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In the Name of the Most High Viewpoint

If the Messiah (AS) were among us (Thought of the Day)!

By: Hossein Shariatmadari

The recent visit to Iraq of Pope Francis, although it was a fascinating piece of news for the world media, what made it more significant for many news outlets was the meeting of Chief of the Catholic sect of Christianity with Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani, the Source of Emulation for most followers worldwide of the School Jurisprudence of the Prophet of Islam's Ahl al-Bayt (Blessed Household), which took place Saturday at his Eminence's house in the holy city of Najaf.

Religious and political circles around the world had thought that important and crucial issues would be raised at the meeting, since Ayatollah Sistani is one of the most prominent authorities of the Shi'a Muslim World, while Pope Francis is the Leader of the world's Catholics.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the meeting on the Pope was the small and simple abode of Ayatollah Sistani, who as one of the leading Sources of Emulation for Shi'a Muslims wields authority and dignity from a modest house in Iraq, where the opulent and luxurious palaces of Saddam abound.

Imagine, with full security the Vatican Chief visits Iraq and meets Ayatollah Sistani in a country whose people were recently drenched in bloodshed and destruction by the US-created Takfiri terrorists with the full backing of the West, Israel, and the reactionary Arab regimes, until Ayatollah Sistani's Fatwa for Jihad mobilized the dedicated Iraqi youth under the command of Iran's Qassem Soleimani, Iraq's Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and their fellow combatants, to decisively weed out the Daesh terrorists and deliver from their blood-soaked and morally corrupt claws the sacred soil of Iraq and its people, whether Shi'as, Sunni or Christians.

Moreover, Pope Francis visits Iraq as a guest of Ayatollah Sistani and the Iraqi people, and is received with honour and dignity, which the US not only did not show to General Qassem Soleimani, the honourable guest of the Iraqi people, but in a stealthy and unmanly manner spilled his innocent blood, along with that of his host, Abu Mahdi, who had played a key role in routing Takfiri terrorists.

Today, not only the Muslim people of Iraq owe their security to Grand Ayatollah Sistani, the Hashd ash-Sha'bi, Martyr Soleimani, and Martyr Abu Mahdi, etc., but the Iraqi Christians also feel indebted to these figures and the self-sacrifice for the peace they enjoy and the survival of their churches.

Part of the statement released by Ayatollah Sistani's office following the meeting with the Pope, states: "His Eminence emphasizes commitment to Christian citizens who, like all Iraqis, live in security, peace and in full accordance with their fundamental rights."

The statement also focused on the role of the religious authorities in protecting the Christians and all those who went through oppression during the recent years, when terrorists had occupied large areas of several Iraqi provinces and indulged in criminal activities.

The recent meeting in holy Najaf brings to our mind the meeting of the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA), in Tehran on 29 November 1979, with Archbishop Annibale Bugnini, the emissary of Pope John Paul II – a passing reference to which is not without merit.

Imam Khomeini's (RA) message to Pope John Paul II which focused on some interesting political realities and the fundamentals of the Christian faith, following the latter's bid to mediate on the arrest of American spies at the so-called US embassy in Tehran, unfortunately went unanswered.

The Imam had asked the Pope: If Jesus (peace upon him) was among us today to witness the US hostility and crimes against Iran and the Iranian people, would he side with us or with the Americans?

Some passages of the Late Imam's message are as follows:

"If Jesus the Messiah (peace upon him) were with us today, do the Pope and the other clergymen think he would side with (US president Jimmy) Carter and the deposed Pahlavi potentate by turning away from this oppressed nation?!"

"Have the Pope and other Christian clergymen, as well as the leaders of all other religions, considered the possibility that if Jesus the Messiah came among us, would he side with the oppressed party or the party of oppressors?"

