

JESUS (PBUH) DID NOT DIE

**And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah,
Jesus son of Mary, messenger of God."
They did not kill him and they did not crucify him,
but it was made to seem so to them.
Those who argue about him are in doubt about it.
They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture.
But they certainly did not kill him. (Qur'an, 4:157)**

HARUN YAHYA

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Author: HARUN YAHYA

Translated by Carl Rossini

Edited by Jay Willoughby

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CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

Jesus' (pbuh) Was Not Killed and Is Not Dead

Other Evidence that Jesus' (pbuh) Is Not Dead

The Error of Those Who Maintain that Jesus (pbuh) Is Dead

Jesus (pbuh) in the Hadith

Jesus' (pbuh) Return Will Usher in Global Peace

Conclusion

The Deception of Evolution

To the Reader

- A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation – and therefore, God's existence – over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

- All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn God's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning God's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

- This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

- In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of God. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

- We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

- In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

About the Author

Now writing under the pen-name of HARUN YAHYA, he was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, he has published many books on political, scientific, and faith-related issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as the author of important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, their invalid claims, and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and such bloody ideologies as fascism and communism.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their people's lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of godless ideologies and to have the last word, so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as God's existence and unity and the Hereafter; and to expose godless systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, and Spain to Brazil. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, and Indonesian.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in God and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for God's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of God, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome

disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of God, these books will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

FOREWORD

Ever since time began, God's prophets and messengers have called people to the true path. Some people heeded this call and surrendered themselves to God, thus attaining an honorable life in this world and in the Hereafter. Others persisted in their unbelief, thus earning a troubled and difficult life in this world and eternal suffering in the Hereafter. Just like the other prophets sent by God, Jesus (pbuh) commanded his society to worship God, the One and Only, and to live with the knowledge that they will have to account for themselves on the Day of Judgment, recommended that they live by moral values that please God, and called on them to avoid denial, polytheism, and evil in all of its forms. Those who rejected his call tried to pressure him and those who followed him to give up their mission. For that reason, as has happened with many prophets and believers throughout history, they set traps for Jesus (pbuh). One of these was how they would kill him.

However, with his unique birth and the miracles he performed, Jesus (pbuh) was one of God's blessed prophets. God laid out a specific destiny for him, and thus all of the unbelievers' traps came to nothing. The Qur'an reveals that Jesus' (pbuh) enemies failed to kill him, although they were made to think that they had. God raised Jesus (pbuh) to His presence while he was still alive. The Qur'an, as well as the words of our beloved Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), say that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth, a great miracle indeed.

Those who maintain that Jesus (pbuh) was killed or is dead are making a serious mistake. One purpose in writing this book is to explain why this is so. In the following pages, we will examine the Qur'anic verses and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) that reveal the truth of this issue, which has confused so many people over the centuries.

In addition, this book will remind the reader of two important tidings: Jesus' (pbuh) return to Earth and the signs that will precede this event. By God's will, his second coming has drawn near, and the world will witness great events when it becomes a reality. All sincere believers need to prepare for this miraculous period in the most appropriate way.

Before examining the proofs that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead and will return to Earth, we will clarify several important points.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an and the hadith contain many signs indicating that the period of the End Times is approaching. Some of these signs are clearly revealed in those two sources, while others are referred to in a more indirect manner. This is part of God's testing of humanity.

The great Islamic scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi stressed this fact while explaining the signs of the End Times:

Religion is a test, an experience that separates the superior from the inferior. Therefore, an event that will be seen by everyone in the future will be debated in such a way that it will neither be completely obscure, nor so evident that it will inevitably be accepted by everyone. It will open the door to reason, but it will not do away with the possibility of choice. That is because if a sign of the Day of Judgment is seen in such a completely evident form that everyone is obliged to accept it, then a person with a coal-like predisposition will remain alongside a person with a diamond-like predisposition. As a result, the secret of God's charging humanity to act in compliance with His commands and prohibitions and the consequences of the test are lost.¹

Thus, one characteristic of the End Times' signs may be that not everyone who sees them can immediately understand and interpret them. The fact that some of these signs have been described in an oblique manner may cause some people to have doubts. Yet these doubts are completely unfounded, for when such signs are analyzed with a clear and open mind, they can be understood. Moreover, commentaries by great Islamic scholars are valuable guides for believers.

People with true faith and the requisite fear of and respect for God also have, as a blessing from our Lord, a deep understanding and comprehension. Thanks to this, they can accurately identify what is wrong and also understand, to the extent that God wills, that wisdom is often expressed in oblique terms. Such people will never feel any doubt about what our Lord reveals and what our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) has reported. They will evaluate the relevant hadith and Qur'anic verses through the eyes of faith, and will seek to understand the information contained within them. Rejecting wisdom-containing information just because one cannot understand it is unsuitable behavior for Muslims. Therefore, Muslims need to pray to our Lord in order to understand any wisdom that is unclear to them, remember that the End Times will be a most miraculous period, and prepare themselves for it in the most appropriate manner.

Muslims' Love of Jesus (pbuh)

As revealed in "**The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves...**" (Qur'an, 33:6), Muslims who have true faith also have a very deep, sincere, and powerful love of and respect for our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), the last prophet sent by God to humanity. Our Lord revealed the Qur'an to him and sent him as a messenger to lead humanity to salvation. The Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) is a chosen and honorable believer in God's sight.

Even though we have never seen our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), we can come to know his pleasing attitudes, words, and superior moral values from the Qur'an and the hadith, and we can do all

in our power to take him as our friend in the Hereafter. The Qur'an reveals that he is the finest role model for all believers:

You have an excellent model in the messenger of God, for all who put their hope in God and the Last Day, and remember God much. (Qur'an, 33:21)

One of the Muslims' main characteristics is that they make no distinctions in their love of and respect for all of God's prophets and obey them all from the heart: "... **We believe in God and what has been sent down to us; what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes; and what Moses, Jesus, and all the prophets were given by their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. We are Muslims, submitted to Him**" (Qur'an, 3:84). Muslims know that all of God's prophets are chosen, honorable, and respected individuals in His sight. God created all of His messengers with superior moral values and perfect behavior so that they could serve as role models for humanity. The prophets are His beloved servants. Many verses reveal that those who obey the prophets are actually obeying God, and that those who comply with God's prophets will be rewarded in this world and in the Hereafter. This devotion and obedience is shaped within that awareness.

Beginning with the Companions of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), it is a great source of honor for all believers who were the prophets' contemporaries to be with these blessed people. Being with the prophets, who set an example for all people with their deep faith in God, superior moral values, sharp intellects, and determination and courage is one of the most valuable blessings in this world. Those who sincerely obeyed Abraham (pbuh); who had faith in Joseph (pbuh); who fought against Pharaoh alongside Moses (pbuh); and who followed such great individuals as Noah (pbuh), Solomon (pbuh), Salih (pbuh), Jacob (pbuh), and David (pbuh) have all received, by God's will, their rewards in the Hereafter. Those believers who have never seen one of the prophets can still pray to be counted among their friends in the Hereafter and to live with them in Paradise for all eternity.

The End Times is a very blessed period, one of glad tidings for all believers who love and obey the prophets, for God has revealed that after a gap of 2,000 years, He will send Jesus (pbuh) back to Earth. This very important news is revealed both in the Qur'an and the hadith. All Muslims who feel a deep devotion to and love for the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) also love, respect, and honor Jesus (pbuh). In a hadith reported by Abu Hurayrah, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) said:

The prophets are brothers of different mothers, but their religion is one. Of all men, I am the most deserving to be the brother of Jesus son of Mary, for there was no prophet between me and him.²

As stated by our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), all of God's prophets communicated the same religious moral values to their societies. All of God's messengers called upon the people among whom they lived to believe only in God, serve Him, and live the kind of life that meets with His approval. In addition, they showed their people how to avoid Hell's eternal suffering. In other words, they relayed the same religion to their people. God states that the religion He revealed to His prophets and which they spread among their peoples is one and the same:

He has laid down the same religion for you as He enjoined on Noah. That which We have revealed to you and which We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "Establish the religion, and do not make divisions in it." (Qur'an, 42:13)

Therefore, when he returns, Jesus (pbuh) will call people to this same divine religion: Islam. Indeed, the Qur'an reveals that Islam is the only religion of which God approves: "**The religion with God is Islam**" (Qur'an, 3:19). When Jesus (pbuh) returns to Earth, he will cleanse Christianity of its corrupted elements, rule the people according to the Qur'an (the last divine text), and bring all people together in Islamic moral values.

Muslims will be this great prophet's sincerest supporters and defenders, for they have a deep love for him, just as they do for all of God's prophets. Given that Jesus (pbuh) is one of God's chosen servants, and because they take only God, His prophets, and true believers as their friends, all Muslims feel a deep respect for Jesus (pbuh). The source of this deep love and devotion is a result of their love and fear of, and respect for God, as well as their obedience to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace).

Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) Gave Muslims the Glad Tidings That They Will Be Jesus' (pbuh) Helpers

The Qur'an, the hadith, and the works of great Islamic scholars reveal that Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence and will return to Earth. His second coming is widely described in al-Hafiz ibn al-Dayba' al-Shaybani's *Taysir al-Usul ila Jami` al-Usul*, and such esteemed hadith collections as Imam Malik's *Al-Muwatta'*, the *Sahihs* of Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Hibban, and the *Musnads* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi. Some of these hadith are as follows:

By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, the son of Mary (Jesus [pbuh]) will shortly descend among you people as a just ruler.³

Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, will definitely descend as a just judge and a just ruler.⁴

Some members of my community will be reunited with Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, and will witness his war against the Antichrist.⁵

Islamic scholars consider this miraculous event to be *tawatur* (unanimously agreed upon), and the relevant hadith are considered to be of indisputable veracity. All hadith scholars agree that those who transmitted these hadith are completely reliable, are not to be doubted, and that no completely reliable hadith is to be questioned.⁶ In due course, we shall examine, with detailed examples, the great Islamic and hadith scholars' opinions that "there is no doubt about the return of Jesus (pbuh)." However, we now need to briefly mention what the Hanafi legal school says about this event, as its founder, Imam Abu Hanifa, heads the list of those who discuss it. In the final chapter of his book *Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, Abu Hanifa states:

The emergence of the Antichrist and of Gog and Magog is a reality; the rising of the Sun in the west is a reality; the descent of Jesus, upon whom be peace, from the heavens is a reality; and all of the other signs of the Day of Resurrection, as contained in the authentic traditions, are established realities.⁷

In his hadith, our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) informed us of such matters as Jesus' (pbuh) descent, his struggle, and what the world will be like at that time. Each of these reports is good news for all Muslims. For example, Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) said that when Jesus (pbuh) returns to Earth, Muslims will enjoy the honor of being his valuable helpers:

I swear to God, Who sent me as a true prophet, that of course Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, will find in my community people to replace his disciples [when he returns close to the period of the End Times].⁸

Of course, being his helpers is both a very good piece of news and a major responsibility for true believers. All believers will sincerely wish to achieve such an honorable position.

At a time when the signs of the second coming are becoming clear, we need to think about the importance of the Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) words. The fact that some people behave almost as if Jesus (pbuh) will not return, a grave mistake, must not be allowed to deceive others or lead them to make concessions on the subject. On the contrary, Muslims who realize that this event is a manifest truth revealed by the Qur'an and the hadith must experience the excitement of this extraordinary situation and make great efforts to welcome this blessed guest with the appropriate amount of love and enthusiasm. There is no time to waste on groundless doubts and apprehensions. Believers must prepare both themselves and those around them for this miraculous event and use the opportunities afforded by living in such a time to gain God's good approval.

When Jesus (pbuh) returns in the End Times, he may ask: "**Who are my helpers?**" Those who aspire to be among his helpers must use this valuable period in which we are living to renounce and, from that point on, abandon all behavior and immorality that might be a source of shame when Jesus (pbuh) returns. The most important attitude to be avoided, and which might constitute the greatest source of shame, is a lack of enthusiasm in this area. Given this reality, believers should constantly raise the issue of what an extraordinary event the second coming will be. Explaining the proofs that Jesus (pbuh) was raised alive to God's presence and will return, along with describing all aspects of this event's signs, will enable those who are still unconvinced to overcome their doubts. Moreover, constantly raising this issue will make it impossible for people to claim later on: "But we did not know. If we had known, we surely would have made the most suitable preparations." Thus, believers should use all available means to join together in order to prepare for this event.

True Followers of Jesus

The essence of the divine religion brought by Jesus (pbuh) 2,000 years ago has been corrupted. As the Qur'an reveals, such distorted beliefs as the Trinity and the deification of Jesus (pbuh) (God is surely beyond that) became part of Christianity after the time of Jesus (pbuh) himself. When he returns, his first action will be to cleanse Christianity of these distorted beliefs, for only he can do this. He will tell the Christian world, which is awaiting his coming, of Islam's moral values and direct Christianity in the direction of the true, divine religion. Those who follow him will be true Christians.

The great Islamic scholar Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, the renovator (*mujaddid*) of the thirteenth Islamic century, describes these true Christians with considerable wisdom. When we look at his words closely, we see that true Christians are those who abide by the moral values of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and who obey Jesus (pbuh). True Christians will be sincere Muslims and those Christians who reject the distortions and superstitious beliefs that have entered their religion and turn toward Islamic moral values. Muslims and Christians, who will have been freed from their superstitious beliefs, will then establish a great alliance (by means of Jesus [pbuh]) that will cause all systems and practices that oppose religious moral values to collapse.

Some of the Bediuzzaman's statements on this subject are as follows:

"At the end of time, Jesus (pbuh) will come and act in accordance with the Sunnah of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace)," indicates that at that time, Christianity will be purified and divest itself of superstition in the face of the current of unbelief and atheism born of naturalist philosophy, and that it will then be

transformed into Islam. At this point, the collective personality of Christianity will kill the fearsome collective personality of irreligion with the sword of heavenly revelation; so too, representing the collective personality of Christianity, Jesus (pbuh) will kill the Antichrist, who represents the collective personality of irreligion. In other words, he will kill atheistic thought.⁹

"... in the face of the current of unbelief and atheism born of naturalist philosophy": Bediuzzaman reveals that Jesus (pbuh) will lead a great struggle against the irreligious movements created by Darwinism and those who deny God's existence.

"... Christianity will be purified and divest itself of superstition ... and that it will then be transformed into Islam": Here, Bediuzzaman interprets the hadith that says that when Jesus (pbuh) returns in the End Times, he will abide by Islam's law and rules. His struggle will begin by cleansing Christianity from all of the myths and false beliefs that have entered into it over the centuries, and thereby return it to Islam.

Following the Qur'an, the collective personality of Christianity will be in the rank of follower, and Islam, in that of leader. True religion will become a mighty force as a result of this joining. Although defeated by the atheistic current while separate, Christianity and Islam will defeat and rout atheism as a result of their union. Then the person of Jesus (pbuh), who is present with his human body in the world of the heavens, will come to lead the current of true religion, as, relying on the promise of the One Powerful Over All Things, the Bringer of Sure News [Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace)] has said. Since he has said it, it is true, and since the One Powerful Over All Things has promised it, He will certainly bring it about.¹⁰

"Following the Qur'an, the collective personality of Christianity will be in the rank of follower, and Islam, in that of leader": Christianity's transformation, beginning with Jesus (pbuh), will conclude with all Christians adhering to the Qur'an, as required by the final book of revelation. Both Jesus (pbuh) and Christianity as a whole will adhere to Islam.

"Although defeated by the atheistic current while separate, Christianity and Islam will defeat and rout atheism as a result of their union": A great power will form when Christians, under Jesus' (pbuh) leadership, adhere to the Qur'an, because the world's two largest monotheistic religions are two huge powers in terms of politics, economics, and spirituality. After their unification, they will have enough power to destroy all forms of irreligion. Materialist philosophy, which distances people from their true purpose in life and forces them into selfishness, lovelessness, and aggressiveness, will be eradicated, along with all forms of irreligion.

"Then the person of Jesus (pbuh), who is present with his human body in the world of the heavens, will come to lead the current of true religion...": This alliance, when combined with the Christians' acceptance of the Qur'an, will achieve a global majority status and move as one body led by Jesus (pbuh). Bediuzzaman reminds us that Jesus' (pbuh) leading of the true religion is based upon the hadith and stresses that, as a result, this news is true knowledge.

Jesus (pbuh) Will Protect Believers from the Antichrist

The concept of the Antichrist, which means "liar and cheat; the one who confuses good and bad, as well as truth and superstition in the people's hearts and minds; who gilds the surface of things and conceals their true nature; the evil and inauspicious one who travels to all places," is described as a person who will appear in the End Times and who will be the source and representative of all evil and strife. However, the Antichrist may not

actually be a human being; rather, this person may be a system or an ideology that represents a way of thinking or practice that is against religious moral values. Many hadith contain a great deal of information about the Antichrist, and several verses refer to the Antichrist's morality and system. This individual's emergence is reported as being one of the End Times' major signs:

Abu Hurayra narrated: "There are three things that, when they are manifested, will be of no benefit to the faith of a person who did not have faith before: the Antichrist, the Beast, and the Sun rising in the west."¹¹

Abu Hanifa said this about the hadith that refer to the Antichrist and other signs:

The emergence of the Antichrist and of Gog and Magog is a reality; the rising of the Sun in the west is a reality; the descent of Jesus (pbuh) from the heavens is a reality; and all the other signs of the Day of Resurrection, as contained in authentic traditions, are established realities.¹²

In addition to the signs of the Antichrist's coming, the hadith also reveal his characteristics in considerable detail: The Antichrist will cause people to turn away from the true path, portray good as evil and evil as good, deceive those who follow him with so-called blessings, oppress those who fail to obey him, wreak confusion upon the world, encourage conflict, oppose religious moral values, and seek to turn people away from those values. The Antichrist's time on Earth will be one when true believers experience many troubles and difficulties, and when most people turn away from religious moral values.

The Antichrist's emergence will have a profound effect on the whole world, and will be the source of developments that will inflict many catastrophes and troubles upon humanity. Since his main target will be religious moral values and true believers, the period in question may be a particularly difficult one for the believers. In addition, many people will believe in his deceptions and follow him. Such an environment will have to be opposed by all people of good conscience and believers. In addition, they will have to wage a powerful intellectual struggle against this environment, one in which, by God's will, they will be victorious. However, the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) revealed that this individual's wickedness will be on a scale never before seen in history, and warned believers to avoid it:

I tell you these things so that you may understand the situation and not fall into his snare, and so that you may tell those who come after, because his wickedness is the worst wickedness of all.¹³

This advice, as well as his prayer for shelter in God from the strife caused by the Antichrist, is a guide for Muslims. Muslims from different sects and races ask God during their five daily prayers to protect them from the Antichrist's evil. As the hadith reveal, the prayer that our beloved Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) taught to believers is as follows:

Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) stated that: "When one of you finishes his prayer, let him seek God's protection from four things by saying: Oh God, I seek your protection from the suffering of Hell, the agony of the tomb, the wickedness of life and death, and the wickedness of the Antichrist."¹⁴

The fact that the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) taught this prayer to his followers in person and recommended that they say it during the daily prayers shows how important the question of the Antichrist is for believers. We know that after their daily prayers, Islamic scholars also added the words *Allahumma ajirni min fitna al-Masih al-Dajjal wa al-Sufyan* (O God, protect me from the wickedness of the Antichrist and the Sufyan). Aware of the immense scale of the Antichrist's evil, Muslims seek God's protection with this prayer in their own daily prayers. This shows that Muslims are spiritually prepared for the Antichrist. However, the most important preparation to be taken against the Antichrist is exactly the one that must be taken to prepare for Jesus' (pbuh) coming.

In one respect, the second coming will manifest the fact that this prayer has been heard. This is because the hadith reveal that the Antichrist's wickedness can only be done away with by Jesus' (pbuh) return to Earth, and that when the Antichrist sees Jesus (pbuh), "he will dissolve like salt in water." Some of the hadith reveal how Jesus (pbuh) will eliminate the Antichrist, as follows:

As the Antichrist spreads evil through the world, God will send the Messiah, Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary ... Jesus (pbuh) will meet the Antichrist at the gate of Ludd [near Jerusalem] and kill him. ¹⁵

When God's enemy [the Antichrist] sees him, he will dissolve like salt in water. Although he would dissolve until he has been completely destroyed, even if left on his own, God will still destroy the Antichrist by the hand of Jesus (pbuh)... ¹⁶

Jesus (pbuh) will soon return, and will then destroy the Antichrist, the malicious, the inauspicious one. ¹⁷

Therefore, it is a matter of the greatest importance that all believers and those who wish to be protected from the Antichrist's evil should fully support Jesus (pbuh) and strive to prepare the best possible environment before he actually returns.

On the one hand, Muslims must uncover the Antichrist's wickedness and deceptions and wage an intellectual struggle against those elements that comprise the ideological foundations of the Antichrist's system. On the other hand, they must prepare the groundwork for the great intellectual struggle that Jesus (pbuh) will wage after his return, and must prepare themselves to support him. The information provided in the Qur'an and the developments described in the hadith indicate that one of history's most important periods is approaching.

