

**IS PROPHET
ISSA COMING
BACK?**

By

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The religion belongs to Allah only. It is no man's property. Religious issues should be discussed with respect and knowledge. Only the knowledgeable ones about areas of Islam should talk about them; and certainly with convincing evidences. Personal issues should likewise be separated from religious issues.

The topic this article aims to address seems to be a controversial discourse at this present time. Only scholastic facts and intellectual evidences should be considered. Most especially, the topic is a creedal one. Emotions and assumptions should be left aside. If there is any rejoinder to a particular portion, it should simply be stated in the same intellectual nature for proper perception and not the usual Muqallid statement that "this is what our own alfas are saying". Your own scholars do not constitute the generality of all revered scholars.

As for whether Nabiyy Isa (alayhi salaam) is coming back or not, we will have to examine these following arguments:

The first argument: Isa wasn't killed by the Jew (who conspired against him); neither was he crucified. He escaped the coup and his whereabouts was not known after this incidence.

All Muslims of varying tendencies agreed to this point and I do not know of any khilaaf in this area.

The second argument: After Isa escaped the coup, he left Palestine (to a place no reliable source mentioned) and died a natural death afterward. Allah raised his soul only to the heaven (as all Prophets and believers souls are living). And he is not coming back.

There is a strong disputation as regard this claim.

The third argument: When he escaped the coup, Allah raised his soul and body to the heaven in His place; he is still living and did not die. He will still descend at the last hour.

There is also a disputation over this claim.

The fourth argument: Isa died of a natural death after the coup, he was raised to the heaven by soul only. And it is possible for Allah to descend him at the last hour again.

There exists a dispute over the claim that he is dead.

Now, let's go into details of these arguments.....

The death and ascension of Nabiyy Isa

Three verses of the Qur'an talked about the death of Isa.

1: Allah promised Isa with His statement:

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنِي مَتُوفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا.....

"And when Allah said: O Isa, I am going to take your soul and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve..." Suratu Al-Imran, Verse 55.

2: Then, the promise got fulfilled:

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

"And their saying: Surely we have killed the Messiah, Isa son of Maryam, the apostle of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it appeared to them so (like Isa) and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they killed him not for sure."

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

"Nay! Allah took him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise." Suratu Nisaa verse 157,158.

3: And on the day of judgment, Isa will say:

وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ

"and I was a witness of them so long as I was among them, but when you caused me to die, You are the watcher over them..." Suratu Al-Maidah, Verse 117.

These three verses affirmed that the Jew did not kill Isa. Neither did they crucify him.

Allah killed (caused to death) Isa

Here is the area of disputation as regard the meaning of التوفي. The two Islamic opinions have it that Isa wasn't killed and crucified by the Jew. An opinion says he was killed by Allah Himself; while the other opinion says he wasn't killed at all.

In the first verse of Al-Imran quoted, Allah says إني متوفيك. And the word التوفي here caused the upraor.

Those who opine that Isa isn't dead yet interpreted the meaning of التوفي to mean الاستيفاء taking. They said Allah took Isa, he didn't kill him. They also argued the word التوفي can mean "he made him sleep أنامه"; so he isn't dead yet. Ibn Kethir and other famous scholars held to this.

While the other set of scholars opposed and said the meaning of التوفي is "caused to death", natural death الموت الجسدي الطبيعي.

To arrive at the truth, if we trace the word التوفي in the Qur'an, we will realize that the word was mentioned in a few area to mean النوم sleep. Examples are:

Allah says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ

"And it is He Who takes your souls at night (in sleep)..." Suratu al-An'aam Verse 60.

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا

"Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep;..." Suratu Zumar, Verse 42.

We realize that the context of the verses whereby Allah used the word التوفي to mean sleep are all indicated with an indication (qareenah). In that of Suratu An'aam, Allah says "bi layl at night", this already indicated that the التوفي in this verse does not give the meaning of death. The same to the verse of Zumar, Allah attached "في منامها" during their sleep", which also indicated that the التوفي here does not mean death. So, if التوفي gives the meaning of sleep, there will be an indication (qareenah) indicating that.

Also, for the claim that التوفي is being used to mean الاستيفاء taking, we get to know that the context (siyaaq) whereby the word التوفي is used to mean taking/apprehend are also indicated by a qareenah. Examples are:

Allah's statements:

وَإِنَّمَا تُؤَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"and you shall only be paid fully your reward on the resurrection day;..." Suratu Al-Imran, Verse 158.

وَتُوفِّيٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ

"and every soul shall be paid in full what it has done..." Suratu Nahl, Verse 111.

In these verses, when التوفي mean الاستيفاء taking/grasp, there are likewise indications in the contexts of these verses that pointed to the actual meaning of التوفي. "أجوركم" and "what it has done" ما عملت.

Which means when the word التوفي is used without an indication in the context of the statement, it gives its fundamental meaning which is death. Many a time the word التوفي is used in the Qur'an, it gives the meaning of death الموت.

Examples:

A: قُلْ يَتُوفَّاكُم مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ

"Say: The angel of death who is given charge of you shall cause you to die..." Suratu Sajda, Verse 11.

B: حَتَّىٰ يَتُوفَّاَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ

"until death takes them away" Suratu Nisai verse 15.

C: وَالَّذِينَ يَتُوفُّونَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا

"And those of you who die and leave wives behind" Suratu Baqara, Verse 240.

D: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تُوَفَّوهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

"Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die" Suratu Nisa, Verse 97.

إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُتَوَفَّوْنَهُمْ

"when Our apostles come to them causing them to die.." Suratu A'raaf Verse 37.

These scholars opined that the mention of the word التوفي is enough to mean death. And if the word التوفي will be used to mean something else, there will surely be a qareenah indicating that the meaning is not that of its basis which is death. The word التوفي is basically known among the Arab to mean death (unless an indication stated otherwise); and that is why whenever the Arab say توفي الله فلانا, there is no other meaning that comes to the intellect than "Allah killed him أماته".

And as for Nabiyy Isa (alayhi Salaam) in the context of the verse of Suratu Al-Imran, we did not see an indication changing the meaning of "التوفي death" from its basis. No indication to sleep, no indication to taking/grasp, rather the apparent meaning is that of natural death. Allah saved Isa from the death, he escaped the coup of the Jews, then, he died a natural death.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas (radiya Allahu anhu) - the most knowledgeable Sahabi in the field of Tafseer - has translated the statement توفيك إني to mean "إني مميتك" I'll take your soul (by death). See Tafseer Tabari Vol 6 pg 457

Ibn Hazm said in his Mahalla Volume 1 pg 43 that "the statement فلما توفيتني does not mean وفاة النوم Sleep. It actually means death وفاة الموت."

Ibn Aa'shur also said: "the apparent meaning of اني ابي متوفيك is ابي ابي I shall take your soul. This is the meaning of this wording where used."

These verifying scholars also opine that the verse of Al-Ma'idah is more clear in this regard. Whereby Allah says

فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ

"and when you took my soul (by death), you were the watcher over them".

This means he has been dead by the natural death.

Sheikh Muhammad Shaltuut said: "the word توفى is used in the Quran in many cases to mean death; till it becomes what comes to the brain first when mentioned; this word isn't used to mean something else unless there is an indication changing its meaning from the known basis."

Allah raised Isa to Him

There is also a disputation over this claim.

Some scholars said: رفع الله عيسى Allah raised Isa means Allah raised his living body and soul to Him. And their evidence is the verse:

و ما قتلوه يقينا

"they certainly did not kill him"

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللهُ إِلَيْهِ

"Nay! Allah raised him up to Himself;"

They argued the particle "بل Nay/rather" negates what comes before and after it; and this negation cannot be completed without Allah raising Isa alive to Him so as to save him from the killing.

While the other scholars said: what is meant by الرفع is Allah raising Him in prestige and honor.

Their evidence: they first argued that, for the particle بل to fulfil its meaning, it doesn't necessarily mean the raising of his body. The بل works to negate the claim that he was killed by the Jew; he wasn't killed by them. Rather, Allah raised him in prestige and honor. Then he died a natural death.

They also presented the verse in Al-Imran as an evidence. Whereby Allah says:

إني متوفيك و رافعك إلي

"I shall kill you and raise you to me".

They said: in this verse, Allah mentioned his death first. If Allah meant he raised Isa's body to heaven, He (Allah) would have mentioned الرفع the raise first before the death.

