

THE ULAMA of EGYPT ON THE Death of Jesus Christ

A FATWA

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SHAIKH MUHAMMAD TUFAIL, M.A.



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INTRODUCTION

There is a hard struggle going on, at present, between Islam and Christianity. The point of contention is the personality of Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus is most emphatically condemned in the Holy Quran. The belief in the physical ascension of Jesus, however, lends support to this theory. Such a belief on the part of the Muslims has been a most powerful weapon, especially in these days, in the hands of Christian Missionaries against Islam. But a careful perusal of the pages of the Holy Quran establishes it, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus died a natural death like all other prophets. And the belief in the death of Jesus sounds the death-knell of Christianity. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, with all the argumentative force at his command, has proved that Jesus is dead and that the prophecies about the second advent in the reports of the Holy Prophet and the New Testament have been fulfilled in his own person.

This, however, invoked a strong opposition. The bulk of the Muslim Ulama, burnt with rage against him. He was reviled everywhere. He was openly declared to be an apostate. The anathema of heresy was vehemently issued against him.

After the lapse of half a century, however, the Muslim world seems now to have realized the soundness of his claims.

About the death of Jesus Christ, Muslim Ulama are generally falling in line, with his views. This is, undoubtedly, a healthy sign and a preliminary step towards the acceptance of his claim as a Muslim Messiah.

Hazrat Mirza's position is quite simple to understand.

Jesus Christ is dead. The prophecies concerning the second advent are numerous and their validity cannot be denied unless one rejects all the canons of testing the authenticity of *Hadith*. Besides, these reports are connected with a large number of prophecies relating to the Anti-Christ, Gog and Magog, downfall of Islam and its ultimate triumph. To reject this whole mass of reports, which are closely intertwined, as untrustworthy is tantamount to rejecting the whole knowledge of *Hadith*.

But if these reports are correct, as they in fact are, the question is how Jesus can be raised from the dead and come back to the world.

The Great Mirza found a golden mean between these two extreme views and reconciled the Quran and the reports.

He did not reject the sacred words of the Holy Prophet as meaningless. To him the advent of a Messiah among the Muslims only meant the appearance of a *Mujaddid* in the power and spirit of Jesus. The expression 'Ibn-i-Maryam' can be applied metaphorically to any person who is raised in this spirit and power. And God Almighty bestowed this favour on him.

We cannot here enter into a detailed discussion of his claims. Those interested in it are referred to his original works. Here we are only concerned with the death of Jesus Christ which is a question of paramount importance to the advocates of Christianity and Islam.

We are publishing below a translation of a *fatwa* alongside its original that appeared in a Weekly 'Al-Risalah' of Cairo (of May 11, 1942, Vol. 10 No. 462, p. 515) which shows that Muslim theologians are, consciously or unconsciously, appreciating the views that were most emphatically advanced, half a century back, by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. We place this *fatwa* before our Muslim brethren for their careful consideration. It should induce them to the study of the claims of the Great Mirza who stood to defend and strengthen the cause of Islam in this age.

S. M. TUFAIL

Note: We have given the exact references from the Holy Quran which are not found in the original *fatwa*.

EXALTATION OF JESUS

By Prof. Mahmud Shaltut

"A letter was received by the Professors of the Great Azhar from Abdul Karim Khan working under the command of the Allies in the Middle East containing an inquiry :

Is Jesus dead or alive according to the Qur'ān and the Holy Traditions of the Holy Prophet? What do you think of a Muslim who does not believe that he is still alive and what about one who disbelieves in him in case he comes to the world for the second time?

This question was referred to the Senior Professor Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut, a member of the Senate of the learned Professors who replied as follows :

... Now, the Qur'ān mentions Prophet Jesus in reference to his fate at the hands of his people in three chapters :

1. In the chapter *The Family of Amran* where it is stated : "But when Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, he said : Who will be my helpers in Allah's way? The disciples said : "We are helpers (in the way) of Allah : We believe in Allah and bear witness that we are submitting ones : Our Lord : We believe in what Thou hast revealed and we follow the apostle, so write us down with those who bear witness. And they planned and Allah (also) planned, and Allah is the best of planners. When Allah said : O Jesus ! I will cause *you* to die and exalt *you* in My presence and clear *you* of those who disbelieve and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve to the day

رفع عيسى ..