Those who will enjoy the honor of living at such a historic time should feel great excitement at this prospect and should be aware of the scale of their responsibility. One of the first things that such people have to do is to prepare themselves and those around them for Jesus' (pbuh) return.

How Should We Await the Second Coming?

The current state of the world shows us which subjects we need to give priority to as we prepare for this glorious event. This is a period when the damage inflicted on society by atheistic ideologies will perhaps be worse than in any other. The spread of violence, terror, cruelty, fraud, falsehood, immorality, conflict, and poverty all over the world shows that the world is full of "wickedness."

All of this cruelty and degeneration is gathering strength from the superstitious system established by those who deny God's existence and oneness and who do not believe in the Hereafter. Moreover, it is growing and spreading. In the face of this, Muslims need to eliminate the ideological sources that make up this environment's foundation and encourage this degeneration through intellectual arguments. One of the most important ways of doing this is for Muslims to struggle in a spirit of oneness and unity.

This intellectual struggle is a major responsibility for all Muslims. In addition, those Muslims who are awaiting his return must abandon their internal disagreements and differences of opinion in order to establish unity and solidarity. No doubt, it would be a grave error and a terrible evil for the Muslim world to become mired in its own internal problems.

Muslims who fully live by the Qur'an's moral values and follow the Sunnah of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) must behave in a cohesive manner, bring a spirit of cooperative solidarity to the fore,

and remind the Muslim world that all Muslims are "brothers and sisters in religion." In fact, our Lord tells Muslims to act in a spirit of unity and union:

Hold fast to the rope of God all together, and do not separate. Remember God's blessing to you when you were enemies and He joined your hearts together so that you became brothers by His blessing. You were on the very brink of a pit of the Fire, and He rescued you from it. In this way, God makes His signs clear to you so that, hopefully, you will be guided. (Qur'an, 3:103)

Furthermore, by God's will, this alliance will be one of the main stages in the intellectual destruction of atheistic ideologies. In the Qur'an, our Lord mentions this alliance and reveals that the believers must enjoy friendly relations among themselves and help each other if the wickedness in the world is to be eliminated:

Those who do not believe are the friends and protectors of one another. If you do not act in this way, there will be turmoil in the land and great corruption. (Qur'an, 8:73)

If the Muslims can set aside their differences and divisions, remember that they are "brothers" and "sisters," and live by the proper moral values brought about by this spiritual unity, they will set an example to the whole world and provide an entirely suitable environment for Jesus (pbuh).

When Jesus (pbuh) returns, the Muslim world must have already turned its internal cultural and traditional differences into elements of enrichment, eliminated the negative influence of atheistic ideologies upon it, and joined together in unity by living according to the Qur'an's moral values.

JESUS (PBUH) WAS NOT KILLED AND IS NOT DEAD

Jesus (pbuh) is one of the prophets whose lives are described in detail in the Qur'an. He came into the world without a father, as a miracle of our Lord. The Qur'an reveals his miraculous birth, as follows:

... The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers. (Qur'an, 4:171)

When Gabriel appeared to Mary in human form, he told her that she would give birth to Jesus (pbuh). God revealed Jesus' (pbuh) miraculous and superior characteristics to Mary even before he was born. The Qur'an also reveals that Jesus (pbuh) is a chosen and honorable individual in bKoth worlds, and that he will perform miracles:

When the angels said: "Mary, your Lord gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, of high esteem in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near. He will speak to people in the cradle and when fully grown, and will be one of the righteous." (Qur'an, 3:45-46)

Mary's society had various ignorant ideas about Jesus (pbuh) right from the moment of his birth, and even attempted to slander Mary. The Qur'an relays the reaction of those who did not believe in his miraculous birth and that he was a miracle of our Lord even while he was still in the cradle:

She [Mary] brought him [Jesus] to her people, carrying him. They exclaimed: "O Mary! You have done an unthinkable thing! O Sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!" She pointed toward him. They said: "How can a baby in the cradle speak?" He [Jesus] said: "I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am, and has directed me to perform prayer and give alms as long as I live. And [He directed me] to show devotion to my mother. He has not made me insolent or arrogant. Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive." (Qur'an, 19:27-33)

Jesus (pbuh) performed, by God's will, many other miracles, such as healing the blind and the sick and making a bird out of mud and setting it in flight:

Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel; when you created a bird-shape out of clay by My permission, and then breathed into it and it

became a bird by My permission; healed the blind and the leper by My permission; when you brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I held back the tribe of Israel from you, when you brought them the clear signs and those of them who did not believe said: 'This is nothing but downright magic.'" (Qur'an, 5:110)

Despite all of these miracles, such as the ones mentioned above and the fact that he could tell people what they had eaten and what they had hidden, and referred to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) as "Ahmad," very few people in his society actually believed in him.

Jesus' (pbuh) Struggle

Like all prophets with a deep fear and love of, and respect for God, and all of whom were role models for humanity, Jesus (pbuh) struggled against his society's unbelievers and pagans throughout his life. He told the Children of Israel, many of whom had turned away from religious moral values, of God's divinely revealed moral values as well as the reality of His existence and oneness. He called on his people to believe in God, avoid sin and evil, and do good works. He also reminded them of the transitory nature of this world's life and the closeness of death, and called upon them to worship, fear, and respect only Him.

At the time of Jesus (pbuh), the Mediterranean region and the surrounding area was ruled by Rome. Roman religion, in common with the surrounding religions, was polytheistic and superstitious. The imaginary deities of Greek mythology also appeared in Roman mythology, but under different names. The Jews living in Palestine were a small minority in the Roman Empire. However, Rome interfered very little in their beliefs and internal affairs. But beginning with the second century B.C.E., the Jews entered a period of internal fragmentation. With the Old Testament and Judaic tradition being interpreted in different ways by various groups, several sects emerged and serious disputes began to occur. These disputes gave rise to uncertainties and discontent in Jewish society, and the ensuing chaos could not be eliminated. As a result, Judaism moved away from the divine religion that God had revealed to Moses (pbuh) and was corrupted by the addition of many superstitious beliefs and laws.

Jesus (pbuh) was sent to resolve these differences, by teaching them once again about the divine religion, from whose essence they had departed, and to eliminate their superstitions:

And when Jesus came with clear signs, he said: "I have come to you with wisdom and to clarify for you some of the things about which you have differed. Therefore, have fear [and respect] of God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path." The various factions among them differed. Woe then to those who did wrong on account of the punishment of a painful Day! (Qur'an, 43:63-65)

[Jesus will say:] "I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a sign from your Lord. So have fear [and respect] of God and obey me." (Qur'an, 3:50)

Jesus' (pbuh) mission created great unease among those circles whose interests lay in maintaining the status quo, even though it was incompatible with religious moral values. These circles were headed by false religious leaders and other individuals who ascribed partners to God. Some of their religious ideas acquired considerable status among the people and increased their own material benefits. Instead of following the proper moral values required by the religion, they supported injustice, cruelty, falsehood and polytheism, all of which served their own interests. They performed certain acts of worship according to their own opinion, and only for show, failed to protect the divine religion of Moses (pbuh), and added many superstitions and errors. As the Qur'an reveals: **"Woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: 'This is from God' to sell it for a paltry price!"** (Qur'an, 2:79). Moreover, some Jewish theologians even changed the stipulations of the Pentateuch.

However, Jesus (pbuh) told these people to worship, fear and respect, love and live only for God. He told them that they needed to display the proper morality to win God's good approval, turn their backs on superstition, and avoid committing injustice. He preached that they should stop deceiving themselves and the people and acquire sincere belief. His miracles clearly demonstrated that God had selected him over the worlds, supported him with knowledge and power, and made him a most valuable prophet. Jesus' (pbuh) deep faith, high moral values, superior understanding, and wise words inspired great admiration among the people. However, those who insisted on defending their corrupted version of the divinely revealed religion refused to obey him.

While Jesus (pbuh) was among his people, only a very few people followed him. The Qur'an reveals that when his people persisted in their denial, he asked who would be his helpers:

When Jesus sensed unbelief on their part, he asked: "Who will be my helpers of God?" The disciples said: "We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Bear witness that we are Muslims. Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down and have followed the messenger, so write us down among the witnesses." (Qur'an, 3:52-53)

One of the true believers' main characteristics is that they believe in concealed mysteries and obey the messengers unquestioningly. Such believers know that every word spoken by God's messengers is true, and so they trust them completely, follow them, and love and respect them. As revealed in **"The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves"** (Qur'an, 33:6), this devotion is superior to all other forms of love. Indeed, the devotion of the Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) Companions and their protection of him during the wars against the pagans is a fine example of this.

In addition to Roman pagan oppression and the hypocrisy of some polytheistic Jews, as well as the opposition of prominent Jews who pursued only their own interests, the fact that Jesus (pbuh) had only a very few followers draws our attention to the difficult circumstances in which he found himself. However, it must be made clear that there is considerable wisdom in the fact that he struggled in such difficult conditions. Jesus (pbuh) and those sincere, devout believers who followed him displayed great patience, by God's leave, in these trying circumstances and will receive their reward at every moment in His presence. Such climates are actually very valuable, for they increase the believers' determination and mutual devotion, strengthen their faith, and reinforce their love of and devotion to God. Believers have faith that everything they experience happens because He wills it to, and thus sincerely accept everything that our Lord sends their way. Aware that God is their true friend and guide, all believers know that His religion will eventually triumph.

God has promised that He will never allow those who deny Him to triumph over the believers. Therefore, the prophets and their followers will inevitably be victorious, for He states that the traps of those who set snares for the believers are doomed to failure:

... shown by their arrogance in the land and evil plotting. But evil plotting envelops only those who do it. Do they expect anything but the pattern of previous peoples? You will not find any changing in the pattern of God. You will not find any alteration in the pattern of God. (Qur'an, 35:43)

Like all of the other prophets, Jesus' (pbuh) superior determination and patience are meant to encourage and increase the believers' enthusiasm. Jesus (pbuh) told his followers that difficulties awaited them, but that God was their friend and protector. With his trust in and submission to God, Jesus (pbuh) displayed superior moral values and told those around him to always trust God and remember that He performs everything. The Bible recounts some of his words to his disciples, as follows:

You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me, you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given to you at the time, for it is not you speaking ... but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. (Mark, 13:9-13)

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and, after that, can do no more. But I will tell you whom you should fear: Fear Him Who, after killing the body, has the power to throw you into Hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him. (Luke, 12:2-5)

Indeed, the oppression of the first Christians continued for the next three centuries. Most of those who believed in Jesus (pbuh) had to keep their faith secret, and many of those who declared their faith suffered severe punishment, torture, and, sometimes, even death. However, the unbelievers' greatest plot was, without a doubt, their attempt to kill Jesus (pbuh). A number of leading Jews collaborated with the Roman pagans, and, with the support of various hypocrites, devised a plan. Each stage was planned down to the finest detail, and they were convinced that it would succeed. However, their plan was disrupted in a most unexpected way: They imagined that they had killed Jesus (pbuh), but in reality, God raised him to His presence and protected His prophet from their snares and deceptions. By means of this miracle, their plan failed.

Here, it is appropriate to mention a most important matter. As we have seen, so-called Jewish religious leaders plotted against Jesus (pbuh). Acting out of a concern for their position and interests, they received the support of a number of influential Jews. These people then collaborated with the Roman pagans and planned Jesus' (pbuh) death. Although their plan failed, the way that they sought to kill this most honorable and superior prophet, one who called upon them to live by the moral values of the divine religion, was a terrible crime. Furthermore, they also committed the crime of murder by killing someone who resembled Jesus (pbuh). However, this crime belongs solely to those who were actually guilty of it, and there is no doubt that they will be duly recompensed for their actions in the Hereafter. In other words, it is a serious mistake to hold all Jews, regardless of time or place, responsible for the crime of a few individual Jews.

God Foiled the Unbelievers' Plot

The plan to kill Jesus (pbuh) is not an isolated event, for throughout history unbelievers have made similar plans against the prophets sent to them. In the Qur'an, God reveals that whenever a prophet came to his unbelieving people and began calling on them to live by the moral values of the true religion, the unbelievers would inevitably set about preparing traps for them and even try to kill them:

We gave Moses the Book and sent a succession of messengers after him. We gave Jesus, son of Mary, the clear signs and reinforced him with the Purest Spirit. Why then, whenever a messenger came to you with something that your lower selves did not desire, did you grow arrogant, and deny some of them and murder others? (Qur'an, 2:87)

Those who cast Abraham (pbuh) into the flames, pursued Moses (pbuh) with their armies, sought to kill our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) in a nocturnal attack, and left Joseph (pbuh) at the bottom of a well solely because all of these prophets said: "God is our Lord" have exactly the same mindset, even though they lived at different times. All of them sought to rebel against God and His messengers, opposed the moral values commanded by God, and ignored the fact that they would have to account for their deeds in the Hereafter. Their anger arose out of the prophets reminding them of several facts: that they were God's servants and therefore should be faithful to Him, give alms and perform good deeds to win His good approval, be just and modest, and that the prophets were chosen and immaculate messengers in His presence. As a result, these people set traps for the prophets. This mentality is described, as follows:

...We sent messengers to them. Each time a messenger came to them with something their lower selves did not desire, they denied some and they murdered others. (Qur'an, 5:70)

A similar plan was devised by the leaders of the Makkan polytheists, who hoped that they could expel the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) or perhaps even kill him. Our Lord warned him of this plan. But as the unbelievers soon discovered, God's plans are superior to all others:

When those who did not believe were plotting against you, to imprison you or to kill you or to expel you: they were planning and God was planning, but God is the Best of Planners. (Qur'an, 8:30)

As we have seen, the unbelievers sought to kill Jesus (pbuh). They drew up a wide-ranging plan and thought that they would succeed if they captured him. According to historical and Islamic sources, some polytheistic Jews spread many lies and slanders about Jesus (pbuh) in order to incite the Romans against him, for they wanted Rome to take action against him. The Qur'an reveals their plan in the following verses:

When Jesus sensed unbelief on their part, he asked: "Who will be my helpers of God?" The disciples said: "We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Bear witness that we are Muslims. Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down and have followed the messenger, so write us down

among the witnesses." They planned and God planned. But God is the best planner. (Qur'an, 3:52-54)

God foiled their plot in a completely unexpected manner: They were shown, and killed, a double in his stead. Our Lord protected His chosen servant from the unbelievers:

And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. God raised him [Jesus] up to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:157-58)

Other verses reveal that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead, but is alive in God's presence. The fact that God has revealed that He foiled the traps set for him is one of the important pieces of evidence that Jesus (pbuh) is still alive. Had Jesus (pbuh) really died, as some people (erroneously) maintain, then the unbelievers would have achieved their goal of killing him. However, "... **God will not give the unbelievers any way against the believers**" (Qur'an, 4:141). God revealed that He would not allow the unbelievers to kill Jesus (pbuh). Moreover, many verses reveal that the unbelievers would never achieve their goal and that their failure is a requirement of God's divine plan. Some of these verses are given below:

They concocted their plots, but their plots were with God, even if they were such as to make the mountains vanish. (Qur'an, 14:46)

God always confounds the unbelievers' schemes. (Qur'an, 8:18)

Or do they desire to dupe you? But the duped ones are those who do not believe. (Qur'an, 52:42)

God will defend those who believe. God does not love any thankless traitor. (Qur'an, 22:38)

They are hatching a plot. I too am hatching a plan. So bear with the unbelievers – bear with them for a while. (Qur'an, 86:15-17)

Those before them also plotted. God came at their building from the foundations, and the roof caved in on top of them. The punishment came at them from a direction that they did not expect. (Qur'an, 16:26)

Jesus (pbuh) Is Not Dead

The Qur'an reveals, among many other glad tidings, that Jesus (pbuh), one of God's messengers, is not dead and was not put to death. To acquire a better understanding of this, we will conduct a detailed examination of the relevant verses.

Qur'an 3:55 and Qur'an 4:157-58 head the list of those verses that relate how Jesus (pbuh) was not killed but was raised alive to God's presence. When these verses are examined word by word, this most important truth is clearly revealed. Another truth is also indicated: Jesus (pbuh), who now lives in God's presence, will return to Earth during the End Times. This fact will be examined in later sections of this book.

Qur'an 3:55 informs believers that God will "take back" Jesus (pbuh), protect him from the unbelievers, and raise him to His presence. Many great Islamic scholars and commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that Jesus (pbuh) did not die. As the verse states:

[God said:] "Jesus, I will take you back [mutawaffeeaka] and raise you up [wa raafi`uka] to Me and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection..." (Qur'an, 3:55)

The part requiring special consideration is the sentence **"I will take you back [mutawaffeeaka] and raise you up to Me."** A close examination reveals a most important truth: The verb carries a sense that differs from what is normally meant by "to die." The word translated into English as "to die" comes from the Arabic root *waffaa* derived from the verb *tawaffaa*, which does not imply death, but rather taking the soul, or surrender. The Qur'an also reveals that taking a person's soul does not always imply death. For instance, another verse uses *tawaffaa* to refer not to a person's death, but to taking his or her soul while asleep:

God takes the souls [of people] at death [yatawaffaa], and those who do not die [lam tamut] during their sleep. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death [al-mawt], He keeps back [from returning to life], but the rest He sends [to their bodies] for a term appointed. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect." (Qur'an, 39:42)

The word here translated as "taking back" is the same as that used in Qur'an 3:55: *tawaffaa*. Since a person does not actually die during the night, the word *yatawaffaa* here refers not to death, but to taking the soul at night. If *tawaffaa* were being used in the sense of death, then that would mean that all people would be biologically dead during sleep. Thus, Jesus (pbuh) would have died every night of his life. Such an assertion is both irrational and illogical.

Another instance in which sleep is regarded as a kind of death, but which does not refer to biological death, is the following hadith: "All praise is for God, Who has made us alive after He made us die [sleep] (*Al-hamdu li Allah illadhi ahyana ba'da maa amatana; wa ilayhi al-nushoo*)" Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) often said this after he woke up.¹⁸ No doubt, he used these wise words not to refer to biological death when one is asleep, but rather to a sleeping person's soul being "taken." Ibn Kathir, the famous Islamic scholar and commentator, used this hadith, along with many other proofs in his commentary on Surah Al

'Imran, to explain that *tawaffaa* refers to sleep. In addition, he indicated the word's meaning in other verses where it appears. He then gave his opinion using a hadith handed down by Ibn Abi Hatim:

Ibn Abi Hatim says that: "My father told us ... from Hassan that the meaning of the verse 'I will take you back...' is this: Here it means that 'I shall kill you with the death of sleep; in other words, I shall cause you to sleep.' So God raised Jesus (pbuh) to the heavens while he was asleep ... As an incontrovertible truth, God caused Jesus (pbuh) to die the death of sleep and then raised him to the sky, rescuing him from the Jews, who were inflicting suffering upon him at the time."¹⁹

Imam Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari, another Islamic scholar who examined the meaning of *tawaffaa*, stated that it did not mean death, and drew attention to the use of *mawt* in Qur'an 39:42:

Had Jesus (pbuh) died [which is not the case], then the word *mawt* revealed in the verse: "**God takes the souls [of people] at death**" (39:42), would not have been revealed... This is because if, as has been claimed, God had referred to normal death [in the biological sense], then this would have been clearly stated. Since God refers to the fact that the Jews did not kill Jesus (pbuh), but that he was taken and raised to the sky, then one must think of a meaning beyond that of ordinary death."²⁰

Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri, a contemporary of al-Kawthari, cites this verse as evidence and offers the following interpretation: "If we were to take the word *tawaffaa* as meaning 'killing,' then souls would also have to die."²¹ In his commentary on the Qur'an, the Islamic scholar Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi makes the following statement about *mutawaffeeka*, which appears in Qur'an 3:55 (the same word is also used in Qur'an 5:117):

The word *mutawaffeeka*, in the Arabic text comes from the word *tawaffaa*, meaning "to take the surrender of" and "take the soul," although here it is used in a figurative sense. Here, it means "relieving from duty."²²

Abu Mansur Muhammad al-Maturidi, regarded as one of the first Qur'anic commentators, also stated that the verse does not refer to Jesus (pbuh) dying in the familiar biological sense:

The thing being referred to in the verse is not passing on in the sense of death, but in the sense of the body being taken from this world."²³

Islamic scholars agree that *mutawaffeeka* means that Jesus (pbuh) did not die, but that he was raised to God's presence and will return to Earth. For example, the famous commentator and scholar al-Tabari stated that *mutawaffeeka* is used in the sense of "removing from Earth" and interpreted the verse in the following terms:

In my opinion, the soundest thing is to take this word in the sense of "to take into one's possession," "draw [away] from Earth." In that case, the meaning of the verse is: "I shall take you from Earth and into the heavens." The rest of the verse emphasizes the [believers'] victory over unbelievers in the End Times, which confirms the above idea."²⁴

Further on in his commentary, al-Tabari included other interpretations of *mutawaffeeka*. Islamic scholars are in general agreement that its correct interpretation is "a kind of sleep." According to Imam Hasan al-Basri, the Egyptian scholar Muhammad Khalil Herras stated that the verse means: "I shall put you to sleep and raise you to My presence as you sleep." In his commentary, al-Suyuti said, based on reliable hadith, that Jesus (pbuh) did not die, and then continued:

In that case, Jesus (pbuh) was raised to the skies and will return before the Day of Judgment."²⁵

Mehmed Vehbi, a commentator who lived during the final years of the Ottoman Empire, interpreted the verse in the following manner:

O Jesus, I shall *put you to sleep* and raise you to the skies, the place of plenty and My sanctity. I shall rescue you from the Jews' wickedness and cleanse you of the unbelievers' impure actions, rescuing you from their wickedness by *drawing you up away from them*.²⁶

The great Islamic scholar Imam Ibn Taymiyya stated that Qur'an 3:55 indicates that Jesus (pbuh) did not die, but most likely experienced a kind of "sleep death." He then wrote:

This verse is proof that *the death of Jesus (pbuh) is not being referred to...* The word *al-tawaffi* [the infinitive form of the word *mutawafeeka* used] in the verse requires the death of the soul without that of the body, or of both, but with the existence of another piece of evidence explaining the circumstances in this sense. The meaning may be the death of sleep (as in Qur'an 6:60). The words at the end of the verse, to the effect that: "I shall separate you purified from the unbelievers," are also along these lines. Had Jesus' (pbuh) body been separated from his soul, then his body would be in the ground, as with the other prophets.²⁷

In his commentary, Hamdi Yazir of Elmali stated that the verse in question means:

In my view, a summary of this interpretation and belief is as follows: The soul of Jesus (pbuh), described as a "word from God" and reinforced with the "Purest Spirit", has not yet been taken. His soul has not come to the hour of death. "The Word" has not yet returned to God. He still has work to do in this world.²⁸

As we have seen, this verse does not mean "death" in the sense as it is generally used in English. The expression in this verse reports that Jesus (pbuh) was placed in a condition similar to sleep and then raised to God's presence. Jesus (pbuh) did not die, but was merely removed from this dimension by His will. (God knows best.)

