THE FATWAH OF THE GREAT AL-AZHAR
UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO ON EXALTATION OF JESUS

(A letter was received by the Senate of the Great Al-Azhar University of Cairo from Abdul Karim Khan, from the Middle East, which contained an inquiry: Is Jesus dead or alive according to the Qur'an 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 by the Senate to the Senior Professor Shatkh Mahmud Shaltutt, a member of the Senate of the University. His Fatwah is printed verbatim).

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

1. In the chapter The Family of 'Imran' it is stated:

   But when Jesus perceived unbelief on their part, he said: Who will be my helpers in Allah's way? The companions 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 of resurrection; then to Me shall be your return, so I will decide between you concerning that in which you differed.

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 thou 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.

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.

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

   In the last verse (verse from the chapter The Food) there is 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 the other meaning: "Say: The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die;" Surely (as for) those whom the angels caused to die while they are unjust to their souls, "And had you seen when the angels will cause to die those who disbelieve."

   "Our messengers cause him to die;" And of you is he who is caused to die;" Until death takes them away; "Make me die a Muslim and join me with the good."

   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.

   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

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EDITORIAL

Muslims or Christians?

To a non-Muslim observer looking objectively at the Muslim world, it must truly be a perplexing situation, as he observes the beliefs held by the bulk of the Muslims, as to whether the Muslims adhered to a religion of their own or whether they were but another sect of Christianity. This must surely be his view when he notes the following orthodox Muslim beliefs:

(i) Jesus was born fatherless and hence had Divine paternity.

(ii) Jesus had ascended bodily into heaven and was physically alive to this day.

(iii) Jesus will return to earth in his second coming and will secure salvation for mankind.

That these three beliefs are the cornerstone of Christianity is well known. Acceptance of these tenets puts one squarely into the Christian faith. And yet, those who would have themselves called Muslims, cling to such Christian articles of faith. Can an observer be asked not to accept these "Muslims" as simply just another sect of Christianity?

However, the question that is even more pertinent is why these beliefs are held at all by these Muslims when they are contrary to that ultimate yardstick for all Muslims — the Holy Quran. The Quran goes to a lot of detailed explanation which puts to nought all such concepts as enumerated above. But it appears that tradition dies hard, irrational as it may be.

The Holy Quran expressly states in the chapter Al-Hujurat, Chapter 49, V.13:

"O mankind, surely we have created you from a male and a female..."

It goes even further, and states in many places that a sperm ("life-germ") is necessary to start the conception of a human being (the Muslims surely acknowledge that Jesus was a human being). For example:

"O people, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then surely We created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then from a lump of flesh, complete in make and incomplete, that we may make it clear to you. And we cause what we please to remain in the wombs till an appointed time, then we bring you forth as babies, then that you may attain your maturity..."  

(22:5)

Similar statements on the necessity of the sperm for conception appear in 23: 12, 13; 35:11; 40:67; 80:18,19; to mention a few.

And to become even more specific, the Holy Quran takes care to mention that like all the other prophets, Jesus too had his ancestors and therefore, a father through which to trace his genealogy. In Chapter 6 (Al—An'am), verses 84-88, the Quran makes it clear that Jesus took his descent, alongside the other Jewish prophets, from Abraham. This could not have been possible unless Jesus had a father in like manner to his fellow Jewish prophets.

How, then, does a Muslim uphold that Jesus had a fatherless birth? The only way out is to deny that he was human and to concede that he was Divine — as our Christian fraternity does. But even here, the Holy Quran thwarts us by telling the Holy Prophet Muhammed (PBUH):

"We did not send before thee any messengers but they surely ate food..."  (25:20)

And again, in Chapter 5, verse 116, Allah asks:

"And when Allah will say: O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say to men, take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah? He will say: Glory be to Thee! It was not for me to say what I had no right to (say). If I had said it, Thou wouldst indeed have known it..."

Since Jesus himself denies his divinity, his very human form can only follow the universal principles of human birth laid down so clearly in the Quran.

Consider now the orthodox Muslim stand that Jesus ascended bodily into heaven and is physically alive to this day. Again, the Holy Quran gives ample proofs that such beliefs are false and heretical. Consider Chapter 21 (Al-Anbiya), verses 7 and 8:

"And we sent not before thee any but men to whom we sent revelation; so ask the followers of the Reminder if you knew not. Nor did we give them bodies not eating food, nor did they abide."

