

Proposed solutions for the four metaphysical puzzles related to Jesus from an Islamic perspective

Omar Abur-Robb

Library: omr-mhmd.yolasite.com

omar.robb@yahoo.com

Dec 2022

(Revised July 2023)

There are 4 puzzles related to Jesus that are really interesting:

1. Jesus didn't die on the cross (as per the Quran). So, was Jesus nailed to the cross but didn't die there, or was he not on the cross at all?
2. Jesus missionary lasted for about 3 years, and we can conclude that he finished his mission. So, what was this mission?
3. Why Jesus ascended to heaven and why is he returning back? Why not just die?
4. Why the miraculous birth? Abraham birth was normal and Moses birth was normal, so what is the need for the miraculous birth of Jesus?

Jewish Scholars have clear answers for these puzzles:

Jesus died on the cross, he didn't have a mission, he didn't ascend to heaven, he won't be returning back, and his birth is not miraculous.

Atheists have the same exact answers for these puzzles, devoted Christian Scholars have other answers for these puzzles, but to my understanding, these puzzles have never been explored by Muslims before (except for the first one), and it would be interesting to explore them here.

It should be noted that this is not an apologetic article; rather, it is an article that aims to present solutions for these puzzles from a perspective that is in harmony with the Islamic metaphysics. However, it should also be noted that I have utilized certain legitimate interpretations for the Quranic verses, and it is important to acknowledge that these verses can also be legitimately interpreted differently. Nevertheless, the proposed solutions don't contradict the clear verses of the Quran.

We also have added the following two chapters:

5. The miraculous birth of Jesus from the Quranic perspective.
6. Was the virgin birth of Jesus a public knowledge or was it a secret?

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1# Was Jesus nailed to the cross but didn't die there, or was he not on the cross at all?

In Quran 4:157.

- Translated by quran.com:
and for boasting, “We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.” But they neither killed nor crucified him—it was only made to appear so. Even those who argue for this ‘crucifixion’ are in doubt. They have no knowledge whatsoever—only making assumptions. They certainly did not kill him.
- Translated by quran.ksu.edu.sa:
And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.

There are differences in translations for this verse. The word for word translation for the first underlined text: “But seemed to them”. The “quran.com” translation is much more accurate than the other one.

The word for word translation for the second underlined text: They didn’t kill him certainly. This can be interpreted as: they didn’t kill him for certain.

Now ... the word “crucify” has two legitimate meanings in Arabic:

- The default meaning: to execute by the cross.
- The alternative meaning: to nail on the cross.

This will provide two legitimate interpretations for the above Quranic verse:

- The default interpretation: Jesus was nailed to the cross, but he didn’t die there.
- The alternative interpretation: Someone else other than Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Muslims took the alternative interpretation as they couldn’t believe that God will let Jesus go through this horrible treatment. This was supported by stories originated from Christians who converted to Islam.

This view was dominant until 1984 when Ahmad Deedat highlighted the default interpretation and built an interesting model accordingly (Ref: Deedat).

Now ... the line in the Quranic verse “they didn’t kill him for certain” does support the default interpretation as it clearly clarifies that there has been a killing attempt.

Using the default interpretation, the meaning of Quran 4:157 can be summarized as the following:

They say they killed Jesus, but they didn't, nor they executed him on the cross, but they thought they did. They even were in doubt and they didn't have knowledge but assumptions, and they didn't kill him for certain.

The default interpretation can be supported by analyzing the scientific historical data:

[“Scientific History” is a special approach in which we only include records and draw conclusions that don't contradict with the scientific laws of nature. After that, we analyze the gaps between the metaphysics and these conclusions. This approach can help in solving many issues and answering many questions. See article #54.02 in the library site: “The general methodology for analyzing metaphysical subjects”].

There are numerous accounts that Jesus has been seen after the crucifixion. Therefore, there are 3 main options to explain these accounts from a scientific historical perspective:

- Jesus died on the cross, and he was buried, but someone took his corpse. However, Jesus companions hallucinated seeing and talking to him.
- Jesus died on the cross, and he was buried. A group of his companions decided to take his corpse and bury him somewhere else. Then they decided to tell the people that Jesus is still alive.
- Jesus was nailed to the cross. However, he didn't die there, but went into deep-coma. He then recovered and talked with many people. then he went into hiding waiting for the right moment to make his move, but he died suddenly. One of his companions was with Jesus at the time and he buried Jesus quietly, and he managed to keep this matter secret.

The first option is highly unlikely: people don't have the same exact hallucination.

The second option is possible but unlikely: these people were peasants and it is unlikely that they could maintain a conspiracy of such magnitude.

The third option is probable as it is possible to withstand 6 hours of crucifixion, and deep-coma does scientifically exist.

So, regardless of the probability distribution of these options, we could claim with confidence that the death of Jesus on the cross was “historically” not certain.

