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. 452, 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'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 to the Senior Professor Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut, a member of the Senate of the learned Professors who replied as follows:

... 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 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...
للأستاذ محمود شلتوت

ورد إلى مشيخة الأزهر اللميلة من حضرة عبد الكريم خات بالقيادة العامة لجيوش الشرق الأوسط سوال جاء فيه: "هل عيسى ؟! حين ميت في نظر الثقات الكريم والسنة المطورة؟ وما حكم المسلم الذي ينكر أنه حي ؟! وما حكم من لا يؤمن به إذا فرض أنه عاد إلى الدنيا مرة أخرى؟!، وقد حول هذا السؤال إلى قضية الاستاذ الكبير الشيخ محمود شلتوت عشر جماعة كبار العلماء فكتب ما يلي:

أما بعد، فإن القرآن الكريم قد عرض لعيسى عليه السلام في نهاية شأنته مع قومه في ثلاث سور: ففي سورة آل عمران قوله تعالى: "وَفَلَا أَحْسِن عِيسَىِّ مِنْهُمَّ الْكِفارُ قَالُوا: مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهَ؟ قَالَ الْمُوَلَّادُ بِنْيَةً. حَيَّاهُ اللَّهُ وَأُولُوْدَاهُ. فَأَتَبَعَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ فَأَكْتِبَهُ مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ. وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكْرُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ خَيرُ الْمَا كَرِينَ. إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ: يَا عِيسَى، إِنِّي مَتَوكِفٌ وَرَافعٌ إلَى
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 مطهر كرب الذين كفروا، وجا على الذين اتبعوك فوق الذين كفروا إلى يوم القيامة، ثم إلى مرجعكم فاحكم بينكم فيما كنت فيه تختلفون، ٥٥-٥٦.

وفي سورة النساء قوله تعالى: "و قوهم: إن قلنا 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 اتبع الظن، وما قتلوه يقيماً، بل رفع الله إليه، وكان الله عزيزا حكياً، ١٠٨-١٠٩.

و في سورة المائدة قوله تعالى: "و إذ قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم: أنت قلت للناس انحدوني وأمي إلهين من دون الله؟ قال: سبحانك ما يكون لي أن أقول ما ليس لي بحق، إن كنت قلته فقد علمته، تعلم ما في نفسى ولا أعلم ما في نفسك، إنك إنت علام الغيوب، ما قلت لهم إلا ما أمرتي به: إن إعبدا الله ربى وربكم، وكنى عليهم شهيدا ما دمت فيهم، فلما توفى كنت إنت الرقيب عليهم وانت على كل شيء شهيد، ١١٧-١١٨.

* * *

هذه هي الأيات التي عرض القرآن فيها نهاية 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’ān 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 شأناً آخرًا يتعلق بعبادت قومه له ولأمه في الدنيا وقد سأله الله عنها وهي تقرر على لسان عيسى عليه السلام إنه لم يقل لهم إلا ما أمره الله به: "واعبدو الله ربي وربيكم)، وإنه كان شهيدًا عليهم مدة إقامتهم بينهم، وإنه لا يعلم ما حدث منهم بعد أن وترفوه الله من كلمة "وتوفى"، قد وردت في القرآن كثيرًا بمعنى الموت حتى صار هذا المعنى هو الغالب عليها المتبادر منها، ولم تستعمل في غير هذا المعنى إلا وتناولها ما يصرفها عن هذا المعنى المتبادر: "وكل ي توفى كم ملك الموت الذي وكل بكم - إن الذين توفاه الملائكة ظالمة أنفسهم - ولو ترى إذ يتوفى الذين كفروا في هذه الأمهات، - توفته رسولًا - ومنكم من ي توفى - حتى يتوفاه الموت، - توفى مسلاً والحقين بالصالحين، "، ومن حق كلمة "و توفيتني"، في الآية أن تحمل على هذا المعنى المتبادر وهو الامة العادية التي يعرفها الناس، ويدركها من الله، ومن السياق الناظرون بالضاد - وإن فلما لم يتسكع بها غيرها في تقرر نهاية عيسى مع قومه لما كان هناك مبرر للقول بأن عيسى حي لم يمت.
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، وإنما سينزل منها آخر الزمان. لأن الآية ظاهرة في تحديد علاقته بقومه هو لا بالقوم الذين يكونون آخرين الزمان وهم قوم مهد باتفاق لا قوم عيسى