How clear it is that all prophets before the Holy Prophet Muhammed had met their blessed deaths, as all human beings must! But the Holy Quran becomes more specific, and in Chapter 5 (Al-Ma'idah), verse 117, Jesus answers to Allah thus:

"...I said to them (men) naught save as Thou didst command me: Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord; and I was a witness of them as long as I was among them, but when Thou didst cause me to die thou wast the Watcher over them and Thou art Witness of all things."

And yet again in Chapter 21, verse 34, Allah addresses the Holy Prophet (PBUH):

"And we granted abiding for ever to no mortal before thee. If thou diest, will they abide?"

And in verse 35, we are told:

"Every soul must taste of death."

The Holy Quran even gives the final resting place for Jesus and his mother:

"And we made the son of Mary and his mother a sign, and we gave them refuge on a lofty ground having meadows and springs."  (23:50)

Researchers have now shown that the "lofty ground having meadows and springs" is no other than Kashmir, where the tombs of Jesus and Mary exist to this day.

And now, the final and the most damaging of our orthodox brethren's contention — that Jesus will come again in his physical body and bring salvation to mankind. Surely, if Jesus has been demonstrated to have died a natural death, he cannot return in his physical body! Consider Chapter 23, v.99 and 100:

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FULFILMENT OF A MIGHTY PROPHECY
Superiority of Quranic Truths over Scientific Theories

by DR. ALLAH BAKSH

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth."

[Nineteenth century science conceived matter to be indestructible, immutable, dynamic and eternal. Modern Nuclear-science has however, exploded the falsity of this myth. It has proved beyond doubt that the Atom is divisible and destructible. Thus the Quranic concept of the mystery of the creation of Universe has been confirmed by the twentieth century Nuclear-science. It was during the height of the nineteenth century materialistic concept that a mighty prophecy was made. It was prophesied that the falsity of this concept which was contrary to Quranic truths would soon be proved. Accordingly in exact fulfilment of the Divine prophecy, the twentieth century nuclear-science has established the falsehood of the nineteenth century science, thus setting a seal of confirmation on the truthfulness of the Quranic concepts about the creative forces working in the universe. Himself an unlearned man in Western science and methodology, yet Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Mijaddid and Promised Messiah of the present century of Islam, prophesied in clear, un-ambiguous terms about the falsity of the eternal concept of matter vis-a-vis the reality of the Lord of Universe as well as the futility of following the materialistic Western civilisation at a time when these concepts were dazzling and ascendant; scientific concepts about creation of matter and life. How wonderfully true has the mighty prophecy proved to be! Could it emanate from a source other than the All-knowing?]

The Nineteenth Century Dalton’s Atomic theory.

The nineteenth century scientific concept about the nature of creation of matter was based on Dalton’s Atomic theory. According to this theory all matter was composed of certain elements which in their final form consisted of tiny, invisible and indivisible atoms. The atoms of one element were considered to be essentially different from those of the others.

Moreover atoms were regarded as indivisible, immutable, indestructible and eternal. Even life itself was considered as mechanical, merely a process of the result of working of the physical and chemical laws of matter and nothing more. Hence the materialistic viewpoint of life was in the full ascendant.

Discovery of Radio-Active elements.

The notion of conservation of mass and eternal nature of matter was violently shaken by the discovery of the Radio-active elements, especially Radium and Uranium. It was discovered that the atoms of these elements were not stable but were continuously undergoing spontaneous disintegration. By constantly emitting electrical radiations, they were decreasing in their mass. Atoms of these radio-active elements were thus undergoing constant change by discharging from them particles of light, heat and electric radiations (energy). Now it has become fully established that matter and energy are interconvertible. But besides spontaneous disintegration it is now an established fact that atoms can be disintegrated artificially also by the process of “fission.” This process if continued from one atom to another to produce a “chain-reaction,” is the great mystery underlying the invention and preparation of Atom-Bomb.

Internal Structure of an Atom.