This can be supported by the data related to the crucifixion itself:

Jesus head hasn't been hit, his neck hasn't been cut, his legs haven't been broken, and six hours on the cross is not normally deadly. Many now do relive these six hours of crucifixion every year and it is not very dangerous to them. It has been recorded that Josephus (the ancient Jewish historian) noticed that three of his friends have been crucified, and he informed Titus (the Roman army leader) who ordered these three to be brought down. Two of them died in treatment and one survived.

Also, there is a new “Hollywood mission-impossible type” hypothesis, which is probably inaccurate, but it is interesting and deserve to be mentioned:

There is a claim that some friends of Jesus have prepared a plan for saving him: they put a strong drug in the water and vinegar, so Jesus went unconscious, then a friend of Jesus ran to Pilate (the Roman Governor) asking for Jesus body. This friend was very convincing specially when followers of Jesus start to appear in the area and there was fear that things might go out of control.

This is a Hollywood type hypothesis, and It is probably inaccurate, but is it really impossible?

However, this hypothesis presuppose that Jesus friends knew that Jesus will be crucified, and this presupposition is unlikely.

But still, if there were numerous accounts that Jesus has been seen after the crucifixion, then there is a good probability that Jesus simply didn't die on the cross, but instead, he went into a deep coma.

Now ... There is a clear contradiction between the conclusion that “Jesus probably died in hiding” with the Islamic metaphysics. Therefore, this conclusion can be rejected metaphysically as it is clear from the Islamic Scripture that Jesus ascended to heaven.

But the conclusion that “Jesus didn't die on the cross” fit exactly with one of the interpretations of Quran 4:157. Therefore, this conclusion can support one interpretation over the other. Therefore, we can say with confidence that Jesus was highly likely nailed to the cross but didn't die there.

Now ... Jesus survival was not due to a direct act from God; it was due to the circumstances that happened during the crucifixion. So, even if Jesus died on the cross, then God would have resurrected him for a reason that will be clear when discussing the third puzzle. Nonetheless, it is clear from the Quranic verses that Jesus simply didn't die on the cross.

But there is a serious question here: how God allowed his Messenger (Jesus) to be tortured on the cross for 6 hours?

The answer for this question is actually the solution for the fourth puzzle (chapter 4), which we will be discussing later.

2# Jesus missionary lasted for about 3 years, and we can conclude that he finished his mission. So, what was this mission?

When Jewish apologetics debate with their Christian counterparts, they would argue if Jesus was “the king like David” or “the Prophet like Moses”. I am going here to argue that Jesus was “a Prophet like Elijah”:

Elijah was sent by God to the Samaritans (the people of the ancient kingdom of Israel) to submit to God and to give up the prohibited customs of the Canaanite culture. They disobeyed Elijah and tried to kill him, and I am assuming here that this was sufficient cause to end the covenant between them and God.

The ending of this covenant means that the Samaritans from that day on will live according to their skills and capabilities with no special support from God, as same as most other nations on earth.

However, the Samaritans did have the sufficient skills and capabilities to steer their life through the turbulent sea of time, relatively unharmed, until about 650AD when they went into mass conversion to Islam.

Now ... We (the Muslims), the Jews, and the Christians would agree that the covenant has ended between the Samaritans and God. As a consequences of this end, no prophet of God will specially and explicitly be sent to them. However, we don't know exactly when the covenant ended between the Samaritans and God, and I am assuming here that this happened as a consequence of the Samaritans trying to kill Elijah.

But there are other possible options which is to say that the covenant ended as they disobeyed either Elisha, Micaiah, Amos, or Hosea. However, these are not recognized prophets in Islam. They could be, but we (the Muslims) don't know it, and we cannot assume it. Elijah is clearly mentioned in the Quran (Verses 37:123-132) as one of the highest prophets:

There are three types of prophethood:

1. Prophets without specific duties. Examples: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
2. Prophets with specific duties to guide and teach their own people. Example: John the Baptist.
3. Messengers of God for a specific people. These prophets are actually special envoys from God. Examples: Lot and Moses.

Jesus was the Messenger of God to the Jews, and Elijah was a Messenger of God to the Samaritans.

Therefore, I am leaning toward the assumption that the covenant has ended between the Samaritans and God due to their efforts to kill Elijah (and we will discuss later how the covenant started between the Israelites and God in chapter 4).

I am going here to argue that Jesus came to the Jews with the same two options: either the Jews will submit to God and give up the prohibited customs of the Greek culture, or the "covenant" between them and God will be over. The Jews disobeyed Jesus and they actually tortured him for 6 hours on the cross in an attempt to kill him. This was sufficient cause to end the covenant between them and God. Therefore, the mission of Jesus had ended as the covenant was over.

The ending of this covenant means that the Jews from that day on will live according to their skills and capabilities with no special support from God, as same as all other nations on earth.

