

Lesson 18: Hazrat 'Isa Jesus (a.s.)

The Messiah, The Messenger, and Servant of Allah

Maryam, the mother of Isa

The wife of Imran was a barren and sterile woman, but she heard from her husband that God had promised him a boy who would be able to bring people to life and to cure the sick as well through the power and command of God.^{[1](#)}

She believed that Almighty God could do this, and prayed to Him to give her the child.

God granted her prayer and she became pregnant. As a sign of thankfulness for this great blessing and gift, she vowed that she would give her child to the service of the House of God (in Jerusalem).^{[2](#)}

The child who was born was a girl, and when her mother saw her she said, “This is a girl, but I will be faithful to my vow; I will call her Maryam She and her children, I commend to Your protection from the mischief of Satan.”^{[3](#)}

The wife of Imran took Maryam to the House of God. She entrusted her to the custodians of that place. Since the infant was the daughter of their leader, Imran everyone wanted to pay for her upbringing and guardianship so that the honour of having looked after the daughter of Imran would fall on him. In the end a dispute arose between them, and to resolve their differences they drew lots.

Among the custodians of the House of God the draw came out in favor of Hazrat Zakariyya. So Maryam came under the tutelage and supervision of Hazrat Zakariyya and she gradually grew up engaged in nothing but worship and serving the House of God.^{[4](#)}

Her purity and devotion reached such a stage that whenever Hazrat Zakariyya (a.s.) went into Maryam's sanctuary; he found heavenly food beside her. He would ask in surprise, “Where does this food come from?” Maryam would reply,

“From Allah; truly Allah gives to everyone who He wants without reckoning.” (3:37)

Zakariyya and Yahya

The wife of Zakariyya (a.s.) was also, like the mother of Maryam barren, and for this reason Zakariyya had been without children till his old age. At that time when Zakariyya (as) was looking after the spiritual advancement of Maryam in her sanctuary and saw the infinite mercy of God towards her, he was taken with the desire to have a pious child like Maryam. So he raised his hands in supplication towards God and said,

“O God, I wish you to grant me a pure and pious child a child who will be a source of satisfaction to me, the inheritor of me and the House Of Ya'qub.” (3:38, 19: 1-6)

Hazrat Zakariyya (a.s.) was engaged in prayer in the sanctuary when angels said to him, “God gives you glad tidings of a child called Yahya who is of the righteous and devout prophets.”

Hazrat Zakariyya (a.s.) who was himself old and weary and saw the barrenness and sterility of his wife (and to become pregnant in such conditions was a gift which could not be expected). He said with delight and surprise, “O God, in the state I and my wife are in, how can you grant me the favour of a child?”

In answer to this it was said, “This work is easy for God. Did God the Almighty not bring you forth from non-existence into being? “

Thus Hazrat Zakariyya (a.s.) became one of the Divine prophets and throughout the whole of his life he called people to faith and salvation. In the end he was martyred by one of the kings of Bani Isra'il who wanted to marry the daughter of his own brother against the law of God, and to whom Hazrat Yahya had forbidden this.⁵

'Isa, Jesus, the Messiah

One day, Maryam⁶ the girl who had grown up from infancy in the House of God and whose upbringing a prophet of the stature of Zakariyya had undertaken was engaged in worship when an angel appeared to her in the form of a man.

Maryam thought that he was a man, and in fear sought protection from God, but the angel gave her glad tidings, “I have come from your God to give you a pure and perfect son.”

Maryam said, “How, since no man has had contact with me and I am not a fornicatress.”

“Your God,” said the angel, says that this work is easy for Him; that it may be appointed as a sign and an indication of His Mercy.”

So Maryam became pregnant, and, since she had no husband some gossipers began to make

obscene comments about her, and she became grieved so as to be free from these afflictions she took herself far from people, and had to go to a remote place. There she counted the days until the birth of her child.

At last, when the time of delivery arrived, she took refuge from her pain under a dry date palm in the desert, and in that very place she delivered her baby into the world without any mid-wife or nurse.

Loneliness fear of disgrace and the thought of how she would prove her chastity to people filled Maryam with so much anxiety that she said to herself, "Would that I had died before this and had been lost from people's memories."

Then she heard a voice, which consoled her, "Do not grieve, your God has set under your feet a stream, refreshing to the soul. And shake the trunk of the withered date palm that fresh dates may tumble down for you. Eat, drink and calm your mind, and if you see any man point and say, "I have vowed a silent fast, and today I will not speak to any man."

Miracles and unseen help, one after the other made Maryam courageous. So, because of this tranquility, she took her child back with her to the place where she had been living. When the people saw Maryam with the child clutched to her bosom, they began to chide her, and said, "Your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother unchaste."

Without speaking, Maryam pointed to her child. That meant: ask from him what has happened, and you will get your answer.

"How shall we speak to a child of that age!" they said in amazement.

But Maryam's child spoke through the power of God, and in clear distinct speech said, "I am God's servant. He has given me the Book and has appointed me to be a prophet. And wherever I may be He has put me as the bearer of good news and with His blessing; and He has commanded me that as long as I live I should pray and give zakat and he has made me loving towards my mother Maryam."

