Globethics Repository



Creation of Mary, Mother ofJesus, as a Miracle in the Qur'an

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Article
Authors	Okuyan, Mehmet
Publisher	Frankfurt University
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-15 11:42:50
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/191395

Journal of Religious Culture

Journal für Religionskultur

Ed. by / Hrsg. von Edmund Weber
in Association with / in Zusammenarbeit mit Matthias Benad
Institute of Religious Peace Research / Institut für Wissenschaftliche Irenik
Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main

ISSN 1434-5935 - © E.Weber – E-mail: irenik@em.uni-frankfurt.de
web.uni-frankfurt.de/irenik/

No. 106 (2008)

Creation of Mary, Mother of Jesus, as a Miracle in the Qur'an

A Different Interpretation of the Qur'anic Verses 66:12 and 21:91

By

Mehmet Okuyan♦

Introduction

As is well know the birth of Jesus from the virgin Mary is one of the issues which we have been satisfied with either the traditional interpretations or oversimplification of the role of Mary in this event. By doing so, those who have been interested in this issue have related the virgin birth to Jesus by regarding it as a miracle for Jesus and thus underestimated the role of Mary. Because of this traditional understanding either we have difficulty to understand why the Arabic male pronoun "*hû/hî*" is used for Mary in chapter 66 verse 12 or we have always avoided to question of this usage. While examining deeply in this verse and thinking about how Mary became pregnant to Jesus without any human father we have come across that there were a special system in Mary's genital organ, produces both ovule and sperm. By taking this information into account we need to examine chapter 66 verse 12 and other verses concerning Mary in order to highlight how Mary became pregnant to Jesus without human father. By doing this we believe that we will bring satisfactory

♦ Associate Professor on the Qur'anic Exegesis at the Faculty of Theology, University of Ondokuz Mayis, Samsun/TURKEY

explanation to why both male and female pronouns are used in chapter 66 verse 12 for Mary.

Mary and Jesus are Two Miracles in the Qur'an

When we look at the Islamic sources we can see that in every work which the virgin birth of Jesus has been discussed, it is always Jesus himself has been accepted as a miracle without mentioning of his mother Mary. However, when we look at the Qur'an we see that not only Jesus but his mother Mary are accepted as miracle also. "We made the son of Mary and his mother a symbol (of Our grace) and provided for both an abode in a lofty place of lasting restfulness and unsullied springs".[1] In this verses first of all it is taken into account miraculousness of Jesus and then his mother Mary and secondly it is emphasised that he was born without any human father by being described only as "son of Mary". There is similar usage in the following verse. "Remember of her who guarded her chastity whereupon into her of Our spirit and caused her together with her son, to become a symbol of Our grace unto all people".[2] Contrary to the above verse, in this verse firstly Mary and then Jesus are indicated as miracles for the universe. When we look at this verse closely we see that it is used only female pronoun *hâ* both for Mary and Jesus. For that reason there is an ambiguity in this verse concerning who is mentioned, Mary or Jesus or both of them. In order to solve this ambiguity we need to take into account all the Qur'anic verses as a whole concerning Jesus and Mary.

Now in the light of this methodology we try to determine the pronouns which are used in chapter 21 verse 91 and chapter 66 verse 12. In the first part of 21:91, while the Qur'an says "Remember her who guarded her chastity, whereupon we breathed into her of Our Spirit…" the name of Mary is not mentioned clearly. But when we compare this part with chapter 66 verse12 we see that "(We have propounded yet another parable of God-consciousness in the story of) Mary, the daughter of Îmrân, who guarded her chastity, whereupon We breathed of Our spirit into that (which was in her womb), and who accepted the truth of her Sustainer's words –and (thus) of His revelations- and was one of the truly devout".[3]

In this verse the name of Mary and whose daughter of her (daughter of Imrân) are clearly mentioned and then it is spoken about her guarded chastity and breathed her a spirit for God's side. These expressions of this verse are compatible with the general meaning of chapter 21 verse 91. Because of this compatibility there is no doubt that it Mary which are mentioned in both 21:91 and 66:12.

The other important point in the above verses concerning Mary is the praise of the Qur'an of Mary's chastity. Since this situation of Mary is very compatible with Mary's response to Gabriel when he appeared to her as a man in order to inform her tha Allah will give her a child.