If we accepted that the covenant between the Samaritans and God had ended, then I can argue here that the things that happened to the Jews after 70AD was much harder than the hardest thing that happened to Samaritans before. Hence, I can say with

confidence that the covenant between the Jews and God must have ended before 70AD.

Looking at the history of the Jews from the Time of Abraham (about 1700 BC) until 70AD then the most oppressions that the Jews faced were three: the oppression of the Pharaoh (about 1187BC), the exiles to Babylon (about 587BC), and the oppression of Greek under the rule of Antiochus IV (about 160BC). These oppressions didn't last for more than 50 years:

- For the Oppression of the Pharaoh: We have proposed in a previous article (Ref: Om-1), based on Quranic verses and supported by the Jewish bible, that the Pharaoh of the exodus was Ramesses VI (died in 1137BC) and the Pharaoh of the oppression was Ramesses III (reigned at 1187BC). Therefore, this oppression lasted for less than 50 years.
- For the exiles to Babylon: The Babylonians took Jerusalem in 587BC and the Persians took Babylon in 539BC, and the permission for the Jews to return back to Palestine was given in 537BC. Therefore, this oppression lasted for about 50 years.
- For the Oppression of the Antiochus IV: His reign started in 175BC and Jews managed to overcome the Greek by the "Maccabean Revolt" in 134BC. Therefore, this oppression lasted for less than 50 years.

But the things that happened after 70AD is completely different in magnitude and duration to the previous events in the Jewish history. Therefore, I can say here with confidence that the covenant between them and God had ended at one point before 70AD.

It should be noted here that many prophets had been killed before (based on many Quranic verses as verse 2:61), but Jesus wasn't just a prophet, he was a Messenger of God, and this is the highest level of prophethood.

So, aligning these notes with the data related to Jesus, then I can conclude that the covenant had ended at the day of the crucifixion, and this ended the mission of Jesus.

3# Why Jesus was ascended to heaven? Why not just die?

I am going here to argue that Jesus ascending and returning is just a symbolic fulfillment to a divine promise in Quran 58:21 (translated by quran.com):

Allah has decreed, "I and My messengers will certainly prevail." Surely Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty.

As Jesus ended his mission "not prevailing", therefore, he needs to return back to fulfill this divine promise.

If we accepted that Jesus return is just a symbolic fulfillment of a divine promise at the end of time, then Jesus will not have a hard time in preaching, but things will be firm similar to the firmness at the time of Moses as mentioned in Quran 7:171 (translated by quran.com):

And remember when We raised the mountain over them as if it were a cloud and they thought it would fall on them. We said, Hold firmly to that Scripture which We have given you and observe its teachings so perhaps you will become mindful of Allah.

It should be noted here that Jesus has only been sent to the Jewish Israelites: not to the Samaritans, not to the Greek, not to Romans, not to the Arabs, not to the Jewish Ethiopians, and not to the whole people,, but only to the Jewish Israelites. Therefore, his second preaching will only be to the Jewish Israelites.

The story of Jesus has many similarities with the story of Elijah. Therefore, the question here would be: has Elijah been ascended to heaven as the Jewish bible says?

Ascending to heaven is a miracle. A miracle is an event that contradicts with the laws of nature. If a miracle is clearly expressed in a divine-authorized-trusted text, then we can believe in it. If not, then we cannot assume it, and we need to generate a logical explanation.

For the Muslims, the Jewish bible is not an authorized-trusted text; there are lines in it that we believe are accurate and other lines that we believe are wrong. These wrong lines were either deliberate alterations to the original text, or they were just unintentional errors. Therefore, the Jewish bible is not an authorized trusted text for the Muslims. Therefore, we cannot accept the ascending miracle for Elijah.

Elijah has been briefly mentioned in the Quran (Verses 37:123-132), and there is no mention of his ascending to heaven. Therefore, we cannot accept the claim that Elijah has ascended to heaven. We can accept the data in the Jewish bible that Elijah has been sent to the Samaritans, and they refused him, and they tried to kill him,, and we have assumed here that this attitude caused the end of the covenant between the Samaritans and God.

However, I am proposing here that Elijah's enemies were destroyed before his death, and this would fulfill the promise in Quran 58:21.

4# Abraham birth was normal, Moses birth was normal, and David birth was normal. So, why the miraculous birth for Jesus?

I need to be upfront and say that the analysis here might seem a bit bizarre, but it provides a complete proposition for solving this puzzle. Therefore, we have here something that we can start with, and later we might be able to develop a better one.

I am going here to argue that Messengers of God have a formal (or informal) contract with God of which the Messenger will deliver the message as best as he can, and God will protect the Messenger from serious harm. For example, Moses did have a contract with God (regardless whether it was formal or informal) as it can be interpreted from Quran 20:25-47. But I am going to argue here that Jesus didn't have such a contract as he was created as a servant/prophet from birth. Furthermore, Jesus was compared to angels in Quran 4:172 (translated by quran.com):

The Messiah would never be too proud to be a servant of Allah, nor would the angels nearest to Allah. Those who are too proud and arrogant to worship Him will be brought before Him all together.