The clear mind of this child dumbfounded them and this great sign dispelled their incrimination of and suspicion toward Hazrat Maryam (As) and they knew that this infant was brought into existence by the Will of God without a father. And that in the future he would have great rank and responsibility.

Description of the Condition of People Before the Message of Hazrat 'Isa, Jesus (a.s.)

Before the birth of the Messiah, Palestine was in the hand of the Romans. But the people of Palestine, although they had no support to help them to eventual emancipation, were engage¹ in a struggle with the

alien Romans. This continuous fight worsened the condition of Palestine and its people.

The economy was in a shambles and heavy oppressive taxes added to the evil. Free people were either anxious and in chains or were engaged in a life long struggle. Prosperous places came to a standstill and everything fell into ruin and became weakened even the faith of the Jews themselves, so that they no longer abided by the commands of their religion.

Perhaps this weakness of faith was a present for Roman colonisation from the people. Colonialism always has and always will use this gift, because in this kind of struggle the enemy has no need of arms. People who neglect and give up their faith, without their knowing, will be gradually annihilated.

Under these circumstances, in that time full of disturbance and agitation, the need was thoroughly felt for Divine leader to come and save the deviated people from their misfortunes and aberrations.

And thus it was that, with the expediency of the love and mercy of Allah, the Compassionate, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) came into this world. The birth of this beloved one was accompanied by wonders, all witnessed to his exalted and magnificent rank. These were Divine signs that he was God's leader and that the strong hand of God had brought him into existence to establish the great revolution.

The Message of the Messiah (a.s.)

The Injil descended to the person of Hazrat Isa (a.s.) to be a plan for the liberation of those who were lost. The revealed Injil (gospel) has disappeared and the Gospel which are now in the possession of the (Christians are not revealed books.

Hazrat Isa (a.s.) announced his prophetic message and started his activities on a large scale. He took great pains and sacrificed himself to save the Jews and to exterminate the roots of their deviations.

But the leaders of the Jews, who clung to their position and rank, and who thought that these would be destroyed by the coming of Hazrat 'Isa and feared his prophetic mission, plotted together to find ways to create a disturbance to check his progress.

Hazrat Isa (a.s.) was aware of their designs, but he was as steady as a rock, and thus dispensed his guidance and leadership, and informed the people of the superstitions and distortions that had crept into the religion of Hazrat Musa (a.s.).

Sometimes, while he was doing this, he would cure a sick person by the leave of God, or, similarly by His leave, bring to life a dead person, so that they would understand that he had come from God and had been sent by the Unique and Incomparable God.

The End of the Mission of the Messiah (a.s.)

Day by day, Hazrat Isa's friends and followers increased, and the more they increased the more the opposition of the leaders of the Jews increased, to such an extent that they decided to do away with him.

But God concealed him from their eyes, and they crucified another by mistake who resembled Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.), and thus they believed in their error that they had crucified Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.). This fact has been explicitly stated in the Holy Qur'an:

But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them; and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge but only conjecture to follow. For a surety they killed him not Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power and Wise. (4: 157-158)

Therefore, the matters of the cross and the illogical embellishment, which were added to this matter are all without any foundation. For example, the Christians today say that every man is, in his essence, a sinner, although he may not have committed any sin during the whole of his life. That is why Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.) was crucified in the place of these men so that they might be spared the torment of Hell and its Fire. And that is why the Marcion and the Gnostics did not believe in the killing or crucifixion of the Messiah.

Hazrat Isa Messiah, or the Slave of God

What is clear from the Holy Qur'an and even from some of the New Testament which is at present in the possession of the Christians is that the Messiah always considered himself as God's slave, worshipped God, and called people to the worship of the One God. (The Gospel according to St. Mark ch. 12, v. 29.)

Hazrat Isa (a.s.) said:

"It is Allah, Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a way that is straight."
(3:51)

Hazrat Isa (a.s.) never claimed to be a god, and if Christians know him and consider him as God, then it is their own imagining.

Nehru, in his book Glimpses of World History, wrote that the Messiah was never a claimant to divinity or to being a god, but that people like to turn their heroes into a kind of god.

Hazrat Isa (a.s.) was, like other prophets, a man to whom revelation came from God and who was moved to lead and guide society. If he had a miracle, other prophets also had miracles. If he was born without a father, Hazrat Adam (a.s.) was also created without a father or a mother, but no Christian thinks that he was the Son of God.

The Qur'an says:

The Messiah, son of Maryam, was no more than a messenger many were the messengers who passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their daily food. (5:75).

Like all other human beings, they were in need of the necessities of life.

This truth, which has come in the clear word of Allah – the Qur'an – agrees with both wisdom and the intellect, because a man, who, like other individuals, has no power from himself, and thus like other men and prophets is in need of the necessities of life like food and sleep. By the Judgement of wisdom, he does not deserve to be worshipped.

So, according to the intellect, and with the confirmation of the Holy Qur'an according to the existing New Testament (Gospel of St. Mark), and on the evidence of great historians, Hazrat Isa (a.s.) was the slave and messenger of God, and never laid claim to divinity.