"The basic rule is that I should speak according to the creed of the Messiah, and as per his lofty position. The exalted station of the Messiah warrants his judgement against the oppressor in order to prevent the oppressor from oppressing others. You, who are the clergy of the Messiah, and the nations which follow the Messiah, should adhere to the path of the Messiah. God forbid, do such nations believe that the Messiah would side with the oppressor against the oppressed?! I do not think a Christian would say such words."

It is also worth mentioning that on the occasion of Christmas 1979, Imam Khomeini (RA) in his address to Christian clerics, cited some of the US crimes, saying: "Is Mr. Pope aware of these matters when he condemns us, or has he been misinformed? If he is aware of the facts, then woe upon us, woe upon Christianity, and woe upon the scholars of the Messiah; and if he does not know, then woe upon the Vatican!"

In view of these facts, the crimes of the US against the honourable people of Iraq are so widespread and so frequently mentioned that they cannot be counted. It is a list as long as the proverbial ode written on 70 tons of paper.

Could we now expect Pope Francis – after meeting Ayatollah Sistani and seeing that his principal heartfelt concern is the struggle against oppression, destruction, and the salvation of mankind from the arrogant, bloodthirsty and plundering powers – to answer the question of that Sage of the Age, Imam Khomeini (RA), left unanswered by Pope John Paul II some 42 years ago!.

In other words, Ayatollah Sistani (may God protect him) has posed the same question today, to which an appropriate answer is required.

If Jesus (peace upon him) were among us, would he be silent and indifferent towards the countless crimes committed by the United States of America and other western regimes which claim to follow the Messiah, and by his silence side with the US and other arrogant powers, or would he stand up for the defence and dignity of the oppressed nations?

Thus, in which direction is Pope Francis, as Leader of the world's Catholic sect (of Christianity) headed? Has he taken the side of Jesus the Messiah, or?

Rouhani Warns Europe to Avoid 'Threats or Pressure'



President Rouhani meets with a delegation headed by Ireland's visiting Foreign Minister Simon Coveney in Tehran, March 7, 2021.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran's President Hassan Rouhani Sunday urged Europe to avoid "threats or pressure" in any negotiations with Tehran, as he received Ireland's foreign minister amid Washington's obfuscation over the former U.S. regime's hostile policies toward the Islamic Republic.

Ireland is currently "facilitator" for the United Nations Security Council resolution that enshrined the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and six major powers, according to the Irish foreign ministry.

The deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has been hanging by a thread since former U.S. president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it in 2018 and reimposed inhuman sanctions on Tehran.

Following Joe Biden's U.S. presidential election victory in November, the European parties to the deal – France, Germany and Britain – say they are trying to salvage the accord, but they have become more strident in their threats against Iran

in recent weeks.

"The best way to solve problems with European partners at various bilateral, regional and international levels, is negotiations based on mutual respect and avoiding any threats or pressure," Rouhani told Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney at Sunday's meeting, according to a statement by the Iranian presidency.

Ireland is not party to the nuclear deal, but currently sits on the UN Security Council.

As "facilitator" for resolution 2231 - the UNSC resolution enshrining the nuclear deal -- Dublin is tasked with keeping other council members briefed with implementation of the deal.

The Iranian president criticized Europe's "inactivity on JCPOA commitments" and added that Iran is committed to "preserving the JCPOA and is the only party that has paid a price for it."

"But this situation cannot continue as it is," Rouhani stressed.

"Preserving and reviving" the deal requires all sides to act on

their commitments, he said.

The three European parties to the nuclear deal on Thursday scrapped a U.S. draft resolution at the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency that criticized Iran's suspension of some nuclear inspections, a move welcomed by Tehran.

Biden has expressed a willingness to bring Washington back to the JCPOA. But he is demanding that Iran walk back all its remedial steps which it has taken in response to the U.S. violations and the Europeans' failure to meet their end of the bargain.

Iran insists the United States has to lift its sanctions before the Islamic Republic considers a reversal.

