

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF PROPHET JESUS ^(pbuh)

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The challenge against the virgin birth of Mary's son is usually asserted by some Muslims that do not accept a 'literal' reading of some passages. The main thrust of their contention is against miraculous interventions by God such that would warrant a virgin female to miraculously conceive.

Other verses of scripture, such as Prophet Moses' ^(pbuh) staff writhing as a serpent, the seas parting et al, are all challenged on similar grounds with a view to impart a more metonymical explanation which rid the narratives of any extraordinary appeal.

The central challenge from a Quran's perspective would most certainly ask the pointed exegetical questions:

What did the primary audience, especially the Christian community, understand by such a narrative of the Quran?

Did the Quran confirm their understanding or challenge it in this specific regard?

It is indisputable that the Quran foremost appealed to a specific people to whom the Quran was revealed who undoubtedly had a specific understanding. Apart from the Pagan Arabs, a central address of the Quran's narratives is geared towards the People of the Book.

These are very serious exegetical questions.

Those that wish to argue against such a mainstay understanding based on the Quran must deal with this central contention persuasively and not with nonchalance. The latter will only result in an academic accusation of an unwarranted and faulty interpretation on their part.

From a Quran's perspective, it appears that the Quran's intention was **only to mirror the understanding** of the Biblical text found in the New Testament which underscores the understanding of the mainstay Christian belief.

This belief was that Mary was to conceive without any intervention of a male counterpart.

Explicit verses of the scripture underscore their understanding:

Luke 1 (part) (KJV)

³⁰ And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

34 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee..." (part)

The Quran makes absolutely **no attempt** to **challenge** the mainstay Christian understanding resonating the same sentiments verbatim.

Quran Surah 19

19. He said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, that I may bestow upon you a righteous son."

20. She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?"

21. He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me: And so that We will make him a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us and it is a matter decreed.'"

To seek support from **implicit verses** of the Quran such as 3:59 and 6:88 in order to **'imply'** a rejection of the mainstay understanding of a community supported by **explicit verses** remains wholly **without warrant**.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Quran must be allowed to speak and not be wrought into an understanding that supports one's own views. Otherwise, one would become guilty of **'eisegesis'** (personal interpretation of a text using one's own ideas) instead of a more critical, objective **'exegesis'**.

The Quran remains **explicit** when it challenges an incorrect belief of the followers of previous scriptures which is clear from many narratives of the Quran.

However, in the case of Prophet Jesus' ^(pbuh) birth, there appears to be no room to argue for a metaphorical interpretation that denounces the literal understanding that Mary conceived without the intervention of a male counterpart.

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