

THE DIFFERENCES STORY OF ISA (JESUS) IN THE QUR'AN AND THE BIBLE. (Study of Comparative Text)

Husnul Qodim

(Pengajar di Fakultas Ushuluddin UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung)

Kontak: Gg. Manisi Jl. Jati N0. 45 Kel. Pasirbiru, Kec. Cibiru Kota, Bandung, telp. 081336100400)

Abstract

As great religions both Christianity and Islam have a holy book that is acquired as a divine book that comes from God's revelation. Christianity has the Bible and Islam has the Qur'an in which both of them tell the story of Jesus. Both of them were believed as God's revelation, but they have different versions of the story. This case sometimes causes some controversy between Christians and Moslems. In this paper I will express similarities and differences in the story of Jesus in the Bible and the Qur'an. Although this paper is not a complete writing about Jesus, however, I will tell a brief different assertion in the Qur'an and Bible in three points of classification; Jesus birth, the confession of his position and duty, and his death.

This paper is one case of comparative religion studies which tries to use comparative text between two holy books, the Qur'an and the Bible, in the story of Jesus. The results of research found that there are three fundamental points of differences between them: one, in his birth, the Qur'an told that Jesus was born by Mary without father, but in the Bible said that Mary was engaged to Joseph as his bride. Two, in the confession of Jesus and his duty, the Qur'an told that Jesus was only human being who created by God as His messenger. The Bible told that Jesus was son of God and he was both divine and human. Three, in his crucifixion and death, The Qur'an told that Jesus was secured by God, the Bible told that Jesus was dead in the Cross of crucifixion. These differences are called as "non-negotiable things" in religion. It must not be debatable and acclaimed each others, but it must be understood sincerely in order to get better understanding between the two sides in the way of dialogue.

Keywords

Birth, Crucifixion, Death, Duty, Jesus, The Qur'an, and The Bible.

A. Preference

The stories of Jesus life were told more in the Bible. This is differs from the Qur'an which does not explain the story of Jesus' life in detail. The Bible told that Jesus was born in the village of Nazaret (the acts of the prophets 10:37), the city of David which is called Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), in the area of Palestine which is called Galilea (Mark 1:9), a Jewish area which was occupied by quite a lot of dwellers from various nations. He was born when the nation of Jews was under occupation of Roman Empire, during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 B.C.-A.D.14

or 6 B.C).¹ According to Mark 6:3, Jesus became a carpenter, indicating that he come from low society class, but not from proletariat circle. He could read and write and know little bit about the Old Testament and religious tradition of Jews, although he was none the expert (John 7:15).

¹Jonathan W. Smith (ed), *The Harpercollins Dictionary of Religion*, (New York: the Harper San Francisco, 1995). Pp.568.

B. The Differences story of Isa (Jesus) in The Qur'an and The Bible

About his birth, Jesus was born from the virgin girl who was called Mary². Not only the Bible but also the Qur'an asserted that Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary. According to the Qur'an, Mary was the most noble among women of the nations (Qur'an 3: 42) and Jesus was born by a virgin mother with no father. The verses express:

'Relate in the Book the story of Mary, when she withdrew from her family, to a place in the East. She screened herself from them; then We sent to her Our spirit (angel Gabriel) and he appeared before her as man in all respects. She said: I seek refuge from you in God Most Gracious (come not near) if you do fear God. He said: Nay, I am only a Messenger from your Lord, to announce to you the gift of a pure son. She said: how shall I have a son, when no man has ever touched me, and I am not unchaste? He said: So it will be, your Lord says: That is easy for Me: and We wish to appoint him as a sign unto men and a Mercy from Us: It was matter so decreed' (Qur'an 19: 16-21)³

This assertion differs from the Bible assertion that while she was pregnant in virgin, she was engaged with Joseph. This was told in Matthew 1:18:

'The birth of Jesus Christ is like following: When Maria, his mother, was engaged with Joseph, in the reality she in pregnant of a Holy Spirit (Jesus), before they live as the wife husband'

In the Bible, we can also know that the ancestry of Jesus was refers to Joseph, a husband of Mary, come up to Prophet of David.⁴ In contrast the Qur'an takes the

²Mary is her call in English, Maria in Spanish and Maryam in Arabic.

³See also The Qur'an, Ali Imran : 47, in English translation.

