be a human man.

Why did Allah give Maryam so much information about the son He would develop in her womb? Mothers usually have to wait, watch and hope. Allah gives her information and then gives her time to absorb this information before sending His Ruh with the actual *“kalimah” or life force* that will generate the child in her. This method is part of the sunnah of Allah.

Lessons

1. Allah reveals to each being in His creation. Purity makes one more receptive and the messages may come in a variety of ways.

❖ وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَائِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ حَكِيمٍ

“It is not for any human one that Allah will speak to them except by revelation (inspiration) or from behind a veil or He will send a messenger, who will reveal, by His permission, whatever He wills. Surely, He is Exalted, Wise.” (translation of Quran Surah 42: ayah 51)

2. Revelations usually have a confirmatory or second message. One should always question if not sure of the Divine origin or the validity of the message.
3. As Maryam needs to move, the places are made ready and whatever she needs is in place. She is in a state of complete dependence, which is where Allah wants the servants to be. Trust in Al Wakeel, Al Wadood, Ar Razaaq.
4. When Allah decides, the servant has no choice! No matter how difficult it seems, submit to Divine Will.
5. Observe the practice or sunnah of your Lord. These will repeat – the pleasant and the punishing.

The Importance of Moral Purity, Courage and Creating a Legacy

﴿ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ
 إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾
 فَادَّانَهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾
 وَهَزَىٰ إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسَاقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾
 فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا فَإِمَّا تَرِينِ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ
 صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

So she carried him and she withdrew with him to a distant place. Then the pains of birth drove her to the trunk of a date tree and she said, “Oh how miserable I am. If only I had died before this and had been one forgotten and removed from sight.” Then he called her from beneath her, “Don’t be sad. Surely your Lord has placed a stream beneath you. And, shake the trunk of the date palm towards yourself. She will let fall upon you ripe dates. Then, eat and drink and cool your eyes and, if you see any human being, say “Verily, I have dedicated a fast to the Merciful One, so I will not speak to any human one this day.” (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 19: ayaat 22 – 26)

She carried him. The purification of Maryam’s body over the years allowed her to carry the kalimah of Allah and this is a sign for us all. **The words of Allah do not hold in impurity.** A sacred spirit entered her uterus, an ‘alaq was created and a life began to develop. The Tafseer says that after this she experienced all the sensations and reactions of a pregnant woman – morning sickness, hunger, change in her complexion and even in her manner of speaking. This was noticed and many began to talk and seek to visit Zakariyyah to get more information. It is said that at this time she separated

herself and hid from the people. She saw no one and no one saw her. It was in this seclusion that labor began. Look at the messages here and see what we can learn for ourselves.

1. Labor pains can temporarily weaken the character of even a strong woman. Great care and forbearance should be used.
2. Should the necessity arise, childbirth is something that can be handled alone and that knowledge should bring courage to anyone who is placed in such a situation.
3. There is a very spiritual time as the child emerges from the mother's womb. These are only moments, but are of a high spiritual quality. We are to praise Allah and as soon as possible recite the shahadah and adhaan in the ears of the newborn before anything else is recorded on the brain.

There are two opinions as to who is speaking in the words translated as ***“Them he called her from beneath her.”*** Some explanations record that this is Jibreel speaking to her from a lower valley, while others say that this is her son **‘Eesaa ibnu Maryam** speaking to her as he is born. I am of the latter opinion and the reasons will be given.

As for the dates and water, ***“There is nothing better for the woman post-partum than fresh dated and water.”*** (Tafseer of Ibn Katheer) Dried dated may be substituted. Then as to Allah instructing her to ***“shake the trunk of the date tree towards yourself...”*** perhaps there is some benefit to the womb with such movement or it may be to indicate that even though our abilities are weak and we seem frail, we must still make some effort and Allah will respond with all that we need. (See Surah 76: ayah 22 and Surah 3 ayah 136.)

