

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MARY'S STATUS IN QURAN AND BIBLE

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Abstract

The Present Study, under the title of "Investigating Mary's Status in Quran and Bible", is going to compare the characteristic of Mary from the viewpoint of Quran and the respective contents from Bible. Holy Mary is daughter of Imran from Bani-Israel tribe and mother of Jesus who is introduced in Quran as an epitome of chastity. A woman who is superior to many men in moral competence. The name of Mary is mentioned in various stories of Bibles including the pregnancy by God, the visit of Mary with Zakarya's wife, birth of Jesus- in all of which Mary plays an important role. But her role is less highlighted and more marginal after Jesus birth and she is just mentioned as the mother of Jesus. Both Books state Mary as a great and neat woman who could achieve the great status and deserved the word of God. In Quran, Mary's great status is more highlighted than the New Testament which considers the role of holy Mary as the mother of Jesus in His birth. In addition to 10 common features between Quran and Bible about Holy Mary, 4 features about her, namely, being nurtured well by God, getting heaven's foods, being purified by God, and remaining pure and innocent, are just mentioned in Quran.

Keywords: Quran, Bible, Holy Mary, Jesus, Zakarya.

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Introduction

Mary in Quran

Holy Mary is Imran's daughter from Bani-Israel tribe and mother of Jesus who is considered as the epitome of chastity in Quran. The equality of men and women in worship is emphasized in Islam, meaning that women are as the same as men to understand spiritual perfections and to progress to any determined horizon, and it is emphasized in Quran clearly. Also, her name is mentioned 34 times in verses (1). In Ma'ede verses, her name is called Sedigeh, and she is considered as the sign of God in Mo'menoun verses. Also, Anbia verses states Maryam as the paragon of chastity and equal to Prophets, mentioned after 16 great prophets such as Moses, Heron, Abraham, Lout, Isaac, Jacob... Anbia verses introduce Jesus by His mother and named them as the God signs, states as follows:

(Remember that Woman who was Virtuous, and We blew in Her of our Spirit and made Her and Her Son as a great Sign for all the people).(Anbia, 91)

The mother of Mary is Hanne. She was a virtuous woman. When Hanne was pregnant, told God: My God! I pray you to bear my child healthily, so that I dedicate her as the servant in Beit-Al-Moghadas. After pregnancy, she bore a daughter and named her Mary. When Mary was seven, Hanne took her to Beit-Al-Moghadas. Zakaria and other Messenger's children were praying there. Hanne came near, and said the fact. They put their pens into water, but Zakaria's pen stood on the water, so he was responsible for Mary's nurture. (2)

Great Quran states Hanne's pregnancy as such: Hanne, Imran's wife dedicates her baby to God to be the servant of God and His House forever, but after the childbirth, she saw that her child was a girl. Hanne was depressed of it, but God Tells her that: (Al- Imran, 36) (God Knows better). But be aware (Al-Imran, 36) (Boys are not equal to girls in working). The Sublime God never states that girls are not the same as boys meaning that boys can do something that girls cannot. In fact, He states that the grace and blessing resulting from a girl will be much more than that of a boy.

Truly woman, who is considered as the source of human, determines human beings' life. If she is deserved and virtuous, she will lead humans towards piety and competency. Hanne named her daughter Mary, and it literally means Muslim and servant of mosque. She can be the servant of mosque though Imran's child is female. (3)

Holy Mary stayed in God's House and became His guest. That time, Beit-Al-Moghaddas was called Temple. It was built by Prophet Davoud and was completed by His son, Suleiman. Beside it, the mosque Aghsa or Biet-Al-Moghaddas was built in Islamic era.

