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THE HOLY QURAN

WITH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

AND

COMMENTARY

VOLUME I

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157. And because of their disbelief and their uttering against Mary a grievous calumny,<sup>620</sup>

وَبَكَّرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَى مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ۝١٥٧

158. And their saying, 'We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah;' whereas they slew him not, nor crucified him, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified; and those who differ therein are certainly in a state of doubt about it: "they have no definite knowledge thereof, but only follow a conjecture; and they did not convert this conjecture into a certainty"<sup>621</sup>—

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ۝١٥٨

<sup>a</sup>10 : 37 ; 53 : 29.

### 620. Commentary :

The fact that the Jews uttered "a calumny" against Mary constitutes a clear evidence of the fatherless birth of Jesus. For if Jesus had a father, what "calumny" was it that the Jews uttered against Mary? Merely taunting her for the claims made by Jesus could in no sense be called a calumny. Elsewhere the Quran says that the mother of Jesus was a righteous woman and that Satan had no share in his birth (3 : 37 ; 5 : 76).

### 621. Important Words :

ما قتلوه (they slew him not). قتله means, he slew him by striking him with a sword or with a stone or by poison or by any other means. See also 2 : 62 & 4 : 158.

ما قتلوه يقينًا (they did not convert this conjecture into certainty) is a peculiar Arabic idiom. The Arabs say قتل الشيء خبرًا (lit. he killed the thing with certainty of knowledge and proper examination) i.e. he acquired full and thorough knowledge of the thing so as to dispel all possibility of doubt. So the words ما قتلوه يقينًا would mean, their knowledge

regarding it was not comprehensive, or they did not know it for certain that he had been killed, or they did not convert this (conjecture of theirs) into certainty, meaning that they were not sure and they did not make sure whether Jesus died on the Cross or not. In this case, the pronoun in قتلوه would refer to the noun ظن (a conjecture) immediately preceding it (Lane, Aqrab, Mufradāt & Lisān).

In plain English the words would mean that their knowledge about the death of Jesus on the Cross was not so full and comprehensive as to have attained the stage of certainty. The expression may also mean that they certainly did not slay him or that they did not kill him as a certainty i.e. they did not execute him in such a way as to definitely assure themselves that life had indeed become extinct in him.

صلبوا (nor crucified him). The word صلبوا is from the root صلب. They say صلب الشيء i.e. he burned the thing. صلب العظام means, he extracted the marrow out of the bones. صلب اللص means, he crucified the thief i.e. he put him to death in a certain well-known manner (Lane & Aqrab).

In crucifixion one was nailed to a framework made in the form of a cross and, being kept without food and drink, slowly died of pain, hunger, fatigue and exposure.

شبه لهم (he was made to appear to them like one crucified). شبهه اياه means, he made it or him to be like it or him, or he made it or him to resemble it or him. شبه عليه الامر means, the matter was rendered confused, obscure or dubious to him. شبه عليه الامر means, he rendered the matter confused to him (by making it to appear like some other thing); he rendered it confused, obscure or dubious to him (Lane & Aqrab).

### Commentary :

This and the preceding verse mention two main objections of the Jews against Jesus: (1) his alleged illegitimate birth, and (2) his supposed death on the Cross which, according to Jewish Law, was an accursed death (Deut. 21 : 23). The words, *We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah*, are spoken ironically and tauntingly, meaning, "we have killed Jesus who posed as the Messiah and a Messenger of God."

The argument of the Jews was that because Jesus died on the Cross, he could not be a true Prophet according to Jewish Law. The inference was based on their sacred scriptures; for, according to the Bible, he who is hanged is accursed of God, and a false Prophet shall meet with destruction. Says the Bible: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" (Deut. 21 : 23). Again: "My hand shall be upon false prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies" (Ezek. 13 : 9). Again: "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in My name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be

in this land; by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed" (Jer. 14 : 15).

On the strength of such verses of the Bible the Jews claimed that, as Jesus had been crucified and met with destruction, he could not be a true Prophet of God, but was a false claimant and an accursed one.

Regarding the charge about the alleged death of Jesus by crucifixion, the Quran says that the act of crucifixion having not been completed, and Jesus having been taken down alive from the Cross, the charge carries no weight. It should, however, be noted that the Quran does not deny the mere hanging of Jesus on the Cross; it only denies his death on it.

Two different views prevail among the Jews regarding Jesus' alleged death by crucifixion. Some of them hold that Jesus was first killed and then his dead body was hung on the Cross, while others are of the view that he was put to death by being fixed to the Cross. The former view is reflected in Acts 5 : 30 where we read "which ye slew and hanged on a tree." The Quran refutes both these views by saying, *they slew him not, nor crucified him*. The words may also signify that the Quran first rejects the slaying of Jesus in any form, and then proceeds to deny the particular way of killing by hanging on the Cross.