"Mary exclaimed "Verily, I seek refuge from you with the Most Gracious, (Approach me not) if you are conscious of Him. The angel answered, 'I am but a Messenger of your Sustainer, (who says) 'I stil bestow upon you the gift of a son endowed with

[1] Al-Mu'minûn, 23:50.
[2] Al-Anbîya, 21:91.
[3] At-Tahrîm, 66:12.

purity. She said: 'How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me? –for, never have I been a loose woman!'".[4]
As is seen from this verse Mary did not know that those who came to her was Gabriel and assumed that he was an ordinary human being and came to give harm to her. This sort of psychology was quite normal for Mary since she was not a messenger who took revelation from Allah. Therefore Mary asked that man to be away from her. When Gabriel introduced himself to her, she said that she was not an unchaste woman since she had not intercourse with anybody and for that reason it is impossible for her to be pregnant. Apart from the above verses which speak about the miraculousness of Jesus and his Mother Mary, the following verse specifically mentions that Jesus was a sign for all mankind and a mercy in the place of Allah just as the Prophet Muhammad. "…We might make him a symbol unto mankind and act of grace from Us".[5]
In this study we will only examine deeply the verses concerning the virign birth of Jesus in order to highlight how the Mother of Jesus became pregnant to him without having sexual relationship with any human being. For that reason we will not study the miracles which are attributed to Jesus. In order to understand fully how Jesus was born from virign Mary first of all we need to study how Mary herself was born and what were her distinctive specialities.

Birth of Mary and the Acceptance of Her Mother's Prayer by Allah

Just as the birth of Jesus the Qur'an specifically mentions the birth of his Mother Mary. In chaper 3 the Qur'an talks about the family of Jesus and his Mother Mary. Between verse 33 and 54 of this chapter it is given a place to Mary's Mother Hanna's prayer concerning the birth of Mary.[6] When Hanna became pregnant to her prayed Allah as follows:
"Behold unto you do I vow the child that is in my womb, the boy devoted to your service. Accept it, then from me"[7]. In Arabic the term *muharraran* means "free male child". Because of this meaning we understand that Hanna was expecting to deliver not a daughter but a boy. But when she delivered a daughter she said that "…I have given birth to a female while God had been fully aware of what she would give birth to".[8] It is obvious that by this response Hanna meant that "my God, I was expecting a boy and I offered him to your service but you gave me a daughter". Since when Hanna said "no male child could have been like this female" she meant that "I offered what was in my womb to your service by expecting that the baby was going to be a male child. But I delivered a female child and it seems to me that she could not do what the male one could do". It could be possible that this last sentence was said by Allah not Hanna. If this is the case, then the meaning of the verse would be as follows: "Male child whom you wanted would not be female child whom I gave to

[4] Maryam, 19:18-20.
[5] Maryam 19:21.
[6] In the Gospel of Jacob Mary's mother is called as "Hnana". (See, the Gospel of Jacob, chapters, 1-20). In Islamic sources are used the name of "Hanne binti Fâzuka" for Mary's mother. See, M. Hamdi Yazir, *Hak Dini Kur'ân Dili*, Azim neş: İstanbul, II, p. 357.
[7] Âl-Îmrân, 3:35.
[8] Âl-Îmrân, 3:36.

you". When we take into account the context it seems to us that the words of the above verse belong to Hanna not Allah. Since in the end of this verse Mother Hanna ended her prayer with the following words: "I have named her Mary, and verily I seek your protection for her and her offspring against Satan, the accursed".[9] As is seen from this prayer of Hanna she gave the name of Mary to her child and begged for Allah to keep her and her descendants away from every kind of harmful things. The following verse indicates that Allah accepted her prayer: "Her Sustainer accepted the girl-child with goodly acceptance."[10] As a last thing concerning the prayer of Hanna and the birth of Mary we would like remind our readers that not Mary's father but her Mother spoke about her in these verses. Since her father had passed away when Hanna was pregnant to Mary. For that reason Hanna took care of her.[11]
After explaining how and which circumstances Mary was born, now we would like to move away to study how Mary became pragnant to Jesus without having a sexual relationship with a man. Before to do this first of all we would like to bring into account the relationship between human being, earth and plants in creation. Since as we will see below Allah says in the Qur'an that He brought up Mary like a beautiful plant.

Relationship Between Human being, Earth And Plants in the Creation.

