

## Symbol of Religious Unity: In Blessed Memory of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him)

Written by freezak  
Monday, 20 July 2020 16:20 -

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By Yusuf Abdullahi

In the name of Allah who states &quot; certainly, you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe (to be) the Jews and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: we are Christians; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly&quot; Q5:82

May the everlasting peace and blessings of Allah be upon His chosen servant, our master Muhammad and his purified progeny.

The piece for this week is on the great Prophet of Allah, Isah al-Masih, peace be upon him, who was born on 25th of Zulqa'dah according to a known narration of Ahlul-bait. We have so many lessons to learn from the miraculous life of this messenger popularly related to the lost children of Israelites. The importance of birthday celebrations in respect of the Last Messenger and purified Imams like Ali (AS) where virtues in their blessed lives are extolled for emulation cannot be overstated. In the same way, we celebrate the birthday of Prophet Isah, peace be upon him where we invite Christian to share the Islamic view regarding the Messiah. With respect, the Holy Qur'an addresses Jews and Christians as people of the book to whom messengers of Allah were sent with monotheistic mission.



Pastor Yila, other guests and participants at the recent programme on the birthday of Prophet Isah (AS), organized by the Youth Forum of the Islamic Movement in Kano

Narrating the historic account of Prophet Isah, peace be upon him, the noble Qur'an started with his grandmother's pregnancy: "When a woman of Imran said; My Lord! Sure, I vow to You what is in my womb, to be devoted (to Thy service); accept therefore from me, surely, thou Art the Hearing the Knowing. So, when she brought forth, she said; My Lord! Surely, I have brought

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it forth a female, and Allah knew best what she brought forth and the male is not like female and I have named it Mary, and I commend her and her offspring into Thy protection from the accursed Satan”Q3:35 - 36

Regarding his bountiful miracles, the Qur’an states: “When Allah says; O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember my favor to you and your mother, how I strengthened you with the holy spirit so that you speak to mankind while you were in cradle as in maturity, and how you shaped of clay the likeness of a bird by my permission and blew upon it and it was a bird by my permission and you healed him who was born blind and the leper by my permission” Q5:110

The rationale behind his miracles and indeed all other messengers was to prove their link with Allah the Most High; “And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: O children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad” Q61:6

However, despite the miracles and missionary period, he was neither accepted nor the prophesized Prophet after him. In fact, they attempted to kill him but Allah saved him in His infinite mercy. “They said in (boast), we killed the Christ, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah - but they killed him not, neither did they crucify him but confusion overtook them ....” Q4:157

Although both Jews and Christians believe he was killed, Allah disproved them in the light of the verse above. Christians generally blame Jews on crucifixion as the ancient phrase “the Jews killed Jesus” until it was agreed to absolve them from the blame after series of international conferences such as the First Assembly of the Protestant World Council of Churches, Amsterdam, 1948, the third Assembly, New Delhi, 1961 and the declaration on the Jews by the Second Vatican council, 1965 which led to closer friendly ties between the two parties. As opposed to Jews who believe in the messengers before Christ, and Christians who believe in messengers to Christ, Muslims believe in all messengers to the last - Muhammad son of Abdullah who said: “among my progeny is Mahdi. When he emerges, Jesus, the son of Mary will descend to help him, send him ahead and pray behind him”.

Here are some statements of blessed memory as narrated in Bihar al-Anwar:

1. Blessed is he whose silence is contemplation, whose view is clear understanding, whose total space is his house, who weeps on his errors, and people are safe from his hands and tongue.

2. I sleep while I have nothing and I rise while I have nothing and yet there is no one on earth wealthier than I. He also said “I began the morning with my Lord, the Blessed and Supreme above me and the Fire (of hell) before me, I have not obtained that for which I wished and I cannot keep away the things I hate. So, who of the poor is poorer than I?”

3. Jesus passed by a blind man, leprous and paralytic and Jesus heard him giving thanks saying 'praise be to Allah Who has protected me from the trials with which He afflicts the majority of men. Jesus said “what trial remains which has not visited you? He said; he protected me from a trial which is the greatest of trials and that is disbelief. Then Jesus touched him and Allah cured him from his illness and beautified his face. Then he became a companion of Jesus and worshipped with him.

