



WILL JESUS THE CHRIST DROP FROM THE CLOUDS?

And Muhammad is but a messenger —
messengers have already passed away before him.
(The Quran)

by

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Mirza Masum Beg.

Will Jesus the Christ Drop From the Clouds ?

We have before us a copy of the Ramzan Number of the *Muslim Digest* of South Africa (February 1963) in which Mr. Justice F.K. of the Calcutta High Court, India, has expressed his views (p. 143) on the *Descent of Jesus Christ*. The learned writer tells us :

The Christians believe that Jesus died on the Cross, but he re-appeared again in flesh and blood and lives in heaven. The Quran says that Jesus was not crucified and killed, but he was raised up to heaven. The traditions say that he will reappear again to reclaim the lost humanity from the evil path.

Crucifixion

The event of crucifixion is such a hard fact of history that it can neither be gainsaid nor doubted. Two big nations of the world, the Jews and the Christians, and also the historical record of that time bear an irrefragable evidence to the fact that Jesus the Christ, son of Mary, was undoubtedly impaled on the Cross; and it will, therefore, be a deliberate denial of an historical truth to state that *Jesus was not crucified and killed, but he was raised up to heaven*. Jesus, it is a plain and honest truth, was hung upon the Cross; but he died not on the Cross; and when he was taken down from the Cross, he was alive but in a state of complete unconsciousness, resembling death. So the Holy Quran said *wa maa salabuhu* i.e. they caused not his death on the Cross.

It is simply unthinkable that the Holy Quran, which is the infallible Word of the All-Knowing God, should make a statement inconsistent with such a hard fact of history. It may be that a wrong interpretation has been put upon the Quranic text dealing with and describing this well-known event. Crucifixion was, at the time of which we are speaking, a well-known method of executing malefactors and criminals. It was, of course, highly torturous and tardy. According to the Arabic lexicon, as well as the idiom and phraseology of the People of the Book, only such a man was called *crucified* who actually yielded up the ghost and expired on the Cross. Jesus died not upon the Cross, so he could not be called *Crucified*.

Modern Research

That Jesus died not upon the Cross, but was in a state of complete unconsciousness when taken down from the Cross, is also the finding of eminent Christian scholars of modern age who held an impartial enquiry and investigated the event of crucifixion. In view of the limited space at our disposal, a few testimonies only are reproduced below :

1. David Friedrich Strauss, a German theologian of high learning, writes in his book *A New Life of Jesus* (Vol. 1, p. 410) :

Crucifixion. they maintain, even if the feet as well as the hands are supposed to have been nailed, occasions but very little loss of blood. It kills, therefore, only very slowly

by convulsions produced by the straining of the limbs or by gradual starvation. So if Jesus, supposed indeed to be dead, had been taken down from the Cross after about six hours, *there is every probability of his supposed death having been only a death-like swoon* from which after the descent from the Cross, Jesus recovered again in the cool cavern, covered as he was with healing ointments and strongly scented spices. On this head it is usual to appeal to an account in Josephus who says that on one occasion, when he was returning from a Military reconnaissance on which he had been sent, he found several Jewish prisoners who had been crucified. He saw among them three acquaintances whom he begged Titus to give to him. They were immediately taken down and carefully attended to; one was really saved, but two others could not be recovered.

2. Dean Farrar writes in his book *Life of Christ* (p. 421):

He (Jesus) might be only in a syncope.

Syncope, according to Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, signifies :

A partial or complete temporary suspension of respiration and circulation due to cerebral anaemia and characterized by sudden pallor, coldness of the skin and partial or complete unconsciousness.

3. There is yet another book *Supernatural Religion* by Das Heiligthum and Die Wahrheit, in which it is written :

Thus the apparent death was that *profound faintness* which might well fall upon an organisation after some hours of

physical and mental agony on the Cross, following the continued strain and fatigue of the previous night.

4. The *winding-sheet* in which the body of Jesus was wrapped, was found in the sepulchre (John, 10:5). It has been preserved all through the centuries and is still in existence. It bears the impressions of Jesus' body and the marks of blood and ointment which was applied to his body. In 1931, a team of German scientists got this winding-sheet from the Italian Government and instituted an intensive research, upon it for eight years. The result of their research, when made available to the press, was published in the Scandinavian paper, *Stockholm Tidningen* (April 2, 1957). In the report which the scientists submitted to Pope Pious IX, they stated in clear and unambiguous terms that *Jesus' heart had not stopped functioning*, when he was taken down from the Cross; that is to say, he was alive.

The Two Verses

The learned writer, Mr. Justice F.K., has, in support of his statement that *Jesus was not crucified and killed but he was raised up to heaven*, quoted the following two verses of the Holy Quran :

1. And their saying, Surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Apostle of Allah, but they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him. but it was made dubious to them (3 : 157).
2. I will take you and raise you up to ME, and clear you of those who disbelieve (3 : 54).

The learned writer, obviously, has misunderstood the Quranic statement *wa maa salabuhu* to mean that they hanged not Jesus on the Cross. It should be understood that the term *salb* carries exactly the same significance as the English term *Crucify* which means to put to death and kill by fixing the hands and feet to the Cross. It is a matter of fact that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, but, as shown in the foregoing pages, he expired not on the Cross. The Holy Quran has merely disclosed that fact that the Jews succeeded not in killing him on the Cross; and when he was taken down from the Cross, he was in a state of *profound faintness, a death-like swoon.*

The Jewish Plot

But before entering upon a discussion of these two verses, it seems necessary to give a brief history of the event of crucifixion which took place 500 years before the advent of Islam. When Jesus, son of Mary, announced his mission to the Children of Israel (the Jews) and claimed that he was the Messiah foretold in the ancient scriptures, they rejected his claim and called him a false prophet. The Jews had their own reasons for it, which we shall discuss in their proper place in the sequel. The Jews, then, conspired to kill him; and this they could very easily do, for Jesus travelled up and down the country, over the hill and the dale, delivering his message to the people, and could easily be put to death when found alone. But their plan was much deeper and darker. It was written in the Law of Moses :

1. A false prophet or dreamer of dreams shall be put to death (Deut. 13 : 5).
2. And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; *for he that is hanged is accursed of God* (Deut 21 : 23).