I am assuming here that angels have been created to be servants to God from the start, and the same is said for Jesus. Therefore, there was no contract between Jesus and God. Therefore, God allowed the torture of Jesus on the Cross for 6 hours, which was sufficient event to end the covenant between the Jews and God.

The argument here is that **if** the covenant is going to be ended, then there need to be a sufficient cause for that. Torturing the Messenger of God and trying seriously to kill him is a sufficient cause. However, God will not allow a normal Messenger to be tortured; because of the contract. Therefore, a Messenger without a contract (i.e. a special Messenger) is needed here. That is the reason (I think) for the miraculous birth of Jesus.

It should be noted here that the miracles of Jesus [healing and resurrecting the dead] were very distinguished even for the Messengers of God before him. Therefore, torturing the Messenger of God (who had provided clear distinguished miracles) and trying seriously to kill him was probably a sufficient cause for ending the covenant.

But there is a question here: If Jesus did have these clear distinguished miracles, then how the Jews dared to try to kill him?

Based on many Quranic verses, the Jews were disobedient to many Prophets before Jesus. Therefore, this attitude towards the Prophets is expected from the rigid religious-authorities as the Prophets would normally criticize the practices of these authorities, and they would also reinforce clear moral codes that might be different from the current one. However, Jesus was not just a Prophet, he was a Messenger with distinguished miracles. So, I am assuming here that these religious-authorities thought that if they managed to kill Jesus then he is not a Messenger of God (or at least he is the same as the one before him). But if Jesus wasn't killed and he managed to prevail, then they (as they probably thought) could just say "Sorry". I would assume that this thought (or similar like it) might probably be universal for all rebellious people against the Prophets.

There is another note here: the Samaritans didn't torture Elijah, but they disobeyed him and they tried to kill him but they couldn't catch him, therefore Elijah was not tortured. Still, the covenant has ended between the Samaritans and God (as assumed and discussed before). So, the question here: why Jesus need to be tortured in order for the covenant to be ended with the Jews?

The answer: The Samaritans at the time of Elijah start to worship Baal along with God. This is a very serious offence for people who have a covenant with God. The Jews never worshiped other than God: they went in huge depth into the Greek culture but not to the point of worshipping Jupiter and Zeus. Therefore, the cause for ending the covenant with the Jews needs to be much more substantial.

Now ... there are many other ways that would be substantial and sufficient causes to end the covenant between the Jews and God. However, God took this particular

approach for reasons that are not yet clear to me. This is of course in the assumption that my conclusions here are accurate.

It would be useful here to discuss how the covenant started with the Israelites:

There have been many different opinions among Islamic Scholars about the identity of the sacrificed son: Isaac or Ishmael. Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi (well-known Quranic commentators) thought that the sacrificed son was Isaac, while Ibn-Kathir (another well-known Quranic commentator) thought that it was Ishmael.

In Quran 11:70-71 a prophecy was given to Sarah (the wife of Abraham) that she will have Isaac, then Jacob will come after him:

And when he saw that their hands did not reach for the food, he became suspicious and fearful of them. They reassured him, “Do not be afraid! We are angels sent only against the people of Lot (70) And his wife was standing by, so she laughed, then We gave her good news of the birth of Isaac, and, after him, Jacob (71) She wondered, “Oh, my! How can I have a child in this old age, and my husband here is an old man? This is truly an astonishing thing (73)

Islamic Scholars have many interpretations for the underlined text (i.e. “so she laughed”):

- Some have said that “laugh” (Da-he-k) can be used in some Arabic ancient dialects to mean “menstruation”. Therefore, the word “laugh” (Da-he-k) would be a better tactful word to describe what happened to Sarah than the word “menstruation”.
- Other have said that the line here has an inverse style (which is an accepted style in the Arabian ancient poems). Therefore, the intentioned meaning is: And his wife was standing by, then we gave her good news of the birth of Isaac and after him Jacob, so she laughed.

Probably the purpose of this inverse style is to clarify that Sarah suddenly laughed, then after that, she went into total wonder.

Our interest here is in Quran 11:71

“We gave her good news of the birth of Isaac, and, after him, Jacob”

Some commentators have argued that Isaac cannot be the sacrificed son as the prophecy is clear that Jacob is going to be after him. Therefore, how could God tell Abraham that Jacob will be the son of Isaac, then after that, God instruct Abraham to sacrifice Isaac!!

However, other commentators have answered that the prophecy here doesn't clearly say that Jacob is the son of Isaac, and it is probable that Abraham at that point thought that Jacob is going to be his son, not his grandson.

We could also say that this verse implies that Sarah (and possibly, but not necessary, Abraham) lived until at least she held Jacob (when he was born) in her arms; as this prophecy was directed to her and not directed directly to Abraham.