The internal structure of an atom has been very much likened to our planetary solar system. Its components are protons, positively charged electrical particles; electrons, the negatively charged electrical particles and neutrons, the uncharged neutral particles. The protons and neutrons of an atom form its inner core or nucleus, while the negatively charged particles, the electrons, are in constant motion, revolving round the nucleus in different orbits. It is now held that the atoms of each and every element are basically composed of the same three components, protons, electrons and neutrons. The difference in the elements results from the difference in the number of protons and electrons. Thus an atom of hydrogen, the simplest atom, consists of one positive proton, round which revolves one negative electron. Similarly the atoms of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen are composed of six, seven and eight protons respectively, round which revolve the corresponding number of electrons. An atom of uranium the largest atom, consists of 92 protons round which revolve 92 electrons in different orbits. The metal uranium is a radio-active element which constantly and spontaneously emanates particles of radiations and is the one used in the preparation of an atom bomb.

The discovery of Isotopes of an element.

Another significant fact in the Nuclear-research, is the discovery of Isotopes which are different forms of the same element. They possess the same properties but are different only in their mass. This difference in mass is due to the presence of various number of uncharged particles, the neutrons; whereas the number of electrical particles, protons and electrons, remains the same. Thus the same element might have two or more forms of Isotopes which differ only in their mass but are identical in all their properties. It is obvious from this that it is the number of electrical particles, protons and electrons, which are responsible for giving to an element its properties and characteristics.

Inevitable Conclusions from the Nuclear structure of an Atom.

From the above brief description, let us summarise the main conclusions we arrive at:

1. Atoms of an element being divisible and consisting of the same kind of electrically charged particles, protons and electrons, but varying in their number in different elements, the creative force in the universe is one and the same.

2. Existence of an atom of an element is ensured so long as the number of positive and negative electrical particles in it remains the same and equal. As soon as this balance of electrical charges is upset, there is a change in the nature of the element. For instance by constantly emitting radiations, the radio-active...
elements are constantly undergoing a change in their atomic structure. The non-radio-active elements although stable in their present state, can also be made radio-active through "fission" or "fusion" by "bombarding" their nuclei with radiations, from the radio-active elements. Thus it is possible to convert atoms of elements into electrical energy or radiations.

3. The properties or dynamicity of an element depend upon the number of electrical particles within it and not on the mass of the atom.

Thus the main governing principles basically working in the creative forces of nature are three; the essential unity and uniformity of matter, the balance of opposing electrical forces and the reality and dynamicity of Energy in contrast to mass and matter, which is unstable, destructible, non-eternal and therefore unreal.

The Quranic Concept of Creation.

Fourteen centuries before the birth of modern Nuclear-science, the teachings of Quran were revealed to the Holy Prophet from the source Divine. It was the voice of God Himself which declared immutable and unfathomable truths to humanity groping in utter darkness. It was fourteen hundred years since the truths discovered by science today saw the light of Divine revelation. Though the nineteenth-century science in its ignorance belied these Quranic truths, yet the twentieth century nuclear-science has set a seal of confirmation upon them. Here are some of the few relevant references from the Quranic text.


"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth." (24:35)

"Everything upon this earth is in a state of change. Only the Presence of your Lord endures (unchanged) for ever, the Lord of glory and honour." (55:56). 

"Every one in the heavens and earth, asks of Him. He is ever in His state of supreme glory." (55:29).

"Everything is perishable except His Presence." (28:88). 

"His is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death and He is Possessor of power over all things. He is the First and the last and the Manifest as well as the Hidden, and He is Knower of all things." (57:23).

In these verses it has been made clear that God is the source of radiant light of all the creation, and that He is the prime motive force behind the Universe. Everything besides Him is changeable and perishable and is undergoing a constant change. Not only have the Quranic verses revealed in such unmistakeable terms the mystery underlying the creation as shown by modern Nuclear-science but have also emphasised its essential unity and uniformity. No other scripture has laid so great an emphasis and stress on the great principle of Unity as Quran has done. This grand principle of Unity of Godhead signifies not only the unity and uniformity of the creative forces but the unity of purpose of human life and conduct as well.

These verses have also so forcefully stressed the great attributes of the Glory, the Majesty, the Power and the Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality; characteristics of the Divine Being, which are ever unapproachable and unfathomable by secular sciences.

II. Balance of Opposing and Contending pair of Forces:

(i) Let us now firstly see as to what the teachings of Quran have to say on the fundamental law of creation i.e. the balancing of the two contending forces. It says:

"Everything We have created is in pairs." (43:12)

"He it is, Who has created all things in pairs." (51:49). Explaining the law of creation of opposing pairs the Quran details it in the following manner:

"Glory be to Him Who has created pairs in everything, in what they grow from earth, from amongst themselves and from that which they still know not." (36:36).