The Jews, therefore, planned to kill Jesus by hanging him on the Cross that it might be proved to the world that he was a false prophet and an accursed of God. And an accursed of God is he whose heart is deprived of the mercy and grace, and love and knowledge of God; he is at war with God, and God is at war with him. And it is for this reason that the *Accursed One* is a name of Satan.

Jesus' Prayer

When Jesus came to know of this dark plot of the Jews, he was very much disconcerted and dismayed. It should, however, be clearly understood that he was certainly not afraid of death. A true and faithful believer will never hesitate to lay down his life ungrudgingly for the sake of Truth. But it was the manner of death, the damned death on the Cross that caused consternation in his mind. Death on the Cross, as already stated, was, according to the Law of Moses and the Prophets which Jesus had come to fulfil, highly contemptible and base in the eyes of God, and consigned the hanged person into eternal damnation and perdition. It was this horrible idea that cast a dark gloom upon the mind of Jesus and unnerved him. In great agony and distress, he prayed to the Most High God, entreating,

Abba, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt (Mark, 14 : 36).

On one occasion, the present writer asked respectfully a Christian preacher with reference to this verse :

Was this prayer of Jesus answered by God ?

The astute padre spoke *words and words and words*, but gave not a straight and honest reply; for he knew where he stood. If he said that the prayer was not granted, it meant that the Jews were on the right in condemning him as a false prophet who had no relation with the Most High God; and if he said that the prayer was answered, it would mean that Jesus was saved from the damned death on the Cross, giving a direct lie to the fundamental Christian doctrine of atonement whereon the whole super-structure of Church Christianity has been erected.

Prayer Accepted

This prayer of Jesus : *Take away this cup from me*, offered in a state of agony and anguish (Luke, 22 : 44), was heard by the Most High God *and there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him* (Luke, 21 : 33). Paul, the founder of Church Christianity, speaking of this acceptance of Jesus' prayer by the Most High God, writes in his *Epistle to the Hebrews* (5 : 7) :

Who (Jesus) in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death *and was heard in that he feared*.

Jesus' prayer was for being saved from the cursed death on the Cross; and his prayer was heard, and he died not upon the Cross, but was in a state of profound faintness when taken down from the Cross.

The Quranic Recapitulation

The Holy Quran, in the verses under discussion, has simply summed up and recapitulated the history of the event of crucifixion as well as the Divine promise that had been vouchsafed to him :

And the Jews planned and Allah also planned. And Allah is the best of planners.

When Allah said : O Jesus, I will cause thee to die, and exalt thee in My presence, and clear thee of those who disbelieve, and make those who follow above those who disbelieve to the day of Resurrection (3 : 53, 54).

And for their (the Jews) saying; We have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the Cross, but he was made to appear to them as such. And certainly those who differ therein are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for certain (4 : 157).

The Term Mutawaffi-Ka

Hazrat Ibn-Abbas, a famous companion of the Prophet and the most authoritative of all the commentators of the Holy Quran, says that the significance of the term *mutawaffi-ka*, used in the verse (3 : 54), is *mumitu-ka*, *I will cause thee to die* (Bukhari. 65 : 12), and not *I will take you*,

as Mr. Justice F.K. has given us to know. Furthermore, according to *Lisan al-Arab*, a well-known dictionary of the Arabic language,

You say *Twaff-hu-llahu* when you mean Allah took his soul or caused him to die.

And according to *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, it means

God took his soul (either at death or in sleep) or caused him to die.

Picthall's translation is : *O Jesus I am gathering thee*. And this is the Biblical idiom for causing to die. For example :

- Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and *was gathered* to his people (Genesis, 25 : 8).
- And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died and *was gathered* unto his people (Genesis, 35 : 29).

Yusaf Ali, in his first edition, translated these words to mean. *I will cause thee to die*, but later on he changed it to *I will take thee*.

George Sale..... O Jesus, Verily I will cause thee to die.
 Rodwell O Jesus, Verily I will cause thee to die.
 Palmer O Jesus, I will make thee die.

Divine Promise

The Jewish plot, as stated above, was to kill Jesus by the ignominious death on the Cross. But the Most High God

assured him that the Jewish plot would be frustrated, and that he would afterwards die a natural death. The Divine promise consisted of four clauses :

1. That Jesus would be saved from the damned death on the Cross, and would die a natural death afterwards.
2. That he would be made honourable in the Divine presence as against the Jewish plan to show him an accursed of God.
3. That he would be cleared of all the charges brought against him by the Jews.
4. That his followers (the Christians) would dominate over his rejectors (the Jews) till the day of Resurrection.

In the verse (4 : 157), it has been stated that the Divine promise held out to Jesus had been fulfilled, and the Jews could not kill him on the Cross.

Prof. Rev. J.R. Dummelow, in his *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, writes on p. 908.

The myrrh and aloe were reduced to powder, and inserted between the bandages which were wound fold upon fold.....
The neck and face of the body were doubtless left bare.

This statement is further corroborated by Dean Farrar in his book *Life of Christ* (p. 429) wherein he writes :

They rolled the fine linen round the wounded limbs.

It is thus but obviously clear that some trusted friends of Jesus knew full well that he was not dead but only in a state of profound faintness; otherwise there could be no sense in rendering medical aid to a dead man and dressing his wounds.