اما آية النساء فأنها تقول "وبل رفعه الله إليه"، وقد فسرها بعض المفسرين بل جمهورهم بالرفع إلى السماء، ويقولون:

إبن الله الذي على غيره شمسه، ورفعه ليسمه إلى السماء، فهو حي فيها وسينزل منها آخر الزمان، فيقتل الخنزير ويكسر الصليب،

ويعتمدون في ذلك:

أولاً: على روایات تفيد نزول عيسى بعد الديالج، وهي روایات مضطربة مختلفة في الاظهار و معانيها اختلافاً لفصول معه للجميع بينها، وقد نص على ذلك علماء الحديث، وهي فوق ذلك من روایة و هب بن منبه وكعبة الأخبار، و هما من أهل الكتاب الذين اعتمدوا الإسلام، وقد عرفت درجهم في الحديث عند علماء إحرج والتعديل.

وثانياً: على الحديث مروى عن أبي هريرة أقتصر فيه على الإخبر بنزول عيسى، وإذا صح هذا الحديث فهو حديث أحد.
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 أجمع العلماء على أن إجماع الأحاديث لا تفيد عقيدة ولا يصح الاعتقاد عليها في شأن المفتيات.

و ثالثاً: على ما جاء في حديث المغارة من أن محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم حينما صعد إلى السماء، وأخذ يستفتحها واحدة بعد واحدة ففتح لها ودخله. رأى عيسى عليه السلام هو وأبن خالته يحيى في السماء الثانية. ويكشفنا في توهين هذا المستند ما قرره كثير من شراح الحديث في شأن المغارة وفي شأن اجتماع محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم بالأنبياء فإنه كان اجتماعاً روحياً لا جسدياً، "إنظر فتح البارى وزاد المعاد وغيرها".

ومن الطريق أنهم يستدلون على أن معنى الرفع في الآية هو رفع عيسى يمسده إلى السماء بحيثي螺旋 المغارة. بينما ترى فريقاً منهم يستدل على أن اجتماع محمد عيسى في المغارة كان اجتماعاً جسدياً، يقوله تعالى: (بِلِ رَفْعِهِ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ) 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: "إِنِّي مَتَوَفِّي وَرَافعُ إِلَيْهِ". في آيات آل عمران مع قوله: "بِلِ رَفْعِهِ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ". في آيات
chapter *The Women* we find that the latter verse fulfills 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'ān 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 الثانيَة إخبارًا عن تحقيق الوعد الذي تضمنته الأولى، وقد كان هذا الوعد بالتوهية والرفع والطهير من الذين كفروا. فإذا كانت الآية الثانية قد جاءت خالية من التوهية والطهير، واقتصرت على ذكر الرفع إلى الله فأنه يجب أن يلاحظ فيها ما ذكر في الأولى جمعاً بين الآتيين.

والمعنى أن الله توفي عيسى ورفعه إليه وطهره من الذين كفروا، وقد نسأ الألوسي قوله تعالى: (إني متوهك) بوجوه منها وهو أظهراً، إلى مستوى إجلك وهميك حتف إنفك لا إسلط عليك من يقتلك، وهو كتابة عن عصمه من الأعداء وما هم بصدده من الفتك به عليه السلام لأنه يلزم من استبقاء الله إجله وموتته حتف إنفك ذلك، وظاهر إن الرفع الذي يكون بعد التوهية هو رفع المكانة لا رفع الإنسد خصوصاً وقد جاء بجانبه قوله: (ومطركل من الذين كفروا) مما يدل على أن الأمر أمر تشيير وتكريم. وقد جاء الرفع في القرآن كثيراً بهذا المعنى: وفي بيوت إذن الله إن ترفع - ترفع 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
ورفعنا مكاناً علياً يرفع الله الذي آمنوا، الخ. . . وأذن فالتعبير بقوله: "و رافعك إلى"، وقوله: "بل رفعه الله إليه"، كالتعبير في قوله: "لحق فلان بالرفيق الأعلى"، وفي "أن الله معنا"، و في "عند مليك مقتدر"، وكالها لا يفهم منها سوى معنى الرعاية والحفظ والدخول في الكشف المقدس. فمن اين تؤخذ كلمة السماء من كلمة (إليه)? اللهم إن هذا الظلم للتعبير القرآني الواضح خضوعاً لقصص وروايات لم يقم على الظن بها فضلاً عن اليقين برحان ولا شبه برهاين!

