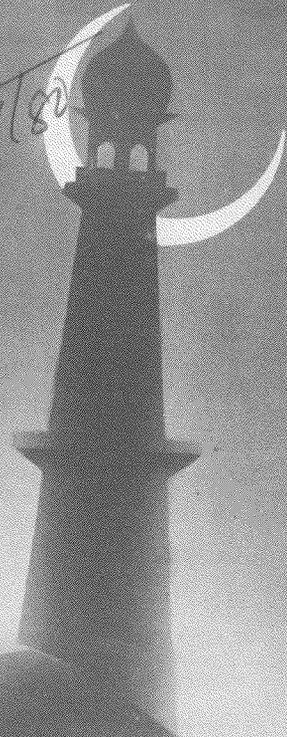


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**DEATH OF JESUS AND
THE RENAISSANCE OF ISLAM**

by Maulana Dost Muhammad Shahid

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Contrary to the belief held by some ill-informed Muslims, the death of Jesus, on whom be peace, and the resurgence of Islam are counterbalancing realities that exist side by side and are correlated to each other.

Death of Jesus and the Renaissance of Islam

by

MAULANA DOST MUHAMMAD SHAHID

(Rendered into English by Akram Ghauri)

O Ye, who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger when He calls you that He may bring you to life. (8:25)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

Jesus was, as the New Testament tells us, *The Bright Morning Star* and one of the purposes for which he came was to give glad tidings of the coming of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him. When this Desired of the Age and the Long-awaited Master Prophet appeared in Arabia, the *Bright Morning Star* (Jesus) had set long before and had departed from the world. But if we continue to believe that Jesus son of Mary is still in heaven physically alive, it would consequently mean that the Holy Prophet has also not yet come to this world. This is the corollary which no Muslim and for that matter no Ahmadi Muslim would be prepared to accept even for a single moment, because every moment of his life an Ahmadi prays fervently to his God and says:

'O God, grant me to see the glory of this faith and I, most earnestly, solicit Thee to obliterate all the false religions of this world from the face of this earth.'

I have, therefore, to prove, through historical facts and undeniable evidence, that the death of Jesus and the rise of Islam are both counterbalancing realities and the two exist side by side. It has been so since the appearance of the Holy Prophet and shall continue to remain so till the end of time. In other words we could say that the day the seed of Islam was sown was also the day the crusade against the falsehood that Jesus is still living in heaven commenced. This wrong notion had, in fact, been planted in the Christian faith by the Christians who had neither seen Jesus nor his dear mother Mary, peace be on them both. The wonderful glory of Islam in the past was the direct outcome of this very fact and so was its bright future based on this truth.

ANCIENT NOTIONS OF ASCENSION OF MAN

To ascend to heaven in the physical body is a very old notion and has prevailed in Asia and Europe for many thousand years. (Mr T. W. Doane has discussed this subject at length in his book *Bible Myths*.)

Prophet Enoch tops the list of those who are supposed to have ascended to heaven with his physical body. On page 274 Volume 4 of *Durri Mansoor* of Imam Siyooti it is mentioned that Enoch was taken to the sixth heaven where he died.

On page 318 Vol. 1 of Imam AbilFida, entitled *Albidaya Wan-Nihaya*, it is mentioned that Prophet Aaron was taken to heaven with the throne on which he had died. Similarly, physical ascension of Prophet Elias is mentioned in Kings 2:11 and his coming back to the earth is clearly mentioned in Malachi 4:5. It was on account of this very prophecy that the Children of Israel were looking towards heaven for Elijah to come down bodily at the time when Jesus was born; and Jesus son of Mary said that Elijah was none else than John the Baptist (Matt. 17:12). Concerning himself he said: *No one has ascended into heaven but he who descends from heaven—the Son of man* (John 3:13). Here the Son of man is none else than Jesus son of Mary of Nazareth. Even when he was among his people in Nazareth, he used to say that he was from heaven, meaning that only those who were spiritually exalted could understand and talk about heavenly matters. The others cannot.

THE EXPLANATION OF JESUS OF NAZARETH AND THE REACTION OF THE JEWS AND THE CHRISTIANS

The Pharisees and the Scribes flatly refused to accept what Jesus had explained regarding the going to and coming from the heaven. Owing to their mundane and worldly inclinations and on account of their religious orthodoxy they pronounced him to be an apostate and heretic and they made secret plans to destroy him. But the most grievous act committed against him was that which came from his own followers who placed him on the pedestal of Godhead and also hailed his mother as divine. They thus completely distorted the teachings of Jesus son of Mary, a beloved Messenger of God. They also invented the notion that he was again going to come down from heaven to rule over the world in latter days. This misguided notion became the life and soul of the Christian faith and was, in the fourth century of the Christian era, granted a canonical seal at the Council of Nicaea (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*—under the word ‘creed’, page 719, vol. 6). Allan Menzies and William Eddie attribute the authorship of this innovation to Paul, and they both agree that this innovation was the most effective means of enticing the Gentiles to their fold (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 9, page 682).

AN INTERESTING VIEW OF THE BASILIDES SECT

Another Christian sect known as the Basilides of Alexandria started a new notion in the second century of the Christian era. They said that Christ was the only son of God and the Saviour of the world and that it was not he who was killed on the Cross. He caused the face of another person, Simon of Cyrene, to be changed and had him crucified in his own place.

‘He appeared in human form and taught, but, at the crucifixion changed form with Simon of Cyrene, so that the latter was crucified in the form of Jesus, while Christ Himself stood by and mocked at his enemies in the form of Simon; for since he was incorporeal, he was essentially invisible, and so he returned to the Father.’ (Page 428—Basilides—Basilidians—System of Doctrine: *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics*, Vol. II)

The above view of the Basilidian faith is totally untenable simply because Simon of Cyrene lived long after the incident of the Cross and was known to be a follower of Christ.

A DISASTROUS TREND TOWARDS IDOLATORY

Notions about Enoch, Aaron, Moses and Elijah simply remained confined to the pages of the histories of religion but the notion of the superhuman life of Jesus in heaven with Divine attributes caused incalculable harm before the advent of Islam. It had spread from the north of Europe to the central regions of Africa. On page 223, vol. 5 of *Usudul Ghaba*, it is mentioned that a large number of tribes in Arabia also had embraced the Christian faith. The wonderful teachings of the pure unity of God in Islam clashed with Christianity, because Christian notions strongly contrasted with the pure and untarnished Unity of God that Islam taught. The Holy Prophet and his companions, and those who followed them immediately, did not rest until they had caused the flimsy structure of plurality of gods to crumble.

A QURANIC PREDICTION ABOUT THE LATTER DAYS

Knowing that the mischievous belief that Jesus is alive in heaven with his physical body will cause a great turmoil and leave the Muslims exposed to the great danger of the Christian doctrine, the All-Knowing God had, in His Final Book of Law, predicted:

They allege: The Gracious One has taken unto Himself a son. Assuredly, you have uttered a monstrous thing: The heavens might well nigh burst thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountain fall down in pieces, because they ascribe a son to the Gracious One. (19:89-93)

In the above verses there is the prediction that indeed the time is approaching fast when owing to the ascendancy of the doctrine of Trinity, those that are considered to be righteous may be led astray and those who are steadfast in their resolve might give in.

PROOF OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

The manner in which the Holy Quran has thrown light on the subject of the demise of Jesus, unlike for any other prophet, is indeed a miracle.

1. A man like all other men.
2. A prophet like all the other prophets.
3. A man-made deity from among the other man-made deities.

The Holy Quran has announced his death from all the above three angles. As a man the death of Jesus is evident from the verse:

We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee; then if thou shouldst die will they live on for ever? (21:35)*

The Holy Quran says:

Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you, even if you be in strongly built towers. (4:79)

The eminent scholar Imam Raaghib of Isphahan states that *Burooj* also means the stars. Therefore, even if Jesus had gone into the Moon and the stars he could not possibly have escaped death.

Classed as a Prophet, the Holy Quran has mentioned his death in a most precise and positive manner. It says:

And Muhammad is only a Messenger, verily, all messengers have passed away before him. (3:145)

The Christian world has given Prophet Jesus a divine status, but God has most emphatically confirmed his death in these words:

Those on whom they call beside Allah create not anything, but are themselves created, they are lifeless, not living; and they know not when they will be raised up. (16:21-22)

JESUS MENTIONED AMONG THE DEAD

The Holy Word of God has declared his death by even mentioning his name in an unambiguous manner.

