361761 - What is the ruling on saying “Jesus!” when one is astonished or amazed or startled, as the Christians do?

the question

What is the ruling on saying “Jesus”? Does it come under the heading of shirk if one says it by way of astonishment or amazement, as the non-Arab Christians do in movies and the like? One of my long-time acquaintances said it, and I want to talk to him about that, but I cannot find any fatwa on this matter.

Summary of answer

It is not permissible for a Muslim to say “Jesus!” when he is astonished or amazed or startled, as the Christians do, because what they mean when they say it is “Oh my God!”, because they believe that Jesus (‘Eesa – peace be upon him) is God, but Jesus is not God; rather he is the slave and Messenger of Allah. Whoever believes that ‘Eesa is in any way divine is a disbeliever.

Detailed answer

It is not permissible for a Muslim to say “Jesus!” when he is astonished or amazed or startled, as the Christians do, because what they mean when they say it is “Oh my God!”, because they believe that Jesus (‘Eesa – peace be upon him) is God, but Jesus is not God; rather he is the slave and Messenger of Allah. Whoever believes that ‘Eesa is in any way divine is a disbeliever.

This expression involves two infractions of Islamic teachings:

Firstly: it involves imitation of the disbelievers , which is haraam, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (4031); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood*.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: At the very least, this hadith indicates that it is haraam to imitate them, although the apparent meaning indicates that the

one who imitates them becomes a disbeliever, as in the verse: *“And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them” [al-Maa’idah 5:51]*.

End quote from *Iqtida’ as-Siraat al-Mustaqeem Mukhaalafat Ashaab al-Jaheem* (1/270).

Secondly: Mentioning the name of ‘Eesa (Jesus) at times of hardship or panic comes under the heading of calling upon him in supplication and seeking his help, which is associating him with Allah, may He be exalted. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *“And do not invoke besides Allah that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers” [Yoonus 10:106]*.

Ibn Jareer at-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Tafseer* (15/219): “*then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers*” means: you would be among those who associate others with Allah and wrong themselves. End quote.

And Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *“And whoever invokes besides Allah another deity for which he has no proof - then his account is only with his Lord. Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed” [al-Mu’minoon 23:117]*.

In *Saheeh al-Bukhaari* (4497) it is narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever dies calling upon any rival besides Allah will enter Hell.”

Allah, may He be exalted, forbade the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) to say to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) “*Raa‘ina* (consider us)” even though they intended a sound meaning when saying it. That was because the Jews would say it, intending an abhorrent meaning. So Allah, may He be exalted, forbade them to resemble the Jews in their wording, even though the intentions were different. Allah, may He be exalted, said (interpretation of the meaning): *“O you who have believed, say not [to Allah 's Messenger], ‘Raa‘ina (consider us)’ but say, ‘Unthurna (wait for us)’ and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment” [al-Baqarah 2:104]*.

As-Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his *Tafseer*:

When the Muslims addressed the Messenger as he was teaching them about their religion, they would say: *Raa'ina*, meaning pay attention to us, giving the word an acceptable meaning. The Jews, however, gave the same word an offensive meaning; they took advantage of this opportunity to address the Messenger with this word, intending the offensive meaning. So Allah told the believers not to use this word, so as to put a stop to this problem. This shows us that something permissible may be disallowed, if it becomes a means that leads to something haraam. It also shows us that we should adopt good manners and use words that can only be interpreted in a good way; we should also avoid foul speech and offensive words, or words that are ambiguous and may be interpreted in an inappropriate manner. So Allah instructed them to use words that could only be interpreted in a good way, as He said:

"rather say undhurnaa (wait for us)", for this word is sufficient to convey the desired meaning without any reservations. End quote.

See also the answer to question no. 250434 .

And Allah knows best.