Our scholars who have the opinion that Isa isn't dead but Allah raised him to heaven gave a response that, the متوفيك (I'll take your soul) which comes first is only تأخير و تقديم an act of forwarding and backwarding which is common in the Arabic grammar. Allah only mentioned متوفيك first; but it was الرفع that happened first and later he will be dead when he comes back in the last hour. You can see Tafseer Ibn Abee Haatim for this explanation. Vol. 2 pg 661.

But the inconsistency here is that, our scholars who gave this response that Allah first raised him, then will later kill him, did not agree that the meaning of متوفيك in this verse is natural death. They said the meaning of the متوفيك is to make sleep أنامه for a certain time or being apprehended.

The scholars who reject our famous scholars interpretation also argued that, if Allah is said to have raised Isa's body to Him, it means we are confining Allah to a certain place مكان. And the general accepted aqeedah of all the scholars (including Ibn Taemiyah) is that Allah is not confined/restricted to a certain مكان point. So, why restricting Allah to a certain point? So, it is better to interpret that Allah raised him in prestige and honour and not physical body lift.

To get the correct understanding as regard (التأويل) interpretation of verses and confining Allah to a certain point, you should read/revise my article titled:

"DID ALLAH CREATE ADAM IN HIS IMAGE?"

Link to the article:

<https://ibntaofeeq.com/did-allah-create-adam-in-his-image/>

These verifying scholars who argued against the physical body lifting of Isa also presented their evidence further that, many a time the Qur'an has used the word الرفع (lifting) alongside the Prophets and believers but mean (رفع المقام) raising in prestige and honor.

Example:

Allah says about Prophet Idrees:

و رفعناه مكانا عليا

"And we raised him to a high level"

They said: despite Allah even mentioned مكانا (a place), yet no one said the body of Idrees was raised to the heaven. The الرفع here does not mean being raised to a certain place; rather being raised in prestige.

Likewise they argued that the noun *إلي* (to me) means (المعية الإلهية) the mightiness of Allah and does not mean a point where a body is raised to. And evidences to buttress this are the verses:

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

"Surely I fly to my lord; He will guide me." Suratu Saaffat, Verse 99.

And no one said Ibrahim went to his Lord with his physical body.

Also,

وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

"and the faithful ones in the sight of their Lord"

And no one said that the Shuhaadaau are with their Lord in physical bodies; rather their souls.

Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed Rido said: "the correct meaning of *إني* is: I shall make you die (إني متوفيك و رافعك إلي و مطهرك من الذين كفروا (مميتك), and place you in a high and prestige place just as Allah said about Idrees that *و رفعاها مكانا عليا* and as He said about the Shuhaadaau *عند ربهم يرزقون* that they are living with Allah i.e their souls; also He said

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ

"Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in gardens and rivers"

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

"In the seat of honor with a most Powerful King."

As for the purification *و مطهرك من الذين كفروا*, this means, Allah will save him from the plots and evils of the kuffar.

This is the most correct and reliable among the interpretations, and this is what Shawaahid (references) of the Qur'an pointed to. But many of the Mufasssiroon only interpreted the statement out of its apparent meaning just to prove that Isa was raised to the heaven by body; and they are the same set of Mufasssiroon who reject Ta'wil in Sifaat." end quote. See Tafseer Manaar Vol. 3 pg 260.

Sheikh Muhammad al-Ghazaali said: "I go by the view that Isa is dead. And he is like other Prophets; he is dead and his soul only has been raised to Allah; his body is in his destiny like all other Prophets; and this verse goes well

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

" Surely you shall die and they (too) shall surely die." also the verse:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ

"And Muhammad is no more than an apostle; the other apostles have already passed away before him;"

And this affirmed that Isa is dead." see *لواء الإسلام* page 254.

Sayyid Qutb in his *في ظلال القرآن* Vol. 3 pg 87 said: "They wanted to kill and crucify Isa but Allah saved him from them and made

him die of a natural death; and then raised his soul up to heaven as He raised the soul of other Prophets and believers; and he purified him from the filth of the Kuffar."

Sheikh Abdul Wahab Najar, Doctuur Salaah Abu Ismaa'eel, said: "Allah has no مكان حسي محدود specific place, how could Isa lifted physically? He was lifted in prestige and honor and not physical. Do you say he is in heaven eating, drinking, and doing what the human body requires? This cannot be true." see Muqaaranatu Adyaan by Shibl page 68.