(ii) In the second place, let us know what the Holy Quran has to say about uniting of opposing pairs in a balanced measure.

"The heavens, We raised high and ordained a balance, in order that you may also not upset the balance. So do maintain the balance of justice but do not fall short of the measure." (55:7-9)

According to the science of Astronomy, the rotation of planets round the sun is the resultant of the balancing of two forces, the solar force which draws the planet towards it and the opposing force of the planet itself which seeks to draw away from the sun. In the description of Atomic structure given above and likened to the solar system, we have already seen that the existence of individuality of Atom depends upon a balance of the positive and negative forces of the electrical particles, the protons and electrons. Any disturbance in the balancing of these two contending but equalising forces leads towards the disintegration of the Atom. If we turn our attention from the inanimate world, to the science of biology it also states the same principle of balancing of the two opposing forces, in order to maintain the integrity of the life of a cell. The cell-nucleus has an equal but opposing pair of chromosomes, each pair being derived from the male and the female parent.

This law of balancing or harmony of opposing pairs is so universal that its application to the physical, the intellectual as well as the moral and spiritual systems of life of man is equally applicable and justifiable. In this connection it is significant to note the balance of blood-pressure, of bodily temperature, of diet, of blood-sugar level of various salts and liquid contents of blood, and of various hormones etc. in the physical system of man. In case of mental balance, the science of psychology teaches us that the maintenance of balance between the degree of force of various emotions and the power controlling them, is essential for the maintenance of a healthy and happy mind. The same truth is applicable to the moral and spiritual fields of human activity. We have opposing and contending moral pairs of qualities and it is through striking a just balance between the contending characteristics that we can keep up a harmonious and healthy blend of the two. However this subject is too vast to be dealt with adequately here.
Amount of Energy or inner-urge — the dynamic soul.

The third great principle underlying the mystery of creative forces taught by Nuclear-science is the fact that the dynamic force of an atom does not depend on its mass but on the amount of energy in the form of number of electrical particles. The case of Isotopes provides its greatest illustration. Different forms of the same element possess the same attributes because they possess the same number of electrical particles but they appear to be different in their mass because of the difference in the number of non-charged particles.

Exactly so do the Quranic-teaching tell us. The value and worth of an action is to be measured not by its external form but by the real and inner urge giving rise to it. Several kinds of practices have been prescribed for observance such as prayers, pilgrimage, fasting, animal sacrifice, almsgiving, jihad etc. For the sake of incalculating unity and giving them uniformity, the external forms for their observance have been detailed. Yet it has always been emphasised, often and anon, that it is not their apparent and physical observance that brings any results but it is the inner urge and the intention that really matters. For instance Quranic verses are amply eloquent on this when they say that woe be upon those worshippers who remain unmindful of their prayers, that the blood and flesh of sacrificial animals is not acceptable to God but only the lesson of righteousness which one imbibles from it, that even almsgiving is worthless if the spirit of sympathy and fellow-feeling is lacking and so on. In fact merely the external observance of practices unattended by the true inner urge and self-reform, go waste and act as a dead-weight.

Analogous parallelism between religious and scientific principles:

Thus it has been demonstrated that religion and science are based on analogous principles. Both have the common object of discovering truth, both work on the same principle of surrender to the Divine laws and both seek to make man's life healthier, happier and higher. We have also attempted to show above that the three common concepts on the creation of universe are acceptable to both, the Quran and modern sciences; i.e. the unity and uniformity of all creation, the constructive forces of union of pairs in a balanced and harmonious blend and the value and worth of inner energy or urge of the soul.