و بعد ما عيسى إلا رسول قد خلت من قبله الرسول، ناصبه قومه العداء، وظهرت على وجوههم بوادر الشر بالنسبة إليه، فالتجأ إلى الله شان الأنبياء والرسل، قاقد هذه الله عزه وحكمه وخبى مكر إعداده، وهذا هو ما تضمنته الآيات "فلا إحس عيسى منهم الكفر قال من انصارى إلى الله"، إلى آخرها، بين الله فيها دقة مكره بالنسبة إلى مكرهم، وأنا مكرهم في اعتيال عيسى قد ضاع إمام مكر الله في حفظه وعصمته "إذ قال الله يا عيسى إلى متوهيك و رافعك إلى و مطهرك من الذين كفروا"، فهو يبشره بإنجائه من مكرهم ورد كيدهم في نحورهم، وإنه سيستوفي
from the machinations of his enemies and that ultimately their ploys 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
إجاه حتى يموت حتف الله من غير قتل ولا صلاب؛ ثم يرفعه الله إليه. وهذا هو ما يفهمه القراء للايات الواردة في شان نهاية عيسى مع قومه متي وقف على سنة الله مع إبنيائه حين يتناول عليهم خصوهم، ومتي خلاءذه نمن تلك الروايات التي لا ينبغي انتزاعه من بينهم ورفعه بحسده إلى السماء مكرًا؟ وكيف يوصف إنه خير من مكرهم مع إنه شئ ليس في استطاعتهم ان يقاوموه، شئ ليس في قدرة البشر! إلا إنه لا يتحقق مكر في مقابلة مكر إلا إذا كان جاريًا على إسلوبه غير خارج عن مقتضى العادة فيه. وقد جاء مثل هذا في شان قد صلى الله عليه وسلم، وإذ يذكر بك الذين كفر واينبتوك أو يقلوك أو يخرجوك ويمكرون ويمكر الله والله خير الماكرين،

والخلاصه من هذا البحث:

1- إنه ليس في القرآن الكريم ولا في السنة المطهرة مستند يصال لتكوين عقيدة يطمئن إليها القلب بأن عيسى رفع بجسمه 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.
السماوات ملكها لله وملائكته، وملائكة الأرض ملكها لله وملائكته، وملائكة النار ملكها لله وملائكته. إن كل ما تفيده الآيات الواردة في هذا الشان هو وعد الله عيسى بن مريم صلى الله عليه وسلم، ورافعه إليه وعاصمه من الذين كفروا، وإن هذا الوعد قد تحقق فلم يقتله إلا الله ولم يصابوه، ولكن وقاه الله اجله ورفعه إليه.

إن من أنكر أن عيسى قد رفع بجسده إلى السماء وإنها إلى الآن وأنه سينزل منها آخر الزمان فإنه لا يكون بذلك منكرا لما شبت بدليل قطعي فلا يخرج عن إسلامه وإيمانه ولا ينبغي أن يحكم عليه بالرد، بل هو مسلم مؤمن، إذ ما فهمن من المؤمنين يصل عليه كما يصل على المؤمنين، ويدفن في مقابر المؤمنين ولا يشية في إيمانه عند الله والله بعباده خير بصبر.

اما السؤال الأخير في الاستفسار وهو (ما حكم من لا يؤمن به إذا فرض أنه عاد مرة أخرى إلى الدنيا) فلا محل له بعد الذي قرره ولا ينججه السؤال عنه والله إله.