An Explanation of Qur'an 4:157-58

Another verse that mentions the plotters' failure to kill Jesus (pbuh) is Qur'an 4:157. This verse needs to be examined together with the one immediately following it, for both of them reveal that the unbelievers did not kill or crucify Jesus (pbuh), but were made to think they did, and that he was raised to God's presence:

And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah [qatalnaa], Jesus son of Mary, messenger of God." They did not kill him [maa qataloohu] and they did not crucify him [maa salaboohu], but it was made to seem so to them [shubbiha]. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him [maa qataloohu]. God raised him to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:157-58)

Before considering the evidence in these verses in detail, we must explain one particular subject: the words *maa salaboohu*, which is translated as "they did not crucify him." This word's root is the verb *salaboohu*: "to hang, execute, crucify." This being the case, the belief that Jesus (pbuh) was crucified, one of Christianity's main tenets, is unfounded.

Those Who Claim Jesus (pbuh) Was Killed Are Speculating

The unbelievers sought to kill Jesus (pbuh). And even though God foiled their plot, an environment in which they imagined that they had been successful was created. They were unable to kill or crucify Jesus (pbuh), and were shown a double in his place. Therefore, those who maintain that Jesus (pbuh) was killed are only speculating. In his commentary, al-Tabari stated that the unbelievers have no sure information about this event:

The Jews who debate over Jesus (pbuh) are unsure of whether he was killed or not. What they know about this issue is based merely on assumptions. They know very little about whether the person they killed was Jesus (pbuh) or not. They merely imagine that the person they killed was Jesus (pbuh), as they had intended. They very definitely did not kill him ... because they continue to speculate about his death.²⁹

The fact that they have doubts shows that the unbelievers did not achieve their goal. Had they really killed Jesus (pbuh), there would be no room for doubt and they would be certain that they had succeeded. Let us consider this with an example. Someone who opens fire in order to kill someone else will know whether the intended victim has actually been killed or not. Alternatively, there needs to be very exceptional circumstances for there to be any doubt about whether someone condemned to death has actually died. If there is doubt, something out of the ordinary must have occurred. Those who had sought to kill Jesus (pbuh) would have felt no doubt as to whether they had succeeded or not. However, our Lord reveals that they did have such doubts, were only speculating, and had no certain information. This is one of the proofs that Jesus (pbuh) did not die but was raised alive to God's presence.

Foiling this Trap Shows God's Superior Might

Another element that attracts our attention is the expression: "**God raised him to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise**" (Qur'an, 4:158). In all likelihood, this extraordinary situation shows God's superior might. (God knows best.)

In their commentaries on this verse, Islamic scholars point out that these words represent an extraordinary revelation of God's might and wisdom. For example, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi said:

God reveals at the end of the verse that "God is Almighty, All-Wise." The intention behind almightiness here is the perfection and immaculate nature of that might, and that behind wisdom is the perfection and immaculate nature of knowledge. In this way, God has indicated the raising of Jesus (pbuh) and that no matter how impossible this may seem to a person, it is not impossible relative to His might and wisdom. A similar situation can be seen in the verse: "Glory be to Him, Who took His servant on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque [Masjid al-Haram] to the Further Mosque [Masjid al-Aqsa]..." (Qur'an, 17:1). That is because no matter how much such a journey may be impossible relative to the power of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), it is a most easy matter relative to the might of God.³⁰

Mehmed Vehbi interpreted one of the elements of wisdom behind this revelation:

The elevation of Jesus (pbuh) to the heavens is determined in this verse. Although elevation to the heavens is impossible relative to human power, in order to announce that this is not difficult relative to His might and wisdom, God declares in the verse's preceding part that He is All-Wise and Almighty. And in order to reveal the perfection of His knowledge, He reveals that He is sovereign and that His might and wisdom are sufficient to elevate Jesus (pbuh) to the heavens.³¹

Hasanayn Muhammad Mahluf cited Prophet Muhammad's (may God bless him and grant him peace) ascent to heaven and stated:

In the same way that our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) ascended to the heavens in both body and soul awake, so Jesus (pbuh) was raised alive to the heavens. There is nothing peculiar here. Situations of this kind are miraculous. There is no need for any comparison on this matter. God possesses might over all...³²

Other Islamic scholars opined that Jesus (pbuh) did not die and could not be killed, and that he is alive in God's presence. Some of their comments are given below:

Omer Nasuhi Bilmen: "They do not definitively believe that Jesus (pbuh) was killed. Such guesswork and speculation have no value. God openly declares the true facts in the Qur'an, saying that He used His divine might to raise this blessed prophet, alive, to the heavens. For those who look at the greatness of the divine might and its manifestation in the universe, with millions of creations, with the eye of the heart, it is impossible to regard the raising of a glorious prophet, in body and soul, to the highest levels, as an untrustworthy account."³³

Hasanayn Muhammad Mahluf: "The belief of Muslims is this: Jesus (pbuh) was neither crucified nor killed, but was raised alive in body and soul to the heavens. He will continue to live in the heavens for as long as God so wills..."³⁴

Imam Zahid al-Kawthari: "The Jews intended to physically kill Jesus (pbuh), but God confounded their aim by rescuing the body of Jesus (pbuh) and raising him to His presence. In order to refute the Jews' claim, this ascension must have been a physical one..."³⁵

Hamdi Yazir of Elmali: "Those who differ on this issue are definitely in a state of doubt and have no knowledge in this regard. They have engaged in speculation. However, those who said that they killed Jesus (pbuh) certainly did not kill him. Therefore, it is a lie for them to boast of killing and murder. That is because the judgment depends on the intention behind a deed. The aim behind their initiative to kill never transpired."³⁶

Al-Qurtubi: "The interpretation of the verse is: 'I shall raise you to Myself without you dying, cleanse you from the blasphemers, and kill you after your descent from the heavens.'"³⁷

God Raised Jesus (pbuh) to His Presence

One of the important proofs that the unbelievers' plot to kill Jesus (pbuh) was confounded is the fact that our Lord has revealed that He raised Jesus (pbuh) to His presence:

... [I will] raise you up to Me and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection. Then, all of you will return to Me, and I will judge between you regarding the things about which you differed. (Qur'an, 3:55)

And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. God raised him to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:157-158)

As these verses reveal, those who sought to kill Jesus (pbuh) failed to achieve their goal, because God protected and rescued him by raising him to His presence. The words *raafiu'ka* and *rafa'ahu* that appear in the verses come from the Arabic root *rafa'a*, which means "to rise." Islamic scholars interpret *rafa'a* as the opposite of "being lowered." The Islamic scholar Abu Musa al-Ash'ari interpreted Qur'an 3:55 together with Qur'an 4:158, and wrote that: "*There is a consensus among the community of the faithful [ijma' ummat] that Jesus (pbuh) was raised alive to the heavens.*"³⁸ (*Ijma' ummat* refers to the agreement on this issue of those Islamic scholars who expounded upon Islamic law and lived during the same century).

In interpreting these verses, the great majority of Islamic scholars agree that "Jesus (pbuh) did not die, but was raised to God's presence, and that this ascension took place in both body and soul." Examples of their opinions are given below:

The interpreter and commentator Fakhr al-Din al-Razi had this to say about "**God raised him to Himself,**" which appear in Qur'an 4:158:

With the ascension here, God refers to an ascension to a place where no laws apart from that of God apply. This verse makes it clear that Jesus (pbuh) was raised to the heavens...³⁹

In his commentary, Hasan Basri Cantay interpreted *raafiu'ka* as meaning "raising and lifting up to Himself," and wrote that "*God raised and lifted up Jesus (pbuh) in both body and soul.*"⁴⁰

Imam Ibn Taymiyya opined: *The verse "He raised him to His presence" ... explains that Jesus (pbuh) was raised in both body and soul.*⁴¹

In interpreting Qur'an 3:55, the famous Qur'anic commentator al-Sabuni set out his ideas on this event:

The wisdom of God making such a declaration is His giving the glad tidings that He will save Jesus (pbuh) from the Jews and raise him in full health to the skies, without his undergoing any suffering.⁴²

Mehmet Vehbi Efendi wrote:

It is certain, due to this verse [Qur'an, 4:158], that Jesus (pbuh) ascended to the heavens.⁴³

Zahid al-Kawthari stated that the ascension is so clear and certain that there is no room for any objections. Al-Kawthari cited Qur'an 3:55 and Qur'an 4:157-58 as evidence and said that this event is beyond doubt. He uses the word *nass*, which means certainty or indisputability stemming from a Qur'anic verse or a hadith. He went on to say:

That is because the basic meaning of the word (*rafa'a* in the verses) is transportation from below to above. There is no element here that could be used to interpret the verses metaphorically. Therefore, there is no evidence for seeking to produce a meaning in the sense of ascension in honor and station.⁴⁴

Mawdudi set out his views on the subject in the following terms:

If God had willed to reveal what is expressed in the verse [Qur'an, 4:158] in the words "God killed him" or "God raised his rank," He would have openly done so. Instead of the former, He could have revealed the words "Certainly they neither killed him nor crucified him, but He saved him and later on caused him to die at his own

appointed hour of death." Instead of the latter, He could have revealed the expression "They tried to humiliate him by crucifying him, but God raised him greatly in rank."⁴⁵

As clearly seen from the verses and the Islamic scholars' comments, Jesus (pbuh) was raised alive, with his body, to God's presence. This is a miracle of God, and a wonder that will inspire great enthusiasm and excitement among all believers. Claims that only his soul was raised to His presence, or that his ascension was only spiritual (in station), do not reflect the facts. The invalidity of such claims has been proven by many Islamic scholars, some examples of which have been cited above.

Another important proof of this event is the Arabic word *bal*, which appears in Qur'an, 4:158, and has the literal translation of "on the contrary." The features of its meaning and use in Arabic linguistics indicate a very important fact: According to the rules of Arabic linguistics, the sentence that comes after it must have a meaning that is completely opposite to the preceding statement. That being the case, it is likely that the verses referring to Jesus (pbuh) "... **They did not kill him,**" (Qur'an, 4:157) "**on the contrary [bal] God raised him up to Himself...**" (Qur'an, 4:158) refer to the state of being alive, rather than the state of being dead. (God knows best.) Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri offered the following interpretation:

If the term *bal*, which appears in Qur'an 4:158 and which I have translated as "on the contrary," comes after a sentence expressing a negativity, then, according to the rules of Arabic linguistics, the sentence following it must mean the exact opposite of the one preceding it. The opposite of death is life. This is a requirement of the rules of linguistics. If we say that "the ascension here is a spiritual one" and "Jesus (pbuh) died in the normal sense," then we are violating that rule. In that case, the ascension following the expression "on the contrary" would not represent the opposite to the verbs of "killing" and "crucifying" in the negative sentence preceding it. That is because it may be possible for a person to be killed and for his or her soul to rise to the skies. Otherwise, this term would be meaningless, and there are no meaningless terms in the Qur'an ... According to those who support the thesis that the ascension is only one of the soul, the meaning of the verse is this: "They did not kill him and did not crucify him ... on the contrary, God raised his station." There is no particular oratory here, let alone succinctness ... No rational person could take the words "The elevator in my building raises me to the fourth floor every day," to mean that I am only raised to the fourth floor in spirit. Therefore, neither was Jesus (pbuh) raised only in spirit.⁴⁶

Said Ramadan al-Buti interpreted the subject in the same way:

The mutual compatibility between the verse's previous and later sections necessarily reveals a fact. For example, if an Arab says: "I am not hungry; on the contrary, I am lying on my side," this is not a correct sentence. In the same way, there is a discrepancy between the components in the sentence: "Khalid did not die; on the contrary, he is a good man." What would be correct is to say: "Khalid did not die; on the contrary, he is alive." To say: "The chairman was not killed; he is a man with a superior station in God's presence" also leads to a break in meaning in the sentence, for his having a high station in God's sight is no obstacle to his being killed. The term *bal* expresses a contradiction between the preceding and the following words. In other words, *bal* cancels out a previous statement.⁴⁷

Furthermore, if the word *rafa'a* indicated a spiritual rank, then the Qur'an could have used the same term for other prophets. Thus, the emphasis on Jesus (pbuh) being "raised to God" contains great wisdom, for it was not used in connection with Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), Moses (pbuh), Solomon (pbuh), David (pbuh), Shu`ayb (pbuh), Noah (pbuh), Abraham (pbuh), and Lot (pbuh), or with any other prophet mentioned in the Qur'an. When mentioning these prophets' deaths, various forms of the word *mata*

(death in the biological sense) are employed, whereas Jesus (pbuh) was "raised up" (*rafa'a*). This phenomenon will be discussed in detail in later chapters. While the souls of all people, including prophets, are raised to God's presence, the use of *rafa'a* with regard to Jesus (pbuh) indicates an extraordinary situation. (God knows best.) The Egyptian scholar Muhammad Khalil Herras, who has researched and published his findings on Jesus' (pbuh) return to Earth, says:

If the use of the word *rafa'a* in Qur'an 4:158 referred solely to the "raising of the soul," this would not cancel out Jesus' (pbuh) killing and crucifixion, and the wisdom revealed in the verse would not apply. For example, if the Jews had killed Jesus (pbuh), his soul would, in any case, have been raised to God. Indeed, we know that the souls of all prophets and believers ascend to God after they die. There is no difference in this regard between Jesus (pbuh) and all other people. Therefore, there is a special feature in this verse: the raising of Jesus (pbuh), while still alive, in both body and soul. At the same time, when we look at the end of this verse, we see that it manifests God's glory and wisdom.⁴⁸

Contrary to what some people maintain, the ascension is not a spiritual one or one of degree. God reveals that He foiled the trap set for Jesus (pbuh). Thus, given the fact that Jesus (pbuh) did not die, the information revealed in the verse shows that Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God with body and soul, and not merely spiritually. The plotters were confounded by Jesus' (pbuh) ascension to God. (God knows best.) The scholar Zahid al-Kawthari expounds on this by giving the following example:

One verse regarding Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) states: "**... God will protect you from people...**" (Qur'an, 5:67). There can be no doubt that the verse means something other than: "He raises your station before people." Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) was attacked physically, and so God placed him under His physical protection. This also applies to Jesus (pbuh), who was physically attacked as well. Therefore, it is impossible for the ascension referred to in the verse to have been merely a spiritual one.⁴⁹

Clearly, Almighty God confounded the unbelievers by raising Jesus (pbuh) alive to His presence. All of this evidence shows that Jesus (pbuh) is still alive and will return to Earth when God wills. (God knows best.) No doubt, this is a most important news for sincere believers. The fact that such a blessed prophet will return to Earth is a miraculous situation and a source of great enthusiasm for all believers who will witness this miracle.

Ibn Taymiyya also drew attention to this subject:

Had God willed to refer to death, Jesus (pbuh) would have died like all other believers. God takes the souls of all believers and raises them to the skies. It would thus appear that there was nothing out of the ordinary in this. In other words, there would be no significance in God's referring to Jesus (pbuh) in this way.⁵⁰

Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri opined:

Had the verse referred solely to killing, then there would have been no need to use the word *raafiu'ka*, since Jesus' (pbuh) soul would be raised like all other souls.⁵¹

Other Relevant Verses

The word *rafa'a* is also used in other contexts. When these verses are examined, however, it can be seen that, in general, what is being referred to is a physical ascension, and that when a spiritual ascension or an ascension in degree is being referred to, the word *ascension* is used together with the words *in rank*. (God knows best.)

Physical Ascension

God raised up the heavens without any support – you can see that – and then established Himself firmly on the Throne. He made the Sun and the Moon subservient, each running for a specified term. He directs the whole affair. He makes the signs clear so that, hopefully, you will be certain about the meeting with your Lord. (Qur'an, 13:2)

He [Joseph] raised his parents up onto the throne. The others fell prostrate in front of him. He said: "My father, truly this is now the interpretation of the dream I had. My Lord has made it all come true. He was kind to me by letting me out of prison, and brought you from the desert when Satan had caused dissent between me and my brothers. My Lord is kind to anyone He wills. He is truly All-Knowing and All-Wise." (Qur'an, 12:100)

Remember when We made the covenant with you and lifted up the Mount above your heads: "Take hold vigorously of what We have given you and pay heed to what is in it, so that, hopefully, you will guard against evil." (Qur'an, 2:63)

Remember when We made a covenant with you and lifted up the Mount above your heads: "Take hold vigorously of what We have given you and listen." They replied: "We hear and disobey." They were made to drink the [golden] calf into their hearts because of their disbelief. Say: "If you are believers, what an evil thing your faith has made you do." (Qur'an, 2:93)

He erected heaven and established the balance. (Qur'an, 55:7)

And when Abraham raised the foundations of the House [the Ka'bah] with Ishmael: "Our Lord, accept this from us. You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (Qur'an, 2:127)

If anyone wants power, all power belongs to God. All good words rise to Him, and the virtuous deeds lift them up. But people who plot evil deeds will suffer a harsh punishment. The plotting of such people is profitless. (Qur'an, 35:10)

Are you stronger in structure or is heaven? He built it. He raised its vault high and made it level. (Qur'an, 79:27-28)

Spiritual Ascension

This is the argument We gave to Abraham against his people. We raise in rank anyone We will. Your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. (Qur'an, 6:83)

O you who believe! When you are told: "Make room in the gathering," then make room, and God will make room for you. And when it is said: "Get up," get up. God will raise in rank those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge. God is aware of what you do. (Qur'an, 58:11)

These messengers: We favored some of them over others. God spoke directly to some of them and raised up some of them in rank. We gave clear signs to Jesus, son of Mary, and reinforced him with the Purest Spirit. If God had willed, those who came after them would not have fought each other after the clear signs came to them. But they differed. Among them there are those who believe and those who do not believe. If God had willed, they would not have fought each other. But God does whatever He desires. (Qur'an, 2:253)

God appointed you successors [khala'if] in the land and raised some of you above others in rank so He could test you regarding what He has given you. Your Lord is Swift in Retribution, Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Qur'an, 6:165)

God's Purification of Jesus (pbuh)

One piece of information provided about Jesus' (pbuh) ascension is that God will purify him of the unbelievers. The Qur'an reveals:

... raise you up [wa raafi'uka] to Me and purify [mutahhiruka] you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection... (Qur'an, 3:55)

The root of *mutahhiruka* is *tahara*, meaning "being clean." Islamic scholars regard this word as one proof that Jesus (pbuh) was raised alive to God. According to them, the interpretation of the verse is: "I am taking you, raising you to Me, and *removing you from this environment polluted by unbelievers and sinners.*"⁵² Thus, God purified Jesus (pbuh) from the unbelievers, the unbelievers' plot to kill him was foiled and they failed to achieve their goal. (God knows best.)

Moreover, this verse also shows that Jesus (pbuh) was purified by his physical separation from an environment containing unbelievers. (God knows best.) Thus, the assertion that Jesus (pbuh) died and that only his soul was raised to God is proven false. A spirit-only ascent would mean that he was not purified.