Biden on Friday extended for another year the so-called U.S. national emergency declared in 1995 with regard to Iran as well as all-out sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

In extending the so-called emergency, Biden claimed that the actions and policies of the Iranian

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IRNA: Zaghari Released After Serving Jail Term

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran has released an Iranian national after she served a five-year jail term on charges of espionage in Tehran, her lawyer said Sunday

Nazanin Zaghari was freed after the termination of her jail term and her ankle tag was removed, Hojjat Kermani told IRNA news agency.

"Today the five-year sentence of Ms. Zaghari was finished and her ankle tag was removed taking into account that since a year ago she was under house arrest, carrying an ankle tag, which allowed her to get as far as 300 meters from her father's home,"

he said.

The lawyer, however, said his client was to attend another court hearing in a separate case involving propaganda against the Islamic Republic, adding that the hearing is scheduled for later this month.

Zaghari was pardoned by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei last year, but spent the final year of her term under house arrest with electronic monitor tied to her feet.

Iran's intelligence authorities arrested Zaghari, who also holds a British passport, at Imam Khomeini

International Airport in April 2016 as she was about to board a plane to London.

A Judiciary official said in June 2016 that Zaghari was arrested for her involvement in post-election riots that engulfed Tehran and some other cities in 2009.

Yadollah Movahed, the head of the Justice Department in the Iranian city of Kerman, said Zaghari was among the suspects who "conducted activities against the security of the country by designing websites and carrying out campaigns in the media" during the post-election "sedition".

Official: Blood Donated in Iran Safest in the World

TEHRAN (IRNA) – Managing Director of Iran's Blood Transfusion Organization Peyman Eshqi said on Sunday blood donated in Iran is the safest in the world, adding that almost 2.1 million Iranians donate their blood a year.

In an interview with IRNA, Eshqi said Iran's Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO) is a technical, specialized organization and over 80 percent of its staff consists of technical forces.

In the meantime, he added,

the IBTO is a cultural body that must be familiar with the culture, interests and motives of the people it is communicating with.

Yearly blood donation in Iran has exceeded 50 million blood units for the first time since the IBTO was established 50 years ago, according to the official. He said over 2.5 million people come to blood donation centers annually, but 2.1 million of them are eligible for donation.

With a rate of 25 donors per

1,000 people, Eshqi stated, Iran's blood donation is at the global standard for countries with middle or high income, i.e. 20-30 donors per 1,000.

Iran is the only Muslim country to be a member of ISBT Rare Donor Working Party. The group includes Brazil, Britain, China, Finland, France and Taiwan, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and the United states.

The Holy Qur'an

And when your Lord made it known: If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe.

The Holy Qur'an (14:7)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	12:15
Evening (Maghreb)	18:24
Dawn (Fajr) "Tomorrow"	05:01
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	06:24

Major Rahim Safavi:

IRGC's Responsibility Is to Extend Iran's Defense Depth

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – The IRGC's primary responsibility is to extend the foreign and defense depth of the Islamic Revolution, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi said Sunday.

In an address to an academic meeting, the top military adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution elaborated on the IRGC's function in the "Second Phase of the Revolution", a roadmap that Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei outlined in 2019 on the 40th anniversary of victory of the revolution.

Safavi said the IRGC's main responsibility in the contemporary era is to help enhance the Islamic Revolution's foreign and defense depth beyond cultural and social aspects.

It is necessary to prepare the "scientific and research ground for defense cooperation and non-aggression pacts with the friendly and neighboring states", and for permanent membership at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the former IRGC chief explained.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an inter-governmental organization founded for multilateral, political, economic and security cooperation.

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and India are its main members, and Iran, Mongolia, Afghanistan and Belarus are observers.

Safavi also reminded U.S. military forces that expulsion from the region is their ultimate fate.

"In cooperation with regional states and nations, we must evict the source of insecurity, massacre, and occupation in the past 20 years, namely the American military forces and allies, from the region."