*The Story of Lady Maryam*

*Ramadan – Ashton Central Mosque – 15/07/13*

Today we’re going to talk about a precious story loved by everybody. Today’s lecture focuses on girls and women, and addresses females between 15 and 23 years old, fathers and mothers, and anyone who wants to worship Allah: the story of Lady Maryam.

***Introduction About Lady Maryam:***

The story is about a girl whose major life events took place when she was a girl. Maryam the worshipper at the age of 15 or 16, Maryam who performed qiyam al Layl. Maryam the meditator at the age of 16 or 17, conceiving Isa and raising him at the age of 17 or 18. That’s why I’m addressing girls today, and when I say “Maryam” I’m referring to a story that is known worldwide, not only among Muslims. Maryam is one of the few personalities in the world that bonds everyone, regardless of their nationality or colour. Everybody loves her and the best that was told of her is Surat Maryam; I’ve never come across a narration that describes Lady Maryam more beautifully.

***The Status Of Lady Maryam To Allah:***

To begin with, she is the woman of the worlds and these are not my own words, but Allah’s, The Lord of the worlds

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“And as the Angels said, “O Maryam, (Mary) surely Allah has elected you and purified you and has elected you over the women of the worlds” (3:42)

Lady Maryam is the only woman who was mentioned by name in the Qur’an; it is always said “mother of Musa” and “wife of Fir’awn, but Maryam is the only one whose name was mentioned in the Qur’an, even 33 times! This is also the number of times we prostrate ourselves a day, 33 in total; she used to prostrate herself a lot. Moreover, she was mentioned in the Qur’an more than some prophets, and there is a Surah by her name, Surat Maryam.

The Prophet says that the best women in paradise are four: Lady Khadijah Bint-Khuwaylid, Maryam daughter of ‘Imran, Asia wife of Pharaoh and Fatimah daughter of Muhammad. That is, two women and two girls. Maryam and Fatimah were about the same age, 17 or 18 years, whereas Khadijah and Asia were women. He also says that no woman has reached perfection like Maryam and Asia did. Maryam had become complete as a women in mind, belly, skin, patience, tenderness and all. In addition, Allah chose her to be the cause of a great miracle.

***Reasons Behind This Status:***

Why was Maryam preferred above others? Here we start addressing girls. First, I want to make it clear that every age group has its own special characteristics, some of which are dominant over the others. At forty, a man’s dominating quality is his wisdom; a child of seven years is characterized by fun, play and humour; and a girl between 15 and 22 years is made up of infinite tenderness and profuse emotions. If we say, for example, that each one of us has 100 units of emotion, a girl during this age has 1000. Such is the nature of this age group. Where will these units end up? They have to be consumed. Some mothers describe their daughters as quiet and inactive, just as others say that a child of seven doesn’t play. That is not possible! How will a girl use up her emotions? Here appears Maryam, a girl with emotions—our first glimpse of Lady Maryam, woman of the worlds. She has plenty of emotion, is single, and has no kids to direct her emotions towards.

***So She Did Two Things:***

· Extreme love for Allah: She is going to drain this emotion in worship, by praying, worshipping and loving Allah a great deal. The love of Allah, this is the best way to consume emotion—try it in Ramadan. It’s an opportunity to pray, cry, perform dua’a and ask for what every girl wants: to marry a man who will love her and make her happy. Talk to Allah, get closer to Him.

· Second comes charitable or volunteer work that involves orphans, orphanages, the ill and widows. However, charitable work for Maryam centred around Jerusalem: serving it, helping the people, and serving the worshippers.

What is required of girls? To be Maryam-like. You have 1000 units of emotion and I fear that you will take the wrong path, that this sea of emotions will be used on a guy who will take it all away and lead you to a sad ending. You possess 1000 units. If one guy hurts you once, you’ll suffer a lot, and another will cause you to suffer more, and the third time you’ll lose it all! And after marriage you will have really lost all of your emotions.