للاستاذ محمود شلتوت



ورد الى مشيخة الازهر الخليفة من حضرة عبد الكريم خات
بالقيادة العامة لجيوش الشرق الاوسط سوال جاء فيه : «هل
«عيسى»، حي او ميت في نظر القرآن الكريم والسنة المطهرة؟
وما حكم المسلم الذي ينكر انه حي؟ وما حكم من لا
يؤمن به اذا فرض انه عاد الى الدنيا مرة اخرى؟»، و قد حول
هذا السؤال الى فضيلة الاستاذ الكبير الشيخ محمود شلتوت
عضو جماعة كبار العلماء فكتب ما ياتي :

... أما بعد، فان القرآن الكريم قد عرض لعيسى عليه السلام
فيما يتصل بنهاية شأنه مع قومه في ثلاث سور:
١- في سورة آل عمران قوله تعالى : «فلما أحس عيسى
منهم الكفر قال : من أنصاري إلى الله؟ قال الحواريون : نحن
أنصار الله آمنا بالله، واشهد بأنا مسلمون : ربنا، آمنا بما أنزلت
واتبعنا الرسول فاكتبنا مع الشاهدين- ومكروا ومكر الله والله
خير الماكرين؛ إذ قال الله : يا عيسى، إني متوفيك ورافعك إلى

of resurrection ; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed” : 52-55

2. In the chapter *The Women* Allah says: “And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of Allah ; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but (the matter) was made dubious to them, and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it ; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they *know it* not for sure ; Nay : Allah exalted him in His presence ; and Allah is Mighty, Wise” : 157-158

3. And in the chapter *The Food* says Allah: “And when Allah will say : O Jesus, son of Mary ! *did you* say to men, take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah ? He will say : Glory be to Thee, it did not befit me that I should say what I had no right to (say) ; if I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it ; Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I do not know what is in Thy mind ; surely Thou art the great Knower of the unseen things. I did not say to them aught save what Thou didst enjoin me with : That serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord ; and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die, Thou wert the watcher over them, and Thou art witness of all things ” : 116-118

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These are the verses of the Holy Qur'an wherein all that Jesus experienced at the hands of his people is related.

و مطهرك من الذين كفروا، وجاعل الذين اتبعوك فوق الذين كفروا إلى يوم القيامة، ثم إلى مرجعكم فأحكم بينكم فيما كنتم فيه تختلفون،،: ٥٢-٥٥

٢- وفي سورة النساء قوله تعالى: «وقولهم: إنا قتلنا المسيح عيسى بن مريم رسول الله، وما قتلوه وما صلبوه، ولكن شبه لهم، وإن الذين اختلفوا فيه لفي شك منه، ما لهم به من علم إلا اتباع الظن، وما قتلوه يقيناً، بل رفع الله إليه، وكان الله عزيزاً حكيماً،،: ١٥٧-١٥٨

٣- وفي سورة المائدة قوله تعالى: «وإذ قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم: أأنت قلت للناس اتخذوني وأمي إلهين من دون الله؟ قال: سبحانك ما يكون لي أن أقول ما ليس لي بحق، إن كنت قلته فقد علمته، تعلم ما في نفسي ولا أعلم ما في نفسك، إنك أنت علام الغيوب- ما قلت لهم إلا ما أمرتني به: إن اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم، وكنت عليهم شهيداً ما دمت فيهم، فلما توفيت كنت أنت الرقيب عليهم و أنت على كل شيء شهيد،،: ١١٦-١١٧

* * *

هذه هي الايات التي عرض القرآن فيها لنهاية شأن عيسى مع

In the last verse (verse from *The Food*) there is a mention of an incident of the hereafter when Allah will ask Jesus concerning he and his mother being worshipped in the world. And Jesus in reply would say that he did not say aught to them except what God commanded him, *viz*, Worship Allah who is your God and my God; and he kept a watch over them, during the period of his stay among them and that he did not know what they did after "Allah caused him to die."

The word "*tawaffa*" is used in so many places of the Holy Qur'an in the sense of death that it has become its foremost meaning. This word is used in a different sense only when there is a clear indication as to this other meaning: "Say: The angel of death who is given charge of you shall *cause you to die*" (XXXII : 11); "Surely (as for) those whom the angels *caused to die* while they are unjust to their souls" (IV : 97); "And *had you seen* when the angels will *cause to die* those who disbelieve," (VIII : 50); "Our messengers *cause him to die*," (VI : 61); "And of you is he who is *caused to die*" (XXII : 5); "Until death takes them away" (IV : 15); "*Make me die* a Muslim and join me with the good" (XII : 101).