4. Jesus passed by a grave whose occupant was being chastised. Then he passed it the following year, when he was not being chastised. He said O Lord! I passed through this town last year and he was being chastised and I passed it through this year while he is not being chastised. Then Allah revealed to him “O spirit of Allah! One of his children matured and cleared some way and sheltered an orphan. Then I forgave him for the deeds of his child”;

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5. World is an ailment to religion, and the scholar is the doctor for religion, therefore, if you see a scholar drawing the ailment towards himself you should accuse him and know that he cannot admonish anyone”

In light of the above tradition, we can understand the significant position accorded the pious scholars. In his traditional well wishes to the Christians community during such occasion in Iran, the late Imam Khomeini (QS) issued the following address in 1978:

“Salutations and peace of Allah be upon Jesus, the son of Mary, the spirit of Allah, and His great Prophet who used to raise the dead and waken the sleeping ones. Salutations of the exalted Lord and His mercy be upon his great mother, the virgin Mary, the pure and truthful lady, who presented, through divine blowing, this type of child for those who burn in love of divine mercy. Greetings to the clergymen and monks who forsake the sinful self in favor of contentment with the teachings of the Messiah and to the independent Christian community who get inspiration from the heavenly teachings of the Messiah. I call upon you Christians in the name of the oppressed nation of Iran, to pray in your blessed days for our nation that has been in calamities under an oppressive ruler, and pray unto Allah to bless it with a relief”;

As a great Islamic scholar and pious personality that led oppressed nation to freedom and development, the Imam was respected by all people irrespective of religious, racial and geographical inclinations. The Christians in Iran supported the Imam and endured persecution after the success of Islamic revolution in the imposed war defending their nation on his orders. As such many Armenian Christian youths were martyred alongside their Muslim brothers. Commemorative programmes were organized in their respect at various places including mosques in attendance of important officials. Few examples of their martyrs include soldier martyr Vartan Abrahamian killed at Kurdistan, 1980, soldier martyr Razmik Davitayan, killed at Abadan, 1981, soldier martyr Joseph Shahiniyan, killed at Ahwaz, 1985, soldier Haraj Hakobian, (missed in action), 1987, Qasreshirin and civilian martyr Matus Banusiyankilled at Tabriz, 1987 among others.

After Imam’s demise, he was succeeded by his promising student, Sayyid Ali Khamne’i, the leader of the Ummah, an erudite Islamic scholar and authority per excellence. Through his fatherly and spiritual guidance, the country has recorded tremendous achievements in all sectors of human endeavors. Like his predecessor and mentor, he is highly respected as a man of letters, human liberator and man of Allah. President Vladimir Putin of the Russian federation had this to say in his respect: “I have met many world leaders whom I came to respect such as Jacques Shirac, the French president, Mikhail Gorbachev, the head of state of the U.S.S.R, and Helmut Koh, Chancellor of Germany, but none of these men touched me the way Ayatollah Khamenei did. In my meeting with him, I forgot everything else as I was overwhelmed by his spirituality. I don't know much about the Messiah, the Christ, just what I have heard or read in the Bible, but I saw Christ, the Messiah, in the leader of the Islamic republic of Iran (referring to the Supreme leader, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei”;

Allah states “O people of the book! Do not go to extremes in your religion: nor say of Allah anything but the truth. Verily; Christ Jesus the son of Mary was no more than a messenger of Allah, and His word which he bestowed upon Mary. And a spirit proceeding from Him; as believe in Allah and His messengers .....” Q4:171. In line with this, we emphasize good exhortation on the basis of knowledge, reasoning and peaceful coexistence for societal advancement. Allah also states “O men! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another; verily, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is deeply conscious of Him. Behold,

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He is all knowing, all aware. Q49:13

The widely recognized effort of Sheikh Ibraheemel-Zakzaky (H) in Nigeria promotes peaceful coexistence, ethno-religious understanding and tolerance. Measures adopted by the revered Sheikh made tremendous impact in the Muslim /Christian relations not only in Zaria but throughout the country. The medical wing of his movement played significant role after the unfortunate 2011 post presidential violence regardless of ethno-religious differences. Pastors Yohana Buru of Peace Revival and Reconciliation Foundation of Nigeria and Maxwell Sanda of Evangelical Intercessory Fellowship, Kaduna are also very steadfast in this direction. This trend is worthy of emulation by both sides as no development is possible under chaos and bloodshed.

Allah states "You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God" Q3:110

In a prominent saying of the commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (AS) "do not despise a human being; for he is either a brother to you in religion or a partner in creation"

As usual, I use the medium to reiterate the urgent need for the unconditional release of Sheikh Ibraheem el-Zakzaky (H), whose insightful and fatherly guidance are not only instrumental to his disciples but the society at large.

Wassalamualaikum.