Zakarya built a room in upper place of Beit-Al-Moghaddas and grew her up keenly. She grew up by Zakarya. She always was deep in praying that Ibn-Abbas (one of the great exegetes in the beginning of Islam), said taht when she was 9, she was fast during the day and prayed at nights. She advanced in knowing God and piety in a way that she was superior that many other pious scholars. (4)

One day, while Mary was praying, Zakaryia came in, and got surprised. He saw many kinds of special food, and asked her: Mary! These foods are not similar to ordinary foods. How did you get them? Mary answered: God sent me, and whenever God wants, gives without means.

(He appointed Zakaria as Mary's guardianship to protect her)(Al-Imran, 37). Whenever he came to the monastery to see Mary, he would find wonderful food, and he would say: Oh Mary! How did you get it? She would answer: God sent me, God gives whoever He wants countlessly. Once as Mary was praying in the altar as usual, angels came and told her: (When the angels said: Oh Mary! God selected and purified you and made you prominent of all other women in the world).(Al-Imran, 42) . First this verse states that angels speak with Mary and this shows that angels may speak with other than prophets so it may indicate the superiority of Mary's stature. Then, He repeats it once again and says: God selected you and made you superior than other women. The first verse states the sublime characteristics of Mary and counts her as a selected woman, and in second verse as was repeated, indicates her superiority over other women. Angels told Mary to thank God and to appreciate Him for His Blessing. (Oh Mary! Follow God, prostrate and pray with others who prostrate).(Al-Imran, 43)

Then, angels came and said: Mary! God gifted you a son, Jesus, who is one of the close to God!(Al-Imran, 45).

After that, one day while Mary was praying, one handsome angel named -Gabriel- came there to blow Jesus in her womb by the will of God. Mary who was a virtuous woman, got afraid of Him and said the name of God and asked him to be far away.

This is stated in Mary surah as follows: (Oh Prophet! Remember Mary in your Book, the day when she settled towards the East, hid herself there, and We sent our Spirit to her and it was a complete human. Mary said: I ask God to help me so that you remain pious).(Mary, 16-18)

Gabriel told her: (I am messenger of God to gift you a son).(Mary, 19). Mary became relaxed when she realized he was not human being and he was messenger of God. Then Mary said: (Al-Imran, 47) (My God! How I will have a son that I have never had any intercourse!). (Your God said that it is so simple, I give you a son as a gift, and everything is possible for me).(Mary, 21) . God can create everything, in fact the world is created by God and it follows God, whenever God wants, He makes changes, perform changes through unordinary means (5).

When Mary was giving birth to Jesus, it is stated in Quranic verses that: (So, Mary got pregnant and he took her with him to a far away place. When the pains of birth began, she relied on the date tree, and said: I wish I was dead beforehand and I was forgotten by all the people).(Mary, 22-23).(she heard: Don't be depressed, your God creates a stream under your feet. Oh Mary! shake the tree branch so that fresh dates fall down for you. Then eat and drink, and have your eyes on Jesus, and when you see someone, do not say anything and say I am fast, fast of silence for the sake of Beneficent God and I wont tell anything to someone).(Mary, 24-26)

When Jesus was born, Mary hugged her baby in her arms and went to her tribe. (Then she took Jesus to go to the tribe, they said: Mary! You did an obscene and surprising act. Oh the sister of Heron! Neither your father nor your mother was unrighteous! Mary pointed to the baby, they said: How do we speak to a baby in cradle?(Mary, 27-29)

Suddenly, they saw that the baby began to speak:(The baby began to speak, because God enabled Him, He said: God created me, gifted me a Book from the Heaven, and assigned me as prophet, He made me as a grace wherever I am and recommended me to pray and pay Zakat till I am alive). (Mary, 30-33)

So, Jesus began to speak in the cradle to purify his mother of the accusation and clearly stated his servant status towards God and revealed His prophecy. His words and speaking ability surprised the tribe and made their eyes be out on stalks, then Jesus speaking in cradle spread to anywhere, thus Mary's status improved again and she became virtuous. Mary looked after her Son in calmness and grew Him up. Mary was the only child of her mother, and did not have any brothers, but in verse 28 of Mary Surah, her tribe called her the sister of Heron. In Majma Al-Bayan exegesis, exegetes make out four possibilities:

- Heron was a righteous man among Bani-Israel, and they would call every good man as Heron.
- Heron was the name of Mary's uncle who was well known as goodness.
- Heron was the brother of Moses and Mary was the offspring.
- Heron was unrighteous man who was well known as being wicked and they referred her in order to rebuke her.