While speaking about the creation of a human being, the Qur'an mentions three kinds of creation namely the creation of human being without parents, creation of human being by bringing together mother's ovum and father's sperm and creation of human being without any human father. There are detail information about the first two kinds of creation but there is one example of the third one and it is the case of Jesus. Only the creation of Jesus is resembled to the creation of Adam in the Qur'an in terms of their example of being the first in their creation. [12]
The Qur'an indicates that all living beings were created from the water.[13] And then it speaks about the relationship of human being's creation with the earth. As is well known according to the Qur'an the first human being was created from the mud (earth).[14] By taking into account this relationshio between human being and the earth we can say that human cells were produced directly or indirectly from the vegetable foods. Since whether it is vegetable or animal all the foods are related to the earth in one way or another. In the light of this undeniable fact it is not difficult to understand the following verse **"**God has caused you to grow out of the earth in [gradual] growth".[15]

---

[9] Âl-Îmrân, 3:36.
[10] Âl-i İmrân 3/37. Mahmud b. 'Umâr al- Zamakhshari, *al- Kashshâf 'an haqâ'ıq ghâwamîd al-tânzîl wa-'aqawîl fî wuj'ub al-tâ'vîl,* Beirut, Dâr al-Kitâb al-'Arabî, 1995; I, pp. 351-352; Abû Jâ'far Muhammad b. Jarir at- Tabarî, *Jâmi'u'l-Bayân 'an Ta'vîli Âyi'l-Kur'ân,* Beirut, 1988, III, p. 241; (Muhammad b. 'Umâr) al- Fakhr al- Dîn al-Râzî, *Mafâtîhu'l-Qayb*, Beirut, VIII, p. 28; Muhammad Rashid Ridâ, *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Hakîm (al-Manâr*), Cairo, 1990, III, p. 240.
[10] Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili (*God's Religion and Qur'an's Language*), II, p. 357.
[11] Yazır, Hak Dini Kur'an Dili, II, p. 357.
[12] Âl- Îmrân, 3:59.
[13] Al- Anbiyâ, 21:30; an-Nûr, 24:45.
[14] For similar verses see., Âl- îmrân, 3:59; al-Kahf, 18:37; al-Hajj, 22:5; ar-Rûm, 30:20; as- Sajdah, 32:7; al-Fâtîr, 35:11.
[15] An- Nûh, 71:17.

This verse clearly indicates that human being is being brought up slowly by slowly and stage by stage just as the plants. It also implies that cells of human beings take their necessary nutrition from the earth. This means that although human beings have a very different specialities from the plants, they are plant in one way or another. Since their creation had started from the earth (mud) and for that reason like plants they are relatated with the earth. There are a number verses which refer to this fact in the Qur'an.[16]

After underlying the following point we would like to move to explain how we can interpreat the verse which indicates that "Allah brought Mary up like a beautiful plant". While the Qur'an speaks about the relationship betwen human being and the earth in chapter 71 verse 17 it includes all human being without making any distinction. But when it speaks about Mary's resembles to plant the Qur'an only mentions Mary as a special and exceptional woman. There should be a special and significant reason of this exception of Mary from the other human beings by the Qur'an. Now we will pass to explain why the Qur'an considers Mary as a special woman in terms of her bringing up as a beautiful plant and what is its possible meaning.

Mary As a Beautiful Plant

The Qur'an indicates that as a human being and as a women only Mary had been brought up by Allah as a beautiful plant.[17] As we have explained above the Qur'an states that Allah has brought out all human beings from the earth like plants "God has caused you to grow out of the earth in [gradual] growth".[18] But in the case of Mary the Qur'an mentions that only Mary, the Mother of Jesus, has been brought up by Allah "as a beautiful plant" or "like a beautiful plant" without mentioning her tie with the earth. This shows that Mary had a different feature from other human beings in general and from other women in particular. In order to develop our argument concerning this charasteristic feature of Mary first of all we need to explain deeply the meaning of the term *inbât* which is used in the above verse.

The Meaning of the term Inbât

The verb *nâbâta* means "earth's giving a new and small product or to plant something". Its noun form *an-nâbât*, too, means that crops which are come out in the earth.[19] The term *nâbât* is used all the crops which are rised from the earth either as a three which has a body or a plant which has not got any body. It is also used in the sense of animal food. In short this term (*an-nâbât*) can be used for everything which is growing up step by step. [20] For example *nabbaytu as-sabiyya tanbîtan* means "I brought

---

[16] See for verses concerning human being's creatin from earth., Hûd, 11:61; an- Najm, 53:32.

[17] Âl Îmrân 3:37.

[18] An- Nûh, 71:17.