Doubt

Death on the Cross was a slow and tardy affair, and people remained alive on the Cross sometimes for six or seven days. But Jesus, a robust bachelor of 33 years, remained on the Cross for three hours only, and people at that very time doubted his death, for he had been taken off the Cross much earlier than was necessary. It is written in the Gospel that a Roman counsellor, Joseph of Arimathea, who secretly believed in Jesus, when approached Pilate the Governor, and craved Jesus' body :

Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurian, he asked him whether he (Jesus) had been any while dead (Mark, 15 : 44).

And this is what the Holy Quran has said : *and certainly those who differ therein doubt about it.*

The Challenge

With regard to the significance of the term *tawaffa*, the Great Imam of this age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him) threw an open challenge to all the Ulema and scholars of the world, saying,

If a person should prove from the Holy Quran, or the Holy Prophet's traditions, or from the prose or poetry of ancient or even modern Arabia, that the term *tawaffa*, when used in reference to God's action taken on a living being, has ever been used in any other sense than the taking away of soul and causing to die, i.e. in the sense of taking away the body, to such a person, I declare upon the most solemn oath. I shall pay Rs. 1000/- even though I may have to sell a portion of my property for this purpose, and shall also accept and acknowledge the profoundness of his knowledge of *hadith* and the Holy Quran (*Izalah-i Auham*)

This challenge has stood unanswered for the last half century. Will Mr. Justice F.K. or any other person of his way of thinking, pick up the gauntlet?

The Term Raf'

The other term which has been misunderstood in this verse, is *raf'*. It means *raising or elevating*, and also *exalting or making honourable*. But where the *raf'* of a man to Allah is spoken in the Holy Quran, or in the religious literature of Islam, it is always in the sense of exalting or making honourable; for the raising of a man in his body to Allah implies that the Most High God is confined to a place, which is absurd on the face of it. Every Muslim, in his daily prayers, implores the Most High God with the humble request *wa-rfa'-i* which means *and exalt me*. He repeats it in the sitting position between the two prostrations, saying,

الهم المغفر لي وارحمني واهدني ورزقني وارفعني واجبرني

But none of the Muslims, even Mr. Justice F.K, we are inclined to believe, ever thinks and wishes that he may, without yielding up the ghost, be lifted up to heaven in his body of clay. It should be remembered that the Jewish plan was to kill Jesus by crucifixion to show to the world that he was an impostor and accursed of God. Hence the exaltation of Jesus is mentioned as a reply to the Jews.

The great Imam Bukhari has also given his final and decisive ruling on the point that *رفع الى السماء* does not mean the rising up and ascending to heaven in this earthly body. He Said

رفع الى السماء رفعه ضد وضة وينه الدعاء اللهم ارغنى
ولا تفضحنى والله يرفع من يشاء ويغفض

i.e. *raf'* towards heaven is the inverse action, the opposite of downfall and disgrace; hence this prayer that

O Allah, grant me *raf'*, and elevate and exalt me, and put me not to shame and disgrace. Allah up-lifts and exalts whomsoever He pleases, and flings down and debases whomsoever He pleases.

It is thus but obviously clear that *raf'* or ascension towards heaven means nothing else but the conferment of honour and dignity.

Christians' Acceptance of Islam

In the earlier times when the Christians of different countries entered the fold of Islam in legions, they brought

with them their old tales and legends about Jesus the Christ; for instance, his immaculate conception, his wonder-working power, his ascension to heaven in this earthly body, and his second coming to this earth in the latter days. These stories spread among the Muslims, and gradually penetrated into books and commentaries; and the Muslims, unfortunately, began to interpret the verses of the Quran in the light of these stories.

Imaginary Stories

The Christian converts related a story that the Jews hanged Jesus on the Cross, and he died there, but he rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended to heaven. But the Holy Quran said: *wa maa qa-ta-loo-hu wa maa sa-la-boo-hu* i.e. they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the Cross. Hence the invention of fanciful stories.

One story said that Jesus was sitting in the company of his disciples when the Jews reached there to apprehend him. Jesus spoke to his disciples, asking: Who of you would like to be with me in Paradise so that my shape and likeness be stamped on him? Forthwith a young disciple offered himself for the noble purpose. Jesus, then, flew up to heaven, and the young disciple was crucified in his place. Incredible and absurd story. If Jesus knew that he would immediately ascend to heaven, beyond the reach of his enemies, why should he have allured a young disciple to lay down his life on the Cross which made him an accursed of God and consigned him into eternal fire and damnation?

What useful purpose, one is naturally tempted to ask, did his ignominious death serve? Was it to throw the Jews off the scent that they might not pursue and apprehend Jesus on the fourth heaven? But if Jesus, without the employment of this trick, had gone up to heaven in the sight of the Jews, it would indeed have been a great sign, and might have induced them to believe in him.

Another story said that it was Judas Iscariot, the traitor himself, who had agreed with the rulers of the Jews to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, on whom the shape and resemblance of Jesus was stamped. It is rightly said that *wrong never comes right*. If he was, in fact, Judas Iscariot a disciple, who was leading the Jews for the arrest of Jesus, why did he not raise any hue and cry that he was not Jesus who had ascended up to heaven? Why did not the Jews look for and search Judas Iscariot who had been leading them for the apprehension of Jesus? Strange enough, this man, when produced before Pilate, stated that he was the Christ. He was sentenced to be crucified which was the most torturous death. A crown of thorns was put upon his head. He was laughed at and ridiculed, and was at last hung upon the Cross. But how was it that he spoke not a word of protest that he was not Jesus? After crucifixion wherefrom he escaped death with the skin of his teeth, this man met disciples and Mary, the mother of Jesus; but again he disclosed not unto them that he was Judas Iscariot, and not Jesus who had gone up to heaven. This strange story puts us in mind of Shakespeare's well-known line,

*If this were played upon a stage now,
I could condemn it as improbable fiction.*