On the Day of Reckoning God shall ask: Jesus son of Mary, didst thou say to the people: Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah? and he will answer: Holy art Thou. It behoves me not to have said that to which I have no right. Had I said it, Thou wouldst surely have known it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy mind. It is only Thou Who possessest full knowledge of all that is hidden. I said naught to them except that which Thou didst command me, that is: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I watched over them as long as I was present among them, but since Thou didst cause me to die, Thou hast been the One to watch over them. . . (5:117-118)

In the above verse the word *TAWAFFI* is the key word of the whole statement of Jesus, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, has himself explained the meaning to be 'dead'. If we refer to Bukhari-Book of Commentary, page 84, Vol. 3, we find

*Explaining the meanings of the word *KHULUD*, Hazrat Imam Raaghib of Isphahan (died 502 A.H.) in his famous dictionary states that it conveys the idea of the immunity of a thing from decay or deterioration and to remain in a certain condition for a long time.

that the Holy Prophet himself said: I shall also, on the Day of Reckoning, repeat the words that Jesus son of Mary would say: I watched over them as long as I was present among them but since Thou caused me to die, Thou hast been the One to watch over them and was their watch and guard.

From the above comments of the Holy Prophet it becomes quite clear that Prophet Jesus had died long before the present polytheism had taken root among his followers.

ASCENSION TO HEAVEN IN EARTHLY BODY AGAINST SCIENCE

The miracle of the Quran is evident from the fact that it has presented the view of *being raised to Allah* instead of *being raised to heaven* and has nowhere used the words *physical body* or *alive or heaven*. On the other hand the Holy Quran clearly states that no human being or a Messenger of Allah can ever ascend to heaven with his earthly body. It is clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran that the pagan Quraish of Mecca demanded the Holy Prophet to ascend to heaven before their eyes and to come back with a book; he told them in plain words that he could not do that as he was simply a human being. He said: I am not but a man sent as a Messenger; and men cannot go to heaven with their physical bodies.

In this connection the Holy Quran has declared the Divine law for all human beings: *And for you there is in the earth a place of abode and provision for a time.*

In this verse the word 'earth', according to the Quranic idiom and usage, means the earth and its surroundings. Because it is only the Quran which explained 1400 years ago and said: *And when the earth is stretched forth* (84:4). How is this stretching of the earth to take place? This is also explained in the Quran: *He will create for that purpose other means which you do not yet know* (16:9). It is further explained: *Of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of whatever living creatures He has spread out in both. He has the power to gather them together when He pleases* (42:30).

In view of the predictions found in the Holy Quran that new discoveries and inventions will take place through the help of which man will be able to reach the Moon, Venus and the other stars and

planets, it becomes quite clear that the word 'earth' also means the earth as part of the planetary system. It also becomes absolutely clear that no one can go into space without the aid of material means – earthly conveyances, earthly dresses, earthly food and earthly air. Therefore, the Christian notion that Jesus the Messiah ascended to heaven without the aid of earthly means is, according to the Holy Quran, totally untrue. And the Quran says: *But thou wilt never find any change in the way of Allah, nor wilt thou find Allah's decree ever averted* (35:44). In this respect it is an open challenge to the travellers in space that in their travels to various planets they will never find Christ in any of them.

CHRIST'S REAL MISSION—GLAD TIDINGS OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY PROPHET

The Quran informs us that *He will make him (Jesus) a Messenger to the Children of Israel, bearing the message: I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord . . .* (3:50) and explains that the sole purpose of his coming was to give glad tidings of the coming of the Desired of the Universe and the central pivot of the whole Creation, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. (*Al-Saff.*)

And so says Barnabas, the Apostle:

I do not deserve even to untie the laces of the shoes of THAT Messenger of Allah . . . He that was created before me and shall now come after me and he shall soon come with the TRUE WORD and there shall be no end to his faith. (*The Gospel by Barnabas*, Ch. 42:15–17)

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I don't go that Counsellor will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and righteousness . . . and you will see me no more . . . I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:7–14)

Now it is quite apparent that the Children of Israel, to whom Jesus had come to give glad tidings, were not living in heavens, but were, as is evident from history, scattered over the country from Palestine to Kashmir. Jesus, therefore, instead of going to heaven, had to go to the countries where the ten Lost Tribes were living. It is quite clear from the Gospels that Jesus was fully aware of this

God-given mission, was fully conscious of it from the very inception of its mission, and had intended to go to the Lost Tribes. *I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* (Matt. 15:24)

And again in John he says:

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know my Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold: I must bring them also and they will heed my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:14-16)

The Holy Quran has disclosed a very important chapter of the life of Jesus which had been wrapped in mystery for so many centuries and has made it known that, after the incident of crucifixion, he did not go to the fourth heaven but instead took refuge in a safe plateau. The Holy Quran says: *And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and gave them shelter on a pleasant plateau with springs of running water* (23:51).

SAYINGS OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Throwing some light on the travels of Jesus of Nazareth the Holy Prophet once said: Jesus, peace be on him, was used to travelling and when it grew dark he would eat vegetables from the jungle and drink fresh water (*Kanz-ul-Ammal*, Vol. 2, page 71, first edition).

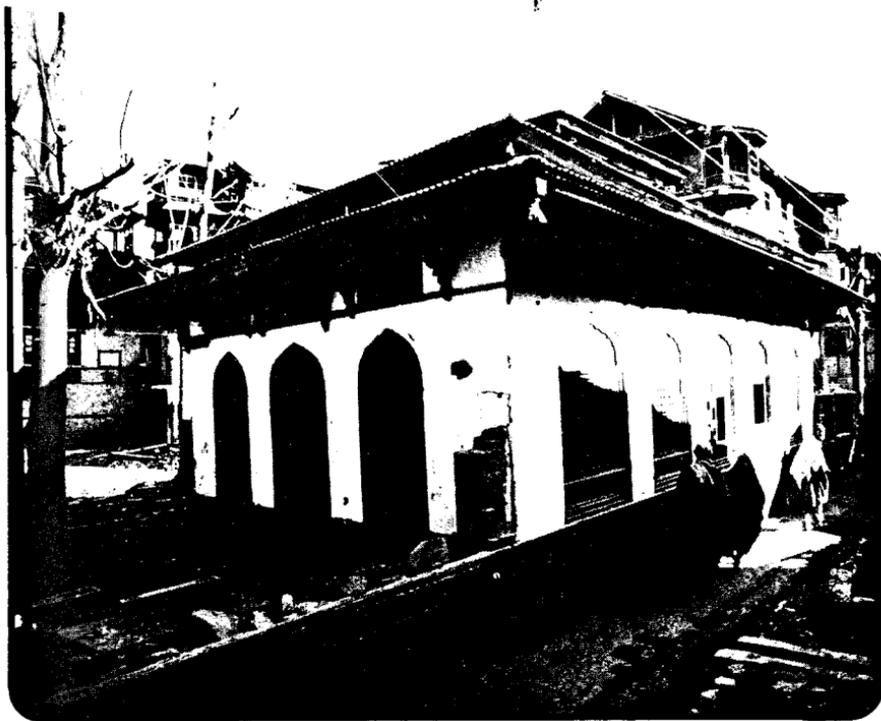
The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, also made clear that Jesus took to this travelling under Divine revelation: God Almighty revealed to Jesus, peace be on him, O Jesus, keep on moving from one place to another so that no one may recognise thee and persecute thee (ibid, page 34).

THE JOURNEY TO KASHMIR MENTIONED IN ANCIENT HISTORIES

Yuz Asif came to the holy valley from Jerusalem and he claimed to be a prophet. He occupied himself day and night in devotion. Having reached the highest stage of righteousness and rectitude, he claimed that he had been raised a Prophet for the people of Kashmir and invited them to accept him. The majority of the people of Kashmir held him in high esteem. Raja Gopananda mentioned to him some Hindu objections. To comply with his (Jesus) command, Sulaiman, whom the Hindus called Sandeman, erected the said dome (in AD54). He inscribed on one step of the stairs that Yuz Asif claimed prophet-

hood and on the stone of the second step he inscribed that he is Jesus the Prophet of the Israelites. I have seen in the books of the Hindus that Yuz Asif was indeed Jesus, the Word of God, our Prophet, may God be pleased with him; and he had adopted the name of Yuz Asif; and true knowledge is with God alone. He spent the whole of his life in this place and after his death was buried in the Anzmar Square (Srinagar, Kashmir). It is commonly said that the light of prophethood manifests itself from his tomb.

The original manuscript is in the Persian language, the photo-script of which has been produced by the research scholar Muhammad Yaseen, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D., on page 9 of his book *Mysteries of Kashmir*, 1972 edition. A much revered person of Kashmir, Khwaja Muhammad Azam, mercy of God on him, has also mentioned on page 82 of his *Taareekhi Kashmir A'azami* about the glorious manifestation of prophethood accruing from this tomb and about this historical fact. This was first published by Matba Muhammadi in 1303 AH or AD 1885-6.