Why don’t you follow the path of Maryam? Love Allah and worship Him a lot, be like Maryam in Ramadan—look for an orphanage where you can expend your emotions, for you have to use them one way or another. Be warned of wrong relationships, watch out for being fooled by a guy; don’t waste your emotions on any guy.

Don’t get involved into relationships with guys; get married. If marriage is late in coming, spend this emotion on the poor and indigent; look for the right place to use it. Use it up in worship; be like Maryam. And you, guys, don’t take advantage of a girl who has extra units of emotion, don’t do injustice to her and betray her parents.

A word to parents: direct your daughters towards charity work. I feel sad when females tell me that her parents forbid her to participate in charity work! You will regret it if your daughter are at home doing nothing all the time; where will she expend her emotions? Don’t assume that she’s safe like that. Satan thrives best in an environment of free time; on the other hand, she has to use up her units of emotion. Girls: go learn a skill or language, play a sport, read or work, but don’t give in to free time.

***Maryam The Worshipper:***

Let’s examine Maryam’s first characteristic: the worshipper.

**وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا**

“And mention in the Book Maryam (Mary) as she retired from her family to an eastern place” (19:16).

Why eastward? In order to always watch the sun rise. Hence, Maryam’s worship started with contemplating in Allah’s creations. Do you know a romantic girl? One who likes to sit in front of the sea to watch it? Why does she do that? So that she may experience romance. Maryam is the same, except that she experienced it in the loving of Allah and meditation. Maryam had the same emotion as every other girl, but she chose to use it up in these ways. A lovely way, which will certainly appeal to you, but you still won’t try it!

Maryam would often retire from her family and sit alone to be just her and her Lord. Meditation is one of the lovely types of worship, but it has effaced, even though it is one by which Prophet Muhammad became a Prophet as he was meditating in the cave of mount Hira' and Ibrahim also

**وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ**

Allah says what can be translated as “And thus We show Ibrahîm (Abraham) the dominion of the heavens and the earth...” (06:75).

One hour of meditation is better than performing qiyam for a whole year. One of the Prophet’s companions says that he heard one, two, three and four of the Prophet’s companions say, “Meditation is the light of faith.” Who will meditate in Ramadan? Girls, you are most qualified for it; don’t you have the most units? If we all try to get closer to Allah, who will outperform us? Because you have 1000 units, the energy to love is higher within you.

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“And as the Angels said...“Maryam, (Mary) be devout to your Lord, and prostrate yourself and bow down with the ones who bow down (for Him)”” (3:42-43)

Whenever Zakariyya entered the Chamber to her

**كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٣٧)**

Whenever he entered he found her praying.

The Prophet says that two rak’aat in the middle of the night is better than the whole world. Just two!

The Prophet says that Our Lord descends every night to the sky of the world, when the last third of the night remains and He says, 'Is there anyone to invoke me so that I may respond to his invocation? Is there anyone to ask me for something so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone to ask for forgiveness so that I may forgive him?’ This happens every night. Every night you’re asleep and He is calling on you! Who will worship Allah in Ramadan like Maryam ? She became the woman of the worlds; I wonder how far Allah will raise your status.

Do you know what the word “Maryam” means in their language? Maryam means ‘worshipper’ and ‘servant of worshippers’. Her name covers volunteer work and worship, for which her mother prepared her well.

***A Chain of Blessings Occurs:***

Once she started worshipping Allah in this fashion, a chain of blessings took place because she became very close to Allah would pray at night while the people were asleep. What are these blessings?

“...Whenever Zakariyya entered the Chamber to her, he found (a) provision in her presence...”