“Cool your eyes” is an idiom for ***“comfort yourself and be happy”*** but also this has a literal meaning because she was crying. She was a young woman giving birth alone with no one to attend to her. Now she was to take joy and comfort in the presence of a wonderful child. The water here has a similar purpose to the water provided for Prophet Ayyub. (See Surah 38: ayah 42). In both cases the water provides internal and external benefits.

Then comes another difficult time for her for which ease has already been written.

فَأْتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ ۗ قَالُوا يَلْمِرِيْمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾
يَأْخُذَتَّ هُرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَمْرًا سَوًّا وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾
فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْأَمْهَدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾
قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ءَاتَنِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾

So she took him to her people, carrying him. They said, “Oh Maryam, you have certainly come with something astonishing. Oh sister of Haroon, your father was not an evil man and your mother was not a promiscuous woman.” Then, she pointed to him. They said, “How are we to speak to a child still being cradled?” He said, “I am indeed a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.” (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 19: ayaat 27 – 30)

The statement of Prophet ‘Eesaa (as) goes on in these following ayaat. It is as he (as) begins to speak that we do not hear more of his Mother (alaihaa asSalaam).

وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا
دُمْتُ حَيًّا ۝۳۱
وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ۝۳۲
وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ۝۳۳

And, He made me blessed wherever I am and He enjoined on me prayer and zakat as long as I am alive. And, He made me kind to my mother and He did not make me overbearing or miserable. So, Peace is on me the day that I was born and the day that I will die and the day I will be raised to live again.” (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 19: ayaat 31 – 33)

Imagine the scene - Maryam had been missing for some time and now she returns carrying a child and people were already thinking the worst of her. When questioned, she said nothing, but pointed to the child. The response comes from him and it is absolutely beautiful. Her legacy of purity, religious responsibility, wisdom and righteousness is passed on to her son. This is the legacy of ‘Ali ‘imraan.

Lessons

1. Righteousness and noble lineage do not render one immune to human weakness and moments of intense melancholy. We may cry and we may cry out but we will not be in despair.
2. Purification is needed to properly receive and hold the messages from Allah. This is essential in our lives because it is by these messages that we are guided. Read Surah 2: 186
3. Any of us may be placed in situations for which we feel unprepared, but if this is in the plan of Allah, help will be provided. We must move through life with courage.
4. Do not jump to conclusions. Things may often appear quite differently than they actually are so it is important to be patient and allow others to explain or wait before you begin talking to others about what you think.

5. If you are not the recipient of and bequeather of a righteous legacy – that is, if righteousness was interrupted in your ancestry– begin to create one now and see to it that it gets passed on.

Though the story of Maryam ends as her blessed son takes over, Allah, ‘izza wa jalla, gives her as an example for all who

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا
وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

“And the one who guarded her chastity and We breathed into her from Our ruh and We made her and her son a sign for every being of conscious knowledge. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 21: ayah 91)

and:

Maryam as a Clear Ayah of the Divine Elevation and Sacred Status of Women

وَصَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ
وَبِخْنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَبِخْنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ
فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا إِتْقَانُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

And Allah has put forth as an example for those who believe the wife of Pharaoh as she said, ‘My Lord build for me a home with You in the Garden and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from people who act sinfully.

And Maryam, the daughter of ‘Imraan, who guarded her chastity and we breathed into it of Our ruh and she confirmed the truth of the Word of her Lord and His Writings and she was of the devoted ones. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 66: 11 – 12)

As Maryam is given as an example for all who believe, then everyone needs to study her life. More particularly we, as women, need to look again and again at her example and what this means for us as individuals and as a group.

Duah

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا

مَنَاسِكَنا وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Our Lord, make us ones who are in submission to you and of our descendants a community in submission to you. And show us our means of worship and turn mercifully to us. Surely, You are the One Who Turns Mercifully (to His servants), the One Who Responds with Compassion. (interpretation of the meaning of Quran Surah 2: ayah 128)