[19] Abu'l-Husayn Ahmad b. Fâris, al- *Mujmalu'l-Lûqa*, Beirut, 1986, III, p. 751; *Mu'jamu Makâyîsi'l-Lûqa*, Beirut, 2001, p. 970.

[20] For the meaning of the term "nâbât" see., Raqıb al-Asfahânî, al- *Mufradâtu Alfâzı'l Qur'ân*, Beirut, 1997, p. 787; Muhammad b. Mukarram b. Mânzûr, *Lisânu'l-Arabi'l-Muhît*, Cairo, VI, pp. 4317-4318; Samîn al-Halabî, Ahmed b. Yûsuf Abduddâim, *'Umdatu'l-Huffâz fi Asrafi'l-Alfâz*, Beirut, 1996, IV, p. 136.

up the child and trained him/her".[21] Both Allah has brought into account a plant" and Allah has bruoght up a child means the same thing.[22] As is seen from all these examples, the verb *anbâta* means "bring up, train, grow up and rise". When we use the verb for human beings it means bring up or grow up.

Some Commentators' Views About Bringing Up Mary As a Beautiful Plant

In this section we will examine not all the commentators' views about chapter 3 verse 37 but some of them because of the limitation of our subject. Tabarî in his commentary J*âmi'u'l-Bayân 'an Ta'vîli Âyi'l-Kur'ân* explaines this verse as follows: Her God brought up Mary as a beautiful plant in order to make her completely a mature woman." In one sense, this means that "Mary growed up by foods which were provided to her by Allah himself".[23] Zamahsarî argues that the phrase "Mary was brought up as a beautiful plant" is a metafor which means that her all needs were provided to her by Allah in a speacial way".[24] After pointing out that previous scholars related the issue both to this world and the hereafter, Radî states that " Mary's bringing up as a beautiful plant in terms of this world means that Mary grows up in one day as much as other children grow up in one year".[25] Her training in religion, too, means her sincerity, chastity, honesty and maturity and her obedience to Allah".[26] Az- Zaccâc takes this verse not as a metaphor but in literal sense and interprets it as "making beautiful of her smell".[27] Modern commentator Rashid Rıda, too, understands this verse both metaphoric and literal. In metaphorical sense, according to him, this verse means that Mary was brought up and trained in righteousness, in sustenance, in successfulness both in terms of her spirit and her body just us trees are brought up in a suitable place/soil so that they will give good fruits. [28] One of the present Turkish commentators Bayraktar Bayrakli in his new commentary *Qur'anic Commentary in the Light of A New Understanding* says that Mary was brought up by Allah just as we grow flowers in our homes or gardens. This means that just as our caring to the flowers Allah took care of Mary's bringing up, growing up and training.[29] All these explanations indicate that both Mary's physical development and her training were done by Allah himself in a caring way.

After explained Mary's bringing up by Allah himself we would like to point out that Allah had done this not directly but indirectly by appointing a custodian for her. As

---

[21] Abû Nasr İsmail b. Hammâd al-Jawharî, a*s-Sıhâh fi'l-Luqa va'l-'Ulûm*, Beirut, 1974, II,p. 531.

[22] Abû Mansûr Muhammed b. Ahmed al- Azharî, , *Mu'jamu Tahzîbi'l-Luqa*, Beirut, 2001, IV, p. 3491.

[23] At-Tabar'i, J*âmi'u'l-Bayân 'an Ta'vîli Âyi'l-Kur'ân,* III, p. 241.

[24] al-Zamakhshari, *al- Kashshâf 'an haqâ'ıq ghâwamîd al-tânzîl wa-'aqawîl fî wuj'ub al-tâ'vîl,* I, p. 352. For a similar assesment see., Abû Abdullah Muhammad b. Abî Bakr b. Abdulkâdir ar-Râdî, at-Ta*fsîru Qarîbi'l-Kur'âni'l-'Azîm*, Hüseyin Elmalı, Ankara, 1997, p. 131.

[25] This a very exaggarated view. Since according to this view Mary became adult when she was 12 days old, delivered Jesus when she was 20 days old and she passed away when she was about 60-70 days old.

[26] al-Râzî, *Mafâtîhu'l-Qayb*, Beirut, VIII, p. 29.

[27] Abû Mansûr Muhammad b. Ahmad Azhârî, *Mu'jam'ul Tahzîbi'l Lûqa*, IV, Beirut, 1968, p. 3491.