Einstein's Hypothesis of Relativity:

Man seeks to make his life higher in the physical realm through his powers of observation, experimentation, reasoning and discovery of natural laws. In obedience of these laws, he makes inventions, thus benefitting through surrendering to Divine-will. But the domain of science remains limited to the material world and man's physical senses, as obviously its sphere of activity pertains to the material world. The realm of religion, however, is different, being the field of progress of man's moral and spiritual nature. Here he has, in addition to his good senses, the Divine Word to aid and guide him; surrender to it is conducive to progress and advancement in these planes. In formulating scientific theories man is often apt to err. Einstein's hypothesis of Relativity even postulates that man, through his physical senses and experiments with matter, can never arrive at the ultimate truth and reality, because of the very fact that he is conditioned by time and space. Whereas the basis of true religion is Divine-communication, which in its perfect form is infallible. Hence the superiority and excellence of the perfect Divine word in the form of Quran in contrast to physical sciences, as the absolute and ultimate truth. In this age of materialism and scepticism, it was prophesied by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian during the last decade of nineteenth century that the Quranic concepts are absolute truths. Anything contrary to them if upheld by the then current sciences, was bound to be proved as false and Quranic teachings would shine out in all their light of truth. In accordance with this mighty prophecy uttered by him from the Divine source, we witness its fulfilment before our own eyes. Nineteenth century scientific notions about creation which were contrary to Quranic concepts, have been shattered to pieces by the twentieth century Nuclear-science. Here below we reproduce the great prophecy of the ascendency and prevalence of Quranic concepts over current contrary scientific notions as uttered by this greatest saint in the history of Islam.

Promised Messiah's Prophecy of Triumph and Victory of Islam against alien Sciences and cults:

"In this age there is raging a severe conflict between the forces of religion and science. Noticing the onsloughts science is making on religion, there should not be the least dis-heartening and disappointment. In this conflict, it must be remembered, Islam need not make compromise with alien forces like a vanquished and fallen foe. On the contrary, let this prophecy be kept in mind, that this age being one of the spiritual sword of Islam, Islam once again is bound to come out victorious in this conflict also, as it has shown its prowess previously, that its foes would soon be routed ignominiously so that Islam would triumph over all alien forces. However severe the onsloughts of science be and no matter with what new weapons the modern sciences may make attacks, defeat is ultimately decreed for them.

"I assert it with God's gratefulness that I have been blessed with the knowledge of the superior excellences of Islam, on the strength of which I can assert that not only Islam would safeguard itself from the onsloughts of the new sciences but would soon prove the falsity of the contrary concepts. Indeed, Islam has absolutely no cause to be afraid of the attacks which new sciences and philosophy are making. The days of its glory are near at hand and I am already witnessing the signs of its victory in the heavens. This glory is spiritual as is this victory spiritual. So that the Divine-forces of Islam might weaken the contrary forces of false sciences to such a degree as to crush them entirely. I am at a loss to understand as to how and from whom have you learnt that the concepts which modern science and philosophy have coined are superior to Islamic principles?

Remember truly that those sciences possess an incomplete weapon of inductive logic and reasoning only, whereas Islam has to its credit, not only all this in its completeness but has also other heavenly weapons in its support. What cause for alarm then be for sake of the faith of Islam!"

(Ainai Kamalat-I-Islam).
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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 admittedly be the followers of Muhammad and not of Jesus.

However, in the chapter The Women the words: “Nay: Allah exalted him (Jesus) in His presence” have been interpreted by some, nay most of the commentators, as “raising him up to the heavens.” They observe that Allah cast his likeness on someone else and Jesus himself was lifted up to the heavens with his body. 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 story:

Firstly, on those reports in which the descent of Jesus is mentioned after the (appearance of) Antichrist. 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 Wahab bin Munnabba and Kaab Akbar, who were converts from the people of the Book. And their status is well known to critics of traditions.

Secondly, on a report by Abu Huraira that mentions the descent of Jesus. If this report is proved 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 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-al-Bari, Zad-ul-Maad, etc.).

Strangely enough they interpret the word rafa’ in this verse in the light of the report concerning the Miraj, 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 ‘Imran along with the words: “Nay Allah exalted him in His presence,” in the chapter The Women, we find that the latter verse fulfils the promise that was made in the former one. This promise was about 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 charge of his enemies. Allama Alwasi has interpreted this verse (inii mutawaffii-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 lease 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 exalted (turfa’a),” “We exalt in dignity (nafsa’u) whom We please;” “And exalted (rafa’uN) for you your eminence;” “And We raised him (rafa’nahu) to an elevated state;” “Allah will exalt those of you who believe....,...” 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 Qur’an. And such an defence is committed simply on account of belief in such stories and narratives which are devoid of accuracy, not to speak of their established unauthenticity.