Question At Issue

The inventors of these stories would have the world believe that the Most High God, when the Jews came to lay their hands on Jesus pulled Jesus up to heaven, and stamped his shape and likeness on another man whom the Jews apprehended and crucified, believing that he was Jesus, son of Mary who claimed to be the Promised Messiah; and the Law said, *he that is hanged is accursed of God.* Then, were not the Jews on the right in rejecting Jesus as a false prophet? Was not God Himself responsible for misleading them into unbelief by His stratagem of stamping Jesus' shape and resemblance on another man? Will the inventors of these fictitious fables have us believe that whereas the Most High God in Whom resides all power, was strong enough to save and protect His other prophets, on this very earth, from the hands of their enemies when they conspired to kill them; Abraham and Moses were saved on this very earth from the aggressive hands of mighty monarchs; the Holy Prophet, too, was saved on this very earth from his blood-thirsty enemies when they had surrounded his house with drawn swords; but it was exclusively in the case of Jesus the Christ that His almightiness gave way and failed so that in order to save Jesus, He had to resort to such a trick which eventually caused the Jews to go astray?

Order of Events

To return to the verse under discussion. The order in which the events promised in the Divine Word were to take place, had also been specified in the verse, as given below:

1. Natural death.
2. Exaltation into Divine presence.
3. Clearance of all charges.
4. Predominance of the Christians over the Jews up-
to the day of Resurrection.

But people who cling to the wrong belief that Jesus has been alive in heaven in this earthly body for all these two thousand years without any decline or decay, would have this Quranic order changed, for which of course they have no authority. If the first event of death did not occur in the first place, then, when shall it come to pass, is the question which naturally arises in the mind of an impartial enquirer. Besides the above-mentioned Quranic order, there can be only three more possible combinations :

- (i) 1. Exaltation into Divine presence.
2. Death.
3. Clearance of charges.
4. Predominance of the Christians.

It means that until his death takes place, Jesus will not be cleared of the dirty charges which the Jews had levelled against him. In other words, he has not as yet been exonerated of those charges. And this is absolutely wrong. The Quranic revelation has cleared him perfectly of all those charges.

- (ii) 1. Exaltation into Divine presence.
 2. Clearance of charges.
 3. Death.
 4. Predominance of the Christians.

It means that until Jesus' death comes off, his followers will not wield authority and dominate; that is to say, the Christians have not yet got into the seat of power and authority which is obviously against the undeniable facts of history.

- (iii) 1. Exaltation into Divine presence.
 2. Clearance of charges.
 3. Predominance.
 4. Death.

In this case, the verse will then read as :

O Jesus, I will exalt thee in My presence, and clear thee of

those who disbelieve, and make those who follow thee above those who disbelieve to the day of Resurrection, and I will cause thee to die.

This means that Jesus' death will take place after the day of Resurrection, which is evidently absurd on the face of it. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable and absolute that the order of events as given in the Holy Quran is unalterable and fast, *viz*,

1. Natural death.
2. Exaltation into Divine presence.
3. Clearance of charges.
4. Predominance of the followers.

And it is a plain matter of truth that Jesus the Messiah, son of Mary (peace be on him) is dead, and to believe in his deathless existence in heaven in his body of clay, for all these two thousand years, is repugnant to the infallible teaching of the Holy Quran.

Verification

It is a distinctive feature of the Holy Quran only that its verses militate not against each other, but a text here confirms and corroborates what has been stated and taught elsewhere. Now turn over chapter 5, *The food*, and read verses 118-119:

And when Allah will say (on the day of Judgment) : O Jesus, son of Mary, did 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 I said to them naught save as Thou didst command me : 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 wast the Watcher over them.*

One is naturally tempted to ask : If Jesus be not dead, but is alive in heaven, and will pay another visit to this earth before his death, and see with his own eyes that the Christians, for aking the doctrine of Divine Unity which he had preached unto them, have adopted the Pauline creed, raising him to the dignity of Divine Being, will he be speaking the truth in making this statement before the Judgment Seat of God : *I was a witness of them so long as I was among them that they followed the right religion taught by me; but when Thou didst cause me to die I knew not what they did after me ?* It is a matter of fact that after the death or disappearance of Jesus the Christ, his followers fell into error and went astray. It is therefore, a simple syllogism that if the Christians, as we have them, are following in the wrong course, then Jesus is surely dead. But if he is not dead and is still alive, then it will have to be admitted that the Christians have not gone astray and follow the true religion which Jesus had preached unto them. It is for the advocates of deathless existence of Jesus in heaven to decide and declare which of the two positions is correct and true.

We invite the attention of our readers to another verse of the Holy Quran (61 : 6) which reads :

And when Jesus, son of Mary, said : O Children of Israel, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah, *and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad.*

In this verse, Jesus the Christ is said to have given his people the glad tidings of the advent of a Prophet whose name was Ahmad *Coming after him*, i.e. after Jesus' death. The Holy Prophet of Arabia was known by two names *Muhammad* and *Ahmad*.

Five hundred years passed over this prophecy, and a man named Ahmad appeared on the stage, claiming that he was the Prophet whose advent had been foretold by Jesus the Messiah. The logical conclusion was that Jesus was dead and not staying alive in heaven in his earthly body, for the Promised Prophet was to *come after him*. But the upholders of the theory of deathless existence of Jesus in heaven would have the world believe that he will drop from the clouds in latter days, and live on this earth for forty years more, preaching to the people, and then die. It means that the Promised Prophet Ahmad will then come into the world. We put it to the upholders of this fantastic theory to state in all seriousness whether this Ahmad of Arabia, the recipient of the Quranic revelation (peace and the blessings of God be upon him), was or was not truthful in his claim, for he said that he had come in fulfilment of the prophecy

uttered by Jesus the Messiah ? If he was the true Prophet—and most surely he was—then, Jesus the Christ, son of Mary, is dead beyond all question.