In order for Jesus (pbuh) to have been purified in the manner revealed in the verse, he would have to have departed from his surrounding environment in both body and soul. Furthermore, a spirit-only purification cannot apply to a prophet with superior moral values, one who is honored in God's presence and has deep faith, such as Jesus (pbuh). Another verse reveals his superior moral values: "**Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive**" (Qur'an, 19:33). As a devout believer and a messenger of God, Jesus' (pbuh) soul is immaculate. However, his environment was not immaculate, due to the unbelievers'

irreligious behavior and corrupt moral values. Indeed, our Lord reveals that they were unclean because of their moral corruption:

O you who believe! The idolaters are unclean, so after this year they should not come near the Sacred Mosque [Masjid al-Haram] ... (Qur'an, 9:28)

Therefore, purifying Jesus (pbuh) means his physical removal from their presence. Thus, God purified and protected him by raising Jesus (pbuh) to Himself. (God knows best.)

The Egyptian scholar Khalil Herras offers the following explanation regarding the wisdom of the term "purification":

The purification of Jesus (pbuh) from the unbelievers comes about with his salvation from their wicked snares. This cannot take place with the death and burial of Jesus (pbuh), but only by his ascension in life to the heavens, for his foes could have inflicted torture on his body, as they did with the person they believed to be him ...⁵³

As Hamdi Yazar of Elmali set out in his commentary, Jesus' (pbuh) purification from the unbelievers is manifested by his ascent:

... and with this raising I shall purify you of the deniers and unbelievers, and you will no longer have anything to do with them...⁵⁴

Verses That Mention Purification

... and when We made the House [Ka'bah] a place of return, a sanctuary for humanity. They took the place where Abraham stood [to pray] as a place of prayer. We contracted with Abraham and Ishmael: "Purify My House for those who circle it, for those who stay there, and for those who bow and prostrate." (Qur'an, 2:125)

And We located the position of the House [Ka'bah] for Abraham: "Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who circle it, and for those who stand, bow, and prostrate." (Qur'an, 22:26)

Purify your clothes. (Qur'an, 74:4)

The only answer of his people was to exclaim: "Expel them from your city! They are people who keep themselves pure!" (Qur'an, 7:82)

No one may touch it except the purified. (Qur'an, 56:79)

And when He overcame you with sleep, making you feel secure, and sent you down water from heaven to purify you and remove the taint of Satan from you, and to fortify your hearts and make your feet firm. (Qur'an, 8:11)

The Deaths of Other Prophets

An examination of the Qur'anic accounts of other prophets' deaths and the verses describing Jesus' (pbuh) death reveals that Jesus (pbuh) did not die. In this section, we will look at the Arabic words used to describe his death and those of the other prophets.

We will make a detailed analysis of several very particular words: *qatala* (to kill), *maata* (to die), *halaka* (to perish) and *salaba* (to crucify). With regard to Jesus (pbuh), however, another word is used, for **"They did not kill him [maa qataloohu] and did not crucify him [maa salaboohu].** (Qur'an, 4:157). In Qur'an 3:55, God reveals that He will take Jesus (pbuh) and raise him to His presence.

When God said: "Jesus, I will take you back [mutawaffeeka] and raise you up [wa raafi'uka] to Me and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who are unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection..." (Qur'an, 3:55)

As we mentioned earlier, the word used for death when dealing with Jesus (pbuh) is not the one used to signify biological death. In the case of the other prophets' deaths, the words used do not have the connotation of a kind of sleep. Moreover, the words that relate that Jesus (pbuh) was "taken" do not have the connotation of biological death. Thus, Jesus' (pbuh) *death* differs considerably from the deaths of the other prophets. (God knows best.)

I. Qatala: To Kill

The Qur'an uses *qatala* to mean "to kill," as in the following verse:

Pharaoh said: "Let me kill [aqtulu] Moses and let him call upon his Lord! I am afraid that he may change your religion and bring about corruption in the land." (Qur'an, 40:26)

In Arabic, "let me kill Moses" is *aqtulu Musa*, a phrase that is derived from the verb *qatala*. In another verse, the the same word is used in the following way:

... [That was because they] killed (yaqtuloona) the prophets without any right to do so. (Qur'an, 2:61)

The expression *yaqtuloona* (they killed) is also derived from *qatala*.

The verses below use *qatala* when speaking of the prophets' deaths. All words in brackets are derivatives of this verb.

We will write down what they said and their killing [qatlahum] of the prophets without any right to do so. (Qur'an, 3:181)

... and deny some of them and murder [taqtuloona] others? (Qur'an, 2:87)

Say: "Why, then, if you believe, did you previously kill [taqtuloona] the prophets of God?" (Qur'an, 2:91)

As for those who reject God's signs, and kill [yaqtuloona] the prophets without any right to do so, and kill [yaqtuloona] those who command justice... (Qur'an, 3:21)

... So why did you kill [qataltumoohum] them, if you are telling the truth? (Qur'an, 3:183)

... The one said: "I shall kill [aqtulannaka] you"... (Qur'an, 5:27)

Even if you raise your hand against me to kill me [taqtulane], I am not going to raise my hand against you to kill you [aqtulaka]... (Qur'an, 5:28)

Kill [uqtuloo] Joseph or expel him to some land. (Qur'an, 12:9)

The wife of Pharaoh said: "A source of delight for me and for you; do not kill [taqtuloohu] him [Moses]..." (Qur'an, 28:9)

... Moses, the council is conspiring to kill you [yaqtulooka]. (Qur'an, 28:20)

The only answer of his [Abraham's] people was to exclaim: "Kill [uqtuloohu] him or burn him!" (Qur'an, 29:24)

II. Halaka: To Perish

Another word used to denote the killing is *halaka*, which can also mean "to perish, to be destroyed, to die," as in the verse given below:

... when he [Joseph] died [halaka], you said: "God will never send another messenger after him."(Qur'an, 40:34)

III. Mawt: Death

Another word used to relate a prophet's death is *mawt*, a noun derived from the verb *maata* (to die), as follows:

Then when We decreed that he [Solomon] should die [mawt], nothing divulged his death [mawtihi] to them except the worm that ate his staff. (Qur'an, 34:14)

The same word is used (in the form of a noun) to relate Jacob's (pbuh) death:

Or were you present when death [mawt] came to Jacob? (Qur'an, 2:133)

In another verse, the verbs *qatala* (in the passive form *qutila*) and *maata* are used together:

Muhammad is only a messenger, and he has been preceded by other messengers. If he were to die [maata] or be killed [qutila], would you turn on your heels? (Qur'an, 3:144)

Other forms of the verb are also used:

She exclaimed: "Oh, if only I had died [mittu] before this time and was something discarded and forgotten!" (Qur'an, 19:23)

We did not give any human being before you immortality. And if you die [mitta], will they then be immortal? (Qur'an, 21:34)

He Who will cause my death [yumeetunee], then give me life. (Qur'an, 26:81)

IV. Salaba: To Crucify

Another word for death is *salaba* (to crucify). This verb has various meanings (e.g., to hang, to crucify, to execute) and is used in the following ways:

They did not kill him and they did not crucify him [salaboohu]. (Qur'an, 4:157)

[Joseph said:] "One of you will serve his lord with wine, the other of you will be crucified [yuslabu]." (Qur'an, 12:41)

They should be killed or crucified [yusallaboo]. (Qur'an, 5:33)

[Pharaoh said:] "I will cut off your alternate hands and feet, and then I will crucify [usallibannakum] every one of you." (Qur'an, 7:124)

I will cut off your hands and feet alternately and have you crucified on palm trunks [usallibannakum]. (Qur'an, 20:71)

I will cut off your alternate hands and feet, and I will crucify every one of you. [usallibannakum] (Qur'an, 26:49)

As the verses show, the words used to express Jesus' (pbuh) situation are altogether different from those used to describe the deaths of other prophets. God states that Jesus (pbuh) was neither killed nor crucified, that a look-alike was killed in his place, and that he was taken back (in other words, that his soul and body were taken) and raised up to His presence. When talking of Jesus' (pbuh), the Qur'an uses *tawaffaa* (to take the soul), whereas when talking of the other prophets, it uses *qatala* or *maata* (and its derivatives) to mean *death* in the conventional sense. This information shows us yet again that Jesus' (pbuh) situation was extraordinary.

OTHER EVIDENCE THAT JESUS (PBUH) IS NOT DEAD

In this chapter, we will look at other evidence that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead and that he will return to Earth.

The Qur'an refers to Jesus' (pbuh) miraculous birth, his message to and struggle against his unbelieving society, his miracles, and his disciples. It also reveals that he will return to Earth near the Day of Judgment. We have already looked in some detail at 3:55 and 4:157-58, which indicate, according to their lexical meanings and the interpretations of the vast majority of Islamic scholars and commentators, that Jesus (pbuh) did not die. This evidence can be listed, as follows:

1. Jesus (pbuh) was neither killed nor crucified.
2. Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence.
3. The unbelievers were shown someone resembling him.
4. The unbelievers' ideas on this subject consist of conjecture and speculation.
5. He is a sign of the Day of Judgment.
6. God taught him the Book – in other words, the Qur'an – in addition to the Torah and the Gospel (God knows best).
7. The People of the Book will obey him when he returns.
8. Those who follow him will be made superior to the unbelievers until the Day of Judgment.
9. He will return to Earth as an adult and will speak to people.
10. He will die after he comes again.

Jesus' (pbuh) return to Earth, one of the most important and greatest events in world history, is revealed in the Qur'an. Such good news will both increase the enthusiasm of those believers awaiting his second coming with joy and excitement, and will also cause them to accelerate their preparations for this event. On the other hand, this evidence will also remind those who have not really thought about this event and, hopefully, will cause them to raise their awareness of the issue.

Jesus (pbuh) Is a "Sign of the Hour"

In addition to revealing that Jesus (pbuh) is still alive, the Qur'an reveals that he will return:

When an example is made of the son of Mary, your people laugh uproariously. They retort: "Who is better, then, our deities or him?" They only say this to you for argument's sake. They are indeed a disputatious people. He is only a servant upon whom We bestowed Our blessing and whom We made an example for the Children of Israel. If We willed, We could appoint angels in exchange for you to succeed you on Earth. (Qur'an, 43:57-60)

The next verse states that Jesus (pbuh) is a sign of the Day of Judgment:

He [Jesus] is a Sign of the Hour. Have no doubt about it, but follow Me. This is a straight path. (Qur'an, 43:61)

The first meaning of this verse is that Jesus (pbuh) is a sign or a precondition of the Day of Judgment. We can confidently say that this verse indicates his return, because he lived six centuries before the Qur'an's revelation. Therefore, we cannot consider his first life as a sign of the Day of Judgment. The verse indicates that he will return toward the End Times or, in other words, right before the Day of Judgment. In that context, his return is a sign of the Hour's imminent arrival. (God knows best.)

Some say that the pronoun *hu* (he/it) in this expression refers to the Qur'an. However, when one looks at other verses, it appears that whenever *hu* stands for the Qur'an, the Book is inevitably referred to in either the preceding or following verse. Alternatively, other expressions show that the Qur'an is the subject. Some of these verses are as follows:

No indeed! Truly it [the Qur'an] is a reminder, and whoever wills pays heed to it. Inscribed on Honored Pages, exalted, purified. (Qur'an, 80:11-14)

When they are told: "Believe in what God has sent down," they say: "Our faith is in what was sent down to us," and they reject anything beyond that, even though it [the Qur'an] is the truth, confirming what they have. Say: "Why then, if you believe, did you previously kill the prophets of God?" (Qur'an, 2:91)

They are the ones whom God has guided, so be guided by their guidance. Say: "I do not ask you for any wage for it. It [the Qur'an] is simply a reminder to all beings." (Qur'an, 6:90)

We have sent it [the Qur'an] down with truth, and with truth it has come down. We only sent you to bring good news and to warn. We have divided up the Qur'an, so that you can recite it to humanity at intervals, and We have sent it down little by little. Say: "Believe in it or do not believe in it." Certainly, when it is recited to them, those who were given knowledge before it fall on their faces in prostration. (Qur'an, 17:105-7)

It [the Qur'an] is certainly a reminder to you and to your people, and you will be questioned. (Qur'an, 43:44)

My signs were recited to you, and you turned on your heels, arrogant toward it, talking arrant nonsense all night long. Do they not ponder these words [the Qur'an]? Has anything come to them that did not come to their ancestors, the previous peoples? (Qur'an, 23:66-68)

When one looks at the verses in Qur'an 43, one can see that the Qur'an is not being referred to in either the verses immediately preceding or following the reference to "**a Sign of the Hour.**" The verses are referring to Jesus (pbuh). Therefore, the pronoun in question also refers to Jesus (pbuh). (God knows best.) In fact, based

on both the verses and on reliable hadith, great Islamic scholars state that in this case, *hu* does refer to Jesus (pbuh). Abu Hurayra, Ibn `Abbas, Qatada, Malik ibn Dinar, Thabit ibn al-Dahhak, Abu Razin, Abu `Ali `Abd al-Rahman, Humayd, and Ibn al-Muhaysin say that Jesus' (pbuh) second coming is a sign of the Day of Judgment.⁵⁵

Many commentators, such as al-'Alusi, al-Shawkani, al-Sabuni, al-Ghumari, Omar Nasuhi Bilmen, Sayyid Qutb, and Hasan Basri Cantay interpreted the verse thus in their commentaries:

The appearance of Jesus (pbuh) is a sign of the approach of the Day of Judgment because his appearance is a sign of the Last Day. His descent to Earth is proof that the end of the world has come, and of the beginning of the Hereafter.⁵⁶

In his interpretation of the verse, Imam al-Tabari also used Ibn Kathir's explanation as evidence. Ibn Kathir said: "There are reliable hadith of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) that Jesus (pbuh) will descend to Earth before the Day of Judgment as a just head of state and just ruler," thus depicting the verse as evidence for Jesus' (pbuh) second coming. In his commentary, Hamdi Yazir of Elmali wrote:

It is certain that he represents knowledge of that hour, evidence, and a sign of the Day of Judgment when the dead will be resurrected. That is because Jesus' (pbuh) appearance, his miracle of resurrecting the dead, and his giving news of the rising of the dead are evidence of the approach of the Day of Judgment and probable signs of the Hour according to the hadith.⁵⁷

Among contemporary Islamic scholars, Sayyid Qutb drew attention to the important evidence concerning Jesus' (pbuh) second coming. As we read in his commentary:

Many hadith regard Jesus' (pbuh) descent to Earth prior to the Day of Judgment. Indeed, the verse, "He is a Sign of the Hour" also indicates this. In other words, Jesus (pbuh) will descend to Earth at a time close to the Day of Judgment. In a second style of reading, the verse reads "*wa innahu la 'ilmun li al-saa'ati.*" In other words, his descent is a sign, a sign of the Day of Judgment. Both styles of reading express the same meaning. His descent from the skies is a news of the Unseen World, spoken of by the right-speaking and trustworthy Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) and indicated in the glorious Qur'an. Apart from the information from these two sources, which will remain unchanged until the Day of Judgment, nobody can say anything else about the subject.⁵⁸

Al-Kawthari stated that even in the oldest doctrinal texts, this verse was used as evidence of Jesus' (pbuh) return.⁵⁹ Omer Nasuhi Bilmen explained the verse in these terms:

It gives news, in an indubitable manner, that Jesus (pbuh) is a sign of the approach of the Day of Judgment and that the Day of Judgment will certainly come ... His appearance on Earth is regarded as a law of the Last Day...⁶⁰

In fact, this title is unique to Jesus (pbuh), for although the Qur'an describes the lives of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), Abraham (pbuh), Noah (pbuh), Moses (pbuh), Solomon (pbuh), Joseph (pbuh), David (pbuh), Jacob (pbuh), and a great many other prophets, this title is applied to none of them. This fact is yet another indication that Jesus (pbuh) possesses a special feature that the other prophets do not: He will return to Earth after having been raised to God's presence. (God knows best.)

Jesus (pbuh) Was Taught the Book, the Torah, and the Gospel

The Qur'an mentions that Jesus (pbuh) was taught the Torah, the Gospel, and the Book:

When the angels said: "Mary, your Lord gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, of high esteem in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near. He will speak to people in the cradle and also when fully grown, and will be one of the righteous," she exclaimed: "My Lord! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?" He said: "It will be so. God creates whatever He wills. When He decides on something, He just says to it 'Be!,' and it is. He will teach him the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah, and the Gospel." (Qur'an, 3:45-48)

The identity of this "Book" is of the greatest importance. The same expression also appears in another verse:

Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel..." (Qur'an, 5:110)

An analysis of the Qur'an shows that the expression *the Book* in both verses refers to the Qur'an, as well as to the Torah and the Gospel. Consider the following verses:

God, there is no deity but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what was there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel. (Qur'an, 3:2-3)

And We have sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming and conserving the previous Books... (Qur'an, 5:48)

In other verses, *the Book* refers to the Qur'an:

For this We sent a messenger to you from among yourselves to recite Our signs to you, purify you, and teach you the Book and Wisdom and things you did not know before. (Qur'an, 2:151)

"Am I to desire someone other than God as a judge, when it is He Who has sent down the Book to you clarifying everything?" Those to whom We have given the Book know that it has been sent down from your Lord with truth, so on no account be among the doubters. (Qur'an, 6:114)

We have only sent down the Book to you so that you can make clear to them the things about which they differ, and as a guidance and a mercy to people who believe. (Qur'an, 16:64)

You did not expect to be given the Book. It is nothing but a mercy from your Lord. So, do not lend support to the unbelievers. (Qur'an, 28:86)

Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book that is recited to them? There is certainly a mercy and reminder in that for people who believe. (Qur'an, 29:51)

We have sent down the Book to you with the truth so that you can judge between people according to what God has shown to you. But do not be an advocate for the treacherous. (Qur'an, 4:105)

Clearly, the third "Book" to be taught to Jesus (pbuh) is the Qur'an. But this can only happen if he returns to Earth in the End Times, since he lived some 600 years before the Qur'an was revealed. In addition, many hadith say that when Jesus (pbuh) returns to Earth, the Qur'an, and not the Bible, will rule: *"He will lead you according to the Book of your Lord and the Sunnah of your Apostle."*⁶¹

Another important piece of information is that the term revealed for Jesus (pbuh) was not revealed for any other prophet. For example, the Qur'an reveals that the Torah was given to Moses (pbuh), that Pages were given to Abraham (pbuh), and that the Book of Psalms was given to David (pbuh). If there were books revealed before the prophets' own time, the Qur'an states that they knew them. However, only in the case of Jesus does the Qur'an state that a prophet will be taught a book that was revealed after his own time. This is one of the indications that he will return to Earth and that when he does so, he will rule with the book revealed after his lifetime: the Qur'an. (God knows best.)

Jesus' (pbuh) Followers Will Be Superior to the Unbelievers

In addition to revealing that Jesus (pbuh) did not die, Qur'an 3:55 also says that he will come to Earth again:

When God said: "Jesus, I will take you back and raise you up to Me, and purify you of those who do not believe. And I will place the people who follow you above those who do not believe until the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return to Me, and I will judge between you regarding the things about which you differed." (Qur'an, 3:55)

In this verse, God reveals the existence of a group of people who will sincerely follow Jesus (pbuh) and who will be superior to the unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection. The number of his followers during his lifetime was very small, and the message that he brought underwent a rapid degeneration after his ascension to God. Throughout the next two centuries, his followers, who came to be known as Christians, were subjected to severe persecution and had no political power. Therefore, it is out of the question to say that the Christians living at the time were superior to the unbelievers and that they are the ones being referred to in this verse.

Over the intervening centuries, Christianity moved away from its essence and turned into a different religion. Christians adopted two mistaken beliefs: Jesus (pbuh) was the son of God (God is surely beyond that.) and the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost [or Holy Spirit]). Given this, we cannot regard present-

day Christians as those who will follow Jesus (pbuh) in the End Times, because God reveals in several verses that those who believe in the Trinity are actually unbelievers:

Those who say that God is the third of three are unbelievers. There is no deity but the One God. (Qur'an, 5:73)

That being the case, the expression "**I will place the people who follow you above those who do not believe until the Day of Resurrection**" has a very clear meaning: There needs to be a community that will follow Jesus (pbuh) and exist until the Day of Resurrection. Such a community will emerge when Jesus (pbuh) returns. At that time, his followers will be made superior to the unbelievers until the Day of Resurrection. (God knows best.) Another verse that supports this reads:

O you who believe! Be helpers of God, as Jesus son of Mary said to the Disciples: "Who will be my helpers to God?" The Disciples said: "We will be the helpers of God." One faction of the Children of Israel believed and the other did not. So, We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious. (Qur'an, 61:14)

It appears from the above verse that during Jesus' (pbuh) lifetime, some people did not have faith. The last part of the verse; "... **so We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became victorious,**" gives news of a time when those who believe in Jesus (pbuh) will be superior. In all likelihood, this period is the time of Jesus' (pbuh) second coming. During this time, Jesus (pbuh) will make the true religion prevail and the believers superior to the unbelievers. (God knows best.)