Sheikh Ahmad Shalabi added that: "those who say it is possible for Allah to keep Isa in His place without food, drink, aging, and other human wants... The meaning of this their claim is that Isa's soul is the one with Allah because it is the living soul that do not require human wants; just as Allah returns the soul of the Prophet to him whenever anyone says tasleem to him in his qabr". See page 68 of his book مقارنة الأديان.

And there are other arguments and evidences cited by the scholars of this Madh-hab.

The descend/coming back of Isa in the last hour

As for the coming back of Isa in the end time, let us verify its evidences....

The faith of all Kitaabiy (Christians) in Isa before his death:

Allah says:

وَأَنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ

"And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most certainly believes in this before his death," Suratu Nisaa, Verse 159.

The scholars of tafseer differed as regard the pronoun in the word *موته* (his death). Some of them said: the pronoun refers back to Isa; then the meaning of the verse is "all ahlul kitaab will believe in the truthfulness of Isa before the death of Isa, after which he will descend/come back in the end time."

While others said: "the pronoun refers back to *الكتابي* the Christian. Then the meaning of the verse will be "all kitaabiy will believe in the truthfulness of Isa before his death i.e before the death of the kitaabiy."

Those who hold to this second opinion say "if the pronoun refers back to Isa, it will then mean only those who will be alive during his second coming believe in him; and this is wrong for the verse says all ahlul kitaab and not those who will be alive then only. So the correct tafseer is that all ahlul kitaab will believe in Isa before they (the ahlul kitaab) die." see *التحرير و التتوير* Vol 6 pg 25.

And this their opinion can be backed up by the verse of Qur'an whereby Allah says all human being will know the truthfulness of his faith before he dies.

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

"And the stupor of death will come in truth; that is what you were trying to escape."

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ ذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

"Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp."

This second Tafseer is the chosen tafseer of Ibn Abbas, Mujaahid, Zamakhshariy, Aloosiy, Ibn Aa'shuur, Nawawi, Muhammad abduhu, Rasheed Rido, and others.

The knowledge of the Last Hour

Allah says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا

"And most surely it is a knowledge of the hour, therefore have no doubt about it" Suratu Zukhruf, Verse 61.

The Mufasssiroon also differed upon the meaning of the pronoun إنه. Some of them said: the pronoun is referring to Isa, denoting on his second coming, he will be the sign of the last hour.

While others opposed and said: the pronoun is referring to the Qur'an; it is the sign of the last hour, it will be the judge to establish rulings.

The scholars of the first opinion presented their evidence by saying the context (سياق) of this verse is talking about Isa.

While those of the second opinion say: even if we believe that the pronoun is referring to Isa, that does still not generally denote on his second coming; rather it denotes that Isa himself is a sign of the last hour - Allah created him without a father, he resurrects the deads, he healed the deaf and blinds; with all his (God-given) miracles, that denotes that Allah is capable of resurrecting all mankind and taking them to account on qiyaamah.

As for the opinion of those who say this verse is an evidence on the second coming of Isa, this verse does not denote on that. Where in the context of the verse denotes on the second coming? This is an addition without evidence.

They say: If the meaning of this verse truly denotes on the second coming of Isa, Allah would not have mentioned in the same verse that *فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا* (do not doubt it); Isa hasn't descended yet, how should an incidence that hasn't occurred be used as an evidence that shouldn't be doubted?!

Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed Rido (the teacher who influenced Sheikh Al-Albaani and Imam Hassan al-Banaa) said: "the

meaning of the verse is that (the being of) Isa is an evidence that Allah will resurrect mankind, He is He Who created him without a father, it is He who made him healed the deaf and resurrect the dead; He is capable of resurrecting all mankind. And this verse is like the verse whereby Allah said:

وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَابْنَهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ

"and we made her (Maryam) and her son a sign for the nations."
see al-Manaar Vol 11 pg 361.

Those who translated the pronoun إنه to mean Al-Qur'an also argued that all the Surah itself is talking about Al-Qur'an and it qualifies the Qur'an with various qualities.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا

"Surely We have made it an Arabic Quran.." Verse 3.

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيَّ حَكِيمٌ

"And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom." Verse 4.

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ

"And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people,"
Verse 44.

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ

"And most surely it is a knowledge of the hour" Verse 61.

They said: Allah started discussing about the Qur'an, then about his Messengers (which comprises of Isa), then returns the conversation back to Qur'an and qualified it with a new attribute.