[28] Rashid Ridâ, *Tafsîr al-Qur'an al-Hakîm (al-Manâr*), III, p. 240. See also, Ahmad Mustafa al-Maraqî, at-Tafsîr, Beirut, 1974, III, p. 145.

[29] Bayraktar Bayrakli, *Yeni Bir Anlayışın Işığında Kur'ân Tefsîri 8 Qur'anic Commentary in the Light of A New Understanding)*, Istanbul, 2002, IV, ss. 66-67.

we learn from the Qur'an it was drawn lots concerning whom took care of Mary among the peoples of Mary's clan and in the end Zachariah was determined the person who took care of her. "…You were not with them when they drew lots as to which of them should be Mary's guardian…[30]…(Allah) placed her in the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her provided with food. He would ask 'O Mary, whence came this unto you'. She would answer: It is from God; behold God grants sustenance unto whom He wills, beyond all reckoning'". [31] Concerning sustenance of Mary directly from God Turkish commentator Süleyman Ates indicates that supernatural elements which were found in Mary's life prove that rightous people can be attained divine sustanence not inderectly but directly.[32] In short after her born or in other words her babyhood first of all Mary was appointed to the service of sanctuary. Secondly when she was put in the sanctuary it was appointed a guardian for her in order to take care of her. And thirdly Mary's sustenance in the sanctuary was directly provided by Allah himself. All these things shows that Mary was a speacial women who was prepared by Allah for a divine duty.

After Mary became a mature woman Allah was sent Gabriel to her in the form of well-maid human being in order to provide her " a son endowed with purity". The Qur'an narrates this event as follows: "And call to mind, through this divine writ, Mary. Lo! She withdrew from her family to an eastern place and kept herself in seclusion from them. Whereupon we sent her our angel of revelation, who appeared to her in the shape of a well-made human being. She exclaimed: 'Verily, I seek refuge from you with the Most Gracious. (Approach me not) if your art conscious of him. The angel answered: ' I am but a messenger of your Sustainer, (who says), I shall bestow upon you the gift of a son endowed with purity. She said: 'How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?- for never have I been a loose women". The angel answered: Thus it is, but your Sustainer says, This is easy for Me; and you shall have a son, so that we might make him a symbol unto mankind and an act of grace from Us. And it was a thing decreed by God: and in time she conceived him, and then she withdrew with him to a far-off place".[33]

In another verse it is indicated that not only an angel but a group of angels came to Mary and said to her Allah will bestow her a boy caled Jesus. "The angels said: ' O Mary! Behold, God sends you the glad tiding, through a word from Him, (of a son) who shall become known as theChrist Jesus, son of Mary, of great honour in this world and in the life to come, and shall be of those who are drawn near unto God".[34]

In order to reconcile these two verses we can say that the event of giving a good news to Mary happened in two stages. First of all a group of angels came to Mary and gave her a good new concerning baby Jesus and secondly Gabriel appeared to her in order to blow her up Jesus as a word from Allah. We can also explain the above verse as follows. Giving a good news of Jesus to Mary was not an ordinary but

---

[30] Al-Îmrân, 3: 44

[31] Al-Îmrân, 3:37

[32] Suleyman Ates, *Yuce Kur'an'ın Çağdaş Tefsiri (Contemporary Commentary fo the Supreme Qur'an*), II, İstanbul, 1989, p.41.

[33] Maryam, 19: 16-21.

[34] Al-Îmrân, 3:45

very significant event. For that reason not an angel but a group of angel came to her to inform that Allah is going to give her a baby without a human father and then Gabreil came forward from the group to blow her a word from God in order to fulfill this good news.

As is seen from these verses firstly Allah decided/willed to give a baby to virgin Mary without a human father and then commissioned a group of angel including the Gabriel to go to Mary and say to her she is giong to be deliver a baby without having sexual relationship with any man. After a group of angel gave this good news to Mary, Gabriel came forward from the group and blow a word from Allah to Mary. Now the question is how Gabrieal did this duty? And what is the possible meaning of Gabriel's blowing a word from Allah to Mary's womb in order to make her pregnant to Jesus? Or in other word was there something in her womb which made it suitable for Gabriel's blowing so that she would be pregnant without a human sperm?

Mary Was Created with a Dual Cell System

In order to answer this question first of all we need explain why both male pronoun *hû* and female pronoun *hâ* are used for Mary in chapter 21:91 and 66:12 .

وَالَّتِيٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا اٰيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ "And remember her who guarded her chastity whereupon We breathed into her of Our spirit and caused her, together with soon, to become a symbol of Our grace unto all people."[35]

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرٰنَ الَّتِيٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهٖ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ

"We have propounded yet another parable of God-consciousness in the story of Mary, the daughter of Îmran, who guarded her chastity, whereupon We breathed of Our Spirit into that (which was in her womb), and who accepted the truth of her Sustainer's words- and (hus) of His revelations- and was one of the truly devout".[36]

As is seen from these verses Allah breated from His Spirit to Mary and she became pregnant to Jesus without having sexual relationship with a man. All the pronouns which are used in the first verse are female pronouns in the form of "hâ" because they refer to Mary. In the second verse when Allah says "We breathed her from Our Spirit" it is used male pronoun *hû*. For that reason there are disagreement concerning whom this male pronoun refers to. Now we would like to summarise commentators views concerning this issue.

As-Samarkandî argues that the phrase "We breathed into her of Our spirit" means that Gabriel blew Mary's cloth's edge in a metaphorical sense. This implies that Gabriel blew into Mary's womb. According to him the spirit who was blown to Mary was Jesus. [37] In addition to this view Tabrasî adds the following explanation. After Jesus created in Mary's womb, a spirit from Allah was breathed to him and thus he became alive.[38] It seems that Tabrasî's this view is not reasonable. Since it is impossible to attribute male pronoun "hu" to him when he has not been created yet.

---

[35] Al-Anbiyâ, 21:91.

[36] At-Tahrîm 66/12.

[37] Nasr b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Abû'l Lays as-Samarkandî, *Bahru'l-'Ulûm*, Beirut, 1996, III, p. 472.

[38] Ebû Ali b. Hasan at- Tabrâsî, *Majma'u'l-Bayân fi Tafsîri'l-Qur'ân*, Beirut, 1994, X, p. 58.

At-Tabarî, too, like Samarkandî states that male pronoun "hû" refers to Mary's womb[39], and interprets spirit as Gabriel.[40]

Ar-Radî argues that the term *farch* is used not as metaphorical but literal sense in this verse because when Mary's people realised that she was pregnant they claimed that she committed adultery. Concerning the term "fîhî" he prefers the meaning of "fî 'Îsâ".[41] It seems to us that Radî's this view is not fair. Since her people accused Mary of committing adultry after she became pregnant.[42] For that reason we do not need to take term "farch" in literal sense. Concerning attribution of the pronoun to Jesus we can say that it is rather difficult to argue that that pronoun refers to Jesus when he has not been created in Mary's womb yet. Turkish commentator Abu's-Suud, was satisfied to indicate that that pronoun is read as "hâ" in order to attribute it to Mary.[43]Al-Qurtubî, too, underlines that Gabrieal blew not Mary's genital organ but her clothes edge. He further argues that what was blown to her was Jesus.[44]

Twenty century Turkish commentator Hamdi Yazır argues that the term *farch* means so called female term. For that reason male pronoun is used for it. In fact there is the following rule in Arabic language. There are two kinds of female words. One is real female the other so called female word. So the term *farch* is not a real female but so called word. For that reason it is used a male pronoun for it. Further Yazır points out that the term *farch* has a metaphorical sense. For that reason it is used both for male and female.[45] Yazır's view can be regarde as different from the above views. But it seems that it also does not reflect the real meaning of what Allah means by saying "We breathed into her from Our spirit".