Another Verse Misunderstood

In support of Jesus' deathless existence in heaven, Mr. Justice F.K. has adduced another queer argument. He writes :

This is very clear from the next verse which leaves no room for doubt that Jesus Christ has not died. The verse runs thus: And there will be no followers of the book but will certainly believe in him (Jesus) before his (Jesus') death (4 : 159).

This interpretation comes into conflict with and contradicts what has been said in the verse (3 : 54) :

And Allah said : O Jesus, I will make those who follow thee (the Christians) above those who disbelieve (the Jews) *to the day of Resurrection.*

Obviously, the Jews will continue to be in existence up to the *day of Resurrection*. In the verse (4 : 157), the Holy Quran has made a mention of the historical truth that Jesus died not upon the Cross, but *was made to appear to them as such*, and that the Jews themselves were *in doubt about it*. But in spite of these hard facts, the Holy Quran says, both the Jews and the Christians still cling to the wrong belief that Jesus was killed by the damned death on the Cross. Every Jew even up to this day believes it as the basic principle of his faith, and repeats it before his death

that Jesus, son of Mary, who was killed on the Cross, was accursed of God and an impostor. Likewise, every Christian believes it as a fundamental principle of his faith, and repeats it before his death that Jesus died on the Cross, and became doomed and accursed. Writes Paul in his *Epistle to the Galatians* (3 : 13) :

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

Every Jew and Christian, notwithstanding the fact that he has no sure knowledge at all, must believe before his death (not Jesus' death) that Jesus died on the Cross. And this is what has been stated in the verse under reference:

And there is none of the People of the Book but will believe in this (of which he has a doubt historically) before his death; and on the day of Resurrection, he (Jesus) will be a witness against them (that they adopted a doctrine which was against their own historical knowledge and truth).

Unanimous Verdict

Mr. Justice F. K's attention is respectfully invited to the first great *ijma* of the *Ummat* which took place immediately after the Holy Prophet's death. Some of the Companions thought that the Prophet was not dead, giving rise to a controversy which assumed a dangerous form. Hazrat Abu Bakr went into the room where the Prophet's body was; and seeing that life had departed, he ascended the pulpit and recited the Quranic verse :

And Muhammad is but a messenger — messengers have already passed away before him.

All the Companions were convinced that the Prophet had passed away, *as all the prophets had passed away before him*. This verse furnishes a conclusive proof that Jesus the Christ was no exception, and that he was also dead; otherwise Hazrat Abu Bakr's argument could not have silenced the doubters of the Prophet's death. And when Jesus was dead like all other prophets, the question of his return to this earth does not arise.

Muslim Scholars

Truth is imperishable. It must triumph in the long run. Scholars of high learning and repute have now begun to acknowledge and accept the Quranic truth that *Jesus is dead*, propounded by the Great Imam of this age, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him). A few examples:

(i) **Allama Muhammad Abdhu** who was a great teacher and *mufti* of Egypt and had been honoured with titles of *Hujjat al-Islam* and *Sheikh al - Islam*, wrote in the well - known Magazine *Al-Manar*, commenting on the verse (3 : 54) :

The meaning of *tawaffa* here is *death*, and this significance is obviously clear from the context, and is also acceptable to human reason and intellect.

(ii) **Sheikh Mahmood Shaltut**, Rector of Al-Azhar which is the most eminent seat of Islamic learning of the

present day, has also elucidated this point beyond all shadow of doubt. In answer to the following question :

Is Jesus dead or alive according to the Quran 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 about one who disbelieves in him in case he comes to the world for the second time ?

the great scholar whose word of course carried power and authority with it, entered upon a detailed discussion of the Quranic verses and the Holy Prophet's Traditions, and concluded his impartial and independent finding in the following words :

To sum up :

- (1) There is nothing in the Holy Quran 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 heavens with his body and is alive there even now, and would descend therefrom in the latter days.
- (2) *The Quranic 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 has 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 days, does not deny a fact that can be established by clear, conclusive argument. 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 our's, this question does not arise at all. God is the best Knower. *Mahmud Shaltut.*

All these eminent religious scholars, it may be pointed out in passing for the information of Mr. Justice F.K. and others of his way of thinking, are not the followers of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, nor connected with the Ahmadiyya Movement in any way.

(iii) **Allama Mustfa Al-Maraghi** who was also the Rector of Al-Azhar University (Egypt), has written in his *Commentary* on the Holy Quran :

In this verse (3 : 54), a glad tiding had been given to Jesus, saying, that the Most High God would deliver him from the dark plot of the Jews, and complete the span of his life in the natural course. The Jews who wanted, most maliciously, to inflict harm on Jesus, could not succeed in their plan. The meaning of the term *tawaffa* is *death* as usual; and the significance of *raf'* is his spiritual exaltation after death. The verse, therefore, means : *I will cause you to die; and after your death, I will exalt you in My presence; just as the Most High God*

has said of Idris (called Enoch in the Bible): *ورفعنا مكا ناعليا*
i.e. We raised him to an elevated state.

(iv) **Dr Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi**, another well-known scholar of Egypt, wrote in the Arabic magazine *Al-Muwahab* of Argentine (March 1955) :

Islam knows it full well that God is present every where, and is the light of the heavens and the earth. The Quranic statement *رفعه الله اليه* certainly carries not any material significance; that is to say, the Most High God has, as professed and preached by the Christians, lifted Jesus up in the heaven; but *raf'*, in this verse means *to give refuge and protect*. And it was done accordingly. When Jesus was placed in the tomb, his disciples took him away from there in the dark of the night, and lavished all care and treatment upon him in secret until he recovered. Then he fled away to the Eastern countries for the purpose of propagating his sublime teaching in safety, until God caused him to die. The significance of *raf'* in this verse, as against the cursed death on the Cross which is inflicted on criminals, is *to exalt, to raise in honour, to give shelter and protection*.

The Christian Argument

The Christian preachers, in support of Jesus' ascension to heaven in his earthly body, adduce the following texts from the Gospels :

1. And Jesus led them (disciples) as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven (Luke, 24 : 51) :

2. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he *was received up into heaven* and sat on the right hand of God (Mark, 10 : 19).