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: 0 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 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 in 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’an. 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 was it in their power nor in

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“Until when death overtakes one of them, he says:
My Lord, send me back, that I may do good in that
which I have left. By no means!”

Or Chapter 32, v.11:

“Say! The angel of death, who is given charge of
you will cause you to die, then to your Lord you
will be returned.”

But what is the need for Jesus to return as Prophet
Jesus? Surely, the Holy Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)
was told in 5:3, inter alia:

“… this day have I perfected for you your religion
and completed my favour to you and chosen for
you Islam as a religion.” A perfected religion does
not need further perfection!

Further, Jesus was sent expressly for the Jews and his
mission was only to them. How would his return help
all those others who are not of the Jewish faith? His
mission cannot change. How will his advent help
the billion Muslims, most of whom are not of Jewish race?
Yet, even if we concede the impossible that Jesus
returned in his own physical body as Prophet Jesus,
surely this would make mockery of the Quranic
declaration to the Holy Prophet Muhammed:

“Muhammed is not the father of any of your men,
but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal
of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all
things.”

Will not Jesus become the final prophet, if he were to
return? Will he not break that seal that is posed by the
Holy Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)? What becomes of
the principle of the finality of prophethood in Holy
Prophet Muhammed (PBUH)?

Much is made of the verse 158 of Chapter 4 of the
Holy Quran, which states in reference to Jesus:

“Nay, Allah exalted him in His Presence. And
Allah is ever Mighty, Wise.”

We are being asked to believe that “exalted” here
should be read to mean “lifted up into heaven bodily,”
although for such a meaning to be extracted from this
word requires a generous exercise of literary licence.
However, this verse cannot stand on its own when it is
realised that it is simply a fulfillment of an earlier
promise made in Chapter 3, verse 54:

“When Allah said: O Jesus, I will cause thee to die
and exalt thee in My Presence and clear thee of
those who disbelieve….”

Clearly before Jesus was to be exalted, he had to
physically die, and the exalting mentioned in verse 158
of Chapter 4 is simply a spiritual exalation and
cleaning of Jesus’ name from the false and baseless
charges laid against him by his enemies. How, then,
can one be asked to regard this as a bodily ascent?

The questions we have for those orthodox Muslims
who cling to such views that do so much damage to
Islam are:

(i) How do you call yourselves Muslims when you
appear to uphold all the basic tenets of the
Christian faith and destroy the very foundation of
Islam?

(ii) How do you reconcile such beliefs with the clear
and unambiguous statements of the Holy Quran
on these issues?

(iii) How is it that the greatest of all prophets, Muham-
med of Arabia (PBUH), lies dead and buried in
Medina while you would have us believe that a
Jewish prophet, sent only for the Jews, is still alive
and well, awaiting to return to earth and apparent-
ly, to complete work which the Founder of Islam
appears to have left unfinished?

(iv) If Jesus were indeed to return to earth, what would
become of verse 158 of Chapter 4 of the Holy
Quran that says Jesus was exalted (exalted here
to mean bodily ascension) will not this verse become
placed at odds with the fact that Jesus was no
longer “exalted”? Or will “exalted” acquire a new
meaning then?

THE FATWAH

(Continued from Page 6)

the power of anybody else to counter it. In fact, there
can be one “plan” (maktab) 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’an with
respect of the Holy Prophet.

And when those who disbelieved and devised plans against you
that they might confuse you or slay you or drive you away and they
decided plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best
planners.

To sum up:

1. There is nothing in the Holy Qur’an, nor in the
sacred traditions of the Prophet, which authorises the
correctness of the belief to the contentment of heart
that Jesus was taken up to heaven 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 is
supposing Jesus returns to the world, 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 SHALUTU.

(The above was printed in full as Chapter XIV of “Jesus in Heaven
on Earth” by Al-Haj Khuwa Nazir Ahmad),

Page Seven
ملفوظات تخصُّرت محكمة ضنفِياً بفُهارِكُم على السلام

ابي نيان مبين وعَادُرو

مَا ذَلِكَ فَالْدِيَاءُ دَاوُوَوَ لا يُبْلَغُ وَقْتُ عَلَيْهِ allocations

(تَغْرَيْرٌ مِنْ مَا كَانَ مَنْتَجٌ مَتَقَلِّبٌ)