---

[39] For similar views see., Abü'l-Hassan Ali b. Ahmad al-Wâhidî, al-*Vacîz fi Tefsîri'l-Kitâbi'l-Azîz*, Beirut, 1995, II, p. 1115; Ali b. Muhammad b. Habîb al-Mawardî, an-*Nukatü va'l-'Uyûn*, Beirut, VI, p. 48; al- Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshâf,'* IV, p. 560; Abu'l-Farac Jamaluddîn Abdurrahman b. Ali. b. Muhammad Ibn'ul Javzî, *Zâdü'l-Masîr fi 'Ilmi't-Tafsîr*, Beirut, 1994, VIII, p. 85; Abû Sa'îd Abdullah abû Omer b. Muhammad Qadi Baydawi, A*nwâru't-Tanzîl va'l Asrâru't-Tae'wîl*, Beirut, 1996, V, p. 359; Abû Bakr Jâbir aj-Jezâirî, A'ysar'u't-*Tafâsîr*, Medina, 1995, V, pp. 390-391; Abu'l-Fadl Sahâbuddîn Mahmûd al-Alûsî, *Rûhu'l-Ma'ânî*, Beirut, 1985, XXVIII, p. 164; Muhammad Ibn Ali b. Muhammad as-Sawkânî, *Fathu'l-Kadîr al-Jâmi' Bayna'r-Riwâya ve'd-Dirâya fi İlmi't-Tsfsîr*, Cairo, 1964, V, p. 256; Muhammed b. Yûsuf b. Hayyân, a*l-Bahru'l-Muhît fi't-Tafsîr*, Beirut, 1992, X, p. 216; Wahba Zuhaylî, a*t-Tafsîru'l-Mûnîr*, Beirut, 1991, XXVIII, p. 327; Abu'l-Fidâ İsmâil Ibn Kasîr, *Tafsîru'l-Qur'âni'l-'Azîm*, İstanbul, 1986, IV, p. 394; Omar Nasûhî Bilmen, *Kur'ân-ı Kerim'in Türkçe Meali Âlisi ve Tefsiri*, İstanbul, VIII, p. 3777.

[40] at- Tabarî, J*âmi'u'l-Bayân 'an Ta'vîli Âyi'l-Kur'ân*, XXVIII, p. 172.

[41] al-Râdî, *Mafâtîhu'l-Qayb*, Beirut, XXX, p. 50.

[42] Maryam, 19: 27-28.

[43] Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-I'mâdî Abû's Suûd, *İrsâdu'l-Akli's-Salîm ilâ Mazâye'l-Qur'âni'l-Karîm,* Beirut, 1990, VIII, p. 270.

[44] Abû Abdillah Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Qurtûbî, a*l-Jâmi' li Ahkâmi'l-Qur'ân,* Beirut, 1988, XVIII, p. 133.

[45] Yazir, *Hak Dini Kur'ân Dili*, VIII, pp. 170-171.

Evaluation

When we take into account our review of some Qur'anic commentators views concerning how Gabriel blew to Mary's womb from God's spirit and then how she become pregnant to Jesus we can say that most of them are repetitions of each-other. While explaining concerning verses, all of them tried to understand them within the context of their own circumstances. For that reason we cannot expect them to bring a scientific explanation which we will make below. Here we would like to evaluate not all the views which we quoted above but only two of them namely Yazir and Bayrakli. Since these two commentators have tried to explain related verses within the context of the general meaning of the Qur'an.

Yazir brings the following interpretation concerning related verse (66:12) apart from other Qur'anic commentators: "Just as sperm is created in man's belly and ovule is created in woman's womb, both sperm and ovule were created in Mary's womb. So according to this explanation Mary became pregnant to Jesus by coming together of the sperm and ovule during Gabriel's breathing to her without needing any external intervention. This means that Mary's womb had a special condition in which sperm and ovule came together without she had a sexual relationship with a man like other women in order to be pregnant. In fact, the Qur'anic usage of both male and female pronoun for Mary in related verses which we have quoted above (66:12) confirms this interpretation.[46]

Although this convenient interpretation concerning Gabriel's breathing to Mary, Yazir's explanation about why both male an female pronoun are used in 66:12 is not appropriate. It seems to us that if Yazir stated that the male pronoun in chapter 21 verse 91 refers to sperm and female pronoun in chapter 66 verse 12 refers to ovule he would support to his explanation and thus the issue of how Mary became pregnant to Jesus without a human father would be understood more reasonably.

In fact contemporary commentator Bayrakli explains the issue in his commentary within this context and brings the following exposition in his interpretation of chapter 21 verse 91. "There was a system in Mary's body which would produce both sperm and ovule. Thus, sperm and ovule cells came together by the blowing of Gabriel. Nevertheless, there is a similar situation in walnut and hazelnut among the plants and in worms among the animals.[47]

Bayrakli's this should not be understood that a number of time this sort of fertilization happened to Mary. In other words this explanation of Bayrakli does not

---

[46] Yazir, *Hak Dini Kur'ân Dili*, VIII, p.170.