⁴There are differences in Matthew and Luke in giving clan sequence: According to Matthew 1: 1-16 informs the lineages of Jesus come up to David through to 27 persons, nevertheless Luke 3:23-31 informs the lineages of Jesus come up to David through to 42 persons. According to Luke 3:23, Joseph as father of Jesus come from the lineage of Eli, but according to Matthew 1:16, he is a child of Jacob. According to Matthew 1:16 Jesus is a clan of David

lineage of Jesus from his mother, Mary come up to the Prophet of Moses and Harun. Letter of Maryam: 28 in the Qur'an narrated the Jews utterance as follows: "*Ooo...Sister of Harun, your father is not an ugly and your mother is not adultery woman*". From this sentence, all Moslem scholars have a notion that Mary is clan of the prophet of Moses, a brother of prophet of Harun and Miryam. And both of these prophets are clan of Lewi bin Jacob.⁵

In the view of Christianity, the birth of Jesus through the virgin of Mary represents the God Himself which comes to this world. That God the word became flesh as His incarnation through Mary pregnancy, and the function as a Word of God. This narrative can be found in the Bible:

"In the beginning He is the Word; the Word together with Allah. He is in the beginning together with Allah. Everything was made by Him and without Him there are nothing would be ready made even also from all which have been made. In Him there is a life and that life is bold of human being." (John 1:1-4).

"That Word have come to the human being, and kept quiet among us, and we have seen His dignity, that is dignity which is passed to Him as the only Son of Father, loving of grant from above and truth,"(John 1:14)

Therefore, a baby who was contained by Mary is the Spirit of God its self, non human being spirit. Thereby Christians believe that Jesus is both divine and human. All Christians accepted the definition of the trinity and the eternal Son-ship of Christ in the Creed of the Council of Nicaea (325):

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which be in heaven

through a line of Solomon, but according to Luke 3:31 Jesus is clan David through a line of Nathan.

⁵ H. Imam Muchlas dan Masyhud SM., *Al Qur'an Berbicara Tentang Kristen*, (Surabaya:Pustaka Da'I, 2001). Pp. 47-49.

*and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And He shall come again to judge both the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.*⁶

Jesus was also called as "Son of God", in the some verses were written that Jesus was called, "Son of God: "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) such as this word is also written in John 5:24-25 and Luke 1:35.

On the other hand, the Qur'an message asserted that Jesus is just human being as a prophet, messenger of God. The Qur'an described Jesus as follows:

"Indeed I was a slave of God. God gave me a holy book, and created me as a prophet" (Qur'an 19:30)

Jesus Christ is only a slave which We gave miraculous and only as counselor who give by word for his nation, that is a clan of Israel.(Qur'an 43:59)

Jesus is only a messenger. Indeed it have elapsed the previous messengers. And his mother was a trustworthy. Both of them need food (Qur'an 5:75).

This miraculous occurrence, that is birth without father, represents a power evidence of God who is able to do everything. In The Qur'an it was written "And We create the child of Mary and his mother as evidence (power of God),....(Qur'an 23:50). Clearly the Qur'an informs us the denial of Jesus as "Son of God" or a divine as God. So the Qur'an asserted for those who believe Jesus as being God, or Son of God, or a part of trinity are "pagans" (Qur'an 5:17, 72 and 73).

Another dissimilar statement between the Qur'an and Bible is problem of Jesus crucifixion and death. After more three years Jesus invited his people to fulfill God teaching, some Jews and Roman Emperor make every effort to catch and kill him. According to the Bible they succeed to catch

and punish Jesus in crucifixion until his death. Jesus was arrested because the guide from Judas Iscariot, a pupil of Jesus who got reward, thirty silver money (Matthew 26:15). Because the army of Roman Emperor do not know the face of Jesus, Judas gave the code " by hailing and kissing his teacher hand" (Matthew 26:48).

"Start from two o'clock darkness was compassion cover the entire area until three o'clock. About three o'clock Jesus exclaim in a loud voice: "Eli, ELI lama sabakhtani?" its meaning: My Lord, My Lord why Thou leave me?" (Matthew 27:45-46).

Later; one of Jesus pupil, Joseph Arimatea came to the Pilatus to ask the dead body of Jesus and took care of him, then buried him (Matthew 27:57-61). Three-days after Jesus were not found in his grave. Maria Magdalena who searched him, met with the angel and got the information from the angel that Jesus has awakened (Matthew 28:6). In one day, eleventh of Jesus pupils come in contact with him in Galilea (Matthew 28:16-17).

On the contrary, the Qur'an deny about Jesus death in crucifixion. According to Qur'an Jesus was not arrested and did not die crucified. The man that was captured was not Jesus, but another one whose face was similar to Jesus. The Qur'an tell us such as follows:

And because their infidelity (to Jesus) and because their accusation to maryam with the big falsehood (adultery). And because their utterance: " in fact we have killed the Jesus Christ putra maryam, rasul Allah." Though they did not kill him as well as did not crucify him. But (what they kill was) one who was similar to Jesus for them.(Qur'an 4:156).