The present writer, on one occasion, asked a Christian preacher who called himself an Evangelist, when he adduced these two verses in support of Jesus' ascension to heaven in his physical body : How is it that of the four Gospel-writers, only two, Mark and Luke, speak of this ascension, whereas the other two, Matthew and John, make no mention of such a great event, *viz* Jesus' going up to heaven in this earthly body, breaking all the Laws of Nature ? The astute Evangelist could not solve the riddle, but afforded us some amusement, being an apt exemplification of what the Irish poet, Oliver Goldsmith, sang two hundred years ago :

*In arguing too the parson owned his skill,
For even though vanquished, he could argue still.*

Finding of Christian Scholars

1. Rev. Prof. J.R. Dummelow and with him the whole team of forty-two eminent scholars, state in their *Commentary on the Holy Bible* :

Internal evidence points definitely to the conclusion that the last twelve verses (i.e. from 9 to 20 verses) are not by St. Mark When at the close of the Aposolic age an attempt was made (probably in Rome) to collect the authentic memorials of the Apostles and their companions, a copy of the neglected second Gospel (i.e Mark) was not easily found.

The one that was actually discovered, and was used to multiply copies, had lost its last leaf, and so a fitting termination (the present appendix) was added by another hand. A recently discovered Armenian MS (1891) definitely ascribes the appendix to Ariston.

It is thus but obviously clear that the verse 19 of chapter 16 of Mark (the last leaf) is an interpolation, and the statement *was received up into heaven*, a pious forgery committed by Ariston. Mark's account, therefore, cannot, be taken as basis for this doctrine.

The same is the case of the other verse (Luke, 24 : 51) also, With reference to this verse. it is written in the above mentioned *Commentary* :

A few ancient authorities omit these words (and carried up into heaven)

2. Peake is another Christian scholar of repute. He has also compiled a *Commentary of the Bible*, in which he writes ;

The words, *and was carried up into heaven*, are omitted in some of the best MSS, and have probably crept in from Acts 1 : 2, 9.

3. The Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, published in 1957, has also omitted these words, and the verse reads :

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God.

If Jesus did not ascend up into heaven, the question of his descent or dropping from the clouds does not arise.

American Magazine

A Christian magazine, *Abundant Life*, of America, giving the glad news to the world that the year 1958 might be the year of Jesus' return to this earth, wrote in its issue of 1958:

Yes, during the brand new year, cherish the memories of the blessings of God and be constantly aware that 1958 may be the year of Christ's return.

Ten years have, since then, gone by, but Lord Jesus the Christ has not descended from his supposed seat on the right hand of God: *Oft expectation fails, and most oft there where most it promises.* Jesus had said:

I will come again and receive you unto myself (John, 14 : 3).
Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom (Matt. 16 : 28).

Lord Krishna of the Hindus of India is also reported to have made a similar claim of re-appearances in the world. Turn over *Bhagavada Gita*, chapter 4 and read verses 7 and 8:

Whenever there is decay of *dharma* (true religion) and predominance of unrighteousness, *I myself come forth*. for the protection of the good. and the destruction of the evil-doers, and for the sake of firmly-established righteousness and truth *I am born from age to age*.

Objection

Five thousand years have passed since Krishna held out this promise to his followers, but not even once he made his appearance to make good and redeem his promise. Likewise two thousand years have gone by, and many generations have come and disappeared from the surface of this earth, but Jesus descended not from heaven. One is, therefore, constrained to ask: Did these holy men mean what they said, or was it a mere empty brag which they had uttered to induce high opinion of themselves in the minds of incredulous people?

Figures of Speech

These holy persons, it should be clearly understood, spoke under inspiration from heaven, and their word could not go amiss and fail. But the trouble arose from the fact that whereas they spoke in the language of metaphor and figure of speech, the sticklers of the letter clung pertinaciously to the literal meaning of their word and failed to appreciate their true intent. We read in Matthew (13:34):

All these things spoke Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spoke he not unto them.

(The reason being)

Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand (13 : 13).

Scriptural Idiom

By the *Second Coming* of a person, in scriptural usage, is meant the appearance of another man in the spirit and power of the former. Jesus himself has elucidated this point beyond all shadow of doubt. When he proclaimed himself as the Messiah *which was for to come*, the Jews took up cudgels against him, calling him an impostor; for it was written in the scripture that Prophet Elias who had gone up by a whirlwind into heaven (II Kings, 2 : 11) shall drop from the clouds before the appearance of the Promised Messiah; and Elias had not yet descended. Jesus explained to them with all his prophetic might that it was a figure of speech, the scriptural way of saying that another man would be raised in the spirit and power of Elias; and pointing to John the Baptist, Jesus said in answer to a question of his disciples :

—Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come ? Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things But I say unto you, that Elias is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matt, 17 : 11-13)

—And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come (Matt. 11 : 14) :

—And he (the Baptist) shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias (Luke, 1 : 17).

Christ is Come

In spite of the light and knowledge imparted to them by Jesus the Christ himself, the Christians, too, have slipped into the same error of letter worship. For two thousand years, they have been, like the Jews, straining their eyes in watching the skies for the second visit of Jesus, son of Mary. But it is a dream which shall never materialize. If Jesus can come from heaven for a second time, why not Elias? The truth of the matter, however, is that just as the promise of the second coming of Elias had been fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, in the same way, another man shall be raised in the spirit and power of Jesus in fulfilment of the prophecy of his second coming. This man was Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. He proclaimed himself as the Promised Messiah on March 4, 1889 for the information of the world through a widely-circulated poster, saying,

I am the Messiah which was for to come

رسول مژده زغيميم كه من هم'ن مردم
 كه او مجدد اين دين و ره نما باشد
 منم مسيح ببا نك بلند مے گويم
 منم خليفه شاهي كه برسما باشد

i.e. it has been revealed to me that I am the same man who is the *Mujaddad* of this faith and the guide unto the people.