But after Hazrat Isa (a.s.), his pure religion lost its genuineness and polytheism and idolatry found its way into it, so that Will Durant in his 'History of Civilization; has written that Christianity did not eradicate polytheism, but has rather adopted it.

Everyone who has studied Christian dogma will confirm that the historian has proved a historical fact. For even now such beliefs as the following are found among the followers of the Messiah.

- 1) Isa became separated from the essence of God and he is therefore not created, but is called the Son of God;
- 2) The Messiah was a man, but a man in whom God was incarnate;
- 3) The Messiah is himself God who showed himself in the form of man.

But we all know that God is not material as a result of which he could exist in space, or separate from himself parts and call himself the Son of God. And we also understand with our wisdom that God has no dimensions as a result of which he could be contained in something or incarnate himself or come forth in the likeness of man.

Moreover, how can it be possible that a God without any need should become in need of food and clothing?

Therefore, if the Christians ponder carefully, they will confess that the Messiah, like all other prophets, is the slave of Allah and has absolutely no claim to divinity.

The Qur'an says:

“They are unbelievers who say, “Allah is the Messiah, Maryam’s son.” Say, “Who then shall overrule Allah in any way if He desires to destroy the Messiah, Maryam’s son, and his mother, and all those who are on the earth? For to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, creating what He will. Allah is Powerful over everything.”
(5: 17)

Sayings of the Messiah

The Prophet of Islam, the great Messenger (S) said: The disciples asked Hazrat Isa (a.s.), “With whom should we associate?” He replied, “With those whose countenance recalls Allah, and whose speech adds to your knowledge, and whose actions make your eagerness for the concerns of the next world greater.”^{[7](#)}

The Prophet (S) also said, “The disciples asked Hazrat Isa (a.s.) for guidance for them and he replied, “Musa, Kalim Allah, said to you, “Do not swear in the name of Allah what is a lie, but I say, “Do not swear in the name of Allah, even what is true.” The disciples asked for greater guidance, and he said, “The prophet of Allah, Musa, said to you, “Do not commit adultery.” But I say to you, “Do not even think of it, because everyone into whose head the thought of adultery enters is like the person who kindles a fire in a painted room, which even if it doesn't burn the room, at least blackens the paint.”^{[8](#)}

Amir al-mu'minin (a.s.), Hazrat 'Ali said, “The Messiah, the son of Maryam said, “Fortunate is he whose silence is thought and whose look gives advice; whose house gives him rest and comfort. He repents of his improper actions, and people obtain tranquility from his hand and tongue.”^{[9](#)}

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, “Hazrat Isa (a.s.) said to his companions, “O sons of Adam, “Turn away from this world towards Allah, and do not enslave your heart to it, for you were not created for this world alone. It has no merit for you. You will not stay in it, and it will not remain for you. What a great many people are deceived and ruined! Whoever is attracted by it, and places his confidence in it will be lost. Whoever likes it and goes after it will perish.”^{[10](#)}

He also said, “The Messiah (a.s.) told his followers, “Refrain from regarding others wives for it plants the bitter seed of passion in the heart of man and that is enough for your perdition. Alas for he whose aim is the pleasure of this world, and whose actions are sins! None of you know how tomorrow and at the time of resurrection he will be ashamed before Allah.”^{[11](#)}

Questions

1. What was Imran promised to receive from Allah?
2. The wife vowed that she would do what with the gift of Allah if he granted it to her?
3. What name did she give her?

4. Under whose supervision was she entrusted in?
5. Who did one of the kings of Bani Isra'il Martyr?
6. Who came to her in the form of a man?
7. What message did he bring with him?
8. What rumours started going around about the mother of Isa?
9. What comment did Maryam say to herself after the birth?
10. What did the child say to her?
11. Who is the child?
12. What helped Maryam to be courageous again to return to where she was living?
13. What remarks did people make to her when she returned to the place where she lived?
14. What did the child say to the people in return?
15. In whose hand was Palestine in during the time of Prophet Isa?
16. What were the people like?
17. What happened to the followers of Hazrat Isa day by day?
18. What happened to the leaders of the Jews day by day?
19. What did the finally decide to do with Hazrat Isa?
20. Who did they crucify, and did they fall for it?
21. What did the "messiah" consider himself as?
22. What happened to the religion after Hazrat Isa?
23. Name two misconceptions, which took place after Hazrat Isa?
24. What does the Qur'an say about the unbelievers?
25. What did Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq say to his companions?

[1.](#) Majma al-bayan vol. 2, p. 435.

[2.](#) See 3:34.

[3.](#) See 3:34-35.

[4.](#) Majma al-bayan vol. 2, p. 436.

- [5.](#) Allamah at-Tabataba'i Tafsir Al-mizan vol. 14, p. 26-27.
- [6.](#) See Holy Qur'an, 19-16-32
- [7.](#) Usul al- Kafi vol. I, p. 39
- [8.](#) Bihar al-anwar, vol. 14, p. 331.
- [9.](#) Bihar al-anwar, vol. 14, p. 320.
- [10.](#) Bihar al-anwar vol. 14, p. 289.
- [11.](#) Bihar al-anwar. vol. 14, p. 323.

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