

Jesus and Mary in Islam

Mary (Maryam in Arabic) and her son Jesus (Isa, pronounced Eesa), peace be upon them, hold significant reverence in Islam. They are esteemed figures within the faith, esteemed even more so than in other religions.

Islam has endeavored to elucidate the truth regarding them and to illuminate their nature. The Quran affirms that they were descendants of Abraham, peace be upon him (pbuh), and were born into esteemed lineages.

Maryam (Maid-servant of Allah. Allah is the name of God in Arabic and Aramaic) is the only female character mentioned by name in the Quran. She was mentioned 34 times in the Quran (Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was mentioned only 4 times) and a whole chapter (Chapter - 19) was named after her.

Notably, Mary (pbuh) isn't the only member of her family mentioned in the Quran by name. Chapter 3, one of the Quran's largest chapters, is titled "The Family of Imran" (Al-Imran in Arabic), named after Mary's family. Imran, according to the Quran, is identified as Mary's father. The Quran recounts the life of Mary (Maryam, pbuh) from her conception through her youth, womanhood, and her devoted service to God, including her care by Zachariya (Zachery) until the birth of her son, Jesus (pbuh). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) affirmed, "Many men attained perfection, yet no woman reached such heights except Mary and Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh." Notably, Prophet Muhammad did not cite any woman from his own household in this context.

In the Quran, Mary's narrative starts while she is still in her mother's womb. When Mary's mother realized she was expecting, she uttered: ["When the wife of 'Imran said, 'My Lord! I dedicate what is in my womb entirely to You, so accept it from me. You are truly the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.'"] [Quran 3: 35] Mary's mother desired that the child in her womb would serve solely the Creator. (*Service at the temple was conducted exclusively by males.)

After Mary's birth, her mother said: [When she (Mary's mother) delivered, she said, "My Lord! I have given birth to a girl,"—and Allah fully knew what she had delivered— "and the male is not like the female. I have named her Mary, and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring from Satan, the accursed."] [Quran



Guest Column

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3: 36.] Quran continues: [So her Lord accepted her (Mary) graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing – entrusting her to the care of Zachariah (Zachary). Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He exclaimed, "O Mary! Where did this come from?" She replied, "It is from Allah. Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without limit."] [Quran 3: 37] It was then that Zachariah prayed to his Lord to bestow him with a child. Quran continues: [Then and there (on the spot) Zachariah prayed to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! Grant me—by your grace—righteous offspring. You are certainly the Hearer of prayers."] [Quran 3: 38] God (Allah) answered his prayers as Quran continues: [So the angels called out to him while he stood praying in the sanctuary, "Allah gives you good news of (the birth of) Yahiya (John the Baptist) who will confirm the Word of Allah and will be a great

leader, chaste, and a prophet among the righteous."] [Quran 3: 39.]

When Zachariah exclaimed that he will be given a boy he was reminded that he talks to God, the Almighty, and that bestowing a son on him is easy. Quran verses continue to say what happened with Jesus and his call, but I shall move to another snapshot of the story - as narrated by the Quran - that discusses Jesus' miraculous birth.

The Quran initially addresses the miraculous conception of Mary, as detailed in her dedicated chapter, Chapter 19. The Quran elucidates the events surrounding Mary (pbuh) in Chapter 19, starting from verse 16 and continuing: [And remember Mary in the Book, when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place (16) And she veiled herself from them. Then We (God) sent unto her Our Spirit [the angel Gabriel], and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man (17) She said, "I seek refuge from thee in the Compassionate [i.e., God], if you are reverent!" (18) He said, "I am but a messenger of thy Lord, to bestow upon thee a pure boy." (19) She said, "How shall I have a boy when no man has touched me, nor have I been unchaste?" (20) He said, "Thus shall it be.

Thy Lord says, 'It is easy for Me.'" And [it is thus] that We might make him a sign unto mankind, and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed. (21) So she conceived him and withdrew with it (pregnancy) to a place far off. (22) And the pangs of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a date palm. She said, "Would that I had died before this and was a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten!" (23) So he (some scholars say the baby boy, others say an angel,) called out to her from below her, "Grieve not! Thy Lord has placed a rivulet beneath thee. (24) And shake toward thyself the trunk of the date palm; fresh, ripe dates shall fall upon thee. (25) So eat and drink and cool thine eye. And if thou seest any human being, say, 'Verily I have vowed a fast unto the Compassionate, so I shall not speak this day to any man.'" (26) Then she came with him (the infant Jesus) unto her people, carrying him. They said, "O Mary! Thou hast brought a horrible thing! (Major sin!) (27) O sister of Aaron (metaphor for: O! religious woman)! Thy father was not an evil man, nor was thy mother unchaste." (28) Then she pointed to him (Jesus). They said, "How shall we speak to one who is yet a child in the cradle?" (29).]

Next, the Quran recounts the first of Jesus' miracles: speaking while still in his cradle, just a few hours old. The narrative continues in the Quran: [He (Jesus) said, "Truly I am a servant of God. He has given me the Book (the Injeel/Gospel) and made me a prophet. (30) He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live (31) And [has made me] dutiful toward my mother. And He has not made me domineering, wretched. (32) And Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am sent alive!" (33) That is Jesus son of Mary— a statement of the truth, which they doubt. (34).]

The Quran has also stated that 5 of all the messengers and Prophets are the ones with the strongest will. They are Ibrahim (Abraham), Nooh (Noh/Noah), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), and Muhammad peace be upon them and all other Messengers and Prophets.

This is Mary (pbuh) and her son Isa – (Jesus, pbuh) as Islam views them.

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For more information, please visit: www.icstillwater.org/islam/

Dallas pastor stepping into Jesse Jackson's role as leader of Rainbow PUSH Coalition

DALLAS – The civil rights group founded by the Rev. Jesse Jackson in the 1970s is elevating a new leader for the first time in more than 50 years, choosing a Dallas pastor as his successor to take over the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

The Rev. Frederick D. Haynes III is set to be formally installed as president and CEO in a ceremony Thursday in downtown Dallas, replacing Jackson, 82, who announced in July that he

would step down.

Jackson, a powerful voice in American politics who helped guide the modern Civil Rights Movement, has dealt with several health issues in recent years and has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Haynes, 63, said he began working with Jackson on the transition in the fall: "I'm appreciative of what he's poured in to me, which makes me feel like I've been prepared for this

experience and this moment."

"One of the things that we have shared with the staff is that we have been the beneficiary of the dynamism, the once-in-a-generation charisma of Rev. Jackson, and now what we want to do is institutionalize it, as it were, make the organization as dynamic and charismatic as Rev. Jackson," Haynes said.

"Whereas he did the work of 50 people, we need 50 people to do the kind of work that Rev.

Jackson did," Haynes said.

Haynes, who has been senior pastor at Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas for over 40 years, will remain in Dallas and continue in that role as he leads the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. He said his work at the justice-oriented church will serve as an expansion of the work done by the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, which will still be based in Chicago.

Jackson, a protege of The

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., broke with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1971 to form Operation PUSH, which initially stood for People United to Save Humanity. The organization was later renamed the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. The group's work ranges from promoting minority hiring in the corporate world to conducting voter registration drives in communities of color.

— AP

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2 Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him."
3 But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory,
the One who lifts my head high.



Psalms 3:2-3

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