The verb شبه (in the passive voice) means, he was made to appear like, or was made to resemble. Now the question arises, who is the person who was made to appear "like one crucified." Clearly it was Jesus whom the Jews tried to crucify or slay. Nobody else can be meant here, for there is absolutely no reference to any other person in the context. Hence, the theory invented by certain Commentators that Judas or somebody else was made to appear like Jesus and was then crucified in his place is simply absurd. The context cannot be so twisted as to make room for somebody else of whom no mention at all is made in the verse.

To what then was Jesus made like? The context provides a clear answer to that question. The Jews did not kill him by crucifixion, but he was made to appear to them like "one crucified", and thus it was that they wrongly took him for dead. It was thus Jesus who was made to resemble "one crucified". This interpretation is not only in perfect harmony with the context but is also clearly borne out by all relevant facts of history.

The second meaning of the expression *شبه لهم* is, as explained under Important Words, that "the matter became confused to them". This interpretation is also clearly borne out by history; for, although the Jews asserted that they had put Jesus to death by suspending him on the Cross, they were not sure of it and the circumstances being obscure the matter had certainly become confused to them. The fact that the Jews themselves were not sure whether Jesus had actually died on the Cross is supported by the Bible and by all authentic historical facts.

The statements made in this verse are clearly substantiated by the following facts narrated in the Gospels:—

(1) Jesus had himself predicted his escape from death on the Cross, saying, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). Now it is an accepted fact that Jonah had entered the whale's belly alive and had come out alive; so, according to his own prophecy, Jesus was to enter the heart of the earth (*i.e.* his tomb) alive and was to come out of it alive.

(2) The trying magistrate (Pilate) believed Jesus to be innocent and, being sympathetic, was anxious to save his life (Matt. 27:17, 18; Mark 15:9, 10, 14; Luke 23:4, 14, 15, 20, 22; John 18:38, 39); and he must have secretly tried to save him or at least connived at the attempt of others to do so.

(3) Pilate's wife had seen a vision concerning the innocence of Jesus: "When he (Pilate) was set down on the judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him'" (Matt. 27:19). This message must certainly have influenced Pilate, and his wife must have also done her best to save Jesus.

(4) Pilate held the killing of Jesus in such horror that he actually washed his hands with water, saying that he was innocent of the blood of that just man (Matt. 27:24).

(5) Pilate did all he could to help Jesus; and the soldiers in charge also treated Jesus with kindness, apparently under Pilate's directions. The following are some of the special favours shown to Jesus: (a) Every malefactor carried his own cross but another man was made to carry that of Jesus (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21); (b) Jesus was given wine or vinegar mingled with myrrh. This was intended to render him less sensible to pain. The two thieves who were crucified with him were not given this drink. When after some time the effects of the drink were wearing off and Jesus cried with pain, the drink was administered again to render him unconscious of pain (Matt. 27:34, 48, Mark 15:23, 36; John 19:29, 30).

(6) The unconsciousness which followed the administration of vinegar was mistaken for death (John 19:30).

(7) Jesus remained on the Cross for only about three hours (John 19:14. *cf.* Matt. 27:46) and according to Mark only for six hours (Mark 15:25, 33), and either of these periods was by no means sufficient to kill a young man like Jesus on the Cross.

(8) When Joseph of Arimathaea came and craved the body of Jesus, Pilate "marvelled if he were already dead," and calling to him the centurion asked him whether he had been any while dead (Mark, 15:44).

(9) The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus, but the legs of the two malefactors who had been crucified with him were broken (John 19 : 32, 33).

(10) Jesus was not buried in the earth with the two malefactors but was laid separately in a spacious sepulchre hewn out of a rock and situated in a garden which was private property (Mark 15 : 46, John 19 : 41, 42).

(11) The Jews themselves were not sure that Jesus was dead; for they came to Pilate and besought him that his legs be broken (John 19 : 31).

(12) The doubt that Jesus was alive and might, with the aid of his sympathizers, escape from the sepulchre rankled in the minds of the Jews. They remembered also the prophecy of Jonah and would come out of the heart of the earth alive. So, influenced by such misgivings, the chief priests and pharisees went together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember that the deceiver said, while he was yet alive—'After three days I will rise again.'—Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day." Pilate told them to make their own arrangements; "so they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch" (Matt. 27 : 62-66).