Also, this verse does imply that the names: Isaac and Jacob were part of the prophecy. This means that the prophecy wasn't about two sons, but about two sons with the names Isaac and Jacob.

Now ... the sacrificial ceremony was a clear and known practice within the Semitic people; as the Semitic parents did sacrifice one of their offspring to their Gods. I am assuming here that this practice was totally voluntary, but the Semitic people regarded it to be very noble.

So, if Abraham was instructed to sacrifice Isaac for God, then this won't be something very hard for him to do; as it was part of the community's norms,, and he already has another son (Ishmael) and another promised one (Jacob).

But the attitude of Isaac (for accepting willingly to be sacrificed for God) is something very extraordinary, and I am assuming here that the covenant had started between Isaac and God from that moment.

Furthermore, this event (to sacrifice an animal for the son) was very useful and very attractive workaround for the descendants of Abraham in dealing with the Semitic related norms.

However, there is one catch for this hypothesis: if the covenant started with Isaac then Esau (the older son of Isaac according to the Bible) should be included in this covenant, but he isn't: If Esau was in this covenant then his descendants would have prophets the same as the Jews, and we would have known some of them, but we know nothing about them.

A possible solution is to say that Isaac had only one son and the stories in the Bible about Esau aren't very accurate. This is a heavy claim; but Quran 11:71 does imply that there are no brothers older than Jacob.

I can also add here that the Jewish Scholars are addicted to create stories from the meaning of names. Jacob means: "to come after". So, I am assuming here that the Jewish Scholars thought (from the meaning of this name) that there should have been an older brother (probably his twin) before him, and that was the start of the story of Esau. However, I am assuming here that Jacob was a given name in the prophecy for Sarah (in Quran 11:71); probably because Jacob was coming after Isaac.

Now ... I am not rejecting the existence of Esau: Abraham lived about 1700BC at the end of the Sumerian Empire (the Sumerians are different nation than the Samaritans, although in Arabic, the two names are almost identical). At that time, the Akkadians and Sumerians were mixed together due to their proximity for the past 2000 years. So, when Abraham left Iraq, he highly likely didn't leave alone; some of his relatives went with him along with some of his Akkadians and Sumerians friends. Therefore, Abraham had probably established a small tribe that settled in Palestine. So, Esau might have been a member in this small tribe, and there might have been struggles

and differences between Esau and Jacob. The only thing I am opposing here is the notion that Esau was the son of Isaac.

If we accepted this conclusion that the covenant started with Isaac because he accepted willingly to be sacrificed for God, then the end of this covenant happened when the descendants of Isaac tortured the Messenger of God and seriously tried to kill him. So, the covenant started by the willing to shed the blood for God and ended by the willing to shed the blood against God.

The other possible answer for the covenant is to say that it started for something that Jacob have done (which we know nothing about). Therefore, the covenant started with him and his descendants. This answer would accept the notion that Jacob had brothers. But I do favor the first answer that the covenant started with Isaac.

5# The miraculous birth of Jesus from the Quranic perspective:

If the reader thought that Jesus birth was miraculous according to the Gospels, then multiply this thought thousands of times and this how miraculous the birth of Jesus according to the Quran.

We will argue here that Mary didn't carry Jesus for 9 months pregnancy. She only carried him for much less than half a day, probably even less than 3 hours. This is not a new idea; it originated first time from Ibn-Abbas (the cousin of the Prophet who became a well-known scholar) as an interpretation for the related Quranic verses.

Therefore, the birth of Jesus was immediate after the conception. Jesus creation wasn't by a "sperm-fertilized" egg and it wasn't by a miraculous "non-sperm-fertilized" egg, but Jesus was created from the belly fat of Mary in the same process that created Adam from mud.

The conclusion here is that Mary is not the biological mother of Jesus, but she is his birth mother. We need here to clarify an important point related to birth mothers and we will do this through the following example:

Suppose there was a couple named Antonio and Isabella whom they were good friends with another couple named Dan and Martha. Dan and Martha couldn't have babies, therefore, they decided to have a third-party reproduction with Isabella. So, a sperm-fertilized egg will be taken from Dan and Martha and it will be implanted in Isabella. Therefore, Isabella would be pregnant with this egg and subsequently would give birth to a child that belong biologically to Dan and Martha.

The implantation was successful, and Isabella is carrying a male embryo that Dan and Martha decided to name him David. The pregnancy was successful, and Isabella delivered a healthy child. However, Isabella loved the child very much and decided to keep him. This enraged Dan and Martha and they went to the court, and the court (as expected) ruled that the child should be given to Dan and Martha.

However, if Dan and Martha went to an Islamic court (taking into notice that Islam probably doesn't allow third-party reproduction) then the Islamic court

will rule without hesitation or deliberation that the child belong to Antonio and Isabella; because there is a clear-cut verse in Quran 58:2 that says (in translation): Mothers are the ones who give birth.

