Hannah and Mary

The first book of Samuel contains the story of Elkanah of the hill country of Ephraim and his two wives. Hannah was beautiful and beloved, but had borne him no child. Penninah had born a child and despised and abused Hannah for her infertility. In desperation and hope, Hannah went to the temple on the height at Shiloh to pray for a son to deliver her from persecution in her own house into the freedom a successful birth might confirm.

In her humble prayer, Hannah vowed to dedicate any son from God to serve in His temple at Shiloh. He granted her prayer and she brought the son she bore, called Samuel, to the temple and gave him to the priest Eli, to praise God and confirm his mother’s gratitude. Affirming her duality with her husband, Hannah renewed her connection with her heart.

This mosque kept the Ark of the Covenant, so that Hannah’s prayer and God’s response took place under the sign of the Holy Spirit’s descent and our own return. God appeared to Samuel there, who lay in the temple, and called him prophet, telling him of the mysteries of Eli the priest and his sons and revealing the truth of the Praised hidden in the self.

At a time when the Philistines ruled over them, the Council of the sons of Israel called on Samuel to nominate a king. The Recitation tells us that he told them to take Saul for king and of the signs for this choice:

The sign of his kingship is that the Ark will come to you, in it a Shekhinah from your Lord, and a remnant of what the folk of Moses and Aaron’s folk left behind, the angels bearing it. Surely in that shall be a sign for you, if you are believers.¹

Anointing Saul and raising him up to be king over Israel, he said:

Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? When thou art departed from me today, (...) Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine. And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of

¹ Qur’an, 2:248.
bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tarbet, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.²

So, Saul became king under a condition laid down by God through His prophet. When Saul broke it, Samuel revoked his anointment, transferring it to the boy David, prophet of Israel, Solomon's father and the Virgin's ancestor, confirming what was said of anointment: “The baptism of God! And who is there that baptizes more beautifully than God?”³

Before his elevation, David had served Saul and borne his faults patiently. He knew of Saul's anointment and its revocation and the debt of his own anointment by God. He had crossed the river in the king's army, of whom the Recitation says: “How often a little company has overcome a numerous company, by God's leave! And God is with the patient!”⁴

This small group of faithful fought a great army of concealers. God said: “And David slew Goliath. And God gave him the kingship, and wisdom, and He taught him such as He willed.”⁵ God promised David his kingdom would last through his posterity forever.⁶ The Anointed was from this posterity.⁷ David, like his descendant Jesus and ancestor Abraham, is on the wheel of Time, on which every tomorrow is yesterday and exile, migration and suffering are signs of potential mercy. Each prophet participates in praising the All-praised and the truth of the Praised as the truth of creation.

Hannah and Penninah's destinies and Samuel's affirmation of Hannah and Elkanah's pairing bear comparison with Ishmael's story affirming the pairing of Hagar and Abraham. Hannah faces the void, searching for a sign to affirm the pair she is a term of. God gives her one in Samuel, showing that He hears

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² 1 Samuel, 10:1–2, 3–6.
³ Qur'an, 2:138.
⁴ Ibid., 2:249.
⁷ See Matthew, 1:6.