Tomb of Jesus at Sri Nagar, Kashmir.

The Holy Quran speaks of Jesus as *honoured in this world and the next and of those who are granted nearness to Allah* (3:46). This shows that in the latter part of his life Jesus enjoyed great respect, reverence and high status among his people and he fulfilled the mission for which God had raised him. History furnishes us the evidence that all the tribes whom Jesus had advised to accept the Holy Prophet did indeed embrace Islam. But if, God forbid, we accept for a moment that the Christian notion claiming ascension to heaven after the incident of the Cross, we deny his journey to Kashmir and insist on his being alive in heaven even now, the whole structure of Quranic views, God forbid, shall immediately crumble down.

It is, therefore, quite clear that the death of Jesus and the life of Islam are interlinked.

HOLY PROPHET'S CRUSADE AGAINST THE NOTION OF JESUS BEING ALIVE

The Holy Prophet, who is the Chief of all the prophets and of all the living creatures, is the Seal of the Prophets whose whole life was a manifestation of the Holy Quran. He had most vigorously opposed the notion of Jesus being alive in heaven. This can easily be proved by what happened when the Deputation from Najran arrived at Medina.

While writing letters of invitation to Islam to the Kings, the Holy Prophet dictated a letter to the Heads of Najran, inviting them to accept Islam. In response to this invitation a stately deputation arrived at Medina in 7AH. It consisted of sixty persons including their three Heads of State. Their names were: Abdul Maseeh (Aaqib), Sharjeel or Aihim (Sayyad) and Abuhaaritha bin 'Alqama (the Usquf). The deputation came to the Holy Prophet with all their royal splendour and the Holy Prophet arranged for their stay in his Mosque. A little later came the time for their prayers and they, with the permission of the Holy Prophet, said their prayers in the Mosque according to their own custom. When they had finished their devotions, the Holy Prophet addressed them. To all practical purposes this deputation was a symbol of representation from the whole of Christendom. Explaining to them what Islam stood for, the Holy Prophet invited them to accept Islam. In reply, the deputation said

that they were already Muslims. The Holy Prophet said: You believe in Christ to be the son of God, you worship the cross and eat pork which is the reason why you are nowhere near Islam. They asked: If Jesus Christ is not the son of God, then who is his father? The Holy Prophet asked: Do you not know that a son takes after his father? They said: Yes, certainly. Then the Holy Prophet replied in all majesty: Do you not know that our God is alive and never dies, but Prophet Jesus is dead (*AsbaabunNuzool*, page 53 by Hazrat Abul Hassan bin Ahmad Waahidi).

The above reply of the Holy Prophet was not a showy refutation or an exercise in bandying words in a dialogue but what he had said was firmly based on the Holy Quran and his personal spiritual observations and visions and also on his strong conviction that Jesus was dead. This conviction was further supported by what he had himself seen during the night of the Miraj. He had seen the spirit of Jesus along with all the other Prophets who had passed away a long time before. What he saw of Jesus on that occasion was not a physical body but a spirit. Moreover, according to the Arab idiom the abode of the souls of the righteous persons is also called *Samaa* or heaven (*Aqrabul Mawaarid*, page 545).

The Holy Quran says: *He does not speak out of his own desire; the Quran is pure revelation sent to him* (53:4-5). On the strength of the above verse it has got to be admitted that the Holy Prophet's comment before the Najran Deputation of the Christians was given wholly under Divine direction and was incontrovertible. It seems that the above was to serve as a directive for his followers to bear in mind for all time to come that, in order to oppose the Christian dogmas, they must always adhere to 'death of Jesus' as the most effective argument against them.

THE ADVENT OF THE QURANIC REVELATION

What the Holy Prophet had said to the Christian delegates was later strengthened by a further revelation from God Almighty which came in the following words: *Allah reassured Jesus: I shall cause thee to die a natural death, and shall exalt thee to Myself and clear thee from the calumnies of those who disbelieve . . .* (3:56). In this verse God Almighty reminds the grace that He had shown to Prophet Jesus and had given him the glad tidings that He would

cause him to die a natural death and would not let him die on the cross and that He shall exalt him to Himself and would clear him of all calumnies of his enemies.

In this verse there is a definite promise from God Almighty that He would, after the death of Jesus and his spiritual exaltation, send the Prophet of the latter times, through whom all calumnies against him shall be cleared and the world will realise the truth that he (Jesus) was truly a beloved Prophet of God, holding an exalted position spiritually. This promise of God was fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet who is a great and open-handed benefactor of Prophet Jesus as he has cleared him from all the calumnies that his vile enemies had piled upon him.

A CONTINUOUS REMINDER FOR THE MUSLIMS

To support my above statement I quote below three sayings of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him.

‘Had Jesus been living today he would have no recourse but to follow me.’ (*Sharah Fiqah Akbar*: Egyptian edition, page 112, by Hazrat Imam AlQari; printed 1375 AH or AD 1955)

There is another Tradition to the same purport which says: Had Moses and Jesus been living today they would have had to follow me. (*AlYawaqeeet WalJawaahar* by Hazrat Imam She’raani: vol. 2, page 174 and Tafseer Ibni Katheer—Footnote Fatah alBayaan: vol. 2, page 246)

The noble Fatima, the most exalted among women; Hazrat Ayesha the Truthful and Hazrat Abdullah son of Umar have all reported that the Holy Prophet said: Undoubtedly Prophet Jesus son of Mary lived to the age of 120 years. (*Kanzul’Ammal*, vol. 6, page 120; Tabri’s Commentary Jame-al-Bayan, vol. 3, page 164 and Hujajul Karamamah, page 428)

It is important that I mention here a great benefaction of the Holy Prophet:

Had I been given a billion lives; I would surely have
sacrificed them all for him;

This is because of his countless kindnesses and benefactions
that he has bestowed on me.

THE SECOND SAYING

The beauty of what the Holy Prophet said is twofold. On the one hand he made quite clear the truth about the death of Jesus and on the other he predicted and gave us the glad tidings of a Muslim Messiah and made these two facts distinctly clear that the Messiah of the Israelites was very fair coloured and had curly hair; but he foretold that the Muslim Messiah would be of wheaten colour and shall have straight hair. (Bukhari: Egyptian edition, vol. 2, page 165)

The Holy Prophet did not say that the coming Messiah, your Imam, would be from among the Israelites; but said instead: *Imam-ukum Minkum* and *Fammakum Minkum* (Bukhari: Egyptian edition, vol. 2, page 166 and Muslim vol. 1, page 87 of Egyptian edition). That is to say that he would be your Imam and shall be born from amongst you; as Jesus of Nazareth had himself said about his namesake: Truly in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne (Matt. 19:28).

There must be no confusion from the word *Nuzool* which occurs in the Traditions, because this very word has been used in the Holy Quran regarding the Holy Prophet: *Allah has sent down to you a source of honour, a Messenger, who recites unto you the clear Signs of Allah . . .* (65:11). And the Holy Prophet has also used this very word for the Promised Messiah which without any doubt means 'to be born' (Bahaarul Anwaar, vol. 13, page 20 by Allama Majlisi).

By calling the Mahdi by the name of Jesus son of Mary, the Holy Prophet spoke about him only metaphorically and the usage of this method is exactly what he meant when he called Hazrat Ali, God be pleased with him, by the name of Dhul Qarnain (AlTargheeb wal-Tarheeb, vol. 3, page 218).

THE THIRD SAYING

During the last illness of the Holy Prophet the Ansaar of Medina, in a state of despair and despondency, were hovering round the Prophet's mosque, when Hazrat Abbas, the Holy Prophet's uncle, told him that the Ansaar were restless. A little later Hazrat Fazal bin Abbas and then Hazrat Ali also came in and said the same thing. The Holy Prophet then, leaning on Ali, the Lion of Allah and Fazal bin Abbas, came out into the mosque. Hazrat

Abbas was then in front of him. The Holy Prophet had a cloth tied round his head because of severe headache and he came dragging his legs. He was so weak that he sat down on the first step of the mimbar. All his loving followers gathered round him and listened to his heart-rending last message. Uttering the usual praise of God, the Holy Prophet said: O my people! I hear that you greatly fear the approaching death of your Prophet. Has there been a Prophet before me who has lived an unnatural long life that I might also live for ever? You must understand that I am about to meet my Creator (*AlMwahibul Ludunniyya*, vol. 2, page 368, compiled by Abu Bakr Khateeb of Qastalaan; *Mukaashifaatul Quloob*, page 269, compiled by Hazrat Sheikh AlGhizaali, Egyptian edition).