(13) In spite of the watch and despite the sealing of the stone, Jesus had left the sepulchre before the third day had dawned, when Mary Magdalene and Mary, mother of James, came to see the sepulchre and found the stone rolled away and the sepulchre empty (Matt. 28 : 1-6; Mark 16 : 1-6), which shows that the men set to watch were also in league with, and won over by, the friends of Jesus.

(14) After leaving the sepulchre Jesus moved about secretly, lest the Jews should have him arrested again (Mark 16 : 12, John 20 : 19, 26; 21 : 4).

(15) Mary Magdalene and other disciple actually saw Jesus in this body of clay (Mark 16 : 9, 12).

(16) Jesus showed them his wounds to assure them that he was not a spirit but a man of flesh and blood and that the body they saw before them was the same physical body that had been nailed to the Cross (Luke 24 : 39, 40; John 20 : 27).

(17) After leaving the sepulchre Jesus felt hungry and partook of food with his disciples (John 21 : 5, 13; Luke 24 : 41, 42, 43).

The above references among others make it abundantly clear that Jesus did not die on the Cross, that he was alive when he was taken down from the Cross, and also when he was laid in the sepulchre, and that he came out of it alive on the third day at early morn, as he had himself prophesied, and that later he appeared to his disciples in secret and assured them that he was not dead.

(18) Jesus had said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10 : 16). In these words he was obviously referring to the lost ten tribes of Israel who had scattered in Afghanistan, Kashmir, etc. In search of these Jesus came to the East after his miraculous escape from an accursed death on the Cross, and among these he now lies buried in Khan Yar Street in Srinagar, Kashmir. Conclusive historical evidence has established the fact that the holy occupant of the tomb in the Khan Yar Street in Srinagar is no other than Jesus, son of Mary. For further discussion of this important subject, see *Masīh Hindustān Men* (Jesus in India) by the Promised Messiah, and R. Rel. Vol. II Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 10 published from Qadian, and the "Tomb of Jesus" by Dr. M. M. Šādiq of Qadian.

159. <sup>a</sup>On the contrary, Allah exalted him to Himself. And Allah is Mighty, Wise;<sup>622</sup>

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٩﴾

160. And there is none among the People of the Book but will believe in it before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection, <sup>b</sup>he (Jesus) shall be a witness against them,—<sup>623</sup>

وَأَنْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ  
وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٠﴾

<sup>a</sup>2 : 254 ; 3 : 56 ; 7 : 177 ; 58 : 12. <sup>b</sup>5 : 118.

## 622. Important Words :

رَفَعَهُ (exalted him). See 2 : 64.

### Commentary :

The words, *On the contrary, Allah exalted him to Himself*, constitute a reply to the taunt embodied in the words of the Jews: *We did kill the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah* (4 : 158). The verse thus purports to say that he whom the Jews so exultingly claimed to have killed on the Cross was never so killed but was exalted to God Himself and granted His nearness. There is no reference here whatever to the supposed physical ascension of Jesus to the skies. The verse only contains a refutation of the allegation of the Jews that, having become accursed by crucifixion, Jesus had become spiritually fallen and degraded, and was, as it were, driven away from the presence of God. In refutation of this charge the verse clears him of the insinuated blemish by speaking of his spiritual exaltation.

It should also be noted that the Quran does not say here that Allah raised Jesus *towards the skies*, but only that He exalted him *towards Himself*, which clearly signifies not a physical but a spiritual exaltation, because no fixed abode can be, or has ever been, assigned to God. It is a pity that such an ennobled and holy spiritual significance of the verse should be distorted and debased to prove the utterly unfounded notion that Jesus was taken up

to the heavens alive. The Quran would not accept the idea of a human being being physically taken up into the skies even if it were the Holy Prophet himself (17 : 94). See also note on 3 : 56.

## 623. Important Words :

The pronoun "it" in the clause, *believe in it*, stands for the false belief (referred to in the preceding verses) that Jesus met his death on the Cross. So the verse signifies that both Jews and Christians will continue to believe in the supposed crucifixion of Jesus till the time of their death, when the veil will be lifted and everything will become clear. They are indeed bound to believe in the alleged death of Jesus on the Cross. If the Jews do not do so, his truth becomes established and their whole position becomes indefensible. Similarly if the Christians do not believe in it, the doctrine of Atonement becomes untenable and the entire fabric of Christianity crashes to pieces. So both these peoples go on sticking to this absurd and unfounded belief in the face of all reason and all established facts of history.

The attempt to make the words *لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ* (will believe in it before his death) mean "will believe in him (Jesus) before his (Jesus') death" is simply ridiculous. The context spurns the idea, as does the second reading of the expression *مَوْتِهِ* (his death) *viz.* *مَوْتِهِمْ* (their death) reported by Ubayy (Jarir, vi. 13).