Whenever he entered her room he would find provisions; what does this mean? Scientists say that he would find grapes in winter or abundant food without her leaving her room, as a blessing and sign of satisfaction from Allah. Now, why would the provision only include food? For example, it could be spiritual: submissiveness to Allah, crying from submissiveness, closeness in dua’a, a high level of faith—all are sustenance’s from Allah. So why is it material here? Witness the glory of the Qur’an in describing the mother of another prophet: “...Whenever Zakariyya entered the Chamber to her, he found (a) provision in her presence. He said, “O Maryam, however does this (come) to you?” She said, “It is from the Providence of Allah; surely Allah provides whomever He decides without reckoning.” Thereover Zakariyya (Zechariah) invoked his Lord (and) said, “Lord! Bestow upon me from very close to You a goodly offspring. Surely You are The Ever-Hearer of invocation”” (3:37-38)

Underline the words “there over” 100 times. There over, or at that moment, he started invoking his Lord to bestow upon him a child, for Zakariya. (Zakariya) could not have children. As a result of this dua’a on that night, Allah bestowed upon him Yahya John.

When he saw a sign (i.e. ayah) from Allah and Allah’s loyalty to Maryam, he felt that Allah would accept his dua’a. So, every time you see one of Allah’s signs, like increased submissiveness or crying from submissiveness to Allah, or closeness to Allah, or someone who had offspring after ten years of infertility, invoke Allah during that time, make use of this point. “There over” is like Allah telling you that this is one of the special times when dua’a is likely to be accepted, which is why Allah accepted Zakaria’s.

**هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ**

“There over Zakariyya (Zechariah) invoked his Lord (and) said, “Lord! Bestow upon me from very close to You a goodly offspring. Surely You are The Ever-Hearer of invocation” (3:38)

To those whom Allah has not provided with children, invoke Him during umrah or hajj. “There over” could be the last ten days of Ramadan or a moment of submissiveness. Invoke Allah for a virtuous husband and await lawful sustenance, and if you’re in a sinful relationship, break it today.

***How Did Maryam Become The Way She Was?***

She became the way she was as a result of her mother’s dua’a, vow in dedication to Allah, and intention.

**إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ**

“Lord! Surely I have vowed to you what is in my belly in dedication...” (3:35)

Only to Allah. Also, her father was one of the greatest scientists of Jerusalem and sons of Israel. If you, righteous father, want your daughter to be like Maryam, be like ‘Imran. Mother, you want your daughter to be like Maryam? Be like mother of Maryam, be the role model mother. I don’t want parents to preach to their children; don’t talk, but let them see role models! This is by far the greatest preachment. There is a Syrian proverb which says, “Count to 100 before you lie to people, count to a million before you lie in front of your daughter, and count to a billion before you lie to Allah.”

Don’t think that Maryam led an easy life; Maryam was an orphan whose mother gave birth at an old age and died when she was a child. Who should sponsor her? Her sister’s husband would—an old man who doesn’t have children. He had Yahya upon seeing her worship. And don’t think that he sponsored her with ease; there was a fight among the worshippers in Jerusalem because they all wanted to sponsor her as her father had taught them all.

**ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ**

, “...as they were casting quills (Literally: pens) (to determine) which of them should sponsor Maryam, (Mary) and in no way were you close to them as they took adverse stands (about that) (and)” (3:44).

What does that mean? They agreed to each stand at the riverbed and cast their quill, and the owner of the last quill to be washed away would sponsor Maryam . Why did they choose quills? Because her father taught them by it, so they chose it in honour to him. And so they cast their quills once, twice and three times and Zakaria’s wouldn’t move so he became her sponsor and not an ordinary one too. He showered her with affection and mercy. Embrace your children at this age, say no to harshness; shower your daughter with love so she won’t go out looking for it and get harmed in the process.

Look at what happens; Allah provides for the righteous father’s children after his death,

**وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَالِحًا**

“...and their father was a righteous (man)...” ( 18:82)

After his (Maryam’s father’s) death, the worshippers fought over Maryam’s sponsorship: “...and in no way were you close to them as they took adverse stands (about that) (and)” ( 03:44). They are quarrelling to sponsor her; who fights over raising orphans nowadays?! When Ja’far Ibn-Abu-Taleb died, three of the Prophet’s companions argued over sponsoring the late Ja’far’s children. The Prophet would ask who the potential sponsor is and all three would say “Me!” despite being very poor.