[47] Bayraklı, *Yeni Bir Anlayışın Işığında Kur'ân Tefsîri* XII, pp. 514-515; It seems that Mary's became pregnant to Jesus through Gabriel's blowing to her is very similar to some plants' fertilization. When we look at the studies which have been done in biology we can see that there are two kinds of fertilizations of the plants namely self-fertilization and foreign fertilization. Mary's pregnancy seems very similar to self-fertilization of some plants. Since in this kind of fertilization a plant can be fertilized by its flower's ovum cell through their transportation by wind or some animals such as bee. See., Tosun, M., Açıkgöz, N., "Bitkilerde Islah Teknikleri Kendine Döllenenler", *Tohum Bilimi ve Teknolojisi*, Eds., Eser Benian, Hikmet Saygılı, Adem Gökçöl, Emre İlker, Ege Üniversitesi İzmir, 2005, p. 7. For more information about how plants' male and female flowers are fertilized see., Hartman, Hudson T., Kester, Dale E., Davies, Fred T., "The Development of Seeds and Spores", *Plant Propagation Principles and Practices*, New Jersey, 1990, s. 55-76; Allard, R. W., *Principles of Plant Breeding*., Singapore, 1960, pp. 38-42.

imply that Mary had became pregnant through this way not only to Jesus and also her other children. This happened only once and it was Jesus. As we learn from the Gospels and other Christian sources Mary got married with the Carpenter Joseph after delivered Jesus and had other children in s normal way by having sexual relationship with Joseph.[48] This explanation shows that Mary had a dual fertilization system. On the one hand she had a similar fertilization system like plants which have self-fertilization system as in the case of her pregnancy to Jesus. On the other hand she had similar fertilization system like other women who become pregnant by having a sexual relationship with a man.

Now I would like to develop Yazir and Bayrakli's views in order to explain fully how Mary became pregnant to Jesus without a human father. As we have indicated above according to the Qur'an both Jesus and Mary is a sign or a symbol for all the mankind.[49] This shows that both he and his mother had some specialties and peculiarities which made them as sign for all mankind. In our opinion the virgin birth of Jesus and Mary's pregnancy to him without a human father can be mentioned among these peculiarities. As is well known after the creation of the first man from the earth human beings have been increased/multiplied through sexual relationship between man and woman. But in the case of Mary this natural procedure did not work. Since Allah created Mary in a special way in which she had both male and female fertilization system and she became pregnant to Jesus through this system. This shows that the real miracle should be accepted not Jesus's creation without a human father but is Mary's special fertilization system which had produced Jesus without needing a human father.

In chapter 3 verse 37 the Qur'an underlines that Allah caused Mary to grow like a plant or in other words as a plant. This verse implies that Mary was growed up like plant or as a plant. Nevertheless in chapter 71 verse 17 the Qur'an indicates that all the mankind grew out of the earth. Growing out of the earth implies that all human beings are related to the earth in terms of maintaining their lives. Since the earth provides necessary tools such as food in order to cause human beings to keep their own lives. But in 3:37 while the Qur'an is mentioning about Mary's growing it says that Allah caused her to grow as a plant without referring to the earth. Now the delicate question is how we need to understand Mary's growing as a plant or (like a plant)?

It seems to that we can answer this question properly if we try to interpret this verse in the light of chapter 21:91 and 66:12 which we have fully and deeply explained above. As we stated before while in 21:91 it is used female pronouns for Mary, in 66:12 it is used a male pronoun for Mary. Although as we have summarised above most of the commentators have argued that this male pronoun in 66:12 does not refer to Mary, it seems to that if we maintain that it refers to Mary in the light of Yazir and Bayrakli's explanation the real meaning of the related verses can be understood fully. Since by taking into account Mary's growing like a plant we argue that she had a dual fertilization system like some plants which have not got external tools in order

[48] See., Mattew, 12:46; Mark, 3:31; Luke, 2: 6-7, 8:19-20; John, 7:3, 5.

[49] Al-Anbiyâ 21:91; al-Mu'minûn 23:50.

to get fertilized. Because of this specialty of Mary the Qur'an uses both male and female pronouns for her.

We also would like to point out that as similar to wind's or some animals' function to cause bringing together male and female cells in one plant in order to ensure fertilization, the Gabriel had brought together sperm and ovum in Mary's genital organ by blowing her womb by the will of Allah. This means that Gabriel's function to Jesus creation in Mary's womb was to cause actuating sperm and ovum in order to be fertilized.

In short, our examination of two Qur'anic verses, 21:91 and 66:12 concerning how Mary became pregnant to Jesus demonstrates that in terms of his birth not Jesus himself but his mother's pregnancy to him without a human father was a miracle. Since Jesus was the product of this miraculous pregnancy of Mary.