Ibn Aa'shuur said: "the third person singular pronoun in Allah's statement *وإنه لعلم للساعة* means al-Qur'an, and this is exactly the tafseer of Hassan bn Aliy, Qataadah Sa'eed bn Jubayr, and some other Sahaabah and Salaf. This would be a praise for the Qur'an, the praise started from the beginning of the verse till it reaches the last praise that Al Qur'an knows better than mankind about the occurrence of the qiyaamah.

And the meaning that Qur'an is a sign of the hour is that it comes with the Last and seal of all the religions, after the revelation of the Qur'an, nothing else should be expected aside the end of this world. The last hour was associated with the Qur'an in a figurative way (*إسناد مجازي*). And that was the reason Allah said "do not have a doubt about it" i.e about the Qur'an that has already been revealed to you." see *التحرير و التتوير* Vol 26 pg 242.

So, the verse, either it denotes that the Qur'an is the sign of the hour, or Isa - with his birth and miracles - is the sign of the hour. As for the claim that the verse denotes on the second coming of Isa, this is a very strange claim that has no evidence. Even if something else will affirm the coming back of Isa, not this verse.

The speech of Isa in cradle and adolescence

Allah says:

وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

"And he shall speak to the people when in the cradle and when of adolescence age, and (he shall be) one of the good ones."
Suratu Imran, Verse 46.

Some people said: Isa died young, and the meaning of "he shall speak to people when of old age *ويكلم الناس في كهلا*" is that he is Still coming back, and he shall speak to people while he's old.

This is a funny point of view by the way. Which reliable source affirmed it that Isa died young? After he escaped the coup and wasn't killed and crucified, no one knew where he went, and no reliable Islamic source mentioned how many years he lived after and when exactly he died; this is because anything relating to date in past history is subjected to speculations and assumptions because there was no specific object they used in counting days. Just as we don't know the exact date even the Prophet Muhammad (solla Allahu alayhi wa sallam) who came later was born. And there is even a view that Isa lived until 120 years.

Even if (for the sake of argument) we go by the common (but unverified) view that he died at age 33, yet, the meaning of *الكهول/الكهولة* in Arabic language is adolescence; a phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. This is a phase after 30 years when a person is still a youth. Then, Isa has

spoken both in cradle (mahdi) and kahlan (adolescent) and it doesn't necessitate him to come back.

Imam Raaziyy said: "Al-Kahl in Arabic language means the age when someone is perfecting his youth *وما اجتمع قوته و كمل شبابه* and the basis of the word is from completeness and this is between 30-40 years of age. Then, Isa reached the state of Kahl while he was alive." see Tafseer al-Kabeer Vol 8 pg 224.

Imam Tabari in his Tafseer and many other Mufasssiroon also defined the meaning of Al-Kahl to mean a phase when a young man is perfecting his youthfulness.

And the reason Allah added kahlan *كهلا* in the verse is to tell that the speech of Isa while he was in cradle wasn't like the speech of a baby or someone afflicted by the Jin; his speech in cradle was exactly like a grown up adult that has reached puberty.

Imam Al-Aloosiy said: "the meaning of his phase in cradle and adolescence is to tell that there wasn't difference between his cradle and adolescence period." See Tafseer Aloosiy Vol 3 pg 163.

Imam Zamakhshari said: "he spoke to people in mahd and kahlan means: he spoke to them in the two phases the speech of the prophets, without any difference in the two phases." see Tafseer al-Kashaaf Vol 1 pg 559.

With these explanations, it is so clear to us all that there is no verse of the Qur'an that explicitly states Nabiyy Isa is coming back. Now, let's look into hadeeth.

Ahadeeth about the signs of the last hour:

As we couldn't explicitly establish the coming back of Isa with a verse of the Qur'an, we tend to look further into the books of ahadeeth. Certainly, authentic ahadeeth will serve as supplement for the Qur'an. And incase there is no Qur'anic verse backing up an issue, most especially a creedal one, we consider Mutawaatirah ahadeeth if they do not go against the Qur'an.

If not for these ahadeeth we see, no one would have ever translated those above Quranic verses to mean Isa is dead or coming back. So, it was these ahadeeth they tend to use to explain the Qur'an; and it wasn't still explicit.