The word "*tawaffaitani*" in this particular verse primarily means natural death which is known to everybody. The Arabic-speaking people understand this and only this meaning of the word with reference to the context. Therefore, had there been nothing else to indicate the end of Jesus in this verse even then it would have been improper and wrong to say that Prophet Jesus was alive, and not dead.

قومه، والآية الأخيرة (آية المائدة) تذكر لنا شيئاً آخر وياً يتعلق
 بعبادة قومه له ولأمه في الدنيا وقد سأله الله عنها وهي تقرر على
 لسان عيسى عليه السلام انه لم يقل لهم إلا ما امره الله به :
 «واعبدوا الله ربي وربكم»،، وانه كان شهيداً عليهم مدة إقامته
 بينهم، وانه لا يعلم ما حدث منهم بعد ان «توفاه الله»،!

وكلمة «توفى»، قد وردت في القرآن كثيراً بمعنى الموت
 حتى صار هذا المعنى هو الغالب عليها المتبادر منها، ولم تستعمل
 في غير هذا المعنى إلا و بجانبها ما يصرفها عن هذا المعنى المتبادر :
 «وقل يتوفاكم ملك الموت الذي وكل بكم - إن الذين توفاهم
 الملائكة ظالمى انفسهم - ولو ترى إذ يتوفى الذين كفروا
 الملائكة - توفته رسلنا - ومنكم من يتوفى - حتى يتوفاهن الموت -
 توفى مسلماً والحقنى بالصالحين»،

ومن حق كلمة «توفيتنى»، في الآية ان تحمل على هذا المعنى
 المتبادر وهو الاءماتة العادية التي يعرفها الناس، ويدركها من
 اللفظ ومن السياق الناطقون بالضاد - وإذن فالآية لو لم يتصل
 بها غيرها في تقرير نهاية عيسى مع قومه لما كان هناك مبرر
 للقول بأن عيسى حى لم يميت

There is no room for the view that the word "*Wafat*" here means the death of Jesus after his descent from the heavens—a view held by some who think that Jesus is still alive in the heavens and would come down from there in the latter days. For, this verse clearly denotes the relation of Jesus with his own people and not with any other people of the latter days. The people of the latter age would be admittedly the followers of Muhammad and not of Jesus.

However, in the chapter *The Women* the words: "*Nay: Allah exalted him in His presence*" have been interpreted by some, nay most of the commentators, as "*raising him up to the heavens.*" They observe that the likeness of Jesus was cast on somebody else and Jesus himself was lifted up to the heavens. He is alive there and will descend therefrom in the latter ages. Thereafter he would kill the swine and break the cross. And they base their theory:

Firstly, on those reports in which the descent of Jesus is mentioned after the (appearance of) Anti-Christ. But these reports are at variance with and contradictory to one another in their words and meanings. The difference is so great that there is no room for any reconciliation among them. The scholars of *Hadith* have plainly stated this fact. Moreover they are reported by Wahhab bin Munnabbih and Kaab Ahbar, who were converts from the people of the Book. And their status is well-known to the critics of traditions.

Secondly, on a report by Abu Huraira that mentions the descent of Jesus. If this report is proved

ولا سبيل إلى القول بأن الوفاة هنا مراد بها وفاة عيسى بعد نزوله من السماء بناء على زعم من يرى أنه حي في السماء، وإنه سينزل منها آخر الزمان. لأن الآية ظاهرة في تحديد علاقته بقومه هو لا بالقوم الذين يكونون آخر الزمان وهم قوم محمد باتفاق لا قوم عيسى

أما آية النساء فإنها تقول «ويل لرفع الله إليه»، وقد فسرها بعض المفسرين بل جمهورهم بالرفع إلى السماء، ويقولون: إن الله القي على غيره شبهه، ورفعه بجسده إلى السماء، فهو حي فيها وسينزل منها آخر الزمان، فيقتل الخنزير ويكسر الصليب، ويعتمدون في ذلك:

أولاً: على روايات تفيد نزول عيسى بعد الدجال، وهي روايات مضطربة مختلفة في الفاظها ومعانيها اختلافاً لا مجال معه للجمع بينها؛ وقد نص على ذلك علماء الحديث - وهي فوق ذلك من رواية وهب بن منبه وكعب الأحبار وهما من أهل الكتاب الذين اعتنقوا الإسلام وقد عرفت درجتهم في الحديث عند علماء الجرح والتعديل -

وثانياً: على حديث مروى عن أبي هريرة اقتصر فيه على الإخبار بنزول عيسى؛ وإذا صح هذا الحديث فهو حديث آحاد -

to be true, even then it is only an isolated report. And there is a consensus of opinion of the scholars of *Hadith* that such isolated reports can neither be made the basis of a doctrinal belief, nor can they be trusted with regard to the things unseen.