CONSENSUS OF THE HOLY PROPHET'S COMPANIONS REGARDING THE DEATH OF JESUS

The Holy Prophet died after the above last address. The Companions were utterly struck down with grief and the world appeared totally dark to them. The brave, strong-willed and resolute warrior Umar drew out his sword and threatened anyone who merely uttered the word 'death' in connection with his beloved master. He was so full of grief that though he had himself seen the Holy Prophet lying dead, he continued to say: The Holy Prophet has not passed away. He cannot die until he has annihilated all the hypocrites (Qastalaani Sharah Bukhari).

In this connection Hazrat Abbas has reported that Hazrat Abu Bakr came there at this juncture and said: Sit down, O Umar! But Umar paid no heed to him and the people turned towards Abu Bakr and left Umar alone. Abu Bakr then said: Let it be clear to you all, who worshipped Muhammad, that Muhammad is dead; and those among you who worshipped God let them remember that God is alive and shall never die. God Almighty has declared that *Muhammad is only a Prophet and all Prophets before him have of a surety passed away. If then he dies or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? He who turns back on his heels shall not harm Allah a whit. Allah will certainly reward the grateful* (3:145).

It is reported that it appeared that God Almighty had revealed that verse on that very moment and that they all were totally unaware of the existence of that verse, that they had heard of it only

when Abu Bakr had recited it. Indeed all the companions grasped the truth of that verse at that moment and even Umar said: By God, I have heard this verse from Abu Bakr only and after hearing it I am so stunned that my feet refuse to carry my weight and I am about to fall down. Saying this, he actually fell to the ground, saying that the Holy Prophet was indeed dead (Bukhari, vol. 3, page 63, Egyptian edition).

Praised be God. How mysteriously He acts. How wonderful it is that the first consensus of the Muslims had to be on the matter concerning the death of Jesus son of Mary, and they all believed that the Holy Prophet and all the Prophets before him have indeed passed away. This consensus became the means to hold firmly to the faith which might have been shaken. This incident has provided the truth that the faith of Islam and the question of the death of Jesus son of Mary are interrelated.

This is so glaring a fact of history that it has given the Orientalists of the West food for thought and serious deliberation. As for instance the renowned scholar Silvestre de Sacy had to make a vain attempt in trying to prove that the above verse had never been revealed and that Abu Bakr, merely to condole those present there, had fabricated it on the spur of the moment (Bell's *Introduction to the Quran* by W. Montgomery Watt, page 51).

It is, therefore, understandable the means the opponents of Islam and Quran adopted in their vain attempts to deface the true faith and discolour its beautiful picture.

The consensus mentioned above shall always occupy a very important place in the history of Islam. It is even more important than the one connected with the succession of the Holy Prophet. This is because on this first occasion not a single vote of contention was raised against what Abu Bakr had stated and everyone bowed before the truth. This consensus is an incontrovertible authority, the authority which compelled the famous poet Hassaan bin Thaabit who said extemporaneously:

Thou has been the light of my eyes and thine passing away hast caused me to become blind. What does it matter now who dies (may he be Moses or Jesus). It was thine death that I feared most.

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A SIMILAR INCIDENT OCCURRED AT KUFA

A repercussion of the First Consensus of the Companions was also repeated forty years later at Kufa when Hazrat Imam Hassan, the eldest son of Hazrat Fatima, the most beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet, delivered the Funeral Service at the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali, the Commander of the Faithfuls, and said: He has died on the very night when the soul of Jesus was raised to heaven, that is to say, on the 27th night of Ramadhan.

DEATH OF JESUS AND SOME NOTABLES IN ISLAM

A great number of renowned and revered personalities in Islam such as Imam Malik bin Ans (d.179 AH), Hazrat Imam Bukhari (d.256 AH), Hazrat Muhammad bin Abdul Wahha Jabaae (d.303 AH) and Hazrat Ibni Jareer Tabri (d.510 AH) and others confirm that Jesus of Nazareth, peace be on him, has died. Hazrat Ibni Jareer has even mentioned the words inscribed on the tomb of Jesus: This is the grave of Jesus son of Mary, Messenger of God.

In short, the echo of this consensus of the Companions of the Holy Prophet continued to be heard in the first three centuries of Islam.

CHRISTIAN CONSPIRACY

Alas! the Christian powers that had once secretly conspired to desecrate the sacred coffin of the Holy Prophet through a secret tunnel did at last succeed in thrusting the deadly dagger of the notion of 'Jesus being alive in heaven'. They are now using this devastating weapon against Islam. In this connection a vulgar and depraved Christian poet of the fourth century of Islam wrote the following verses

1. I shall conquer the lands in the East and the West; and shall propagate the Christian Faith and make it the signpost of all the cross-roads.
2. The throne of Christ rests higher than all the heavens and only he, who has the succour of Christ with him, can achieve success.
3. But he, whom you call your Holy Prophet, lies buried underground; has become dust and his bones are crumbled to pieces.

(*Studia Arabica I*, 1937, page 50 and
Medieval Islam by Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, page 18)

OUR REVERED DIVINES UNVEIL THE CONSPIRACY

Hazrat Allama ibni Qayyum (691–751), a great exponent of Islam, had warned his Muslim brethren of the great danger to the faith on account of the wrong notion of Jesus being alive in heaven. He made it quite clear that this idea was only the basic concept of Christianity and had nothing to do with Islam. In his book *Zadul Ma'ad*, vol. 1, page 19, he wrote: The notion that Prophet Jesus was raised to heaven at the age of 33 years totally fails to find any support in the authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

The renowned Hanifite scholar and Jurist Allama Ibni 'Aabideen of Syria (d.1252 AH and whose *Raddul Mukhtsr* is, like the Fatwa Aalamgeeri, equally famous) said: Hazrat Imam Qayyum's view is correct. No doubt this idea crept into Islam through the Christians.

They (Muslim Scribes) lent every aid to the Christians by collaborating with them and affording them substantial support.

WHY DID THE CHRISTIAN VIEW GAIN POPULARITY?

The true cause of the popularity of the Christian view and its spreading like wildfire was that the person mentioned in the Muslim predictions was mistakenly supposed to be the Jesus of Nazareth, peace be on him. This was a mere conjecture and not based on any divine authority. Predictions and prophecies are, in most cases, wrapped in mystery and metaphor. Their true meanings cannot be given in advance nor could a consensus be arrived at in this respect. This prediction is also particularly allegorical as Hazrat Ali bin Muhammad, the Mystic of Bahgdad (d.741 AH), has also mentioned about it in his book nearly six hundred years ago (*Tafseeri Khazeen*, vol. 1, page 70). But Hazrat MohyudDeen Ibni'Arabi (d.638 AH) and other mystic divines had, under Divine guidance, adopted the view concerning this Tradition that 'Mahdi is none else but Jesus son of Mary' but he shall appear in an entirely different body and in which the spirit of Jesus shall manifest (*Tafseer MohyudDeen Ibni 'Arabi*, page 165; *Iqtibasul Anwaar*, page 52 by Hazrat Ikram Sabiri, Successor to Sh. Sondha d.1129 AH).

In this respect the historian of the eighth century of Islam, Hazrat AbulFida Hafiz Ibni Katheer (d.774 AH), deserves our thanks who in his book *AlBidayat WalNihaya* used the term AlMessiah the Mahdi, peace be on him, which makes the point very clear (*Al-Bidayat WalNihayat*, vol. 2, page 92).

MUSLIM SAINTS BELIEVE THE BASILDIAN THEORY

We have already mentioned the Basildian fable that someone else was hanged in place of Jesus and crucified. When this false notion crept into Islam, the Muslims began to misinterpret the Quranic verse: *But he was made to appear to them like one crucified* (4:158) so that they could uphold the Basildian innovation. This fable is neither mentioned in the Holy Quran nor in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. The verse in question simply means that Jesus could not die on the cross as such a death would ban his spiritual exaltation. God caused the Jews to be confused in this matter and he appeared to them to be dead. But God caused Jesus to be exalted spiritually to heaven after he had accomplished his mission. Such an exaltation is the lot of each righteous person. This is, indeed, a promise from God. But the Divine law for the disbelievers is quite different: For those who reject Our Signs and turn away from them in disdain, the gates of heaven will not be opened. And against this the divine promise is: *Allah will exalt in rank those from among you who believe and those to whom knowledge is given* (58:12).