So, regardless whether Mary was the biological mother of Jesus or not, still, Mary is the true mother of Jesus according to the Islamic concepts as she is the one who gave birth to him.

Let us start the story of Jesus birth based on the Quranic verses:

5.1# In Quran 3:37 (translated by quran.com):

So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing—entrusting her to the care of Zachariah.

In Quran 3:44 (translated by quran.com):

This is news of the unseen that We reveal to you 'O Prophet'. You were not with them when they cast lots to decide who would be Mary's guardian, nor were you there when they argued 'about it'.

From the underlined sentences in the previous verses we can conclude that both Mary's parents died when she was a child. Many of her relatives wanted to take care of her and they argued about it. At the end, they drew lots to decide who is going to be her guardian, and the lots went for Zachariah (the father of John the Baptist).

This means that there is a direct relative relationship between Zachariah and Mary.

5.2# Quran 3:37 (translated by quran.com):

So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing—entrusting her to the care of Zachariah. 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.

5.2.1# In "quran.ksu.edu.sa" translation: "Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber". This translation is more accurate for the Arabic Quranic text.

I am assuming here that the sanctuary (i.e. prayer chamber) is the synagogue in Nazareth.

5.2.2# I am assuming here that women didn't enter synagogues, but children did. Therefore, Mary was a child when her parents died.

5.2.3# Mary was a religious person from her childhood and used to spend her free time in the synagogue with her guardian (i.e. Zachariah).

5.2.4# Mary was highly loved by her relatives. They expressed this feeling by providing food and provisions to Mary in the synagogue as they know that Mary will be there.

There are some commentators that assumed that these provisions were provided by angels. However, this is a miracle that is not clearly expressed in the text; therefore, it shouldn't be considered, especially if we have non-miracle-explanations available.

5.2.5# The answer of Mary: "It is from Allah" is the typical answer for religious people regarding good fortunes or provisions. This also indicate that Mary was a religious person from here childhood.

5.2.6# The verse "Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without limit" can be part of Mary's answer or it might just be a clarification from God.

I am leaning toward the second option; as Mary was probably too young to have such an answer. With this option, Mary said: "It is from Allah" and God clarified her answer with an interrupting sentence.

5.2.7# If Mary is spending a lot of time in the synagogue and there is always food there, then we can conclude that Mary at her childhood was a bit fat. There are two other indicators that support this conclusion, which we will be discussing later.

5.3# Quran 19:16-26 (translated by quran.com):

And mention in the Book 'O Prophet, the story of' Mary when she withdrew from her family to a place in the east (16) screening herself off from them. Then We sent to her Our angel, 'Gabriel,' appearing before her as a man, perfectly formed (17) She appealed, "I truly seek refuge in the Most Compassionate from you! 'So leave me alone' if you are God-fearing." (18) He responded, "I am only a messenger from your Lord, 'sent' to bless you with a pure son." (19) She wondered, "How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me, nor am I unchaste?" (20) He replied, "So will it be! Your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me. And so will We make him a sign for humanity and a mercy from Us.' It is a matter 'already' decreed." (21) So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a remote place (22) Then the pains of labour drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She cried, "Alas! I wish I had died before this, and was a thing long forgotten!" (23) So a voice reassured her from below her, "Do not grieve! Your Lord has provided a stream at your feet (24) And shake the trunk of this palm tree towards you, it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you (25) So eat and drink, and put your heart at ease. But if you see any of the people, say, 'I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate, so I am not talking to anyone today (26).

5.3.1# Gabriel is not explicitly mentioned in the Arabic Quranic text. The direct translation in the Arabic Quranic text is "Our Spirit". However, it is clearly understood that this phrase refers to Angel Gabriel.

5.3.2# The words "The Most Compassionate" is an interpretation. The Arabic Word is "Al-Rahman". Many commentators think that this name of God is derived from the word Compassion (or Mercy). However, there are evidences that suggest that this name is a solid name that is not derived from any word: The Arabs at the time of Muhammed didn't recognize this name and they mocked him for it (See Quran 25:60). Also, there are some recent archaeological findings in Yemen that suggests

that Al-Rahman was the name of the supreme God (i.e. the God of heaven and earth) for the ancient Yemenites (Ref: Zeena).

Now ... Al-Rahman is not a Jewish recognized name. The Jews have many names for God and the main two are: Yahweh and Elohim. However, “Yahweh” at the time of Jesus was regarded a sacred name, therefore, it wasn’t normally used.

My assumption here is that Merry did invoke the name “Yahweh” in fear from the approaching stranger, and the Quran translated this by using the special name of God (i.e. Al-Rahman).