Thirdly, on the report about *Mi'raj* (i.e., the Ascension of the Holy Prophet to the heavens) which narrates that when the Holy Prophet went up and began to have the gates of the heavens opened one after another and entered them as they were opened, he saw Jesus and his cousin John on the second heaven. For us, it is enough to prove the weakness of this evidence, that many interpreters of the traditions have taken this contact of the Holy Prophet with other prophets to be a spiritual phenomenon and not a physical one. (*vide Fath-ul-Bāri, Zād-ul-Ma'ad, etc.*)

Strangely enough they interpret the word *rafa'* occurring in this verse in the light of the report concerning the *Mi'raj*, and deduce therefrom that Jesus was also bodily raised up. And there are others who regard the meeting of the Holy Prophet with Jesus to be a physical one on the basis of this verse, (i.e., *Nay! Allah exalted him in His presence.*) Thus when these people interpret the *hadith* they quote this verse to support their imaginary meaning of the *hadith*; and while interpreting the verse they cite this *hadith* to support their imaginary explanation of the verse.

When we turn to the revealed words of God "I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence," in the chapter *The Family of Amran*: and "*Nay Allah exalted him in His presence,*" in the

و قد اجمع العلماء على ان احاديث الآحاد لا تفيد عقيدة ولا يصح الاعتماد عليها في شأن المغيبات .

وثالثاً : على ما جاء في حديث المعراج من ان محمداً صلى الله عليه وسلم حينما صعد إلى السماء واخذ يستفتحها واحدة بعد واحدة فتفتح له ويدخل ، رأى عيسى عليه السلام هو وابن خالته يحيى في السماء الثانية - ويكفيها في توهين هذا المستند ما قرره كثير من شراح الحديث في شأن المعراج وفي شأن اجتماع محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بالأنبياء وانه كان اجتماعاً روحياً لا جسمانياً ، انظر فتح الباري و زاد المعاد وغيرها ،

ومن الطريف انهم يستدلون على ان معنى الرفع في الآية هو رفع عيسى بجسده إلى السماء بحديث المعراج بينما ترى فريقاً منهم يستدل على ان اجتماع محمد بعيسى في المعراج كان اجتماعاً جسدياً بقوله تعالى : (بل رفعه الله إليه) وهكذا يتخذون الآية دليلاً على ما يفهمونه من الحديث حين يكونون في تفسير الحديث ، ويتخذون الحديث دليلاً على ما يفهمونه من الآية حين يكونون في تفسير الآية !

ونحن إذا رجعنا إلى قوله تعالى : «إني متوفيك ورافعك إلى»، في آيات آل عمران مع قوله : «وبل رفعه الله إليه»، في آيات

chapter *The Women* we find that the latter verse fulfils the promise that was made in the former one. This promise was about the death and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and his purification from the false charges of the disbelievers. Thus even if the latter verse had mentioned just his *rafa'* towards God and had no reference to his death and purification from the false charges even then it should have been our duty to take note of all those matters that are referred to in the former verse; so that both the verses might be reconciled.

The actual meaning of the verse therefore is that Allah caused Jesus to die and exalted him and sanctified him from the charges of his enemies. Allama Alwasi has interpreted this verse (*inni mutawaffi-ka*) in many ways. The clearest of these interpretations is that "I will complete the lease of your life and will cause you to die and will not let those people dominate over you who try to kill you." For, completing the period of his life and causing him to die a natural death indicates that Jesus was saved from being slain and from the mischief of his enemies. Obviously *rafa'* after death cannot mean any physical ascension, but only exaltation in rank, especially when the words "*I will clear you of those who disbelieve*" are present along with it. This shows that it is a question of spiritual honour and exaltation. The word *rafa'* has occurred many a time in the Holy Qur'an conveying this sense: e.g., "In houses which Allah has permitted to be honoured (*turfa'a*) (XXIV : 36); "We exalt in degree (*narfa'u*) whom We please" (VI : 84; XII : 76): "And exalted (*rafa'na*) for you your eminence," (XCIV : 4); "And We raised