Despite what the Holy Quran has made quite clear and what the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had predicted about the age of duplicity and perversion, the Basildian fable got itself firmly rooted in the belief of the Muslims. That was why Ibn Hazm (d.456 AH), a renowned Muslim scholar of the fifth century Hijra, and the famous commentator Hazrat Ibn Hayyan (654–754 AH) strongly reprehended this view and pointed out that such a belief would negate the whole institution of prophethood and would open a door for sophism and specious reasoning. Moreover they pointed out that such fables have not the slightest connection with the sayings of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and the sole source of this fabrication is the books of the People of the Book (*AlFasl Filmilal wal-Ahwaal Wannahl*, vol. 1, pages 59–60; and *Al-Bahrul Muheet*, vol. 3, page 390).

An allegorical pointer to the absurdity of the notion of Jesus living in heaven with his earthly body can be found in the writings of a number of greatly revered writers of that period. As for instance Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (d.465 AH) and Hazrat Allama JalaludDin Siyooti (d.911 AH) have mentioned that during the 'Meraaj' the Holy Prophet met the spirits of Jesus and other prophets and did not see them in their earthly bodies (*Kashful Mahjoob*, *Bayan Fi Kala-*

amus Ruh, Khasaaesul Kubra lil Siyooti, vol. 1, page 173). But a number of very distinguished divines, among whom Hazrat Ibni Hazm is in the forefront, have very strongly protested against this notion and have expressed their views in favour of the death of Jesus. As for instance he wrote in his 'Al-Muhalla', vol. 1, page 23:

Jesus, peace be upon him, was neither killed nor did he die on the cross. But God caused him to die a natural death and then exalted him to Himself.

DEPLORABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED VIEW

The most admirable effort of the above-mentioned devotees of the Holy Prophet deserves to be written in letters of gold that they refused to budge from the stand shown to them by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, while he discussed this matter with the Christian deputation from Najran and furnished his followers with a solid footing to stand upon in the matter of the Ascension of Jesus. Had the latter Muslims also taken their firm stand upon the same footing in the new crusade started by the Christian Churches, they would also have repelled the enemy successfully. But, alas, they also slipped like the small party of archers that the Holy Prophet had, during the battle of Uhud, stationed at the mouth of the pass behind the field of battle, causing a temporary reverse. Similarly some unwary Muslim divines also slipped in the new crusade started by the Christian Churches. This provided the Churches a cause for jubilation. This matter had reached such a point that Christian representatives, like Carl Gottlieb Phander and others openly threw the gauntlet to the Muslims to choose either Muhammad bin Abdullah or Christ the Word of God. They argued that all the previous prophets, as the Quran admits, have died and passed away. But Lord Christ still lives in heaven. They strongly urged that all the Muslims do agree with the Christians that Jesus is still living in heaven. The Quraish at Mecca had asked Muhammad to show them the miracle of going to heaven. But in reply God told Muhammad that he was a mere man. Hence he could not perform that miracle. This clearly proved that he was unable to perform any miracle. Reverend Fender also added that Muhammad is still in the grip of death and grave. There is also an empty grave between the graves of Muhammad and Abu Bakr which, according to the Muslims themselves, is the place reserved for our Lord Jesus Christ

son of Mary. No one has so far been buried in this grave which reminds the pilgrims to the Hajj that Jesus is still alive and Muhammad is dead. Tell us, therefore, who, from among these two is more powerful to come to our aid? You all admit that Lord Christ shall come again and you still await his coming. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the Lord. Someday or the other you shall have to obey him. Why not now? (Excerpt from *MeezanulHaq*, the Urdu translation of the book compiled by Rev. Fender in 1829).

This infamous book was translated into Armenian, Turkish, Tatarian, Persian and Urdu and was widely distributed in all the Muslim countries.

Another Christian Churchman Ghulam Masih, the Pastor of Anbala Church, has, in his book *The Faith of Islam*, on the strength of Jesus being alive in heaven, audaciously gone to the length of declaring that it is Jesus who is the Last of the Messengers. Muhammad is not even a prophet, leave alone a Master Prophet or the Seal of the Prophets (Mazhabi Islam, Pt 2, pages 70-5, American Mission Press, Ludhiana).

And Rev. R. Roos, in his booklet *Christ or Muhammad*, wrote very provokingly: Jesus is Supreme and the Seal of all the Messengers and it is only through him that Salvation could be obtained (page 2 of the brochure published in 1900 by Christian Literature Society, Ludhiana).

In the same brochure he wrote: Muhammad is dead . . . and like all the other human beings, his body has also putrified and decomposed and has been eaten up by dust . . . But Jesus is not dead and was taken up to heaven alive. Beware! Muhammad has died and his body was eaten up by dust. Whom must we then pronounce the greater Prophet? And who can be the Saviour of mankind? Could he be the one who has tasted death or he who has not tasted death and lives for ever? (Page 9)

LAMENTABLE STRATAGEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Since the creation of mankind a number of ruses and machinations have been used at different times to mislead mankind. But there was not a strategy and deceit that the Christian Church has not adopted in waylaying the simple-minded Muslims. Innumerable

priests and missionaries were scattered all over the globe and during the very short period of 21 years more than 70 million books were distributed all over the globe in trying to denounce Islam and tarnish the fair name of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. These books if piled together would rise to the height of a thousand feet and would easily cover the space of many a mountain. It is not possible to describe the poisonous matter contained in these books against Islam, the true faith of Allah, and the ignominious manner in which the Holy Prophet was tarnished could not be rehearsed. The result was that a great number of ignorant and simple-minded Muslims deserted the ranks of Islam and joined the Christian flock. Among them were those who had previously never uttered the name of the Holy Prophet without invoking a blessing upon him. Alas, when renegades put on the robes of apostasy they began to abuse him flagrantly. Descendants of royal houses, of pious sages and the progenies of respectable families and even some well known divines joined the ranks of apostates. The Imam of the Royal Mosque at Agra, ImadudDin by name, was also baptised and drew solace in being called the Reverend ImadudDin. He also got a list of renegades, like himself, published in the journal *The Chicago Letter* of 1893. This list was again published in a London paper *The Intelligence* and this naturally caused a great jubilation among the Christians.

THE ECHO OF MEDINA IN QADIAN

It was at this time that the Christian missionaries who, in fact, were secret agents of Christian governments in Europe and America, had set their hearts upon ruining Mecca and Medina to waste, when the sweet and miraculous voice of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, which was once heard in the Prophet's mosque at Medina, was again heard from the mosque at Qadian with its full power and grandeur proclaiming 'No doubt, death has taken hold of Jesus.' The call was in fact from the Holy Prophet, but it came from Qadian out of the mouth of his spiritual and glorious son, who loved the Holy Prophet from the core of his heart and with all the strength at his command. Having acquired the honour of personal contact with him and being exalted with the honour of direct converse with God, he again proclaimed that Jesus son of Mary is dead and the Prophet who lives for ever is none but the Holy Prophet of Arabia, peace of Allah be upon him. He announced:

'O ye all who live on the earth! and all ye human souls residing in the East and the West, I invite you with the fullest zeal and declare that now Islam is the only religion that is truly from God and the true God is the God of the Quran and the Prophet who is to live life spiritually for ever on the Throne of Glory, is MUHAMMAD, peace and blessings be upon him.' (Tiryauqul Qulub, page 7)

And again he said:

'Our beloved and exalted Prophet has certainly not died but is sitting on the right hand of the Glorious God and Master on the Holy Throne of Glory. May God bless him and the angels also because Allah sends down blessings on the Prophet and His angels also invoke blessings upon him and salute him with the salutation of peace.' (33:57 and Tiryauqul Quloob, page 6)

PROMISED MESSIAH'S DIGNIFIED CHALLENGE

In support of his claim, the Promised Messiah, in a very dignified manner, challenged all the enemies of Islam in general and the Christian missionaries in particular. He wrote:

I feel that because of following Islam, fountains of divine light are flowing within me and that I have been granted the exalted status of direct communion with God. This status is not attainable unless one follows the True Prophet of God. And if the Hindus and the Christians may even destroy themselves by pleading before false gods, they will not be able to attain this status. The Word of God in which they have a mere superficial faith. I actually hear and I have been shown and it has been made fully clear to me that today it is only Islam which is the true faith on the earth today, and I have been clearly told that all the blessings that have been showered upon me are because of my following the Holy Prophet faithfully; and what I have been granted, the like of it is not to be found in any other religion because they are all now based on falsehood. Now if anyone really longs to find the truth . . . he has the excellent opportunity of confronting me. If he could prove himself superior to me in disclosing hidden secrets and if he could prove himself superior to me in the acceptance of his prayers by God, I declare on oath, making God Almighty my witness, that I shall surrender to him all my landed property which is worth approximately ten thousand rupees. In this respect I shall provide a guarantee in the manner satisfactory to him. My God—the ONE and ALONE—is my witness that I shall not fail in this and shall willingly surrender even my life if it becomes necessary. (Ayena Kamaalaati Islam, page 276)