Remember when :Allah berfirman: " Hi Jesus, indeed I will submit the you by the end of your life and lift the you to Me and also clean the you from infidel people, and make the people who follow the you above infidel people till doomsday(Qur'an 3:55).

In interpreting this verse, Muhammad Abduh tend to have a notion that the man who was captured was Judas Iscariot, because he has similar to the face of Jesus Christ, like

⁶ W.D. Short, *Islam and The Person of Christ*, www.Christianity today. net.

George Sale in Qur'an by English translation.⁷ Above all most of the Qur'an scholars agreed that the Jewish people failed to catch Jesus, and even crucified and killed him. The Prophet of Jesus was saved because he was lifted by Allah and placed in the suitable place.⁸

Whereas the Qur'an and the Bible have a similar story that Jesus was born in the Virgin Mary, but there are much more fundamental differences between them. There are three fundamental points of differences: one, in his birth, Moslems believed Jesus was born by Mary without father, but in the Bible say that Mary was engaged to Joseph as his bride. The Qur'an and Bible tell about different lineages of Jesus. Two, in the confession of Jesus and his duty, Moslems believe that Jesus was just human being who created by God as His messenger. This is dissimilar to Christians who believe that Jesus was Son of God and He was both divine and human. Three, in his crucifixion and death, in one hand Moslems believe that Jesus was not dead in the cross of crucifixion because He was secured by God. On the other hand, Christians believe that Jesus was dead in the Cross of crucifixion and he was buried, and then will be awakened.

These differences are the crucial questions and difficulties that seriously confront metaphysical and theological order of the two religions. It must not be debatable and acclaimed each others, but it must be confronted and understood sincerely and seriously in order to get better understanding between the two sides in the way of dialogue. On this case, Nasr have given his comments, that He seems to believe that mutual understanding between the two religions could be started by learning each theology of religions and what is the crucial issues or what is non- negotiable is still open to be elaborated and understood. The dialogue of the two religions should be discussed from its

non-negotiable basic theological issues.⁹ Reading for Nasr comments, I would rather to say that what is as "non-negotiable things" between religions, it must not be debatable and must be understood each other that each religions has its principle and belief which should be believed and committed by each adherents. In another hand, we are still able to find the similarities in the universal values or ethical principles which were enunciated in every religion.

In the dialogue also requires a balancing between the commitment and the openness. We must commit to our own personal faiths and traditions, in the same time try open to the truth that we expect to find in the other religion. Openness to truth concretely entails openness to the particular messages embodied in other religions.

C. Conclusion

It might be there is the universal message comes from each religion because as we know that almost of religions identically suggest their communities for doing goodness and social justice. And the goodness and social justice is called "*fitrah*" (the goodness instinct within religion) in Islam. The Qur'an also advice all human to keep this *fitrah* as their diametrical religion which is naturally being in all human creation:

Hence confront your face diametrically at one particular religion (God confidence); (be really for) fitrah (goodness instinct) of God created the human being according to that fitrah (goodness instinct). [There is] no change [at] fitrah of God. That's diametrical religion; but most human being does not know. (30:30)

Ibrahim is not a Jew and non also a Nasrani, however he is a diametrical and also surrender ([at] God) and occasionally he is not from faction of people who disobey God. (3:67)

These two verses also show us that the formal or the institution of religion is not the purpose

⁷ Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsir Al Manar*, Kairo, 1367 & 1374, Juz VI. pp. 41

⁸ H. Imam Muchlas dan Masyhud SM., *Al Qur'an Berbicara Tentang Kristen*, Pp. 161.

⁹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Comments On a Few Theological Issues In The Islamic-Christian Dialogue", From Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Zaidan Haddad, eds. *Christian-Muslim Encounters*. (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1995) pp. 465-466.

of religion. But, the purpose of religion is to develop and increase goodness instinct. This reason makes me believe that there is the universal truth within all religion that we can learn and experience passing over to others religion. Inter-religious dialogue on the mutuality is also needed to learn each other and try to respond "eco-human suffering". What is according to Hans Kung that in the future a marked in awareness might be observed in all the great religions in respect of the following central human concerns: the preservation of human rights; the emancipation of women; the realization of social justice; and the immorality of war".¹⁰ If they do not do in responding these problems, they are irrelevant religion.

At present time all religions are challenged by many problems of the global world that made "eco-human suffering", such as a war, crisis of political global, global information, human mal-nutrition and hunger crisis, and so on those are caused of crisis of moral. These challenge all religions to cooperate and make dialogue to involve giving the salvation to these surrounding problems. This is not the time for religions to fight each others and leave the real problems of the world. This needs the mutuality dialogue because the world needs global ethics that might be come from all the great religions. The dialogue is necessary not just within religions but also in every institution of our lives.[]

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