النساء وجدنا الثانية إخباراً عن تحقق الوعد الذي تضمنته الأولى ،
وقد كان هذا الوعد بالتوفية والرفع والتطهير من الذين كفروا ،
فاذا كانت الآية الثانية قد جاءت خالية من التوفية والتطهير ،
واقترنت على ذكر الرفع إلى الله فإنه يجب ان يلاحظ فيها ما ذكر
في الأولى جمعاً بين الآيتين -

والمعنى ان الله توفى عيسى ورفعه إليه وطهره من الذين كفروا -
وقد فسر الألوسي قوله تعالى : (انى متوفيك) بوجوه منها وهو
اظهرها ،،انى مستوفى اجلك وميتك حتف انك لا اسلط عليك
من يقتلك ؛ وهو كناية عن عصمته من الأعداء وما هم بصدد
من الفتك به عليه السلام لأنه يلزم من استيفاء الله اجله و موته
حتف انفه ذلك ،، وظاهر ان الرفع الذى يكون بعد التوفية هو
رفع المكانة لا رفع الجسد خصوصاً وقد جاء بجانبه قوله :
(ومطهرك من الذين كفروا) مما يدل على ان الأمر امر تشریف
وتكريم - وقد جاء الرفع فى القرآن كثيراً بهذا المعنى : وفى بيوت
اذن الله ان ترفع - نرفع درجات من نشاء - ورفعنا لك ذكرك -

him (*rafa'nahu*) to an elevated state" (XIX : 57); "Allah will exalt those of you who believe....." (LVIII : 11), etc. Thus the expressions "*I will exalt you in My presence*" and "*Nay! Allah exalted him in His presence*" would yield a sense similar to the one when we say "So and so met the companion on High," or "God is with us," or "With the Powerful King." All these expressions signify only shelter, protection and coming under His holy care. So one fails to understand how the word *heaven* is deduced from the word *towards Him (ilaih)*. By God! it is an outrage on the plain exposition of the Holy Quran. And such an offence is committed simply on account of belief in such stories and narratives which are devoid of accuracy not to speak of their established authenticity.

Moreover, Jesus was merely an apostle and apostles before him had passed away. When the people of Jesus became hostile to him, he like other prophets, turned towards God and He saved him by His power and wisdom, and frustrated the plans of his enemies. The same point has been elaborated in the following verse; "When Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers in Allah's way...." *i.e.* in this verse God says that His plans were more subtle and effective than the plans of the disbelievers. As against the measures of protection and security from God, the attempts of these people against the life of Jesus were frustrated. In the verse: "When Allah said: O Jesus! I will cause you to die and exalt you in My presence and clear you of those who disbelieve" Allah gives the glad tidings that He will save Jesus

ورفعناه مكاناً علياً - يرفع الله الذين آمنوا، الخ... واذن
 فالتعبير بقوله: "ورافعك الى"، وقوله: "وبل رفعه الله اليه"،
 كالتعبير في قولهم: "ولحق فلان بالرفيق الأعلى"، وفي "وان الله
 معنا"، وفي "عند مليك مقتدر" وكلها لا يفهم منها سوى معنى
 الرعاية والحفظ والدخول في الكنف المقدس - فمن اين تؤخذ
 كلمة السماء من كلمة (إليه)؟ اللهم إن هذا الظلم للتعبير القرآني الواضح
 خضوعاً لقصص وروايات لم يقيم على الظن بها فضلاً عن اليقين
 برهان ولا شبه برهان!

وبعد فما عيسى إلا رسول قد خلت من قبله الرسول، ناصبه
 قومه العدا، وظهرت على وجوههم بوادر الشر بالنسبة إليه،
 فالتجا إلى الله شان الأنبياء والمرساين فانقذه الله بعزته وحكمته
 وخيب مكر اعدائه - وهذا هو ما تضمنته الآيات "فلما احس عيسى
 منهم الكفر قال من انصارى إلى الله"، إلى آخرها، بين الله فيها
 دقة مكره بالنسبة إلى مكرهم، وان مكرهم في اغتيال عيسى قد
 ضاع امام مكر الله في حفظه وعصمته "إذ قال الله يا عيسى إني
 متوفيك ورافعك إلى و مطهرك من الذين كفروا"، فهو
 يبشره بانجائه من مكرهم ورد كيدهم في نحورهم، وإنه سيستوفي

from the machinations of his enemies and that ultimately their plottings will end in futility and that He will complete the period of his life till he dies a natural death neither being slain nor yet crucified and then He will exalt him in His presence.