With the loud beat of drum I proclaim that I am the Messiah, and that I am the successor of the King who is now in heaven (i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad).

A Pertinent Question

The story of the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ is so clear and distinct that it leaves *no hinge nor loop to hang a doubt on*: but a subtle fog may remain lurking in the mind of an impartial enquirer, a seeker-after-truth :

If Jesus died not on the Cross, but was alive and in a state of unconsciousness when taken down from the Cross, where did he go to after recovery; for, since then, he was not to be seen, not even once, any where in Palestine or its suburbs ?

Underground

Immediately after recovery, Jesus went underground to conceal himself: for if he had been discovered and seen alive he would have been, according to the Roman Law, apprehended again and put upon the Cross in a more secure way. He hid himself very probably in the house of Joseph of Arimathea: for it is written in the Gospel that he would appear suddenly unto his disciples, and disappear again after a short while. His place of hiding he had not disclosed even to his disciples. The Christians would have us believe in all seriousness that Jesus had risen from the dead. If it had been so, he would not have been afraid of the people in the least. In the case of supernatural rising, no power on

earth could have been able to bend a single hair of his body. But the Gospel record tells us that after the event of crucifixion, whenever he came out of his hiding place, he went about stealthily, carefully avoiding all detection, and had commanded his disciples also not to tell any one that he was alive.

Jesus' True Mission

Jesus had on several occasions announced his mission, saying,

—I am not sent but unto the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.

—And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, *and they shall hear my voice* (John, 10 : 16).

The present writer once enquired of a Christian friend during a discussion that according to the Gospel record, Jesus had been preaching for a year only in Jerusalem and its suburbs when the Jews killed him on the Cross; he could neither seek the Lost Tribes of Israel nor make them hear his voice; did Jesus fail in his mission? His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

These Lost sheep were the Ten Tribes of the House of Israel which had dispersed in the Eastern countries of Persia, Afghanistan and parts of Northern India, particularly Kashmir. For forty days, Jesus appeared unto his disciples intermittently. But his staying within the limits of the Roman Empire was fraught with fatal danger; for whenever it came to be known that he had escaped the gallows alive, he would be caught

again, and hanged to death on the Cross under a more strict guard. Jesus, therefore, left Jerusalem in disguise, leaving a word for his disciples to meet him on the mountain in Galilee which was at a distance of 95 miles from Jerusalem.

Emigration

Then the eleven disciples went away into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them (Matt 28:16).

Jesus gave them his final instructions regarding the carrying on his mission, and then departed for the Eastern countries. He went to Damascus where Judas Thomas, his most trusted disciple, also joined him. Judas was the twin-brother of Jesus; and it was for this reason that he was called *Thomas* or *Didymous* (John, 20:24) which means twin. Both he and Jesus had sucked from the two breasts of their mother Mary. They had other brothers and sisters also. In the Arabic literature, the term *ba'bad* which also means twin, is generally used for Thomas. Jesus and Thomas had been staying in Damascus for some time, when the news reached Jerusalem that Jesus was "perverting" the people there; and Paul (then Saul, and a bitter opponent of the Christian faith) proceeded to Damascus with letters of authority "to arrest men and women of this way, and bring them bound unto Jerusalem (Acts, 9:2).

Acta Thomae

Early in the second century C.E. a Christian Father, Leucius by name^o who was also the author of several

Apocryphal Acts, compiled a book *Acta Thomae* which was read and recited in churches upto the 6th century C.E. This ancient book tells us that both Jesus and Thomas, when the storm began to brew up at Damascus, left for Nasibain or Nisibis (also called Magdonia) before the arrival of Paul. Their mother Mary was also with them. Jesus preached unto the King of Nasibain. It so happened at that time that king Gondaphares who ruled over the territory called Taxila (now in Pakistan) made a request to the King of Magdonia to give him a skilled workman who could have a palace built for him after the Roman style for the celebration of his prince's wedding. Thomas was both a skilled mason and a carpenter; and he was, on the recommendation of Jesus, sent to Taxila.

Yuz Asaf

We read in *Ibn-i-Jarir* that "the king of Nasibain was a cunning man and when people tried to kill Jesus, he ran away. Jesus took all the necessary precaution and travelled incognito under the name of *Yuz Asaf*, so that the ancient records of the countries through which he passed thence forward, speak of him as *Yuz Asaf*: *Yuz* stood for *Yasu* (Jesus), and *Asaf* in Hebrew means *gatherer*. In view of his mission of gathering the scattered sheep of the House of Israel, this name *Yuz Asaf* befitted him the most.

At Taxila

Jesus travelled through Iran and Afghanistan, and reached Taxila to join his brother and disciple Thomas.

Here also Jesus preached unto the King, and had a free access into the Royal palace. The new palace having been built to the King's satisfaction and the marriage ceremony performed, Thomas was richly rewarded by the King of Taxila. The book *Acta Thomae* further tells us :

Thomas after the ceremonies left the palace. The bridegroom lifted the curtain which separated him from his bride. He saw Thomas, as he supposed, conversing with her. Then he asked in surprise : How canst thou be found here. Did I not see thee go out before all ?

And the Lord answered :

I am not Thomas but his brother. .

The twin-brothers were so much like each other that the prince mistook Jesus for Thomas.

Mother's Death

From Taxila the two brothers and their mother proceeded in the direction of Kashmir. Mary died on the way, and was buried at a place, 45 miles from Taxila. The place, since then, has been called *Murree* after her name.

