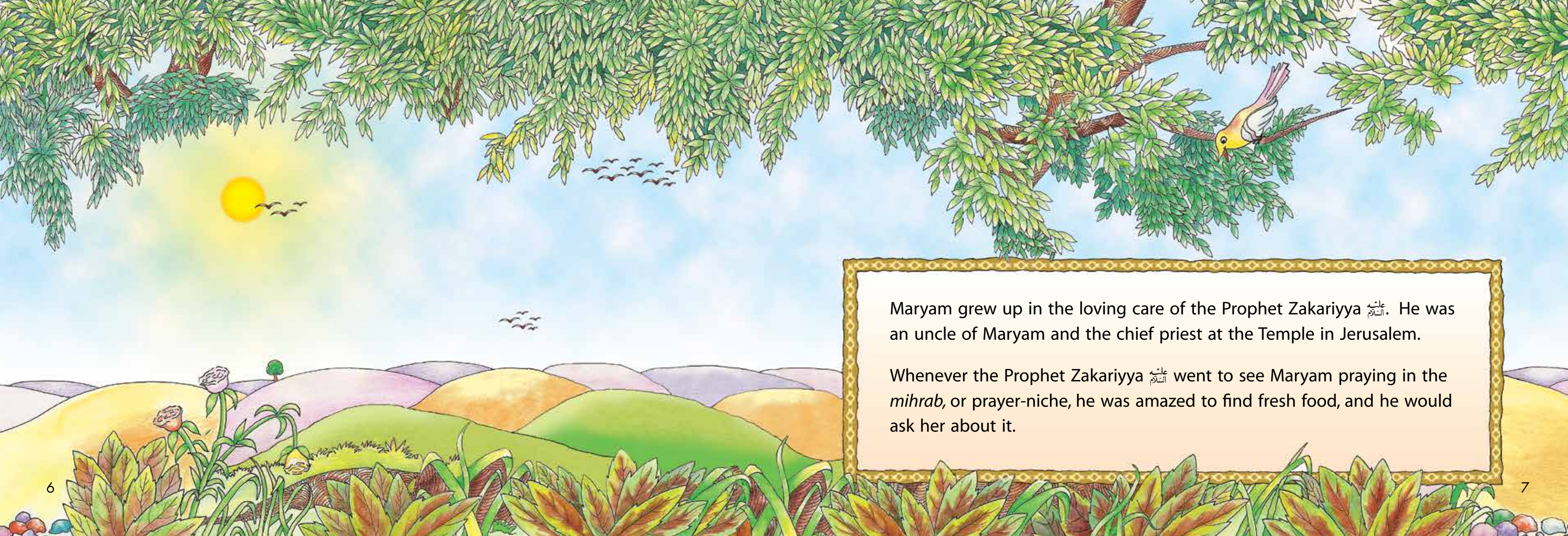


Long long ago there lived a pious lady in Jerusalem. Her name was Hannah and her husband was Imran. She prayed to Allah for a child and vowed that the child would spend her life serving Allah. Allah heard her prayers, and she gave birth to a beautiful baby girl who was named Maryam (Mary). When she gave birth to Maryam, she felt sad and said: "O my Lord! I have given birth to a female."





Maryam grew up in the loving care of the Prophet Zakariyya عليه السلام. He was an uncle of Maryam and the chief priest at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Whenever the Prophet Zakariyya عليه السلام went to see Maryam praying in the *mihrab*, or prayer-niche, he was amazed to find fresh food, and he would ask her about it.



“O Maryam! Where is this food from?” “From Allah,” she would answer. “Allah gives as much as He likes to whoever He pleases.” And so Maryam was raised to be a pious and most devout servant of Allah. Maryam would spend most of her time in prayer and devotion, and soon she became known for being a very good and pure person. Thus the Quran fondly remembers her: “We have set her above all other women.”