Jesus' (pbuh) Adult Ministry

Another piece of evidence for Jesus' (pbuh) return is the word *kahlaan*, which is used in the following verses:

Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the Purest Spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle [mahd] and when you were fully grown [kahlaan]..." (Qur'an, 5:110)

He will speak to people in the cradle and also when fully grown [kahlaan], and will be one of the righteous. (Qur'an, 3:46)

Kahlaan, which appears only in these two verses, only in reference to Jesus (pbuh), and only to express Jesus' (pbuh) adulthood, is used for someone between the age of 30 and 50, someone who is no longer young, someone who has reached the perfect age. Islamic scholars agree that it denotes the age of 35 or above, based upon a hadith reported by Ibn 'Abbas that Jesus (pbuh) was raised up to God's presence in his early 30s and that he will live for 40 more years when he comes again. Given that he can reach old age only by coming again, he must come again.⁶²

Although all of the prophets spoke with their people, invited them to the true religion, and communicated their message at a mature age, the Qur'an does not use such expressions when talking about them. Rather, they

are used only to voice a miraculous situation, because the expressions *in the cradle* and *when fully grown*, when used one after the other, refer to two miraculous events. The Egyptian Islamic scholar Khalil Herras drew attention to this:

The word *kahl* in the verse is directed toward the word *mahd*, which precedes it and is an adverb of place. In the absence of a special clue, it continues to carry the same meaning of the word before it. Therefore, *in the same way that Jesus' (pbuh) speaking immediately after his birth is a miracle, so the same miracle needs to take place in his adulthood*. Otherwise, there is nothing miraculous in a person speaking in adulthood and the wisdom of its revelation in the verse could not be understood. However, if Jesus (pbuh) speaks after appearing on Earth, that would be a miracle...⁶³

The famous Islamic scholar al-Ghumari stated that one piece of wisdom here is that Jesus' (pbuh) speaking in the cradle and then in adulthood show that he has a miraculous life. He wrote that just as Jesus' (pbuh) speaking as an infant is a miracle from God, there has to be a miraculous aspect to his speaking as an adult to people:

It is for a divine purpose that our attention is drawn to Jesus' (pbuh) speaking in the cradle and in adulthood. At the same time, this indicates an extraordinary phenomenon. Jesus (pbuh) was raised to the heavens (at a young age). He disappeared for hundreds of years. He was transported to a world in which the laws of corporeal change do not apply. It is something extraordinary for such a person to descend and speak to people.⁶⁴

Imam al-Suyuti drew attention to *kahlaan* in Qur'an 5:110 when he stated: "This word expresses the fact that he (Jesus [pbuh]) will descend from the heavens before the Day of Judgment, because he was raised to the skies before attaining old age."⁶⁵ In his *Commentary*, Imam al-Tabari gave the following explanation of these verses:

These statements [Qur'an 5:110] indicate that in order to complete his lifespan and speak to people when fully grown, Jesus (pbuh) will come down from the heavens, because he was raised to the heavens when still young ... In this verse [Qur'an 3:46], there is evidence that Jesus (pbuh) is living. The Ahl al-Sunnah share that view, because this verse states that he will speak to people when fully grown. He will be able to grow fully only when he returns to Earth from the heavens.⁶⁶

In his commentary on Qur'an 3:46, Omer Nasuhi says that this verse is a piece of evidence that Jesus (pbuh) will return:

This verse indicates that after the raising up of Jesus (pbuh), he will descend again and speak to people, because he will have entered the age of maturity after being raised up.⁶⁷

As we have seen, Islamic scholars interpret *kahlaan* as indicating that Jesus (pbuh) will come again. (God knows best.) All of this evidence reveals that Jesus (pbuh) will return in the End Times.

All People of the Book Will Believe in Jesus (pbuh)

Among the verses that give the glad tidings of Jesus' (pbuh) return is one that states:

There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them. (Qur'an, 4:159)

The great majority of commentators and scholars agree that the pronoun *his* in the term *qabla mawtihi* (before his death), points to Jesus (pbuh). Arabic linguistics also agree with this view. The plural suffix *hum* is used in all the Qur'anic verses concerning the People of the Book (e.g., Qur'an, 98:1 and 6, and 59:2). In this verse, however, the singular suffix *hu* is used. This means that the People of the Book will believe in Jesus (pbuh) before his biological death after he returns to Earth. (God knows best.)⁶⁸

The phrase "**and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them,**" is one of the proofs that the verse does refer to Jesus (pbuh). That being the case, the verse should be interpreted in these terms: "When Jesus (pbuh) comes, all People of the Book will believe in him." This indicates that Jesus (pbuh) will return and that true religious moral values will rule Earth under his leadership. (God knows best.)

God also reveals that all the prophets and messengers will bear witness for their communities on the Last Day:

... when the messengers' time is appointed. (Qur'an, 77:11)

Our Lord reveals that Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) bore witness for his own community:

How will it be when We bring a witness from every nation and bring you as a witness against them? (Qur'an, 4:41)

However, the Qur'an reveals that "**There is not one of the People of the Book who will not believe in him before his death**" only in the case of Jesus (pbuh). Moreover, the Qur'an does not use such an expression for any prophet who came before Jesus (pbuh) and in whom the People of the Book believed. No similar account is offered with regard to Abraham (pbuh), Solomon (pbuh), David (pbuh), Moses (pbuh), Joseph (pbuh), or Jacob (pbuh).

If every member of the People of the Book were to believe in Jesus (pbuh) before his or her own death, then a similar case would have been revealed with regard to the other prophets who were sent to them. However, this expression is employed only in relation to Jesus (pbuh). Therefore, it is another important proof that Jesus (pbuh) differs from other prophets. (God knows best.)

As we have seen, the *his* in the expression *before his death* is evidently Jesus (pbuh). It is impossible to interpret the verse, as some people have, in a way that indicates that "Each member of the People of the Book will believe in Jesus (pbuh) before they die." The Jews, a People of the Book, tried to kill Jesus (pbuh) because they did not believe in him. They later continued in their unbelief and believed that they had killed him.

In the light of all this, we can understand the following from this verse: Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth and, like every other human being, will live and die. When he returns, all of the People of the Book will see and know him, and will obey him while he lives. Jesus (pbuh) will bear witness to this in the Hereafter. (God knows best.) The great majority of Islamic scholars share this view. Abu Hurayrah and Ibn `Abbas, both of whom were Companions of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), also stated that this verse indicates his second coming. Al-Qurtubi interprets the verse in the following terms:

When the signs of the Day of Judgment draw near, when Jesus (pbuh) returns alive from the sky to Earth, all members of the People of the Book who are alive will believe in him. All there will be is the Islamic nation.⁶⁹

Al-Tabari interprets the verse thus in his *Commentary*:

When he returns to Earth to slay the Antichrist, every one of the People of the Book will believe in Jesus (pbuh) before his death. At that time, all nations will become a single nation under the name of Islam.⁷⁰

In his account, Khalil Herras stated that al-Tabari's interpretation is accurate and that Qur'an 4:159 is evidence of his second coming:

The pronoun *he* in the verse refers to Jesus (pbuh). When he returns, every living member of the People of the Book will believe in him, affirm him, and only Islam will be accepted from them as their religion ... The People of the Book will believe in Jesus (pbuh) when he returns to Earth...⁷¹

Jesus' (pbuh) Death Will Occur after His Second Coming

Another verse that points to the second coming is Qur'an 19:33. The phrase *the day I die* provides very important information. This is revealed in: "***Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive.***" (Qur'an, 19:33)

The Arabic original for *the day I die* is *amootu*, which stems from the word *mawt*, which is used elsewhere in the Qur'an in the sense of biological death. In other verses referring to Jesus (pbuh), *tawaffaa*, and not *mawt*, is used for his death. The meaning of *tawaffaa* is not biological death, but the taking of the soul in a kind of sleep. Meanwhile, *mawt* expresses death in the familiar sense. Therefore, in contrast to the other verses, this verse indicates that Jesus' (pbuh) death will take place after his second coming. (God knows best.)

THE ERROR OF THOSE WHO MAINTAIN THAT JESUS (PBUH) IS DEAD

The Qur'an and hadith reveal that Jesus (pbuh) did not die but was raised to God's presence. The Christians also believe this; however, their belief contradicts the Qur'an. In addition, some Muslims also have the mistaken ideas that Jesus (pbuh) died and will not return. Such a claim is completely unfounded and, as our Lord states, those who make it are only guessing. God tells all believers not to speculate on matters of which they have no knowledge:

Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Hearing, sight, and hearts will all be questioned. (Qur'an, 17:36)

Some people may be taken in by this erroneous belief, because they fail to fully consider what it means to make or believe such a claim. Or, they may be unaware of the responsibility that this will place on them. We do not seek to disparage such people; rather, our goal is to show them their mistake so that they will abandon it. But before they can be made to realize what a great error they are making, they need to consider just what that claim implies. In the Qur'an, God reveals that He confounded the unbelievers' plots against Jesus (pbuh) and that they did not kill him. It is a grave responsibility to ignore a truth revealed as clearly as in the words: "... **they did not kill him and they did not crucify him**" (Qur'an, 4:157). In essence, believing that Jesus (pbuh) was killed means that the unbelievers' plot succeeded, which contradicts the Qur'an.

Some people say that Jesus (pbuh) was not killed but died when his appointed hour came. That is also untrue. According to this error, God took Jesus' (pbuh) soul before the unbelievers could lay their hands on him, and therefore he was not killed by them. Yet the relevant verses clearly demonstrate that this is not the case. Moreover, such logic is flawed. Consider the following analogy: Three people have conspired to kill an enemy in an ambush. Let us further assume that the person in question dies of a heart attack before reaching the ambush site. In such a case, those who set the ambush will presumably rejoice in the belief that they have achieved their objective.

Alternatively, consider the case of someone who goes to an enemy's home to kill him. However, he falls to his death from the balcony rather than as the result of a punch during the fight. The fact that the person in question has died means that his antagonist has attained his objective. A similar analogy can be imagined in the case of Jesus (pbuh). The unbelievers set a trap designed to kill him. Yet God reveals that He foiled that trap. If Jesus (pbuh) were to die anyway, this would mean that the unbelievers succeeded, which is not possible. Therefore, he is still alive, will come again at God's command, and will make religious moral values prevail over the whole world. In effect, he will die only after he has returned to Earth and lived until he reaches old age. (God knows best.)

Still other people maintain that Jesus (pbuh) was saved from the unbelievers' trap but then died at an unknown time. Not only does this claim lack any logical foundation, it also raises a number of unanswered questions to which these people offer no logical explanation. God caused Jesus (pbuh) to disappear suddenly while he was still alive. After this, nobody saw or spoke to him ever again. This is an extraordinary situation. If,

as these people maintain, Jesus (pbuh) had lived for a while longer, surely some people would have seen him or spoken to him. Yet we have no such information that such a thing actually happened. Of course, it would have been impossible for him to have lived without moving among the people, speaking to anyone, or communicating his message, for doing so was the sole reason for his creation and being sent to the Children of Israel.

As mentioned earlier, this situation is unique to Jesus (pbuh). The word *tawaffaa* is used only to describe his death. In addition, no other prophet was taught the three divine books: "**I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel**" (Qur'an, 5:110) or has been described as: "**He is a Sign of the Hour**" (Qur'an, 43:61). Only Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence while still alive, only his followers will be superior until the Day of Judgment, and only in his case will all members of the People of the Book believe in him before he dies. All of this is an important proof that God has approved a very special destiny for Jesus (pbuh), and that to fulfill his destiny Jesus (pbuh) must be alive in His presence and return to Earth. (God knows best.)

God's confounding of the unbelievers' plot against Jesus (pbuh) and raising him while still alive, in both body and soul, to His presence is a great miracle. Throughout history, God has supported the prophets with various miracles. He revealed the true book, the Qur'an, to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace). Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad's (may God bless him and grant him peace) transport from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque in a single night (Qur'an, 17:1) and his prediction that the believers would enter the Sacred Mosque in safety (Qur'an, 48:27) are some of his miracles. The way that Moses' (pbuh) staff turned into a snake and confounded the illusions of Pharaoh's magicians, the way that his hand appeared snow-white to onlookers, and the way that the Red Sea divided in front of Moses (pbuh) and his people as they were being pursued by Pharaoh and his army; the way that Jesus (pbuh) came into the world without a father, spoke to people while he was still in his cradle, raised the dead, and cured lepers; and the way that the fire was cooled when Abraham (pbuh) was cast into it are other miracles performed with God's approval.

The faithful believe in these miracles performed by our Lord, and these miracles increase their joy in belief. Just as one of the faithful believes in all of the prophets' miracles, including those wrought by Jesus (pbuh), by the will of God, that person must also believe that Jesus (pbuh) was miraculously raised to His presence.

In addition, those who claim that Jesus (pbuh) has already died have to bear in mind the loss they will suffer when Jesus (pbuh) does return. Many of the signs regarding this event, as revealed in the Qur'an and the hadith, have already occurred. It is also great news that his second coming is at hand. (God knows best.) That being the case, believers need to experience the excitement, enthusiasm, and joy of that event, and to compete with one another to make the best possible preparations to greet him. Therefore, those who have become caught up in this erroneous belief that Jesus (pbuh) has already died need to abandon their preconceptions, listen to their consciences, and again study in detail what the Qur'an has to say. Only by doing so will they see the truth and be freed from their error.

Nevertheless, it will be useful to examine these mistaken claims once again to see their groundless nature so that those who have been taken in can acquire accurate information.

Claim 1 and Its Refutation

One so-called piece of evidence put forward by those who maintain that Jesus (pbuh) has died is the expression: "... when You took me back to You [tawaffaytanee], You were the One watching over them..." in Qur'an 5:117. These people interpret *tawaffaytanee* as biological death. However, as discussed earlier, taking the soul does not always refer to biological death. We will give a brief summary of the preceding arguments here, as follows:

1. The term *took me back* is the same as that employed in Qur'an 3:55. As we made clear in our analysis of this verse, the word carries different senses than the English word *death*. An analysis of how *tawaffaa* is used in the Qur'an makes this clear. We have already looked at Qur'an 39:42 in connection with this. Now, we will consider another verse that uses *tawaffaa* in the same sense:

He takes you back to Himself at night [yatawaffakum], while knowing the things you perpetrate during the day, and then wakes you up again, so that a specified term may be fulfilled. (Qur'an, 6:60)

As this verse states, God takes the souls of sleeping people. While asleep, people do not die in the normally accepted sense; the soul merely leaves the body for a different dimension for a brief period of time. If this is considered biological death, then Jesus (pbuh) died every night of his lifetime. Moreover, this would be true of all people. Clearly, the verse is not saying this.

According to the majority view, *tawaffaa* is used in the sense of sleep. Therefore, the verse means: "I shall cause you to sleep." In conclusion, we can say that Jesus (pbuh) was placed in a state similar to sleep, was raised to God's presence while alive, and that he merely departed from this dimension. (God knows best.)

The contemporary Islamic scholar Muhammad Khalil Herras made the following comment:

The word *tawaffaa* in this verse does not mean "death," but "putting one into a state resembling sleep." If we accept the meaning of death, *then there can be no explanation for Jesus (pbuh) being raised dead to God. Again, if the word is being used in the sense of death, then there would be no meaning to the good news of Jesus' (pbuh) being saved and purified from the Jews. Moreover, God would have helped the Jews if He had killed him. (God is surely beyond that.)* Moreover, how are we to understand God's trap in Qur'an 3:54? *For God to kill Jesus (pbuh) before the Jews would not fit into this trap. The genuine trap is that God will raise Jesus (pbuh) to His presence while still alive, and Jesus (pbuh) will descend in the End Times...*⁷²

Similarly, in commenting on Qur'an 5:117, Hamdi Yazir of Elmali draws attention to the use of *mutawaffeeka* in Qur'an 3:55 and says that the word is used in the same sense in both verses. Hamdi Yazir of Elmali gives the following exposition in his commentary:

But when You took my soul, You took me from among them and raised me.⁷³

In other words, the expression "You took me back" refers not to his biological death; rather, it indicates that he was raised to God's presence in a state resembling sleep and thereby removed from this dimension. (God knows best.)

2. Some people misinterpret the tidings given in Qur'an 5:116-17 and, as a result, fall into a number of errors. However, when these verses are examined in the light of the following verses and the interpretations of Islamic scholars, the errors of such people are exposed. For example;

And when God asks: "Jesus son of Mary. Did you say to people: 'Take me and my mother as deities besides God?'" he will reply: "Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to say! If I had said it, then You would have known it. You know what is in my self, but I do not know what is in Your Self. You are the Knower of all unseen things." (Qur'an, 5:116)

The people in question claim that this question posed by God reveals that Jesus (pbuh) died. However, the expression revealed here deals with our Lord speaking to Jesus (pbuh) on the Day of Judgment. When the verses following this one are examined, this becomes quite clear:

[Jesus will say:] "I said to them nothing but what You ordered me to say: 'Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.' I was a witness against them as long as I remained among them. But when You took me back to You, You were the One watching over them. You are Witness of all things. If You punish them, they are Your servants. If you forgive them, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise." God will say: "This is the Day when the sincerity of the sincere will benefit them. They will have gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever and ever. God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is the great victory." (Qur'an, 5:117-19)

Moreover, the Qur'an contains other information about the Day of Judgment. Abu Lahab is one example of those told by our Lord, while he was still alive, that he would go to Hell:

Ruin to the hands of Abu Lahab and ruin to him! His wealth has not helped him, nor anything he has earned. He will burn in a Flaming Fire. And so will his wife, the firewood-carrier, with a rope of twisted fiber round her neck. (Qur'an, 111:1-5)

Similarly, the Qur'an reveals that God calls people to account on the Day of Judgment and that the guardians of Hell speak with those who have earned suffering for themselves:

O company of jinn and human beings! Did not messengers come to you from among yourselves, relating My signs to you and warning you of the encounter of this day? They will say: "We testify against ourselves." The life of this world deluded them, and they will testify against themselves that they were unbelievers. (Qur'an, 6:130)

Those who do not believe will be driven to Hell in companies. When they arrive there and its gates are opened, its custodians will ask them: "Did messengers from yourselves not come to you, reciting your Lord's signs to you and warning you of the meeting on this day?" They will reply: "Indeed they did." But the decree of punishment is justly carried out against the unbelievers. (Qur'an, 39:71)

As we have seen, God gives examples of conversations carried out in the Hereafter. The conversation with Jesus (pbuh) will take place with our Lord in the Hereafter, after he has come to Earth for a second time and then died.

Christians have fallen into serious error by deifying Jesus (pbuh). (God is surely beyond that.) Those who adhere to this error will have to give an account in God's presence on the Day of Judgment. According to the Qur'an, Jesus (pbuh) will bear witness that they turned away from the true religion, because, like all other prophets, he called his society to believe in God as the one and only and to serve only Him. Qur'an 5:119 says that this event will occur in the Hereafter, which means that it refers to the Day of Judgment, as revealed in the above verses. The sentence **"This is the day when the sincerity of the sincere will benefit them"** indicates this.

In conclusion, this conversation refers to the future, not the past. In addition, there is no indication given in the verse **"when You took me back to You"** that can be interpreted in such a way to support the mistaken claim that Jesus (pbuh) died in the past. Thus, this verse cannot be used as evidence that Jesus (pbuh) has already died.

As stated earlier, the great majority of Islamic scholars agree that these verses refer to Jesus' (pbuh) ascension to God's presence. For instance, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi said that the verse means "Jesus' (pbuh) raising to the sky."⁷⁴ Similarly, Ibn Kathir said that this does not point to his death, but describes a conversation that will take place on the Day of Judgment. He also said that the word in the familiar sense of (biological) death is not used in the verse.⁷⁵ In his book *Mawqif al-'Aql*, Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri analysed the verse in the following terms: "You took and raised me from among them, and put an end to my relationship with Earth." He then continued: "This is taking by raising to His presence; it is not killing." Such modern commentators as Hasan Basri Cantay, Omer Nasuhi Bilmen, and al-Sabuni have said that **"You took me back to You"** means "You raised me from among them to the heavens."⁷⁶

Claim 2 and Its Refutation

As stated earlier, Jesus' (pbuh) ascension to God's presence is an important piece of evidence that he never died. People who misunderstand this truth, however, have sought to interpret his ascension in terms of the concepts of time and space, which apply to us. As a result, they assert that Jesus (pbuh) is present in the sky in physical form, which then leads them to deny his ascension to God's presence. But this is a most mistaken view. First and foremost, the intention behind raising Jesus (pbuh) to His presence was not so that he could live physically in the heavens, but to take him to a separate dimension, one independent of time and space. (God knows best.)

Human beings inhabit a dimension bounded by time and space and can only perceive and understand events within that dimension, as far as God permits and in the manner desired by Him. However, many verses reveal that there are other dimensions of which we know nothing, such as that inhabited by angels and jinns. With our Lord's approval, angels and jinns can cross from their own dimension to ours. An examination of the relevant verses will clarify this matter for us.