5.3.3# There are meanings in the Arabic text in verses 19:21-24 that are not clear in the translation because the translator didn’t take them into account:

The word “and” is a connector in English. We have many similar connectors in Arabic, and one of them is ‘fa’. When we say: “A ‘fa’ B happened” then we mean that B happened immediately without any delay after A. To rectify the translation for verses 21-24, we say:

She conceived him ‘fa’ withdrew with him to a remote place ‘fa’ the pains of labour drove her to the trunk of a palm tree.

This indicate that the conception, remote place, and labour came immediately after each other. This is the reason that we have said before that Mary didn’t carry Jesus for 9 months pregnancy, but she carried him and give birth to him in almost instantly.

As we have said before, this is not a new idea, it was originated very early, and it is the favored interpretation in many of the major Quranic commentary books (as in Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi).

These verses do imply that the duration for the conception and birth didn’t last for more than half a day (from sunrise to sunset); as Mary didn’t sleep outside. It is more plausible to say that it took less than a quarter a day; which is the time when she left home about probably noon until about sunset. Ibn-Abbas (a well-recognized scholar) assumed that this took about 3 hours.

5.3.4# In the verse 19:25: But if you see any of the people, say, ‘I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate, so I am not talking to anyone today.

There are many Jewish references discussing the “Fasting from Speaking” practice. This Jewish practice is called “Ta’anit Dibbur”:

A Ta’anit Dibbur, which was established in earlier generations and many people customarily still perform today, refers to an order whereby one completely abstains from any non-Torah-related speech; for the duration of the entire day, only words of Torah and prayer emerge from the individual’s mouth. Even with regards to speaking words which one needs to say for a necessary purpose and pose no prohibition whatsoever, such as, “Please pass me the bread” and the like, one abstains from such speech as well while observing the Ta’anit Dibbur and only words of Torah and fear of Heaven are spoken on this day (Ref: Sefaria)

I am going to assume here that the person who is “Fasting from Speaking” would clarify their fasting to the people by a clear sign. Therefore, the text: say, ‘I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate means that she would give the people a clear known sign that she is “fasting from speaking”.

5.4# Quran 19:27-35 (translated by quran.com):

Then she returned to her people, carrying him. They said ‘in shock’, “O Mary! You have certainly done a horrible thing! (27) O sister of Aaron! Your father was not an indecent man, nor was your mother unchaste.” (28) So she pointed to the baby. They exclaimed, “How can we talk to someone who is an infant in the cradle?” (29) ‘Jesus’ declared, “I am truly a servant of Allah. He has destined me to be given the Scripture and to be a prophet (30) He has made me a blessing wherever I go, and bid me to establish prayer and give alms-tax as long as I live (31) and to be kind to my mother. He has not made me arrogant or defiant (32) Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I will be raised back to life!” (33) That is Jesus, son of Mary. ‘And this is’ a word of truth, about which they dispute (34) It is not for Allah to take a son! Glory be to Him. When He decrees a matter, He simply tells it, “Be!” And it is! (35).

5.4.1# “Sister of Aaron” in Arabic is just two words. If we want to put a word to word translation in the exact place, then the translation would be “Sister Aaron”. Notice that in English the adjective is placed before the noun, but in Arabic it is the other way round: the noun is before the adjective. Therefore, the meaning of the Arabic sentence is “Sister of Aaron”.

5.4.2# There are “many” interpretations for the phrase: “Sister of Aaron”, and I am going here to choose the following one: If someone name is Abdullah then he will highly likely name his first-born son (or one of his sons) “Mohammed”; because the name of the Prophet is Mohammed ben (son of) Abdullah. If his name was Waleed, then he will highly likely name his first-born son (or one of his sons) Khaled; as there is a very distinguished military man whose name was “Khaled ben Waleed”.

As in Quran 3:35, the name of Mary’s father was Omran, which is the same name of the father of Prophet Moses. So, it is not surprising for someone with the name Omran to name his first-born son Aaron (as Aaron was older than Moses), and the second son would probably be named Moses, and the first daughter would probably be named Mary; because Moses did have a sister with the name Mary.

Some Arabs (ancient and current) will choose a nick name for their sons. For example, the son might be named Hassan and his nick name would probably be Abu-Ali (which means: the father of Ali).

Now ... I am not sure if the Jews at the time of Jesus did have nicknames related to brothers (sister of X or brother of X), but I am going to assume here that this norm did exist at the time of Jesus. So, my interpretation here is that this name (Sister of Aaron) was the nickname of Mary even though she didn’t have any brothers.

We are also assuming here that the mood of Mary's family was sadness for her and not anger from her. I am assuming here that the family knows Mary very well, and when they saw the child in her arms, they probably thought that one of men in the town had raped her, and she was too shy to discuss this matter. So, the mood was sadness for her and total anger on the person who is responsible for the crime.

As she gave the sign that she is "fasting from speaking" then probably this enraged them, and someone probably asked here: if you wouldn't tell us, then who would? She answered this question by pointing to her child.