God describes Mary in Tahrim surah as: (Mary-daughter of Imran, who was purified, We gifted her a son from our spirit. She acknowledged Books from the Heaven and word of God and she was a submissive servant of God).(Tahrim, 12)

This is one part of her wonderful status. A woman who is superior than many men. Mary's face is drawn in the history of Heaven religions differently. Only the Holy verses of Quran exonerate her of the aspersions and tell the fact clearly.

Maryin Bible

Mother of Jesus is one of the women who was mentioned in the New Testament. Mary was the grandchild of Judaism and offspring of Davoud, mother of Yahiya- Baptist (6).

The first hint about Mary can be seen in the New Testament. "Yet, Jesus birth was in a way that His mother got engaged with Joseph. and before they marriage, Mary was pregnant, but Joseph who was a righteous man, did not want to punish her, so he wanted to leave Mary furtively, but the angel came to him and said: Oh Joseph son of Davoud! Don't be afraid of getting married with Mary, because what is inside her, is the spirit of God, Mary will give birth to a son, and will name him Jesus, He will save his tribe from sins. When Joseph woke up, did what angel had told him, got marriage with Mary, did not know her till she gave birth to her first son and named him Jesus. (Bible Mata/1/18-25).

However, what Logha believes about Mary is like this: "In the sixth month, Gabriel was sent to a city caled Nasereh, he came to a virgin who was engaged with Joseph, her name was Mary. Gabriel said that: this is the gift of God to you, and you are appreciated among all women. When Mary saw Him got frightened and wondered how it could be a respect! Angel said: Don't fear Mary, because God gifted you a son who will be in a high status. And you will name Him Jesus. He will grow up He will get the status of his father, Davoud and will be king of Jacobs tribe forever. Mary said: How is it possible? I never had intercourse. Angel replied: Holy Spirit will come and cover you, so the holy child will be called the son of God. Also, Alisabat (Mother of Yahia, wife of Zakaria)-your acquaintance- will be pregnant in oldness while all call her unfertile, because there is no impossibility for God. Mary said: I am the servant of God now, I saw what you say. Then Gabriel went. (Logha/1/26-38).

In Bible of Logha, after the conversation of Holy Spirit and Mary, the visit of Mary and Alisabat is narrated, in which Mary uttered exciting words and expressed best worships towards God. Mary runs away toward a city from the mountains of Judaism. She came into Zakaryia home, greet to Alisabat, while the fetus began to move. Alisabat said: Mary, you are superior to other women, congratulate to you because of your fetus, you are the mother of my God. When you called me, my fetus began to move. And, what Gabriel told her, occurred. Mary said: My spirit appreciates God because God saw me, and since now all the people make me happy, because God has done great favors to me and his Name is Holly. His name will be holy, he is powerful and all cruels feared of Him. He dealt with and defeated them. He quelled the tyrants and honored those who were modest. Fed the hungry with good things and led the wealthy people

live in penury. Cooperated with Israel- His servant- and followed the way of Ibrahim with the memory of His Beneficence as was said to our ancestors. Mary stayed there about three months, then returned her home (Logha/1/39-56).

These words show the high status of Mary and her respect to God and she predicts toward Holy Spirit. Then, Mary and Joseph went to Beit Al-lahm to be counted there, and Jesus was born there (Logha/2/4-7).