1. God is the Lord of the Worlds

One of God's names is "Lord of the worlds." This indicates the existence of worlds other than the one known to and inhabited by human beings. (God knows best.) God is the Creator and Lord of all worlds, even of

those that are both known and unknown to us and that we can and cannot perceive. This name appears in various verses, some of which are presented below:

[Noah said:] "I do not ask you for any wage for it. My wage is the responsibility of no one but the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 26:109)

Truly, it is revelation sent down by the Lord of all the worlds. (Qur'an, 26:192)

But when he [Moses] reached it, a voice called out to him: "Blessed be him who is in the Fire and all who are around it. Glory be to God, the Lord of all the worlds!" (Qur'an, 27:8)

But when he reached it, a voice called out to him from the right-hand side of the valley in the part that was full of blessing, from out of the bush: "Moses, I am God, the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 28:30)

The revelation of the Book, in which there is no doubt, is from the Lord of the worlds. (Qur'an, 32:2)

You will see the angels circling round the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise. It will be decided between them with truth. And it will be said: "Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds." (Qur'an, 39:75)

2. Martyrs Inhabit a Dimension Unknown to Human Beings

Other verses that point to the existence of dimensions are those that reveal the rank and position of martyrs. For example:

Do not say that those who are killed in the way of God are dead. On the contrary, they are alive, but you are not aware of it. (Qur'an, 2:154)

In other words, even though martyrs appear to have died in the biological sense, He states that they are alive, but that we cannot fully understand their true situation. The expression "**they are alive, but you are not aware of it**" indicates that people have no knowledge of this subject and cannot understand it, for they are only familiar with the conditions of this world. (God knows best.) Other verses reveal that martyrs live in the manner appointed for them by God in a very different dimension, one in which there is no time and space:

Do not suppose that those killed in the way of God are dead. No indeed! They are alive and well provided for in the very presence of their Lord, delighting in the favor God has bestowed on them, rejoicing over those they left behind who have not yet joined them, feeling no fear and knowing no sorrow, rejoicing in blessings and favor from God, and that God does not let the wage of the believers go to waste. (Qur'an, 3:169-71)

In this dimension, martyrs are sustained, feel joy, and wish to give glad tidings to those who come later. Those who feel unnecessary doubts and concerns about Jesus (pbuh) being raised to God's presence because they fail to understand the essence of this event should, necessarily, also doubt the existence of this dimension. Yet there is no evidence to provoke such doubt. On the other hand, there is a clear proof that, just like martyrs, angels, and jinn, Jesus (pbuh) inhabits a dimension about which we know nothing, and that he will return to Earth when God wills. God raised Jesus (pbuh) to His presence, and, when the time established by God comes, he will return to this dimension, which is bound by time and space. (God knows best.)

3. Angels Descend to Earth and Ascend to God's Presence

Belief in angels is one of Islam's fundamental tenets of faith. The Qur'an contains some information about these entities: They constantly praise and glorify God, do what He tells them to do perfectly and fully, have sincerely submitted to Him, and inhabit a dimension that is not bound by time and space. As regards this last point, consider the following verses:

[This punishment is] From God – the Lord of the Ascending Steps. The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose length is fifty thousand years. (Qur'an, 70:3-4)

The expression "**a day whose length is fifty thousand years**" shows that angels are not bound by the human concept of time. Furthermore, it is a proof that there is a life beyond this concept, one that does not resemble the life in this world and is not bound by the concepts of time or space. It is very possible that Jesus (pbuh) is living in such a dimension. (God knows best.)

The fact that God sends angels to Earth to perform specific tasks shows that there is a transition between the human and other dimensions. Some of their tasks are to transmit God's revelations to human beings and to help and support believers:

And when you asked the believers: "Is it not enough for you that your Lord reinforced you with three thousand angels, sent down?" (Qur'an, 3:124)

He sends down angels, as He wills, with the Spirit of His command to any of His servants: "Give warning that there is no deity but Me, so have fear of [and respect] Me!" (Qur'an, 16:2)

Another verse reveals that angels can descend to Earth to carry out various duties approved by God:

In it, the angels and the Spirit descend by their Lord's authority with every ordinance. (Qur'an, 97:4)

In addition, angels were sent as messengers to Abraham (pbuh) and Lot (pbuh) to inform them that their peoples would be punished; that they came to Zechariah with the glad tidings of a child; and that they came to Mary, telling her that God had chosen her and that she would bear a son named Jesus (pbuh). The revelation of the Qur'an to our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) by means of the angel Gabriel, as well as our Prophet's seeing him, is revealed as follows:

[The Qur'an is] taught him by one immensely strong, possessing power and splendor. He stood there stationary – there on the highest horizon. Then he drew near and hung suspended. He was two bow-lengths away or even closer. Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed. His heart did not lie about what he saw. What! Do you dispute with him about what he saw? He saw him again another time by the Lote-tree of the Final Limit, beside which is the Garden of Refuge, when that which covered the Lote-tree covered it. His eye did not waver nor did he look away. He saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord. (Qur'an, 53:5-18)

When the angels return to His presence, this does not mean that they cease to exist, in the terms that apply in this world. They merely move to another dimension and continue living beyond our understanding. Similarly, the fact that Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence does not mean that he has died. Many verses and hadith confirm the truth of this interpretation. Jesus (pbuh) is alive in a dimension that surpasses our understanding. Moreover, the fact that angels cross between two dimensions, as God wills, shows that this transition is very easy when our Lord so wills. When the time set forth by God comes, Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth and call people to religious moral values as the messenger of God. (God knows best.)

All of this evidence indicates that those people who deny that Jesus (pbuh) is still alive and will return fail to appreciate God's power and might. Given that God, the All-Mighty and All-Powerful, is sovereign over all things, He creates as He wills and has infinite knowledge, whereas all human knowledge is limited to that which God permits humanity to have. A human being can only comprehend an event, how it takes place and the wisdom behind it, to the extent permitted by God. The fact that Jesus (pbuh) was purified of the unbelievers and raised to God's presence may be one of those events that people cannot fully comprehend. A great miracle took place when the unbelievers came to kill Jesus (pbuh). Miracles are marvels that strengthen the believers' faith and cause some unbelievers to turn to faith. After they see a miracle, believers turn to God and appreciate His infinite might. Their awed respect and sincere love for God is reinforced, and their enthusiasm and excitement grow. The way that Jesus (pbuh) was protected from the unbelievers' traps and departed from this dimension in both body and soul is one of these miracles. When the time appointed by God comes, another great miracle will take place: Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth. This fact has been imparted in verses and hadith, and is a marvel that all believers need to ponder.

Other Indicative Accounts in the Qur'an

As stated at the beginning, one of the most serious errors made by those who reject Jesus' (pbuh) ascension is their failure to realize that God is not bound by time and space. In fact, there are dimensions, all of which He created, that are unknown and unperceived by humanity. This fact can help us understand the proofs presented for this miraculous event. As the Qur'an states:

What are they waiting for, but for God to come to them in the shadows of the clouds, together with the angels, in which case the matter will have been settled? All matters return to God. (Qur'an, 2:210)

Another verse reveals that all matters "ascend to" God during "a day whose length is a thousand years," according to the human comprehension of time:

He directs the whole affair from heaven to Earth. Then it will again ascend to Him on a Day whose length is a thousand years by the way you measure. (Qur'an, 32:5)

The fact that "God directs the whole affair" is a proof that He is unbound by space and time. God knows everything that happens in the universe, down to the tiniest detail. Nothing can be hidden from our Lord, neither an action performed openly nor one believed to have been carried out in secret. This is indicated in the expression that all matters "**ascend to God.**"

Another verse describes the position of the believers who made the *hijrah* (migration) with Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), and reveals:

... If anyone leaves his home, migrating to God and His messenger, and death catches up with him, God will reward him... (Qur'an, 4:100)

The phrase "migrating to God" indicates that our Lord is not bound by space. These believers left their homes and migrated, together with Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), because of the unbelievers' oppression. They did not, of course, migrate to God in the sense bounded by time and space in which we think. Rather, this verse reveals that they left their homes in the hope of God's mercy and compassion, and migrated to a new home in obedience to the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). Abraham's (pbuh) words: "**I am going towards my Lord; He will be my guide**" (Qur'an, 37:99), indicates his own migration.

In the same way, the Qur'an refers to people being restored to life, after being put into a state resembling sleep or killed, in a manner outside the familiar concepts of time, sleep, and death. One of these is a reference to someone who was resurrected after being left for dead for hundreds of years. Another refers to the people of al-Kahf (the Companions of the Cave), who were awoken after long years of sleep.

The Man Raised to Life after a Hundred Years

The Qur'an reveals:

Or the one who passed by a town which had fallen into ruin? He asked: "How can God restore this to life, when it has died?" God caused him to die for a hundred years then brought him back to life. Then He asked: "How long have you been here?" The man replied: "I have been here a day or part of a day." He said: "Not so! You have been here for a hundred years. Look at your food and drink – it has not gone bad – and look at your donkey, so We can make you a sign for all humanity. Look at the bones – how We raise them up and clothe them with flesh." When it had become clear to him, he said: "Now I know that God has power over all things." (Qur'an, 2:259)

God creates whatsoever He wills, in any manner that He wills, and has dominion over all that exists. Unbound by the concepts of time and space, our Lord can remove people from these concepts whenever He wills and cause them to experience extraordinary events. This is a very simple matter for God, for only humanity – not God – is bound by time and space. But our Lord, Who is unbounded by anything and is perfect in all respects, creates and makes something happen by saying: "Be!" This is revealed in the following verses:

Our Word to a thing when We will it is just to say to it "Be!" and it is. (Qur'an, 16:40)

He gives life and death. When He decides upon an affair, He says to it "Be!" and it is. (Qur'an, 40:68)

... the Originator of the heavens and Earth. When He decides on something, He just says to it "Be!" and it is. (Qur'an, 2:117)

Waking the Companions of the Cave after Many Years

Another example is the Qur'anic account of the Companions of the Cave, a group of young people who sought protection from their oppressive ruler who opposed religious moral values. The Qur'an reveals the following information about them:

When the young men took refuge in the cave and said: "Our Lord, give us mercy directly from You and open the way for us to right guidance in our situation." So We sealed their ears with sleep in the cave for a number of years. (Qur'an, 18:10-11)

You would have supposed them to be awake, whereas, in fact, they were asleep. We moved them to the right and to the left, and, at the entrance, their dog stretched out its paws. If you had looked down and seen them, you would have turned from them and run, filled with terror at the sight of them. That was the situation when we woke them up so they could question one another. One of them asked: "How long have you been here?" They replied: "We have been here for a day or part of a day." They said: "Your Lord knows best how long you have been here. Send one of your number into the city with this silver you have, so that he can see which food is purest and bring you some of it to eat. But he should go about with caution, so that no one is aware of you." (Qur'an, 18:18-19)

The Qur'an does not reveal how long these young people remained in the cave, although the term "for a number of years" reveals that the period they spent there was not a short one. (God knows best.) Moreover, the Qur'an reveals that people estimated that they spent 309 years in the cave. This is another sign that their sleep lasted for quite a while:

They stayed in their cave for three hundred years and added nine. Say: "God knows best how long they stayed. The unseen of the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. How perfectly He sees, how well He hears! They have no protector apart from Him. Nor does He share His rule with anyone." (Qur'an, 18:25-26)

Under normal terrestrial conditions, people obviously cannot sleep for such a long period. This sleep, therefore, may not be the type of sleep with which we are familiar. Perhaps they were taken into another dimension, one in which time and space do not apply, and were later sent back to Earth. (God knows best.)

Just like people waking up from sleep, these people also returned to life. In a similar way, Jesus (pbuh) will return to life when he comes back to Earth and, after fulfilling the honorable responsibility imposed on him by God, and, as a requirement of the verse; **He said: "On it [Earth] you will live and on it die, and from it you will be brought forth,"** (Qur'an, 7:25) he will die on Earth, like every other human being. (God knows best.)

Claim 3 and Its Refutation

Another claim made by those who do not believe in Jesus' (pbuh) second coming is based on Qur'an 21:34-35. These read as follows:

We did not give any human being before you immortality. And if you die, will they then be immortal? Every self will taste death. We test you with both good and evil as a trial. And you will be returned to Us. (Qur'an, 21:34-35)

Some people cite these verses as proof that Jesus (pbuh) is dead. However, by doing so they ignore the many clear verses and hadith that proclaim that God protected and rescued Jesus (pbuh) from the unbelievers' traps. The great majority of Islamic scholars agree with this interpretation. Moreover, the fact that Jesus (pbuh) did not die and was raised to God's presence does not mean that he is immortal. Furthermore, such a mistaken idea is never proposed when dealing with his second coming. All of the evidence focuses on the facts that Jesus (pbuh) has not died yet, that he will return to Earth, and that his death will take place after that. (God knows best.)

These deluded people may make such a claim because they have not fully examined or understood the clear evidence that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead. As revealed in: **"He is only a servant on whom We bestowed Our blessing and whom We made an example for the Children of Israel"** (Qur'an, 43:59), Jesus (pbuh) is a mortal servant created by God, just like everyone else. However, some Christians mistakenly deified him because of the many blessings and miracles that our Lord bestowed upon him. Muslims have a deep love and respect for Jesus (pbuh), just as they do for all of God's prophets. But they are also fully aware that just like all the other messengers, he is no more than a servant created by God:

The Messiah, the son of Mary, was only a messenger, before whom other messengers came and went. His mother was a woman of truth. Both of them ate food. See how We make the signs clear to them. Then see how they have gone astray. (Qur'an, 5:75)

Claim 4 and Its Refutation

Some people suggest that because Christians believe that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead and that he will return to Earth, Muslims should not believe such mistaken claims. However, their logic is seriously flawed.

First, it needs to be made clear that Judaism and Christianity were corrupted over the course of time, and that superstitions and errors entered into them. In addition, a close examination of the Old and New Testaments reveals that a number of beliefs and moral values belonging to the true religion have been preserved. In addition, both books have several aspects in common with the Qur'an. Thus, we can establish which beliefs have been corrupted and which are compatible with the true religion by taking the Qur'an and the Sunnah of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) as our guides.

The Qur'an, the last divine book revealed by God, turned people toward the true path and away from their misguided beliefs. In fact, the Qur'an enabled the Christians and the Jews, who had become divided from each other before its revelation, were given true and divine information on these subjects. Several verses reveal this truth, as follows:

We have only sent down the Book to you so that you can make clear to them the things about which they differ, and as a guidance and a mercy to people who believe. (Qur'an, 16:64)

O People of the Book! Our messenger has come to you, making clear to you much of the Book that you have kept concealed, and passing over a lot. A Light has come to you from God, and a Clear Book. (Qur'an, 5:15)

The Qur'an describes, in some detail, the lives of Moses (pbuh) and Jesus (pbuh), the lives of their followers, their moral values, how Muslims look at Jews and Christians, what their attitudes toward them should be, and other such matters. One piece of information is which Christian and Jewish beliefs and laws have become corrupted. Heading this list is the Christian belief that Jesus (pbuh) is God's son. (God is surely beyond that.) Based upon this mistaken belief, they have sought to deify Jesus (pbuh). The belief in the Trinity is another fundamental, but distorted, Christian belief. God reveals that Christians have assumed a major responsibility because they allowed such distortions to enter their religion:

The Jews say: "Ezra is the son of God," and the Christians say: "The Messiah is the son of God." That is what they say with their mouths, copying the words of those who did not believe before. God fight them! How corrupted they are! (Qur'an, 9:30)

O People of the Book! Do not go to excess in your religion. Say nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers. Do not say: "Three." It is better that you stop. God is only One God. He is too glorious to have a son. Everything in the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. God suffices as a Guardian. (Qur'an, 4:171)

Those who say: "God is the Messiah, son of Mary" are unbelievers. Say: "Who possesses any power at all over God if He wills to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone else on Earth?" The kingdom of the heavens and Earth, and everything between them, belongs to God. He creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things. (Qur'an, 5:17)

Another verse reveals the scale of the responsibility assumed by Christians for developing corrupt beliefs:

They say: "The All-Merciful has a son." They have devised a monstrous thing. The heavens are all but rent apart, and Earth split open and the mountains brought crashing down, at their ascription of a son to the All-Merciful! It is not fitting for the All-Merciful to have a son. (Qur'an, 19:88-92)

On the other hand, Judaism and Christianity have preserved such basic items of faith as belief in the Day of Judgment, the prophets and angels, and various values (e.g., honesty, helping others, being patient and altruistic, protecting and feeding the needy, ensuring justice, speaking fair words, and being modest and peace-loving). These items are found in all divine religions. Some of the virtues of the People of the Book who sincerely believe in God are revealed, as follows:

They are not all the same. There is a community among the People of the Book who are upright. They recite God's signs throughout the night, and they prostrate. They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. You will not be denied the reward for any good thing you do. God knows those who guard against evil. (Qur'an, 3:113-15)

The Christian belief that Jesus (pbuh) is not dead and will return is fully present in the Qur'an, which also reveals which aspects of Christianity are superstitious and which are divine. Christians make several errors with regard to Jesus' (pbuh) ascension, due to such corrupt beliefs as the Trinity and Jesus' (pbuh) so-called status as God's son. In addition, their beliefs that he died to atone for the sins of all humanity and that he ascended to God's presence after dying on the Cross are incompatible with the true religion. God reveals in the Qur'an that nobody can atone for the sins of another, for every individual's deeds are his or hers alone. Every person will be called to account on the Day of Judgment alone, and nobody will be able to help anyone else, unless God wills it. This is revealed in the following verse:

Whoever is guided is only guided to his own good. Whoever is misguided is only misguided to his detriment. No burden-bearer can bear another's burden. We never punish until We have sent a messenger. (Qur'an, 17:15)

Jesus (pbuh), one of God's prophets and messengers, called his people to a great truth: **"God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path"** (Qur'an, 3:51). In other words, he called upon them to serve God alone and to live the kind of lives that would meet with His good approval and warned them against the sufferings of the Day of Judgment. Like all other people, he could only do what God willed him to do.

As revealed in the verse that reports Abraham's (pbuh) prayer, God "**gives me food and gives me drink; and when I am ill, He heals me; He will cause my death, then give me life; He Who I sincerely hope will forgive my mistakes on the Day of Reckoning**" (Qur'an, 26:79-82). Christians, on the other hand, make a grave error by saying that Jesus (pbuh) was crucified to atone for the sins of all humanity.

However, the Qur'an confirms their belief in the second coming. If they had corrupted this belief, there is no doubt that the Qur'an would have rectified this mistake, just as it rectifies all of the corrupted beliefs and concepts that have entered Christianity with respect to this great prophet. In conclusion, the unbelievers did not kill Jesus (pbuh), for God raised him to His presence. Both Christians and Muslims are waiting for his return. Until that time, he continues to live in a dimension that is unbounded by time and space and the nature of which is known only to our Lord.

Claim 5 and Its Refutation

One of the claims made by those who are unwilling to accept the second coming is that "Believing in Jesus' (pbuh) return means accepting Christianity."

This error is the product of mistaken and distorted logic. Jesus (pbuh) is a praised, selected, and unique prophet in God's presence. His superior moral values and deep faith are remembered with respect by all believers, who have adopted him as a role model. Praising his moral values, feeling intense excitement at his impending return, and telling all believers of these glad tidings are examples of a proper attitude. Making irrational and illogical excuses, such as the one given above, is unacceptable.

According to this distorted logic, nothing regarding Christianity should ever be mentioned or discussed. In the same way, Moses' (pbuh) correct moral values and exemplary life should never be described, on the grounds that this would mean supporting the Jews. Many Qur'anic verses praise Jesus (pbuh), Moses (pbuh), Joseph (pbuh), Abraham (pbuh), and Jacob (pbuh), as well as their deep faith. Yet according to this mistaken logic, these verses should never be read. These excuses are clearly unacceptable. As we made clear earlier, the People of the Book have several corrupted beliefs and practices that are incompatible with the true religion. These are revealed in the Qur'an, as is the fact that followers of both religions have good and pleasing aspects and beliefs that are compatible with the true religion. Our responsibility is to consider the People of the Book in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and to distinguish between truth and error with the information that we obtain from these sources.

In addition, we must remember that Muslims make no distinction among the prophets and that they hold these people in great respect: "**We believe in God and what has been sent down to us; what was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes; what Moses and Jesus were given; and what all the prophets were given by their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. We are Muslims submitted to Him**" (Qur'an, 2:136). The fact that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth before the Day of Judgment is not a subject that believers should refrain from discussing on the grounds of irrational and illogical pretexts. On the contrary, it is a glad tidings that should be constantly borne in mind with great enthusiasm, passion, and joy.