The Promised Messiah further added:

When the condemnation of Islam by Christian missionaries had reached the unendurable point, God Almighty sent me to confront them on behalf of Muhammad, peace be on him. Where are those missionaries now? Why do they not come and face me? I have not come at an untimely moment. I have come when Islam is being trampled under by the Christians. . . Bring any Christian priest or a missionary before me who claims that Prophet Muhammad made no prophecy. Remember now the time has come when God wishes to

announce that Muhammad, the Prophet of Arabia, who had been basely ridiculed and in whose disparagement the accursed missionaries and Christians have written and published millions of books, he alone is the True Prophet and the Commander of the Truthfuls. He had been denied and ignored beyond endurance. But in truth it is he who is the Chief of the Truthfuls and it is he who has been adorned with the Crown of Glory and I am one of his humble servants and slaves . . . (Haqiqatul Wahee, pages 273-4)

SOME OLD WRITINGS

The Mahdi shall call the Muslims to the same faith to which the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had invited them. (*Biharul Anwaar*, vol. 13, pages 179-80, printed in Iran)

In some old Traditions it is reported that the long-awaited Mahdi shall remove the veil from reality and a new lease of life shall be given to Islam. Foreign matters that had been grafted to the faith shall be proved worthless and highly injurious. These shall be removed in such a manner that people shall begin to think that the Mahdi has been raised with a new faith and a new book. (The Persian *Kitabul Mahdi* compiled by Syed SadrudDeen Sadr, page 229, printed in Iran)

In fulfilment of this prophecy the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, addressing the Muslims in general, said: Remember it well that the Faith of the Cross will not perish until the death of Jesus is established. What do we gain in believing Jesus to be alive against the teaching of the Quran? Let him die so that Islam may live. (*Kishti Nooh*, page 15)

It is exactly what he said in the Annual Convention of Qadian: Regeneration of Islam and Death of Jesus are closely interrelated. The damage done by the notion that Jesus is alive is beyond limit . . . In the earlier period of Islam this wrong notion was simply considered to be erroneous. But this error has now taken the form of a huge dragon ready to swallow Islam . . . Islam is now in the process of retreat. While Christianity with its only but deadly weapon—Messiah lives in heaven—has taken the offensive and Muslim generations have become an easy prey to Christianity . . . Therefore, God desired to warn the Muslims. (*Malfoozat*, vol. 10, pages 336-7 and 345)

Again the Promised Messiah said: Let Jesus die because his death is now vital for Islam and let the Jesus of Muhammad come in

place of the Jesus of Moses. In this lies the glory of Islam. (Malfoozat, vol. 10, page 458)

PROMISED MESSIAH'S IMPORTANT COUNSEL FOR ALL MUSLIMS

The Promised Messiah fully analysed and commented on the notion of Jesus being alive in his books and has made clear all the ills and evils that could accrue from this deadly notion. He has declared the death of Jesus to be the best means of regenerating and publicising Islam and giving it the upper hand. He advised the Muslims as follows:

'O my friends, now pay heed to my last advice. I am telling you a great secret which you must always bear in mind and it is that in all your dialogues with the Christians you must change your method of approach and try to convince the Christians that Jesus son of Mary has died for ever. This is the line of argument which will lead you to victory over the Christians and will force them to quit the field. There is no need for you to waste your valuable time in lengthy dialogues. Just insist upon the death of Jesus and pin them down. When you succeed in convincing them that Jesus is also among the dead, you shall succeed in driving away the Christian faith from the face of the earth. Engrain it in your minds that so long as their god does not die their faith also shall not perish. All other arguments with them are of little gain. They have only one pillar of their faith and that is that Jesus son of Mary is still alive in heaven. Shatter this pillar and then raise your eyes and see where the Christian faith has gone. Now it is the will of God that this same pillar be razed and the breeze of His Unity may now blow over Europe and Asia. That is why He has sent me and through His special revelations has told me that Jesus son of Mary has died and I have come in his spirit according to His promise. Allah's promise is always fulfilled. (*Izala Auham*, pages 560-2, the first edition of 1891)

A UNIQUE RESEARCH ABOUT THE TOMB OF JESUS AND ITS LINK WITH THE TRIUMPH OF ISLAM

The entire Christendom was completely stunned with the Promised Messiah's pronouncement regarding the journey of Jesus to Kashmir and of his tomb which can still be seen. In his support he produced evidence from the Holy Quran, the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, the Bible, the history and the ancient legends and records of the Buddhists and the Hindus. This made the enemies of Islam totally speechless. This incomparable research is another masterpiece of the truth of the Holy Quran which says: *And there is none among the People of the Book but will continue to believe till his*

death that Jesus died on the cross and on the Day of Judgment Jesus shall bear witness against them (4:160). Revered Companions like Ikrama, Abbas and Ali bin Talha maintain that the word 'bihi' points to the Holy Prophet and according to the rendition of Obeyyi bin K'ab the word 'mautihi' points to the People of the Book (*Tafseer Kashaf* by Allama Zamakhshari, d.528 AH; also *Tafseeri Mazhari* by Qazi Muhammad SanaUllah Usmani Hanafi, d.1225 AH; *Tafseer Tarjumanul Quran* by Nawab Muhammad Siddiq Hassan Khan of Qannauj, d.1307 AH)

Under Divine inspiration Allama BadrudDeen, the Commentator of Bukhari, was directed that the meaning of breaking the cross was that the Promised Messiah shall lay open the falsity of the Christian dogma. (*Aini Sharah* Bukhari, vol. 5, page 584)

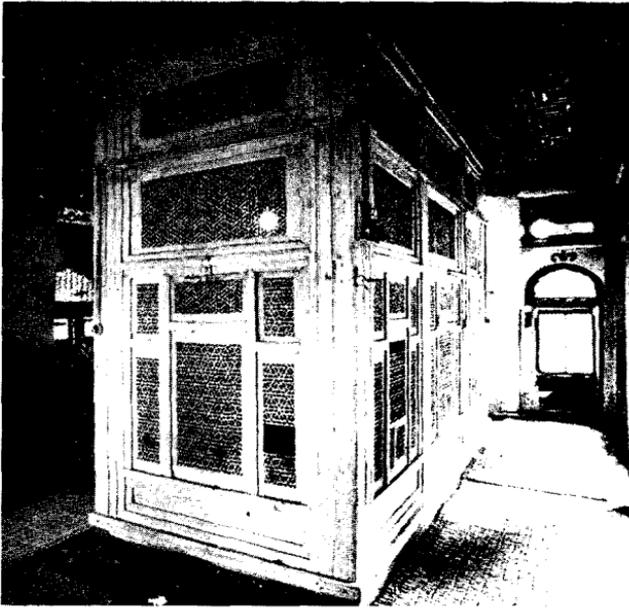
When we give due consideration to the actual context of this verse from this angle, there would appear before us the shape of a wonderful prediction. And when we give due consideration to actual facts and historical evidence, the vagueness of the old ideas about Jesus shall begin to manifest before our eyes. Even the most talented scholars of the People of the Book, who have faith in One True God and who believe in His Books and try to follow their teachings, will, in the end, be obliged to surrender to the Quran and acknowledge and accept the Holy Prophet. Thus will be repeated the old history when the Quran first conquered the hearts of the truth-loving men of Medina. Similarly, the hearts of the people in the West and the East shall be won over for him (the Holy Prophet). This shall come to pass through the discovery that has made the gates of entry into Islam wide open for the people in the West and the East through the fact declared by the Promised Messiah eight decades ago when he said: The Tomb of Jesus has now for certain been proved to exist in the Khanyar Street of Sri Nagar. This is the fact which will shake the foundations of many a faith of the world. This is because if Jesus had died on the cross then how did his tomb come to exist? (*AlHakam*, 24th May, 1901, pages 1-2)

He further added:

This discovery has damaged the Christian Faith exactly in the same way as the roof supported by one beam only. When the beam breaks the roof is bound to fall down. God acts as He pleases and it is only such ways by which He is known. Ponder a little over this explanation: Whereas they slew him not, nor did they compass his death upon the cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified to death . . . (4:158) It is absolutely incorrect that Jesus was killed or that he died on the cross. The truth is that they all misapprehended grievously while Jesus, who had been given an assurance by God Almighty, escaped the cursed death on the cross. If any Christian really and truly cares to find the truth he would find it readily available and being duly convinced may soon forsake his old beliefs. And if perchance this fire of quest kindles in all the hearts in Europe, the flock of 400 million Muslims that grew up in nineteen centuries may, through His mysterious ways, join the Muslims in nineteen months only. (*Raaz-i-Haqeeqat*, pages 12-14; footnote printed 30th November, 1898)