Maryam’s status continued to rise until she became the symbol of chastity, a worshipper who meditates and performs qiyam and is the purest of the people on the earth. Allah gave an example of two believers, not two men but two women: Asia wife of Pharaoh and the other:

**وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ**

“And Maryam daughter of Imran, who kept safe her private parts, (i.e., safeguarded)...” (66:12).

Look at the way she is described; she is the symbol of chastity.

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“And as the Angels said, “O Maryam, (Mary) surely Allah has elected you and purified you.” (3:42)

Why so? Because she directed her units of emotion at Allah; no man could take advantage of her emotions. She smiled, laughed and dressed modestly. Even though she interacted with men during her service of the worshippers at Jerusalem, she did so with chastity; Maryam is the symbol of purity on earth.

Note that there are two elections. Allah only elects someone for a good trait; can you tell me why Allah would elect you? What have you done to be elected? To elect you means to pick you. Why would

May Allah elect you and release you from hellfire tonight? Is it possible that you have repented to Allah today from a sin that no one knows about but you, so that He may elect you and release you from the hellfire and make you of the people who will enter paradise? Don’t think that being elected exempts you from experiencing the hardships of life. Maryam was afflicted many times and her life was full of pains; her father died, then her mother, and later Zakariya, who sponsored her and raised her. In fact, he was murdered with saws and her cousin Yahya was slain; see how much she suffered! Her honour was slandered when she gave birth to Isa and she did not settle down in one place; Isa was dubbed Messiah because he “roamed/travelled across” the Earth. Maryam always travelled with him and was denied a stable marital life - even despite her beauty, affection, and decency. So if your marital life isn’t stable, don’t lament your bad luck! Keep Maryam as your role model. Furthermore, Isa was raised to Allah (SWT) during Maryam’s life, so she lived for him and lost him in the end.

***Preparing Lady Maryam For The Miracle:***

Allah started to prepare Maryam for the miracle; she is the only woman in the world to conceive and give birth as a virgin and be the main player in a miracle that manifests Allah’s Most Beautiful Name “The Creator,”

**هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الأسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ**

as seen in what Allah says that can be translated as, “He is Allah, The Creator, The Initiator, The Supreme Fashioner” (59:24)

Allah is Ever-Merciful and this miracle is a rare occurrence; if it had happened all of a sudden the situation would have been tough on her, which is why some preparations were necessary. The angels started talking to Maryam

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which is the first election—a very special one, “And as the Angels said, “O Maryam...”” (3:42); “As the Angels said, “O Maryam, (Mary) surely Allah gives you good tidings...”” (3:45); “O Maryam, (Mary) be devout to your Lord, and prostrate yourself...”” (3:43)

Hereon, a dialogue started between the angels and Maryam, who started talking to the angels and seeing Jibril and talking to him. This is a very great and special rank indeed. I would like to add something: where are you with regards to angels? Do you sense their presence? Be careful, believing in angels is the second tenet of faith; faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, books, prophets, the Day of Judgment. We all believe in Allah and feel His presence, love the Prophets, read and feel the Qur’an, and talk about the Day of Judgment often. But who senses angels, the second tenet? There is an angel on your left and right shoulders; you salute them at the end of every prayer but where is your relationship with them? For example, have you spoken to the angel who records your hasanat when you have performed a good deed and told him “Write”? You lower your voice when you do something wrong to hide from your neighbour—they (angels) are with you everywhere and all the time; do you sense their presence?

There are angels with us now. “Whenever Allah is remembered, angels gather.” And Allah has angels roaming the roads to find the people of dhikr and when they find a group of people reciting dhikr, they call each other and encompass them in layers until the first heaven -- the location of which is in Allah's knowledge. (This is to say, an unlimited number of angels are going to be over that group).

She has now been prepared for the great day, a great human miracle—one of the greatest in the history of mankind. Isa lived for years, whereas the miracles involving Musa’s staff and the splitting of the sea into two happened in minutes. Isa’s miracle is ongoing and exists among the people, who continue to be touched by it to this day and admit to it.