Another fact reveals these people's error: When Jesus (pbuh) returns, he will rule with the Qur'an. Like all of the other prophets, Jesus (pbuh) is a follower of Islam, the true and divine religion in God's presence. The Qur'an reveals these facts in the following verses:

The religion with God is Islam. (Qur'an, 3:19)

He has laid down the same religion for you as He enjoined upon Noah: that which We have revealed to you and which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: "Establish the religion and do not make divisions in it." What you call the idolaters to follow is very hard for them. God chooses for Himself anyone He wills and guides to Himself those who turn to Him. (Qur'an, 42:13)

When Jesus (pbuh) returns to Earth, he will eliminate the distorted beliefs of the People of the Book, call people to Islam, and rule with the Qur'an and the Sunnah. These glad tidings are reported in the hadith:

He will lead you according to the Book of your Lord and the Sunnah of your messenger.⁷⁷

By the One in Whose hand is my self, definitely the son of Mary will soon descend among you as a just judge. He will break the Cross, kill the pig, and abolish the *jizya* [a head tax on free non-Muslims living under Muslim rule].⁷⁸

Claim 6 and Its Refutation

Another claim is that "The return of Jesus (pbuh) would eliminate the element of testing." According to this totally groundless claim, those who witness the rising of someone who died thousands of years ago and who have doubts about the resurrection will come to have faith. Therefore, there will no longer be any need for testing people.

This interpretation also lacks any logical foundation. First, as stated before, Jesus (pbuh) did not die but is still alive in God's presence. Moreover, not everyone will immediately accept this event, as the people in question maintain. At first, Jesus (pbuh) will be met with skepticism, especially from those who do not live by true religious moral values or those who have weak faith. After the second coming, Jesus (pbuh) will wage a great intellectual struggle against all atheistic systems and ideologies, and return the religion to its pure form by eliminating all of its corrupted elements and beliefs. At the end of this struggle, the true religion's moral values will rule the world. Indeed, the great Islamic scholar Said Nursi showed that the great majority of people will greet Jesus (pbuh) with skepticism, but that sincere believers will recognize him by the light of his faith and immediately obey him:

God, the All-Wise and the Generous, Who every time sends angels to Earth from heavens; sometimes renders them in the form of a human being (as in the case of Gabriel, who appeared in the form of Dihya [one of the Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) followers]); sends spirits from the universe of spirits, making them appear in the form of human beings; and Who even sends the spirits of the dead saints in their former bodies to Earth, sends Jesus (pbuh) (whose body is in the heavenly world and is alive) to Earth, even if he had really died and gone to the remotest edge of the life of the Hereafter, making him wrapped in a body, for the safe occurrence of the most important issue of the religion of Jesus (pbuh) ... Out of his divine purpose, He

promised, and because He promised, He will surely send. When Jesus (pbuh) comes, not necessarily everyone will know that he is really Jesus (pbuh). Those who are close to him and those with profound faith will recognize him, thanks to the light of their faith. Otherwise, not everyone will clearly recognize him.⁷⁹

As this great teacher reported, when Jesus (pbuh) returns, not everyone will recognize and believe in him. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that most of the prophets sent throughout history performed miracles by God's will in order to call people to faith. However, a great many people still refused to believe, despite these miracles. On the contrary, they became arrogant and persisted in their unbelief, as did Pharaoh and his court, who refused to believe, despite Moses' (pbuh) miracles (e.g., turning his staff into a snake, and his hand becoming as white as snow). The people's response to these miracles is revealed in the following terms:

They said: "No matter what kind of sign you bring us to bewitch us, we will not believe in you." So We sent down upon them floods, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood, signs, clear and distinct, but they proved arrogant and were an evil-doing people. (Qur'an, 7:132-33)

God also reveals that, unless He wills otherwise, those who refuse to believe will not change their minds even if they witness great miracles:

Even if We sent down angels to them, the dead spoke to them, and We gathered together everything in front of them right before their eyes, they would still not believe unless God willed. The truth is that most of them are ignorant. (Qur'an, 6:111)

Therefore, regardless of the miracle performed, humanity's environment of testing will never be eliminated. Jesus' (pbuh) second coming will be a means through which sincere believers will be distinguished from those who do not believe. With the reason, clear-sightedness, and foresight imparted by faith, sincere believers will recognize Jesus (pbuh), obey him wholeheartedly, and support and protect him. Unbelievers or those with weak faith will remain skeptical and doubtful. (God knows best.) However, their groundless doubts and skepticism will not alter the facts, for God's promise of Jesus' (pbuh) return to Earth will be fulfilled, regardless of anyone's plan to prevent this great miracle.

Claim 7 and Its Refutation

Another claim made by those who believe that Jesus (pbuh) is dead is that the Qur'an reveals that Prophet Idris (pbuh) was also "raised up." According to this claim, Jesus (pbuh), just like Idris (pbuh), was only "raised up" in the sense of station or rank. When the relevant verses are examined in detail, however, this deduction is shown to be inaccurate. The relevant verses are given below:

Mention Idris in the Book. He was a true man and a prophet. We raised him up to a high place. (Qur'an, 19:56-57)

... [I will] raise you [Jesus] up to Me and purify you of those who are unbelievers. And I will place the people who follow you above those who do not believe until the Day of Resurrection... (Qur'an, 3:55)

And [on account of] their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them... God raised him up to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 4:157-58)

Clearly, there is a great difference between these two states. Since the other prophets' superior moral values and faith are praised in the preceding verses, as is the case with Idris (pbuh), it is revealed that he has been raised in station. However, the verses that precede the one mentioning Jesus' (pbuh) ascension discuss the unbelievers' plot against him and how God protected him by raising him, body and soul, into another dimension unbounded by space and time. Thus, Idris (pbuh) was raised in station, whereas Jesus (pbuh) was physically removed from this dimension and raised to God's presence. (God knows best.)

Claim 8 and Its Refutation

Another unfounded assertion made by some people is that "Since Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) was the last prophet, Jesus (pbuh) will not return." This has no basis in fact. First, it needs to be made clear that our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) is **"the messenger of God and the Final Seal of the prophets"** (Qur'an, 33:40). The fact that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth does not, as some people maintain, change that fact. Jesus (pbuh) will return not as a prophet, but as a messenger who will maintain the law of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) and cause religious moral values to prevail worldwide.

Other people put forward another irrational and illogical claim: "If Jesus (pbuh) is not to return as a prophet, then his coming will have no meaning." This violates both reason and conscience. Our Lord has promised this event, behind which He has placed great wisdom. Throughout history, God has shown people the true path through the prophets that He has sent to them. Sometimes, during periods when people had turned away from religious moral values and degeneracy had become widespread, He removed people from the darkness of their errors by sending them messengers. These messengers are people sent by God as rulers, who have led people to salvation. Indeed, the Qur'an reveals that people suffering woes and difficulties have prayed to God to send them a savior and protector:

What reason could you have for not fighting in the Way of God – for those men, women, and children who are oppressed and exclaim: "Our Lord, take us out of this city whose inhabitants are wrongdoers! Give us a protector from You! Give us a helper from You!" (Qur'an, 4:75)

Of course, God answered these prayers and sent them a savior from His presence, which is a very great blessing. The accounts of Saul (pbuh) and Dhu'l Qarnayn (pbuh) constitute important evidence that God has sent messengers as well as prophets to various peoples. God sent Saul (pbuh) to his society as a ruler, and the

believers had to obey him. Saul (pbuh) and those around him fought against Goliath, the unbelievers' leader. Sincere believers devoted themselves to Saul (pbuh) and obeyed him, while the skeptics could neither understand that Saul (pbuh) had been sent to them as a messenger nor the wisdom in complying with his commands. The ignorant reaction of such people is given in the Qur'an:

Their prophet said to them: "God has appointed Saul to be your king." They replied: "How can he have kingship over us when we have much more right to kingship than he does? He does not even possess great wealth!" He said: "God has chosen him over you and favored him greatly in knowledge and physical strength. God gives kingship to anyone He wills. God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Qur'an, 2:247)

Similarly, Dhu'l Qarnayn was sent as a messenger to his society in order to rescue its members from the difficulties into which they had fallen, and to enable religious moral values to prevail. The Qur'an reveals that God made this man a sound ruler:

They will ask you about Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Say: "I will tell you something about him." We gave him power and authority in the land and granted him a way to everything. (Qur'an, 18:83-84)

In our own time, people are living in a world of moral collapse, poverty, and cruelty in which injustice prevails. When the time stipulated by God comes, Jesus (pbuh) will be sent back to Earth to enable religious moral values to prevail and lead people from the darkness into the light. With the second coming, atheistic ideologies, which form the basis of cruelty and degeneration, will be entirely eliminated on the intellectual level. And then, by the will of God, the peace, security, and abundance for which people are longing will come to prevail.

Claim 9 and Its Refutation

Other people with baseless doubts about Jesus' (pbuh) exact status and return ask: "Why is Jesus (pbuh) being sent to cause religious moral values to prevail, and not Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace)?" Taking these concerns as a pretext, they then raise all sorts of objections.

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) is an honored and trustworthy messenger in God's sight. God revealed His last Book to this great man, who is a role model of abiding by proper moral values, godliness and closeness to God, a friend of God, and one superior in His sight. He is also the friend, and protector of all believers. Throughout his life, the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) waged an exemplary struggle in the path of God and enlightened Arabia, which was buried in spiritual darkness and ignorance, with Islamic moral values. When the time appointed by God came to an end, his life, like that of many other prophets, came to an end.

However, God ordained a different destiny for Jesus (pbuh) and promised him that he would return to Earth. This is our Lord's discretion, and surely there is great wisdom behind it. One element of that wisdom (God knows best) is that only such a miracle will enable Christians and Jews to rescue themselves from the situation in which they find themselves. Christians have many superstitions and distorted dogmas, which the Muslims do not have, such as deifying Jesus (pbuh). Thus, Jesus' (pbuh) second coming is of great importance, for it will enable Christianity to rid itself of such distorted beliefs and turn to the true religious moral values of Islam. Although some Christians abide by the true path once they have seen it, others regard this as a betrayal of Jesus (pbuh) and so avoid living by true religious moral values. The fact is, however, that Jesus' (pbuh) return and spreading of the message of the true religion among people will make it easier for these people to turn to Islam in a more rapid fashion. When their own prophet tells them that some of their beliefs (e.g., the Trinity and Jesus' [pbuh] atonement for humanity's sins) are mistaken, that God is the only deity and that the Qur'an really is God's final revelation to humanity, Christians will sit up and listen to him. This event will free them from ascribing partners to God and other corrupt beliefs, and they will enter Islam in great waves.

Remember that God has promised the believers that religious moral values will prevail on Earth. However, this will happen only if believers totally avoid all forms of polytheism, whether direct or indirect, turn only to God, and worship only Him. By the will of God, the second coming will represent the start of this auspicious time.

God has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land, just as He made those before them successors; will firmly establish for them their religion, with which He is pleased; and give them, in place of their fear, security. "They worship Me, not associating anything with Me." Any who do not believe after that, such people are deviators. (Qur'an, 24:55)

Claim 10 and Its Refutation

Yet another claim is a great deception: "Waiting for Jesus (pbuh) will lead the faithful into idleness." This claim is unacceptable to both reason and conscience. Throughout history, people have sought saviors from God at times when immorality was widespread and cruelty and injustice were on the increase. They prayed to God to send them a messenger to lead them out of the darkness and into the light. When God answers their prayers and sends messengers, sincere believers support and defend them:

Those who believe in him, honor and help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are successful. (Qur'an, 7:157)

In fact, God's sending of a messenger represents a major source of enthusiasm for true believers, for they know that they need to make the best and finest preparations in order to prepare the environment for him. People exert great effort to prepare themselves and their environments, based upon their joy and love of belief, for this great event. Idleness and apathy, on the other hand, are characteristics of hypocrites and people of weak faith. Those whose faith is weak do not fully believe in the messenger's coming, and when that individual comes, they do not obey him sincerely. History shows many examples of this. For example, the mental state of such people in previous societies is revealed in the following verse:

They swore by God with their most earnest oaths that if a warner came to them, they would be better guided than any other community. But then when a warner came to them, it only increased their aversion. (Qur'an, 35:42)

The Qur'an states that Jesus (pbuh) himself gave the glad tidings that a prophet would come after him – after he had been raised to God's presence. This represented great news, both in Jesus' (pbuh) own time and for those believers who came after. This verse states:

And when Jesus son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel, I am the messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that came before me and giving you the good news of a messenger after me, whose name is Ahmad." When he brought them the clear signs, they said: "This is downright magic." (Qur'an, 61:6)

If any of these claims were true, then God would not have revealed by means of Jesus (pbuh) that He would be sending another messenger at a later date. Alternatively, this revelation should have encouraged the people living at the time to engage in idleness and apathy. However, there is great wisdom in our Lord's giving glad tidings to people by means of a messenger, and, with God's permission, true believers will never be idle or apathetic. Believers have deep understanding and reason, both of which stem from faith. Therefore, they comprehend the importance of a messenger's tidings, experience the excitement and enthusiasm of those tidings, and act in the awareness of the need to prepare themselves as much as possible for this great event.

Those who maintain that Jesus (pbuh) is dead are making a false claim. In addition, the interpretations they present to prove their assertions do not reflect the truth. Our hope is that this book will help all of these

misguided people realize their errors and abandon them. Such a moral value is a feature of believers and is praised in the Qur'an.

In the Qur'an, God reveals that the believers do not knowingly persist in error (Qur'an, 3:135) and abide by the true path once they see it. The best and most accurate information on this subject, as is the case with all matters, is that revealed in the Qur'an and the hadith. In other words, Jesus (pbuh) is not dead and was not killed. He will return to Earth when the appointed time comes. Therefore, instead of seeking to ignore or deny this clear truth by using groundless and flimsy interpretations, people should consider just what his return will mean and be excited and stimulated by it. True believers can pray to witness this great event and to experience the environment of beauty and auspiciousness that will ensue.

JESUS (PBUH) IN THE HADITH

The facts that Jesus (pbuh) is alive in God's presence and that he will return to Earth in the End Times appears in some detail in the hadith collections, among them al-Shaybani's *Taysir al-Usul ila Jami' al-Usul*; Imam Maliki's *Al-Muwatta'*; the *Sahihs* of Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Hibban; and the *Musnads* of Ibn Hanbal and al-Tayalisi, regarded as the greatest sources of the most reliable hadith. Furthermore, many Islamic scholars have carried out research and studies on these facts and have written books and treatises on them. These are also invaluable sources.

Heading the list of these great Islamic scholars is Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafi legal school. Some of the other Islamic scholars who hold these views are listed below:

- Imam Abu Mansur Muhammad al-Maturidi, who, while studying the hadith regarding Jesus (pbuh), stated that Jesus (pbuh) would return to Earth and slay the Antichrist.⁸⁰

- Al-Ajuri, regarded as one of the first experts on the Qur'an, stated that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth in the End Times, for which reason the report must be believed.⁸¹

- Ibn Hazm stated that the report that Jesus (pbuh) would return is reliable.⁸²

- Al-Pazdavi drew attention to the fact that reports of Jesus' (pbuh) second coming are openly revealed in many verses and hadith.⁸³

- An-Nasafi stated that this event was one of the major signs of the Day of Judgment.⁸⁴

- Saduddin al-Taftazani stated that the hadith about this event are completely trustworthy.⁸⁵

- Ibn al-'Arabi reported that even though more than a thousand years has passed since Jesus' (pbuh) birth, he is alive in body and soul in God's presence.⁸⁶

- Al-Qurtubi wrote that he believes in the second coming of Jesus (pbuh) and indicated many trustworthy hadith to back up this belief.⁸⁷

- Imam Rabbani wrote: "Jesus (pbuh) will descend from the sky and will be a member of Prophet Muhammad's (may God bless him and grant him peace) community. In other words, he will be one of his people and will abide by the Divine law."⁸⁸

- Imam Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, regarded as one of the most important Egyptian Hanafi scholars of his time, opined that the return of Jesus (pbuh) is a major sign of the End Times and stated the need to believe in this truth.⁸⁹

- 'Ali al-Qari said that Jesus' (pbuh) second coming is a sign of the Day of Judgment and that when he returns, he will slay the Antichrist. According to al-Qari, belief in this report is obligatory, for the subject is fixed by a number of reports from the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) and his followers.⁹⁰

- In his book *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin wa Ikhtilfa' al-Musallin* (The Discourses of the Proponents of Islam and the Differences among the Worshipers), Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari said: "It is a requirement to believe in these elements on which the people of the hadith and the people of the Sunnah are agreed: in God, angels, the books, the prophets, the revelations received from God, and in the words of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) ... that the Antichrist will appear and that Jesus (pbuh) will slay him."⁹¹

- Al-Bayadi draws attention to the fact that the second coming is one of the signs that the Day of Judgment is approaching, and that reliable hadith fully support this information.⁹²

- Al-Suyuti reported that Jesus (pbuh) will come and rule with the law of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace).⁹³

- Al-Alusi said that when Jesus (pbuh) returns, he will rule with the law of Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) and the Muslims will be his helpers.⁹⁴

- Abu Munteha, an Islamic scholar from the Ottoman period, said it was right to believe in the return of Jesus (pbuh).⁹⁵

- Al-Shinqiti, a modern commentator, wrote: "Both the Qur'an and the generally accepted Sunnah are proofs that Jesus (pbuh) is at this moment alive, that he will descend in the End Times, and that his coming is regarded as one of the signs of the Day of Judgment."⁹⁶

Taken all together, these and many other hadith clearly show the full agreement among all Islamic scholars that Jesus (pbuh) will come again. For example, in his *Lawami*, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Saffarini states that Islamic scholars are in agreement on the issue:

The community of the faithful agrees that Jesus (pbuh), the son of Mary, will return. No member of the people of the Divine law has opposed this element.⁹⁷

In his commentary, *Ruh al-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, the great Islamic scholar Sayyid al-Alusi cited examples of the views of other Islamic scholars and said that the community is agreed on the return of Jesus (pbuh), and that these statements were so well known as to attain the level of consensus. He also stated that belief in the coming of Jesus (pbuh) was obligatory.⁹⁸

The Hadith on Jesus (pbuh) Are "Tawatur"

The hadith relating Jesus' (pbuh) second coming are *tawatur*, a specialized term defined as "a tradition that has been handed down by a number of different channels of transmitters or authorities, hence supposedly ruling out the possibility of its having been forged."⁹⁹ Generally reliable hadith are those which are reported by so many hadith experts that there is no room left for error. The Islamic scholar Sayyid al-Jurjani expounded on this concept as follows:

Generally reliable reports are those that attain such a level [of agreement] among the majority of narrators that, according to custom, it is [considered] impossible for so many reporters to agree on a falsehood. In that event, if the report's words and meaning are consistent, then this is known as the "reliability of the word." If there is agreement among all of them in both sense and meaning, but a conflict in words, then this is known as "conceptual reliability."¹⁰⁰

In his *Al-Tasrih fi ma Tawatara fi Nuzul al-Masih*, the great hadith scholar Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri wrote that the hadith about Jesus' (pbuh) second coming are all reliable, and quotes 75 hadith and 25 works by the Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) Companions and their disciples (*Tabi'un*).

The following explanation appears in *'Awn al-Ma'bud*, one of the important texts in *Sunan Abu Dawud*:

The hadith reported from the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) that Jesus (pbuh) will return from the sky in body and soul are trustworthy... This is the doctrine of the people of the Sunnah.¹⁰¹

Imam Muhammad Zahid al-Kawthari stated that the hadith about Jesus' (pbuh) descent are trustworthy:

The hadith regarding Jesus' (pbuh) descent are "conceptually reliable." Each sound and beautiful hadith indicates a different meaning, yet all agree that Jesus (pbuh) will return. **Nobody who has scented the odor of**

the knowledge contained within the hadith can possibly deny this truth... The hadith dealing with the appearance of the Mahdi and the Antichrist, as well as with the second coming, have achieved such a high degree of trustworthiness that their truth is beyond all doubt. The fact that some scholastic theologians deem it obligatory to believe in hadith about the signs of the Day of Judgment, while they still have doubts as to whether a part of these hadith are reliable or not, stems from their insufficient knowledge of the hadith.¹⁰²

We saw earlier that the great Islamic scholar Imam al-Suyuti stated that Jesus (pbuh) is alive in God's presence and will return in the End Times, at which time religious moral values will prevail over Earth. In his book *Al-Hawi li al-Fatawa* and the collection *Nuzul 'Isa ibn Maryam Akhir al-Zaman*, he considered all of the relevant hadith, after which he stated that these were trustworthy:

It cannot remain concealed from those who have studied the hadith at great length that all of the relevant hadith have achieved the level of trustworthiness. Therefore, just as the hadith about the awaited Mahdi are trustworthy and those concerning the Antichrist have attained the level of trustworthiness, the hadith about the coming of Jesus (pbuh) are also trustworthy.¹⁰³

After analyzing and explaining these hadith, the scholar Ibn Kathir outlined his thoughts:

The prophetic hadith reliably report when and where Jesus (pbuh) will return ... **The reliable and trustworthy hadith about when Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth in his physical body** cannot be interpreted in any other manner. Therefore, everyone who has the slightest faith and conscience must believe that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth...¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, many great Islamic commentators and scholars share the view that the hadith dealing with Jesus (pbuh) being alive in God's presence and his return, as well as those dealing with the Antichrist and the Mahdi, are trustworthy. Among them are Ibn 'Atiyya, author of *Al-Bahr al-Muhit*; Imam al-Hafiz ibn Hajar, author of *Fath al-Bari*; Imam Ibn Rushd, author of *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*; Sheikh al-Ghumari, author of *'Aqidat Ahl al-Islam fi Nuzul 'Isa 'alayhi al-Salam*; and Ja'far al-Kattani, author of *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*.