In Kashmir

Jesus and Thomas continued their journey until they got into the large valley of Kashmir. The place of their entry, about 50 miles from Srinagar, on the bridle path from Kaghan, is called *Yasu Marg* up to this day. *Ikmal-ud-din* which is a thousand years old book, compiled by the famous historian, Al-Said-us-Sadiq, completes our story in these

words (p. 359) ;

Then Yuz Asaf, after roaming about in many cities, reached that country which is called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide, and stayed there and spent his remaining life there until death overtook him, and he left the earthly body and was elevated towards Light. But before his death he sent for a disciple of his, *Ba'bad* (Thomas) by name who used to serve him and was well-versed in all matters. He (Yuz Asaf) expressed his last will to him and said : My time for departing from this world has come. Carry on your duties properly, and turn not back from Truth, and say your prayers regularly. He, then, directed *Ba'bad* to prepare a tomb over him at the very place he died. He then stretched his legs towards the West and head towards the East, and died. May God bless him.

Irrefutable Evidence

We now quote from two very ancient books of history, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* by Muila Nadiri who was the first Muslim historian of Kashmir, and *Bhavishya Mahi Purana* compiled by a Hindu scholar Sutta in 115 C.E. Writing about the reign of Raja Gopadatta, the learned author of *Tarikh-i-Kashmir* writes :

After him his son Akh came to the throne. He ruled for sixty years. It is said that he founded the village of Achabaal in Kothar district. After him his son Gopananda took the reigns of Government and ruled the country under the name of Gopadatta. During his reign many temples were built, and on top of Mount Solomon the dome of the temple became cracked. He deputed one of his ministers named Sulaiman who had come from Persia, to repair it. The Hindus objected that he was

an infidel of another religion. *During this time, Hazrat Yuz Asaf having come from (Bait-ul-Muqaddas) the Holy Land to the valley (wadi-i-Aqdas) proclaimed his prophethood. He devoted himself day and night to prayers to God, and having attained the heights of piety and virtue, he declared himself to be a Messenger of God for the people of Kashmir. He invited people to his religion. Because the people of the valley had faith in this Prophet, Raja Gopadatta referred the objection of the Hindus to him. It was because of this Prophet's order that Sulaiman, whom Hindus called Sandeman, completed the repairs of the dome. Year fifty and four. On one of the stones of the stairs he (Sulaiman) inscribed :*

In these times Yuz Asaf proclaimed his prophethood (dar een waqt Yuz Asaf da'wa-i-paighambari mikunad), and on the other stone of the stairs he also inscribed that he (Yuz Asaf) was Yasu, Prophet of the Children of Israel (aishan Yasu paighambar i-Beni Israel ast). I have seen in a book of the Hindus that this Prophet was really Hazrat Isa (Jesus), Ruh-Allah (the spirit of God) on whom be peace, and had also assumed the name of Yuz Asaf

This Hindu book is *Bhavishya Maha Purana*. On p. 282, Parva III, Adhyaya II, Shalok 9-31, it is written :

One day Raja Shalewahin went to a country in the Himalayas. There he saw (what appeared to be) a Raja of Sakas at Wien who was fair in colour and wore white clothes. Shalewahin asked him who he was. His reply was that he was Yusashaphat (Yuz Asaf), and had been born of a woman, and he said that he spoke the truth and he had to purify the religion. The Raja asked him what his religion was. He replied; O Raja ! When truth had disappeared, and there was no limit to the evil practices in the *maleech* country, I appeared there, and through my work the guilty and the

wicked suffered, and I also suffered at their hands. The Raja asked him again what his religion was. He replied: It is love, truth and purity of heart and for this *I am called Isa Masih*. The Raja returned after making obeisance to him.

Wien is a place of sulphur spring about 10 miles North-East of Srinagar.

Judge Docker writes in his book *If Jesus did not die upon the Cross?* (p. 7), London 1920 :

I must here notice the old legend which I have before referred to. A modern version of it was given in the periodical *The East and West*, some years ago. Briefly, it is to the effect that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but recovered under treatment with a miraculous ointment being applied to his wounds, which healed in the space of forty days; that he journeyed to India to preach to the lost tribes of Israel, and eventually died at Srinagar, where a tomb is pointed out to this day as his.

Though I do not know of any evidence tending to establish the substantial truth of this account, I desire to point out that there is nothing *unreasonable or improbable about it*. We are told from other sources that there are to the present day in Afghanistan and Bactria tribes of unmistakable Hebrew type. It is surprising to find the number of passages in the New Testament writings which if they do not corroborate the story, at least are consonant with it. Is it unreasonable then to suppose that Jesus, finding it unsafe to remain in Judea or Galilee longer than the forty days during which he is said to have instructed his disciples in the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Acts 1 : 3) should feel called to carry the message to the lost tribes of Israel.

—Again on p. 77 he says :

I must repeat that we do know. It may be that after preaching to the lost ten tribes of the House of Israel, in those remote regions, Jesus died at Srinagar and was buried at the tomb that now bears his name.

To Sum Up

When Jesus, son of Mary, proclaimed that he was the Messiah *which was for to come*, the Jews rejected his claim, and in order to show to the world that he was an impostor and accursed of God, they conspired to kill him by the damned death on the Cross. Jesus prayed to the Most High God with strong crying and tears, to save him from the ignominious death on the Cross. His prayer was answered; and the Divine promise came unto him, saying *I will cause thee to die a natural death*. The Jews, according to their plan, hanged him on the Cross; but he died not there, and was in a state of complete unconsciousness, resembling death, when he was taken down and removed from the Cross. His close and trusted friends lavished all care upon him. Jesus revived and recovered, and emigrated to search and seek the Ten Lost Tribes of the House of Israel (the Afghans and the Kashmiris). He travelled through Iran and Afghanistan, and at last reached Kashmir. His trusted disciple and twin-brother Thomas also accompanied him. Jesus delivered his message to the Lost Tribes, and they heard his voice. According to a tradition of the Holy Prophet, Jesus lived to a good old age of 120 years. When he died, he was buried in Kashmir, near Srinagar, and his tomb exists there even up to this day.