There is an authentic hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah in Saheeh Bukhari and Muslim, a very common hadeeth whereby the prophet has been reported to say:

والذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينزل فيكم ابن مريم - صلى الله عليه وسلم - حكماً مقسطاً،
فيكسر الصليب، ويقتل الخنزير، ويضع الجزية، ويفيض المال حتى لا يقبله أحد، حتى تكون
..السجدة الواحدة خيراً من الدنيا وما فيها

Meaning: "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, surely the son of Maryam will descend amongst you and will judge mankind justly (as a Just Ruler); he will break the Cross and kill the pigs and there will be no Jizya (ie taxation taken from non Muslims).

Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it, and a single prostration to Allah (in prayer) will be better than the whole world and whatever is in it."

This hadeeth is undoubtedly an authentic one - considering its chain of transmission.

But where lies the issue is that this hadith is a solitary (ahaad) one and does not reach the level of tawaatur (narrated by a lot of narrators in each phase/tabao).

The chain goes thus:

حدثنا إسحاق أخبرنا يعقوب بن إبراهيم حدثنا أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب أن سعيد بن
المسيب سمع أبا هريرة

Then, the question to ask is:

الأحاد, هل يُؤخذ به في العقائد؟

Do we establish aqeedah (creedal issues) with solitary ahadeeth?

This will be answered in the following sub-topic.

There are likewise other ahadeeth that talked about the coming back of Isa, but some are weak, some are ahad and some are undoubtedly authentic.

An example of another authentic one is the hadeeth which says:
"A group among my Ummah will continue to fight for the truth until Isa, the son of Maryam, will descend, and the Imam of them

will ask him to lead the prayer...." This hadith mentions the word "descend".

And scholars like Ibn Kethir in Vol 4 pg 167 of his tafseer, Imam Tabari in Vol 5 pg 451 of his tafseer said that this particular hadeeth reached the level of tawaatur (narrated by large group of people).

Going by this and other authentic and Mutawaatirah ahadeeth, we can conclude that ahadeeth directly and explicitly established the second coming of Isa alayhi salam. His coming back has nothing to do with those who believe he is dead. It is easy and possible for Allah to raise and send him back to the world to follow the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam.

Further observations about these ahadeeth

Those who opine Isa is not coming back further argued and presented some observations.

Sheikh Rasheed Rido said: "the belief that Isa is coming back is the belief of most Christians, and they have tried so hard since years back until this recent century to insert it in our religion, an example of the person who tried such is وهب بن منبه who diluted the Qur'an with what wasn't in it." see Al-Manaar Vol 28 pg 747.

Abu Zhurah also affirmed what Sheikh Rido said: "these ahadeeth that talk about the second coming of Isa was not popular and Mutawaatirah at all until after the first third century (300 Islamic years)." see لواء الإسلام pg 262.

Sheikh Muhammad Shaltuut said: "the narrations that confirm the coming back of Isa are mostly different in their wordings and meanings, differences that couldn't be combined, and some scholars of hadith had pointed these out." see الفتاوى page 61.

They also say, even all these ahadeeth are authentic, the meaning of these ahadeeth is that the Prophet is citing examples and asking the Christians that: what will be your faith if Isa descended and meet you on what you are doing, will he be pleased with your aqeedah? By Allah, if he comes back, he would have broken your crosses, and deny your faith. And this is just like what we do say today to the misguided and extremist Muslims that "what will be your faith if the Muhammad comes back to you and meet you on this? He would have rejected your doctrine. There is no true establishment of coming back in these statements.

But our response to them will be those ahadeeth which informed us directly that Isa descend and lead Muslims in solaah. Even though they argued these ahadeeth are not authentic or ahaad or mudtorib.

Sheikh Rasheed Rido said: "the summary of this discourse is that, there is no explicit and clear cut evidence in the Quran that says Isa was raised by the body and soul alive to the heaven, and there is no explicit evidence likewise saying he will descend." see Al-Manaar Vol 28 pg 747.

Can we establish creedal beliefs with solitary narrations (ahaad)?

Ahaad ahadeeth are ahadeeth that do not reach the level of tawaatur (narrated by large group of narrators in each chain).

Issues of aqeedah are and should only be established with rigorous proofs without any ambiguity. Any iota of ambiguity could not nullify the Qur'an or establish reality. Ahadeeth ahad are subjected to criticism, and rejection if subjected to rigorous analysis unlike mutawaatir.