Accounts in the Hadith about Jesus (pbuh)

Our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) received news of the Unseen directly from God:

He [God] is the Knower of the Unseen and does not divulge His secrets to anyone – except a messenger with whom He is well pleased, and then He posts sentinels before him and behind him. (Qur'an, 72:26-27)

Our Lord reveals that He sent knowledge to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) in his dreams:

God has confirmed His messenger's vision with truth: "You will enter the Sacred Mosque [Masjid al-Haram] in safety, God willing, shaving your heads and cutting your hair without any fear." He knew what you did not know and ordained, in place of this, an imminent victory. (Qur'an, 48:27)

As can be seen, our Lord imparted pieces of concealed knowledge to our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) in order to provide him and his Companions with His support and help. Some of his Companions witnessed some of these concealed things. They reported how he conveyed these concealed things to them. *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, reported from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and Hudhayfa, and Imam Ahmad and Imam Muslim reported from Ibn Zayd al-Ansari, that:

The Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) ... gave us news of all the past and future events in this address, taught them to us, and had us learn them by heart.¹⁰⁵

Hudhayfa al-Yamani said:

I swear to God that the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) gave us news of the wickedness that would come until the end of the world, as well as the names of more than three hundred leaders who would produce that wickedness, with their fathers' names and those of their tribes.¹⁰⁶

A large part of our Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) reports about the future contains information about the second coming. When these hadith about Jesus (pbuh) are examined, we notice that despite their large numbers, all of them agree with each other. When their information is examined, we see that they all contain similar reports that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth, rule the people with the Qur'an, fight and overcome the Antichrist, cause true religious moral values to prevail on Earth, and usher in an era of peace and abundance for the whole world. Another noteworthy feature of these hadith is that they have been reported by a large number of witnesses. Indeed, this is why they are considered *mutawatir*, for so many people have reported them that they cannot possibly be false. The number of witnesses relating hadith regarding Jesus (pbuh) is greater than fifty. These include:

Anas Ibn Malik, Qatada, 'A'isha, Abu Hurayra, 'Imran ibn Husayn, Nafi' ibn 'Utba, Abu Barza, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Qaysan, 'Uthman ibn al-'As, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah, Abu Umama, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Abdulla ibn Amr, Samura ibn Jundub, Nawwas ibn Sam'an, Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf, Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamani, Abu al-Asas as-Sanani, Abu Umama al Bahili, Abu al-Darda', Abu Rafi', Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Al-Hakam ibn 'Amr al-Ghifari, Rabi' ibn Anas, and 'Ammar ibn Yasir, may God be pleased with all of them.

Statements from the Companions and the Later Generations

The Companions are very valuable believers who attained the honors of being alongside and being taught by the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). Thus, their statements regarding the verses about Jesus (pbuh) contain information of what the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) taught them about this unique prophet. When we examine their statements about the relevant verses, we notice that all of them believed that Jesus (pbuh) was not dead and would return to Earth. Some of these statements are as follows:

-Referring to Qur'an 3:46, Ibn Zayd said: "Jesus (pbuh) spoke to people while he was still in the cradle. When he kills the Antichrist, he will speak to people as an adult."¹⁰⁷

-'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas said about Qur'an 4:159: "This verse is proof that Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, will appear ... All of the People of the Book will believe in him before his death."¹⁰⁸

-Muhammad ibn 'Ali Abi Talib (also known as Ibn Hanafiyya), explained Qur'an 4:159 in these terms: "He will descend before the Day of Judgment. All Jews and Christians will believe in him."¹⁰⁹

-Qatada expounded on the same verse, as follows: "When Jesus (pbuh) descends, all religions will believe in him and he will bear witness for them on the Day of Judgment."¹¹⁰ He stated about Qur'an 43:61 thus: "The appearance of Jesus (pbuh) is an indication of the Day of Judgment."¹¹¹

-In explaining Qur'an 4:159, Abu Muhammad al-Madani said: "When Jesus (pbuh) descends to Earth, he will slay the Antichrist, and no Jew who does not believe in him will be left on Earth."¹¹²

-Al-Hakam ibn 'Amr al-Ghifari explained Qur'an 4:159 in the following words: "At the moment when Jesus (pbuh) son of Mary descends, all of the People of the Book will believe in him."¹¹³

-Al-Hasan al-Basri made the following comment: "I swear to God that Jesus (pbuh) is at this moment alive in God's presence, and that everyone will believe in him when he returns." With regard to Qur'an 4:159, he said: "God raised Jesus (pbuh) to His presence. He will send him before the Day of Judgment as a holder of rank. Good and bad, all will believe in him."¹¹⁴ He also made a similar comment regarding Qur'an 43:61, saying that the meaning of the verse was that Jesus (pbuh) would return to Earth.¹¹⁵

-On the same subject, Ibn 'Abbas said: "In Qur'an 43:61, God indicates that Jesus (pbuh) will appear before the Day of Judgment."¹¹⁶

Islamic Scholars Regard the Coming of Jesus (pbuh) as an Article of Faith

Almost all the works that elucidate articles of faith among the People of the Sunnah agree that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth before the Day of Judgment, fight and slay the Antichrist, and cause true religious moral values to prevail on Earth. In their analysis of the proofs presented in the Qur'an and the hadith, Islamic scholars inform us that Jesus' (pbuh) second coming is an important article of faith. They explain the matter thus:

1. God has revealed that: "**They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them**" (Qur'an, 4:157). In addition, many other verses reveal that Jesus (pbuh) is alive in God's presence and that he will come again. Islamic scholars agree that it is impossible to maintain any other position. For instance, Ibn Hazm emphasized that: "Anyone who says that Jesus (pbuh) was killed will either be someone who leaves the just religion or an unbeliever."¹¹⁷

2. The fact that the hadith on this subject are completely *tawatur* (trustworthy) and so clear is important evidence for Muslims. Furthermore, there is no hadith that asserts that Jesus (pbuh) will not return.

3. The hadith reported by Jabir ibn 'Abdullah: "He who denies the appearance of the Mahdi is inevitably blaspheming against what was revealed to the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). He who denies the appearance of Jesus (pbuh), the son of Mary, has become an unbeliever. Someone who denies that the Antichrist will appear is also inevitably an unbeliever," is another important piece of evidence. This hadith appears in such important Islamic sources as Sheikh Muhammad Parisa's *Fusul-i Sitta*, Ibn Ishaq's *Kitab al-Ta'aruf li Madhhab Ahl al-Tasawwuf*, Imam Suhayli's *al-Rawd al-Unuf*, and Imam Suyuti's *Alamat al-Mahdi*. Moreover, Abu Bakr explained the hadith in these terms: "It was revealed to us from Muhammad ibn Hasan, to him from Abu 'Abdullah al-Husayn ibn Muhammad, to him from Ibn Uways, to him from Malik ibn Abas, to him from Muhammad ibn Munkadir, and to him from Ibn Jabir."¹¹⁸

4. Another factor is the number and reliability of the hadith narrators regarding the second coming. Among these people are Abu al-Asas al-Sanani, Abu Rafi', Abu al-Aliya, Abu Umama al Bahili, Abu al-Darda', Abu

Hurayra, Abu Malik al-Khudri, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah, Hudhayfa ibn Adis, Safina, Qatada, 'Uthman ibn al-'As, Nafi' ibn Kaysani, Al Walid ibn Muslim, 'Ammar ibn Yathir, and 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, may God be pleased with all of them.

Given this, Islamic scholars regard belief in Jesus' (pbuh) second coming and his causing true religious moral values to prevail as major articles of faith.

The information considered thus far shows that the relevant hadith are *sahih* (reliable) and *mutawatur* (trustworthy). The information that they contain, as well as the accounts narrated by the Companions and analyses of Islamic scholars, leave no doubt that Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth. By God's will, this great miracle will occur and all people will, as a direct result, experience a most miraculous and beautiful period. (God knows best.)

JESUS' (PBUH) RETURN WILL USHER IN GLOBAL PEACE

All of the evidence presented so far about Jesus (pbuh) being alive and his eventual return to Earth constitutes important good news for believers. Such a historical marvel reinforces believers' enthusiasm and determination. The increasing urgency with which preparations for this event need to be made can be seen in a number of events that are occurring now. As the Qur'an and hadith reveal, we may expect this event to take place in the near future. The present period is one in which many signs of his second coming, the End Times, and the Last Day are taking place. Dozens of such signs have occurred, and, what is more, one after the other, just as revealed in the hadith. The waters of the Euphrates river were cut off, there was a major war between two Muslim nations, extraordinary events occurred in the skies, solar and lunar eclipses happened during the month of Ramadan, natural disasters are on the rise, major catastrophes that have killed many people have taken place, and moral degeneration and corruption have spread all over the world. (See www.jesuswillreturn.com for the 138 signs of Jesus' [pbuh] second coming).

The fact that all of these phenomena are taking place within a very short period, an even shorter period than that predicted by many people, indicates that even more historic and portentous events will occur. By God's leave, humanity will witness the coming of Jesus (pbuh) at some not-too-distant point. There is no doubt that even the possibility of witnessing this miracle, one of the greatest marvels in human history, is an extraordinary situation. If God permits, many people who read this book will witness this age and meet Jesus (pbuh). Therefore, it is essential that all believers accelerate their preparations for this great event and ignore anything that might hinder their preparations. When Jesus (pbuh) comes, all Muslims must be in a spirit of union and togetherness, as a requirement of Islamic moral values. They must strive to intellectually eliminate all atheistic ideologies, disseminate Islamic moral values to the greatest extent possible, and call people to the truth in the finest manner. They must ready themselves so that they can be his most effective supporters in his struggle against the Antichrist. It is a great honor for Muslims to be among those who strive to make the best possible preparations for such a chosen, honorable, and worthy guest. All believers now living have the possibility of achieving that honor, and everyone is responsible for making the best use of this opportunity, for Jesus (pbuh) may arrive very quickly and unexpectedly.

Many people may wonder what kind of environment there will be when Jesus (pbuh) returns. The hadith provide a great deal of information about this. First, Jesus (pbuh) will slay the Antichrist and end his corrupt system. He will call all people to live according to Islam's guidance and teachings. After the Antichrist's system has been eliminated, people will turn in droves to live by religious moral values. As a result, spiritual and material peace and comfort will blossom and spread. All conflicts and fighting will end, and disagreements will be resolved by peaceful means. Tensions and fears stemming from moral degeneration will give way to security. Justice will prevail all over the world, and a golden age when the old wish to be young and the young wish to be more mature will be ushered in. As there will be no physical and mental pressures to make people uneasy, and as religious moral values will be fully implemented, the finest works of art ever known will be produced and there will be stupendous advances in science and technology. Wherever people may go in the world, they will

encounter beauty, wealth, and abundance. This golden age is described in great detail in the hadith, and we shall now look at the delights that Jesus (pbuh) will bring to the world.

Jesus (pbuh) Will Cause Islamic Moral Values to Prevail

He will lead you according to the Book of your Lord and the Sunnah of your messenger.¹¹⁹

Jesus (pbuh) will come not as a prophet to the people of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), but in order to implement the law of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace).¹²⁰

Jesus (pbuh) will descend and practice our Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) law.¹²¹

He will judge by the law of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) and follow the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), even though he is one himself, and will belong to the people of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace)... He will be one of the people and Companions of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), and he will be the most devout of them...¹²²

There is no prophet between him (Jesus [pbuh]) and me. He will certainly descend. Recognize him when you see him. He is of medium height, of a reddish white color. He will wear two sets of yellow dyed clothing. Water will fall from his hair even if it does not rain. He will fight with people for Islam. He will slay the Antichrist and then remain for exactly forty years on Earth. Then he will die, and Muslims will perform the prayers for him.¹²³

He will recognize no other [religion] than Islam ... The religion will prevail ... Nobody and nothing apart from God will be worshipped.¹²⁴

Global Peace Will Finally Exist

Jesus (pbuh) will be a just judge and a just ruler among my people ... all grudges and mutual hatred will be lifted (removed), the sting of every stinging insect will be removed until a baby will insert his or her finger in snake's mouth and not be harmed, and the wolf will be like the dog among the sheep [safeguarding them]. Earth will be filled with peace, just as a vessel is filled with water; the word will become one [i.e., only Islam will prevail], and only God will be worshipped; the battle will put down its weapons [i.e., come to an end], and the dominion of the Qurayshis will be broken.¹²⁵

[In his time], there will be no rancor between any two persons.¹²⁶

[In his time], peace will prevail and people will use their swords as sickles. Every harmful beast will be made harmless ... A child will play with a fox and not come to any harm; a wolf will graze with sheep and a lion with cattle, without harming them.¹²⁷

The people then asked: "O prophet of God, why will the horse be so cheap?" He replied: "Because it will never be used for war."¹²⁸

Jesus (pbuh) Will Bring Justice to the World

Jesus (pbuh) will be a just judge, a fully just imam [ruler] within the community of the faithful. He will break the Cross [of the Christians], kill the pig, eliminate the tax on non-Muslims, abandon alms, and no value will be placed on either the sheep or the camel. All enmity and conflict will disappear and vanish ... The world will be like a silver bowl, and there will be as many plants as in the time of Adam.¹²⁹

Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, will come down as a just judge [ruler] and imam for his nation, by attesting to the truth of Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), and will slay the Antichrist.¹³⁰

Jesus (pbuh), son of Mary, will come down as an imam who leads people to the true path and [will be] a just judge.¹³¹

People Will Live in Security

Such security will come to the world that snakes will graze with camels, leopards with cows, and wolves with sheep. Children will play with snakes, and the snakes will not harm them.¹³²

Enmity and hatred between people will disappear. Snakes and scorpions will have no venom, and a child will even be able to play with a snake in his or her hand, and the snake will not bite him or her. A girl will chase away the lion, and the lion will not touch her. The wolf will stand and wait among the sheep, as if it were a sheep dog.¹³³

Hatred and enmity among people will disappear, since their causes will have vanished.¹³⁴

There Will Be Great Abundance

[When Jesus (pbuh) comes,] wealth will be so abundant that no one will accept it [alms].¹³⁵

The son of Mary will return and kill the Antichrist. Then you will live for 40 years in prosperity.¹³⁶

Everywhere food will cook in pots, unseen prosperity will dominate, and material wealth will be disregarded.¹³⁷

"Earth will turn like a silver tray, growing vegetation as it did in the time of Adam (pbuh) so much so that a group of people will eat a bunch of grapes and it will satiate them; a group of people will eat a single pomegranate and it will satiate them; the bull will be sold for a lot of money; and a horse will cost only a few dirhams." The audience asked: "God's messenger, why will a horse be so cheap?" He replied: "It will not be used as a mount for fighting." He was asked: "Why will a bull be so expensive?" He replied: "The whole land would be tilled."¹³⁸

Earth's productivity will multiply to such an extent that if a seed is sown in a solid rock, it will grow.¹³⁹

Even without the plough, the produce of wheat will multiply seven hundred times, one mudd [a measure of wheat] becoming 700 mudd.¹⁴⁰

Then Earth will be told to bring forth its fruit and restore its blessing. As a result thereof, there would grow [such a large] pomegranate that a group of people will be able to eat it and seek shelter under its skin. A milk

cow will give so much milk that a whole party will be able to drink. A milk camel will give such [a large quantity of] milk that the whole tribe will be able to drink out of it, and a milk sheep will give so much milk that the whole family will be able to drink out of that...¹⁴¹

CONCLUSION

We hope that this book will resolve the doubts of all people who are confused about Jesus (pbuh), will help believers acquire a better understanding of his role, and enable Muslims to feel the joy and excitement of his return.

Finally, another important subject we wish to consider is how believers will recognize Jesus (pbuh) when he returns. This is essential, because false Messiahs will also appear. Some people hesitate to raise the matter of Jesus' (pbuh) return out of a mistaken belief that this will prepare the way for false Messiahs. In reality, the appearance of such imposters is a major sign of the second coming. (See Harun Yahya, *The Signs of Jesus' [pbuh] Second Coming*). More importantly, everything he does after his return will be wise and inimitable, and such acts will distinguish him from all other people. One of the clearest proofs that the other "Messiahs" are false is the way they seek to prove themselves.

Another major feature that distinguishes Jesus (pbuh) from false Messiahs is that he will have no relatives, and that no person will be familiar with his physical features, countenance, or tone of voice. No one will be able to claim: "I knew him before, I saw him at such and such a time, his family and relatives are so and so," since everyone who knew him died many centuries ago. Mary, Zechariah, the Disciples who spent years with him, the leading Jews of his time, and those who received the message from him in person are all dead and gone. Therefore, Jesus (pbuh) will be completely unknown to the general public.

This will eliminate the danger of false Messiahs. On Jesus' (pbuh) return, no situation will arise to cause people to doubt who he really is. Nobody will have any reason to say: "This person cannot be Jesus (pbuh)," for he will return to Earth in the same state, wearing the same clothes as when he was raised to God's presence, and will possess superior features that nobody will be able to imitate. (God knows best.)

All of this is an important reminder that sincere believers should consider this issue and make the necessary material and spiritual preparations by listening to their consciences. Those who heed this reminder may hope to achieve the honor of being this great individual's helpmates and supporters when he returns, as revealed by our beloved Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). This should be the prayer of all faithful Muslims.

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of clear "design" in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that God created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the concept of intelligent design to account for the origin of life. This "intelligent design" is a scientific expression of the fact that God created all living things.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that God created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.
- 2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹⁴²

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.¹⁴³

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.¹⁴⁴

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.¹⁴⁵

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?¹⁴⁶

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.¹⁴⁷

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mechanisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means of Natural Selection...*

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.¹⁴⁸

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.¹⁴⁹

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930's. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., ears, eyes, lungs, and wings) underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The American geneticist B. G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system

will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.¹⁵⁰

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

If such animals ever really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.¹⁵¹

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find – over and over again – not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.¹⁵²

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹⁵³

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the Earth. That means that "the origin of species," contrary to Darwin's supposition, is not evolution, but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. Australopithecus
2. Homo habilis
3. Homo erectus
4. Homo sapiens

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors Australopithecus, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹⁵⁴

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of Homo sapiens, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹⁵⁵

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹⁵⁶

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neandarthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹⁵⁷

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. A paleontologist from Harvard University, Stephen Jay Gould, explains this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he is an evolutionist himself:

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (*A. africanus*, the robust australopithecines, and *H. habilis*), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.¹⁵⁸

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "upheld" with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific" – that is, depending on concrete data – fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception" – concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense – and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible – and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹⁵⁹

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Darwinian Formula!

Besides all the technical evidence we have dealt with so far, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

The theory of evolution asserts that life is formed by chance. According to this claim, lifeless and unconscious atoms came together to form the cell and then they somehow formed other living things, including man. Let us think about that. When we bring together the elements that are the building-blocks of life such as carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, only a heap is formed. No matter what treatments it undergoes, this atomic heap cannot form even a single living being. If you like, let us formulate an "experiment" on this subject and let us examine on the behalf of evolutionists what they really claim without pronouncing loudly under the name "Darwinian formula":

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids – which have no possibility of forming under natural conditions – and as many proteins – a single one of which has a formation probability of 10^{-950} – as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as

much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with God's superior creation.

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of evolutionists discloses this reality, just as in the above example.

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, colored, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all of its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear, the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them, and the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness that Sees and Hears within the Brain Belong?

Who watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by God, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty God, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward to explain the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹⁶⁰

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers,

insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is God, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution: The Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the Egyptians worshipping the Sun God Ra, totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of Abraham (pbuh) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of Moses (pbuh) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, God has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verse, He reveals in many verses that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. God has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Qur'an, 2:6-7)

... They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Qur'an, 7:179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say: "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Qur'an, 15:14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible

explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Moses (pbuh) and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Moses (pbuh) to meet with his own magicians. When Moses (pbuh) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Qur'an, 7:116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Moses (pbuh) and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as the verse puts it.

We revealed to Moses: "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Qur'an, 7:117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge also stated this:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.¹⁶¹

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

**They said: "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except what You have taught us.
You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Qur'an, 2:32)**

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BACK COVER

Like the other prophets, Jesus (pbuh) called upon his people to worship God, the One and Only, and to avoid all forms of denial, polytheism, and evil. Those who rejected him oppressed him and his followers. However, their plot to kill him failed, even though they thought that they had succeeded, because God raised Jesus (pbuh) to His presence. As the Qur'an reveals and the hadith corroborate, Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth. Those who claim that he was killed or is dead are seriously mistaken. This is one of the author's main focuses.

While revealing this truth, the author recalls other very important tidings, such as the fact that the signs of Jesus' (pbuh) second coming are becoming ever more apparent. If God wills, this event is close at hand, and the world will witness momentous events when it occurs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in God, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of God and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.