'APPEARED LIKE ONE CRUCIFIED TO DEATH'

The Promised Messiah has, in a wonderful manner, expounded the phrase 'But he was made to appear to them like one crucified to death.' He said that the meaning of this phrase has not been properly understood and is certainly not what is generally conceived. And such a version does not find any support either in the Holy Quran or in the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him. The true meaning is that the occurrence of death was doubtful for the Jews and they actually believed that they had succeeded in killing him on the cross. On the contrary, Jesus had escaped death. I can state that the meaning of the words 'He was made to appear to them like one crucified to death' is as explained above and that is the way in which Allah works. Whenever God wishes to save those whom He loves, He outwits their enemies in some such a manner as this. The same phenomenon worked at the incident of the Cave of Thaur when the enemies were flabbergasted at seeing a spider's web and eggs of a pigeon at the mouth of the cave and they all said: How could a man have entered the cave without disturbing these? In the same way when the enemies of Abraham threw him into the blazing fire, the same Divine tradition acted again. He was not taken out of the fire nor was he made to ascend heaven. But, as is mentioned in the Quranic verse, his enemies could not do him any harm. Similarly, when his brothers threw him into the well, Joseph was not taken to heaven from the well. But the well failed to do him any harm and the beloved son of Abraham— Ishmael—also, at the time of being slaughtered, was not taken into heaven. But the knife failed to slaughter him. In the same way our Holy Prophet, peace be on him, did not go to heaven from the cave of Thaur, but the blood-thirsty enemies failed to see him and were thus frustrated. Similarly, Jesus also did not disappear into heaven from the cross, but the cross failed to kill him. In short, none of these prophets ascended to heaven on the occasion of their trials. But the angels from heaven did come to their rescue. All these facts are quite clear and provide a vivid proof that Jesus did not go to heaven and that he was raised exactly in the same way as Abraham and the other prophets. In the end he died. (*Tohfa Golraviah*, pages 141-2)



The interior of the tomb of Yus Asaph in Sri Nagar, Kashmir, India.

THE INITIAL REACTION ON THE DISCOVERY OF THE TOMB OF JESUS

The Christian priests and their supporters from among the Muslim divines joined hands together in accusing the Promised Messiah of treason and thus instigating the British Government against him. (*Tauzeenul Aqwaal*, page 40 by Padre ImadudDeen; *Ishaatus Sunnah*, vol. 16, page 168, edited by Maulana Muhammad Hussain of Batala, Advocate Ahli Hadith; *Kalima Fazli Rabbaani*, page 24 by Qazi Fazal Ahmad, Court Inspector, Ludhiana)

After the discovery of the Tomb of Jesus all these people became more furious and greatly enraged. As, for instance, a Hanifite divine, of great standing from northern India, who commanded great respect and influence, warned the British Government in the following words:

'The Government is fully satisfied with the loyalty of their Muslim subjects and are fully aware that people like the Mirza, who claim to be Mahdi and Messiah, and that the said Mahdi and Messiah is now present in Qadian who claims that he has been commissioned with the breaking of the cross and regenerating Islam by annihilating the Christian faith . . . The Government would be well advised if they took cognizance of such people.' (*Tazyana-i-Ibrat*, pages 93-94, second edition by the Lion of Islam, Maulvi Karam Din Dabeer)

As regards the Christians in India, their leaders, on the one hand, declared the Tomb of Jesus to be a mere hypothetical platform (*Zarbati Isawee*, by Rev. Akbar Maseeh, page 156). On the other hand they conspired to implicate the Promised Messiah in a criminal case. Doctor Henry Martin Clarke brought a false allegation of an attempted murder against the Promised Messiah. In the trial he produced a number of Muslim divines who gave false evidence against him and in appreciation of this service the Government granted some of them a certain number of squares of land (*Ishaatus Sunnat*, vol. 18, page 1, ed. Maulana Muhammad Hussain).

The Christians had taken this step hoping to get the Promised Messiah hanged. But God Almighty caused the heart of Mr William Douglas, the Magistrate of Gurdaspur, to arrive at the truth and, therefore, dismissed the case. In his judgment he added that the Promised Messiah would be well advised to take legal action against his accusers. But the Promised Messiah said:

'I do not wish to take any legal step against them: my case is already lodged in heaven.' (*Lecture Ludhiana*, page 22)

DEFEAT OF BISHOP LEFROY AND CLEAR VICTORY OF ISLAM

Three years had not yet passed after the above incident when on 25th May, 1900 the first judgment was announced in the matter mentioned above. It so happened that the famous Lord Bishop George Alfred LeFroy (1854–1919) delivered a public lecture and declared that while Muhammad had died and is buried at Medina, the Muslims hold that Jesus is still alive in heaven. After the speech the audience was given the opportunity to discuss the matter. A sincere disciple and a faithful friend, who a few years later founded the first Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in America, stood up and read a paper from the Promised Messiah which he had written only the previous day and was printed at Qadian the same night. The disciple had come to Lahore to attend the above meeting. An important peculiarity of the article was that it contained a full reply to all the criticisms of the Lord Bishop. In his article, the Promised Messiah advanced irrefutable arguments in favour of the death of Jesus and that the Prophet that lives for ever was none else than the Holy Prophet whose beneficence shall continue till the end of days. He said: I am the living proof of this claim and none from all the peoples

can stand against me. At the end of the article the Promised Messiah wrote:

'God has sent me to provide the proof that the Everlasting Book is only the Holy Quran and that the Living Faith is only Islam and that the only Living Prophet is Muhammad, peace be on him. Listen, I call the heaven and the earth as witness that all that I tell you is true, and the true God is the One described in the Muslim Creed "There is no God but Allah".' (*Mahmu'a Ishtiharat*, vol 3, page 267, published by AlShirkatul Islamia, Rabwah)

As soon as the article was read out, the ground echoed with the call 'Long Live Islam' and the Lord Bishop was completely flabbergasted and merely said: 'It appears that you are a follower of the Mirza. We do not wish to have anything to do with you. We are only addressing the Muslims.' At this the Muslims who were present at the gathering in a very large number said in accord that though the followers of the Mirza are infidels, yet it is they who have saved the face of Islam today. (*AlHakam*, 14th May, 1908, col. 7)

A renowned Muslim scholar of the sub-continent of Pakistan and India, Maulana Nur Muhammad, Naqshbandi Chishti, proprietor Assahul Mataabe, Delhi reported this victory of Islam in the following buoyant and spirited words:

'... It was in those very days when Padre LeFroy sailed from England with a large band of priests hoping to convert the whole of India to Christianity. The English people had furnished him with a large sum of money and the promise to augment his funds in the future also. He came to India and raised a great hue and cry... He thought that he had dealt a deadly blow to Islam through the notion current among most of the Muslims that Jesus was still alive in heaven and that all the other prophets had died on this earth. It was at that time that Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian took up the gauntlet on behalf of Islam and told the Lord Bishop that Jesus, whom he and all the other Christians believed to have surpassed all the prophets, also lay dead like every other human being and that the Messiah being awaited was none else than he himself. They were, therefore, duty bound to accept him. In this manner he pressed the Lord Bishop and the Christians so hard that they did not know what to do. It was thus that he defeated the Christian clergymen in India and for that matter of Europe as well.' (Preface to the Holy Quran, page 30)

THE VICTORIOUS GENERAL OF ISLAM

Similarly, a renowned and distinguished religious leader, Maulana AbulKalaam Azaad, paid the Promised Messiah a glowing tribute in his paper *Vakeel* at his death, declaring him to be the 'Victorious General of Islam.' He wrote:

'That period cannot possibly be forgotten when Islam was surrounded from all sides by its enemies and opponents, and the Muslims who were supposed to be its defenders and custodians, half-heartedly attempted to guard it. But owing to their miserable failure in this duty, were at their wits end. The attacks on Islam took such a dangerous turn that the whole Christian world began to have high hopes of wiping out Islam which stood as a stumbling block in their way of complete success. The Muslims were so poorly equipped that they did not, so to say, possess even bows and arrows against the high calibre guns of the enemy and could not, therefore, offer even the semblance of resistance . . . However, they did start a kind of defence in which Mirza Sahib also played a very important role. This defence not only shattered the ill effects of the previous Christian influences which also had the support of the State at their back and had achieved a considerable success. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims were not only saved from the ill effects of the deadly Christian attack but the charm of Christianity had also begun to fade away like smoke. In short, the future Muslim generations shall always feel themselves under a great debt to Mirza Sahib who, in this Crusade of the Pen, fought against the enemy in the foremost rank and has left behind him so valuable a literature that so long as the Muslims feel the warmth of blood in their veins and so long as they keep in view the Islamic values, it would serve them as their ordnance depot.' (*Akhbaar Vakeel*, Amritsar, May 1908; *Badr of Qadian*, 18th June, 1908)