5.4.3# Let us suppose a father with the name Peter and his daughter Ann. If Ann left at noon and returned back after few hours with a fresh born baby in her arms, then the first thought of Peter would be: a Mother has abandoned her baby and Ann just found it. Therefore, the first question of Peter to Ann would be: where did you find this baby?

But if Ann was a fat teenager and she left at noon and returned back after few hours very thin and slim with a baby in her arms then Peter will immediately realize who is the mother of this baby.

This is another indicator that Mary was a bit fat at her childhood before giving birth to Jesus; because her family immediately realized (when they saw her) that she is the mother of the child.

5.5# Quran 3:59 (translated by quran.com):

Indeed, the example of Jesus in the sight of Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, "Be!" And he was!

5.5.1# Muslim scholars have interpreted this verse as a metaphoric answer to the Christians: if Jesus was God because he has no father, then Adam should be a greater God as he has no father and no mother.

However, I am going here to argue that this verse is more literal than metaphoric:

I did write an article (Ref: Om-2) which clarified that there are no Quranic verses that object to the notion that elephants and rats descended from a shared common ancestor. The only objection in the Quran is related to Humans, as it is clearly mentioned in the Quran that the first human was created from mud. However, Humans are one among one billion species, therefore, the gap between the Quranic metaphysics and the theory of evolution is just "one over billion".

However, the article managed to further reduce this gap by aligning the Quranic verse 2:30 with the current scientific data. This provided the following hypothesis:

Homo-Erectus descended from apes. However, their mental abilities have developed much faster than their humanity, therefore, they started to become a serious threat to the living creatures around them. Therefore, they were wiped from the three continents about 300,000 years ago. After about 150,000 years, God created from mud a successor (Kha-lee-fa) for the Homo-Erectus with a

DNA almost identical to the Homo-Erectus, but with 4 main differences in the Skull and the abstract thinking.

I can assume here that this process of creation is similar to the process that have created Jesus: Jesus was created from fat with a DNA almost identical to the Jews.

The notion that Jesus DNA was almost identical to the Jews means that Jesus didn't look like the Greeks, didn't look like the Romans, didn't look like the Canaanite, but he looked like the Jews.

Therefore, the Quranic verse 3:59 can be interpreted almost literally. This provides a third indicator that Mary was a bit fat before giving birth to Jesus, and Jesus was created from this fat.

5.5.2# There would be a question here: If Adam was created from mud and Jesus was created from fat, then they didn't need the umbilical cord (the navel string). Therefore, they shouldn't have belly buttons, should they?

The answer: the body of Adam (and Jesus) was created according to the human DNA design, and the belly button is part of this design; therefore, Adam and Jesus did have belly buttons.

6# Was the Virgin Birth of Jesus a public knowledge or was it a secret?

First, we need to analyze the Virgin Birth (VB) accounts through the “scientific historical approach” (See the definition of “Scientific History” in chapter 1), then we will analyze the gaps between the conclusions of this approach and the Islamic metaphysics.

6.1# By analyzing the available accounts related to the VB in the Gospels we can conclude the following:

6.1.1# The Biblical Scholars have established that Mark was the first written Gospel (about 70AD), then Luke and Matthew were written almost at the same time (about 80AD), and the last Gospel to be written is John (about 90AD). Also, the letters of Paul have been written much earlier than these Gospels (about 60AD).

6.1.2# Paul knew nothing about the VB. If he knew about it then he would definitely mention it; as it would highly support his ideas. Also, Mark and John didn't mention the VB, and the VB isn't a minor thing to be ignored.

6.1.3# The only Gospels that have mentioned the VB were Luke and Matthew.

6.1.4# Therefore, the “scientific historical conclusion” does support the idea that the VB was just an invented fabricated narrative that has emerged after Paul and Mark, and it didn't become a public narrative until the second century. This is because John didn't know about this narrative and his Gospel was written about 90AD.

6.2# So, we have a serious gap between the Quranic metaphysics and the above conclusion. The best reconciliation between them is to say that the VB was a secret that only known to close members of Jesus family. However, one of them did leak this secret out about 70AD. The story of Jesus birth went through different editions as it

passed from one person to the next. One of these editions reached Luke and the other reached Matthew.

This conclusion does raise some very interesting questions:

What happened to the family of Jesus? Jesus had 4 brothers and 3 sisters (according to the Gospels), where did they go? I assume that James the Just (who was a well-known brother of Jesus) was married, and I expect he had children. What happened to them? They definitely went somewhere.

Possible answer: The Christian Greeks gradually became more liberal towards the Laws of Moses while it is expected that the family of Jesus would continue to follow these laws. Therefore, it can be assumed that the accounts of this family were disregarded and eventually faded away, leading to their complete disappearance from history.

It should be noted here that there are no Islamic metaphysical objections for Mary to be married to Joseph. Therefore, there are no Islamic metaphysical objections for Mary to have children other than Jesus.

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