These verses which relate to the fate of Jesus at the hands of his people will invariably yield this meaning to their reader provided he knows the practice of Allah to which He resorts for the protection of His prophets at the time of the aggression of enemies, and provided his mind is free from all those fictitious reports that can in no case be placed as an authority over the Holy Qur'án. Now, I cannot understand how the snatching of Jesus from the hands of his enemies and lifting him up to the heavens can be called a subtle plan and a better one when neither it was in their power nor in the power of anybody else to counter it. In fact, there can be one "plan" (*makr*) as against another plan when it is contrived in a parallel manner not deviating from the natural course of Allah in such matters. We have a parallel instance in what is said by the Qur'án with respect of the Holy Prophet: "And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners" (VIII : 30).

To sum up :

1. There is nothing in the Holy Qur'án, nor in the sacred traditions of the Prophet, which authorises the correctness of the belief to the contentment of the heart that Jesus was taken up to the heaven

اجاه حتى يموت حتف انفه من غير قتل ولا صلب، ثم يرفعه الله إليه - وهذا هو ما يفهمه القارئ للآيات الواردة في شان نهاية عيسى مع قومه متى وقف على سنة الله مع انبيائه حين يتالب عليهم خصوصهم، ومتى خلا ذهنه من تلك الروايات التي لا ينبغي ان تحكم في القرآن، ولست ادري كيف يكون إنقاذ عيسى بطريق انتزاعه من بينهم ورفعه بجسده إلى السماء مكرآ؟ وكيف يوصف بانه خير من مكرهم مع انه شئ ليس في استطاعتهم ان يقاوموه، شئ ليس في قدرة البشر! الا إنه لا يتحقق مكر في مقابلة مكر إلا إذا كان جارياً على اسلوبه غير خارج عن مقتضى العادة فيه - وقد جاء مثل هذا في شان محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم 'وإذ يمكر بك الذين كفروا ليثبتوك او يقتلوك او يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر الله والله خير الماكرين“

والخلاصة من هذا البحث :

١ - انه ليس في القرآن الكريم ولا في السنة المطهرة مستند يصلح لتكوين عقيدة يطمئن إليها القلب بان عيسى رفع بجسده إلى

with his body and is alive there even now, and would descend therefrom in the latter days.

2. The Qur'anic verses about Jesus show that God had promised to cause him to die a natural death, then to exalt him and save him from the mischief of the disbelievers and this promise had certainly been fulfilled. His enemies, could neither kill him nor crucify him, but God completed the span of his life and then caused him to die.

3. Any person who denies his bodily ascent and his continuance in physical existence in the heavens and his descent in the latter ages, does not deny a fact that can be established by clear conclusive arguments. Thus he is not outside the faith of Islam and it is absolutely wrong to consider him an apostate. He is perfectly a Muslim. If he dies he dies the death of a believer and like believers his funeral prayer must be said and he must be buried in the Muslim cemetery. His faith is decidedly faultless in the eyes of God. And God knows the conditions of His servants.

And as to the other part of the question that supposing Jesus returns to the world then how should a disbeliever in him be regarded, after the above statement of ours—this question does not arise at all. And God is the best Knower.

MAHMUD SHALTUT.

السماء وانه حتى الى الآن فيها وانه سينزل منها آخر الزمان الى الأرض

٢- ان كل ما تفيده الآيات الواردة في هذا الشأن هو وعد الله عيسى بانه متوفيه اجله ورافعه إليه و عاصمه من الذين كفروا، وان هذا الوعد قد تحقق فلم يقتله اعداؤه ولم يصلبوه، ولكن وفاه الله اجله ورفعه إليه

٣- ان من انكر ان عيسى قد رفع بجسمه إلى السماء وانه فيها حتى إلى الآن وانه سينزل منها آخر الزمان فانه لا يكون بذلك منكرا لما ثبت بدليل قطعي فلا يخرج عن اسلامه وإيمانه ولا ينبغي ان يحكم عليه بالردة، بل هو مسلم مؤمن، اذا مات فهو من المؤمنين يصلى عليه كما يصلى على المؤمنين، و يدفن في مقابر المؤمنين ولا شية في إيمانه عند الله والله بعباده خبير بصير

اما السؤال الأخير في الاستفتاء وهو (ما حكم من لا يؤمن به إذا فرض انه عاد مرة اخرى إلى الدنيا) فلا محل له بعد الذي قررناه ولا يتجه السؤال عنه والله اعلم-