TWO TREMENDOUS CHANGES

Seventy years have now passed since this Commander of the Faithfuls passed away. During this period, owing to the philosophic trend of his reasoning, methods of research and scrutiny have also drastically changed. But before concluding I deem it necessary to explain that two noteworthy changes have become quite apparent. One of these is that having fully realised the import of the Promised Messiah's reasoning in religious discussions and dialogues, a considerable number of Muslim thinkers, writers and divines have also accepted his views about Jesus, that is to say that he died a natural death. It cannot be denied that they have openly expressed this change of mind and have acknowledged it not only in their talks and discourses but have also written many articles and books on this subject. They show no hesitation in accepting the fact that the notion of Jesus being alive in heaven crept into Islam through Christian designs and many a Muslim has paid open tribute to the Promised Messiah in connection with his researches about the tomb of Jesus. They have also published books independently on this subject and a faction among these also translate the famous Tradition of the Holy Prophet in the following words:

'Jesus shall be born in the capacity of an Arbitrator.' (*Khutbat Nabwi* by Maulana Abdul Qayyum Nadwi, page 241; and '*Seerat Aimmah Arb'ah* by Maulana Raees Ahmad Jafari, page 595)

POPULARITY OF THE VIEW OF THE DEATH OF JESUS

We give below names of some notable and distinguished Muslim thinkers, scholars and divines who have acknowledged the truth of the notion that Jesus died a natural death.

1. The distinguished scholar Muhammad Asad of the Muslim World League, Mecca and Islamic Centre, Geneva: *The Message of the Quran*.
2. Egyptian scholar of world fame, Rasheed Raza: *AlMannar*, vol. 5, pages 900-1.
3. The great scholar Mahmood Shaltoot, the Mufti of Egypt: *Al-Fatava*, pages 52-75. NashiralIdarat-al-Ammata Lil Thaqaatal Islamia. AlAzhar.
4. Allama Ahmad Al-Ajooz: *Is Prophet Jesus Alive?* page 23.
5. Allama Mustafa Al-Maraaghi of Al-Azhar University: *TafsiralMaraghi*, page 195.
6. Professor Abbas Mahmood of Lebanon: *Life of Jesus*, page 213.
7. Syed Qutub of Akhwanul Muslimeen: *Fee ZilalulQuran*, vol. 7, page 66.
8. Dr Mahmood bin Shareef, Professor of Economics, College in Egypt: *Al-Adyaan fil Quran*, pages 210-4, printed Darul Maarif, Egypt.
9. The Azhar Scholar, S'ad Muhammad Hassan Wizaarat: *AlMahdiyya Fil-Islam*, page 38, printed Darul Kutubal Arabiyya, Egypt.
10. The Egyptian Muhammad Al-Ghazaali: *Nazarat FilQuran*, Cairo.
11. Al-Shaikh Abdullah AlKeeshavi, Ghazza: *Afkaar Momineen Fee Haqaeq-al-Deen*, printed in Palestine.
12. ZainudDeen Rahnuma: *Persian Translation of the Quran*, Iran.
13. Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah: *AlQaulusSahih*, printed in Indonesia.
14. Shaikh Abdullah Saleh, Chief Qadi, Kenya: *SautalHag*, page 6, October 1978, Nairobi.

From among the notable scholars of the sub-continent of India and Pakistan who have accepted this view are Maulana Abaidullah Sindhi; Maulana AbulKalam Azad; Imamul Hind Allama Inayatulla Khan Mashraqi, the Founder of the Khaksar Movement; Allama Niaz Fatehpuri; Muhammad Yaseen, MA, LLB, PhD, a research scholar; Professor Fida Muhammad Hasanain, MA, LLB, Director, Archaeological Department, Sri Nagar and a member of International Congress: Abdul Waheed Khan, author of the book *Eesaiyyat* (Christianity); Maulana Muhammad Ismaeel of Nadwa and Ghulam Ahmad, Parvez: Editor *Tuloo-i-Islam*.

A FAITH INSPIRING MANIFESTATION OF GOD ALMIGHTY

It makes us wonder greatly how our God the Omnipotent and Almighty is, in how many strange ways does He manifest Himself. All these discoveries about Jesus and their respective proofs have been made and provided by Christian scholars themselves and the most strange thing is that many a Christian priest of high order has openly revolted against the belief that Jesus was alive in heaven and firmly refuse to accept that the very same Jesus would physically descend from heaven. They have also pronounced that the cross is an un-Christian symbol and resent strongly its hanging round their necks (*Truth* published by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York; 1968 in English and 1972 in Urdu).

A learned scholar of Upper Dean University, in his talk that he gave on the BBC London, clearly pointed out that the idea of Jesus ascending to heaven alive is no more than a farce (reported by *Nawae Waqt*, Daily of 20th January, 1955, page 2).

Similarly, the renowned Christian research workers Robert Grave and Joshua Podro have proved from historical evidence and scientific observations that the flesh-and-bones body of Jesus could not have travelled into space without mechanical aid and in the event of his body being transferred to an ethereal form would need such an atomic power as would have completely destroyed Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine. But such a catastrophe had never been a fact of history. Therefore, his going to heaven is contrary to the science of atomic energy (*Jesus in Rome*).

For the last three-quarters of the century the Christian clergy have been talking disparagingly about the Tomb of Jesus in Kashmir and have called it the 'Dais of Fiction'. But things have changed now that the Omnipotent and Living God of Muhammad has, from amongst the Trinity worshippers, caused men like Ladislav Filip, MD, Reginald Charles Everard Skolfield and Andreas Faber Kaiser to ponder over and penetrate the secret truth. They gave their talks on this subject in the historical Convention held on this subject in June 1978 in London. All these scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the tomb in Srinagar is indeed the Tomb of Jesus. Mr Skolfield has openly admitted that the credit of this, in fact, goes to the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement who pointed out the tomb and through his insight shattered all prejudices and dogmas in this connection.



Professor Fida
Muhammad Hassnain,
MA, LLB, DArch



Ladislav Filip, MD



Reginald Charles
Everard Skolfield

Faber Kaiser is a well-known Spanish scholar of comparative religions and himself went to Kashmir to find out the truth and after great diligence and persistent research wrote his book *Jesus Died in Kashmir*.

Another amazing pronouncement is that of an American Christian Institute that is renowned for its Christian scholars, which declares that all the verses contained in Luke and Mark relating to the ascent of Jesus to heaven are false and fictitious.

EXPURGATION OF VERSES RELATING TO ASCENSION OF JESUS

The National Council of the American Church has published a new authorised version of the Bible, called the *Revised Standard Version*. From this a number of verses have been expunged, including those which describe the ascension of Jesus. This has caused a great stir among many sections of the American Church. That is the reason why some Christian leaders of the sub-continent of India and Pakistan, in a heart-sinking tone of despondency and apprehension, say that the translators had before them only one aim, namely, to expunge as far as possible all the verses which furnish proof of the godhead of our Lord and his being raised from among the dead and his ascending to heaven so that the second coming of Jesus may appear doubtful and the Lord be given the same status as all the other Prophets. They have thus denied the immaculateness of our Lord and his supremacy. And this is so despicable a move that it causes the whole structure of Christianity to crumble down (the monthly journal *Kalaami Haq* of April 1978, page 7).

A MAJESTIC AND AWE-INSPIRING PREDICTION OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH

'... Remember it well that no one shall ever come down from heaven. All our opponents who live today shall die and none from them shall ever see Jesus son of Mary coming down from heaven; then their children, whom they shall leave after them, shall also die and none from among them shall also see Jesus son of Mary descending from heaven and then their third generation shall also die and they too shall not see the son of Mary coming down. Then God shall cause great tension in their minds and they shall say that the period of dominance of the cross has also passed away and the affairs of the world have completely changed, but the son of Mary has not so far come down. Then the wise from among them shall, in dismay, forsake this notion and three centuries from now shall not have passed that those who await the arrival of Jesus son of Mary, whether they be Muslims or Christians, shall relinquish this conception altogether and then shall prevail only one religion in the world and one acknowledged religious leader. I came only to sow the seed and the seed has been planted by my hand and it shall now grow and flourish and there is none who can stop this.'
(*Tazkiratush Shahaadatain*, page 65)

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