When Jesus was born, we refer to the event occurred when Jesus was twelve: His parents went to Jerusalem to hold Fesah annually, when Jesus was twelve, returned after ides, Jesus stayed at Jerusalem, and his parents didn't know, they thought Jesus is among travelers. After one day, they looked for Jesus, but didn't find him. They returned to Jerusalem, they found him in the Temple after three days among teachers, he spoke and others listened. All who listened his words, wondered. His parents worried. Mary said: Why did you do such? We were sad. Jesus answered: Why did you look for me? Don't you know that I should be in my father's affairs? They couldn't realize what he said. So, Jesus set out, went to Nasereh, followed them, but his mother kept them in her mind (Logha/2/41-52).

Although the name of Mary is mentioned frequently when public propaganda of Jesus is stated, her role remained ignored and Jesus is emphasized more. Once she was eager to speak with Jesus, went to him: Jesus spoke to people when Mary and other sons waited outside. Someone said: Now, your mother and brothers are outside, they came to speak with you. Jesus replied: Who are my mother and brothers? Then pointed to all pupils and said: these are my mother and brothers, and those who follow my father's orders in the Heavens, are my mother and brothers (Mata/12/46-50). Bible of Logha states that: Jesus expressed that my mother and brothers are those who heard words of God and follow (Logha/8/21).

According to Bible of Johana, Mary attended the cross foot too. His mother, and sister of her mother, the wife of Kalopa and Mary Mojadlieh stood aside cross. When Jesus saw his mother and favorite pupil, told his mother: take my mother to home. It maybe inferred that Jesus considered his mother as audience as a woman, maybe it was occurred to revitalize the Hava-

Ophiuchus-, who was the mother of all people. In any way, Jesus asked his mother to be the mother of his favorite pupil (Johana) and asked Johana to be the son of his mother. In Bibles, some things such as Mary pregnancy and hymen, and birth of Jesus are mentioned (Logha/1/31-33). She was pregnant without losing her hymen (Mata/1/20 & 23, Logha/1/34), then Joseph considered as her engaged, then as her husband (Mata/1/18 & 24).

Mary is mentioned in one of the events mentioned in Bible, the marriage ceremony at Ghana. In Ghana Mary absorbed Jesus' Attention to a reality rather than wine. Jesus stated his future and hanged on cross, and said: in the third day in Ghana, there was a marriage ceremony, Mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his pupils were invited to ceremony, when wines run out, his mother told him: there is no wine. Jesus replied: What do you want? The time is not over. His mother said to servants: Do what he orders. Then, Jesus converted water to wine (Bible of Johana/2/1-5).

Pols writings didn't state the name of Mary, and her name was mentioned in prophets' writings once, but she was upper stairs in Jerusalem and prayed as the same as Apostles and saw the messengers and followers of Christianity. When they came in, went upstairs, there, Petrus, Johana, Jacob, Andria, Philips, Tomah, Bartolome, Mata, Jacob Ibn-Alafia, and Samoan and Yehuda the brother of Jacob attended, also all women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were praying (Prophets' ways/1/143 & 14).

As mentioned above, Mary was in various stories of Bible. All events, such as Mary's pregnancy by Holy Spirit, her conversation with Alisabat, birth of Jesus and His presence in the Temple, Mary has an important role, but then her role was less highlighted and just through focusing on Jesus and his prophecy , and she is mentioned only as the mother of Jesus.

Comparison of Quran and the New Testament Perspectives toward Mary

In Quran, Mary is emphasized, and is considered as a wonderful woman through history. Quran consists of a surah as Mary and other surahs as Al Imran, it is while Quran avoids mentioning the name of a woman, whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned, the name of Mary is stated. Never

in Quran the Name of Jesus is not mentioned alone, unless He is emphasized as being Mary's Son.

In the New Testament, the role of Mary as giving birth to Jesus is highlighted, but this role is more marginal after Jesus birth and included a subsidy role and she was considered as one of the remote friends of Jesus even she couldn't meet her son. Except some trivial events, the name of Mary is lost and her characteristic is affected by her son status and character in the New Testament. Now, a comparison of Jesus birth in Quran and Holy Bible is going to be presented. Both state the conversation of Mary and an angel to announce her to be pregnant. Mary feared and considered it to be impossible, especially when she had never had intercourse, but the angel convinced her that everything is possible for God and all things depend on God. Quran expands this more, and states birth of Mary and her nurture, then emphasizes that Mary has had conversations with the angels before becoming pregnant and enjoyed evident dignity.

The New Testament doesn't state the past life of Mary except her engagement with Joseph. But, in Quran, no husband or engaged is pointed out, It considers Mary as a righteous woman. Quran explains conversation of Mary and angel in detail, but the event of Jesus birth is described clearly and in detail. Quran states the hidden life of Mary through pregnancy, describes the events through birth, and disgusting words her tribe uttered. However, the New Testament states events in summary as marginal events.

By any way, both consider Mary as a purified and righteous woman to get the Heaven names and make conversations with angels to show deep spirituality inside her. So, it may be claimed that Quran emphasizes more on spiritual status of Mary, but the New Testament states her as the mother of Jesus through Jesus birth, then ignore it.

Finally, a list of comparisons is presented as followings:

Quran	Bible
Demand help from God to save herself (Al-Imran, 36)	Accompany with God (Logha/1/28)
Being accepted by God (AL-Imran, 37)	The servant of God (Logha/1/38 & 48)
Being Nurtured well by God (Al-Imran, 37)	
Getting Heaven's food (Imran, 37)	
Being selected by God (Estefak) (Al Omron, 42)	Superiority to other women (Logha/1/28, 42)
Purification by God (Al-Imran, 42)	
Conversation with angels (Al-Imran, 42-43, 447, Mary, 17-21)	Conversation with Gabriel (Logha/1/28, 38)
Being righteous and innocent (Ma'ede, 75)	
Be blessed by God (Ma'ede, 110)	Heaven gifts (Logha/1/28)
	Getting gifts from God (Logha/1/30)
	God forgiveness (Logha/1/50)
Virtue (Mary, 20, Anbia, 91, Tahrim, 12)	Not having intercourse (Logha/1/34)
The sign of God (Anbia, 91)	Mother of God (Logha/1/43)
Acknowledge the words of God and books from Heavens (Tahrim, 12)	Graceful (Logha/1/47)
Submission and following with emotion (Tahrim, 12)	Curious worship and pray (Logha/1/41)
Being under God's grace (Tahrim, 2, Anbia, 91)	Pregnancy by Holy Spirit (Logha/1/35, Mata/1/81, 20)

According to the table, four characteristics: 1. Being nurtured well by God, 2. getting Heaven's food, 3. Being purified by God and 4. Remaining Righteous, are only stated in Quran, but are not mentioned in the New Testament. Also, there are common characteristics between Quran and the New Testament.

Conclusion

In Quran, Mary is emphasized so much and she is considered as incomparable woman through history. There is a surah in Quran as Mary, and another surah as Al-Imran which states her name. In Quran, whenever the name of Jesus is mentioned, holy Mary is stated, too. In fact, Jesus name is not mentioned otherwise the statement of Son of Mary is mentioned. In the New Testament, Mary played an important role through the birth of Jesus, but her role is less highlighted after Jesus birth and is considered as having a marginal role and her character is affected by her Son. Quran emphasizes on details such as the visit of angel and Mary, hidden life of Mary during pregnancy, and her moods while giving birth. On the other hand, the New Testament states the events in summarized form. By any way, both consider Mary as a great neat woman who got Heaven status and could see angels and could deserve the word of God. As mentioned, Quran highlighted Mary's spirituality more than the New Testament. Four features, being nurtured well by God, getting Heaven's food, being purified by God and remaining Righteous, are only in Quran, but the New Testament does not state them. Yet, in other ten features, Quran and the New Testament are somehow similar.

References

-Quran

-Holy Bible

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