Similarly, there is no consensus even amongst our Ahlu sunnah scholars in accepting solitary narrations (khabar Wahid or hadeeth Ahad) in Aqeedah. You can come across books making the general statement but upon verification and application, you will see it as not the fact.

Solitary ahadeeth are subjected to speculations which cannot deconstruct a known reality of Deen.

Aqeedah must be based upon certainty. There are Ahad ahadeeth in the past which was considered authentic and suitable for Aqeedah but later scholars like Sheikh Albani said it is weak; should Aqeedah be subjected to flip flop? If an Ahad hadith on aqeedah is strongly backed with Quranic verse then it becomes distinctive (qat'ee dilaalah) and not Zhaniyy.

No two of the saying that Qur'an itself only is the clear-cut distinctive evidence (قطعي الثبوت). It may then be distinctive in its application (قطعي الدلالة) or subjected to interpretations and ambiguities (ظني الدلالة).

As for ahadeeth, basically, all ahadeeth are based upon assumptions and interpretations (which are strengthened by the Qur'an) called ظني الثبوت and not قطعي unlike the Qur'an. Only a little few of ahadeeth are regarded as قطعي الثبوت (distinctive clear-cut); and these ahadeeth are called Mutawaatirah and not solitary (ahaad). There is no difference among our scholars that authentic (saheeh) ahad ahadeeth are evidences in ahkaam but not in aqeedah matters. There maybe few ahad which has the distinctive status; yet it can never fulfil the desirability for creed except being supported by quranic verse.

You may see someone trying to justify that the Salaf do establish aqeedah issues with solitary narrations; that it was the khalaf that disputed on ahad narrations; ask the person what is the defining period for the Salaf and Khalaf? i.e what century did the period of Salaf ended and when did the period of Khalaf begin?

If the Khalaf should cite incidence from the Salaf to claim it and it is proven to be authentic, then that is enough an evidence of the dispute among the Salaf on even the entire ahad ahaadith.

The Salaf also deferred on the reliability and acceptance of Khabaru ahad. Could we then say the Salaf did not also drag mutlaq, muqayad , Aam, Khas, Zahir, Nass, muhkam, mutashabih, mufassar, and other mutaqabalaat - that it was just the Khalaf who cited incidence as claimed!

You should also know that, Ahad hadith at times does not necessarily mean one single narrator; but not narrated by large group of trustworthy narrators in each chain. That made ahad ahadeeth not to be distinctive (qat'ee).

Many among our past and present scholars have affirmed it that ahad (solitary) ahaadith cannot be used to establish basic aqeedah.

Among those who affirmed this are: Abu Haneefah, Imam Maalik, Imam Shaafi'i, al-Juwainiy (see al-burhaan fii Usooli-l-fiqh Vol 1 pg 321). Imam Ghazaali (see المستصفي من علم الأصول pg 215). Imam Muhammad Abduhu (see his الأعمال الكاملة Vol 5 pg 542-545). Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed Rido, Muhammad Shaltuut (see شريعة و عقيدة الإسلام pg 59). Sayyid Qutb (see fii Zilaal Vol 30 pg 4008). Imam al-Bootiy, Sheikh Al-Qaradaawi, Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zhurah (see كبرى اليقينيّات pg 35) and so on...

Objection:

Some of us (myself inclusive) have the belief that, okay, the evidences that talked about the coming back of Isa are not distinctive clear-cut, they are rather based on assumptions and interpretations (Zhaniyy Thubuut); what if we just have the belief that he is coming back to be at a savor side (احتياط)?

But I think there are some issues with this our belief also. Which are:

1: All knowledge lays down conditions for its evidences to be convinced about. If we see a weak hadith for example telling us to be truthful and never tell lies, there is no problem following such hadeeth despite being weak. But for fundamental beliefs, there is no room for assumption (Zhann) and doubt. How should I say I beleive in something while the establishment of my belief is based upon doubt and its truthfulness is tackled?!

2: The fundamental of all religions is false. All beliefs are basically faulty. Unless the religion that can be established with convincing evidences.

The Shiites would defend their kind of religion with hundreds of ahadeeth, with hundreds of points that Aliyy was the rightful successor and the 12 Imams; but all these evidences are based upon assumptions (zhaniyyah), should we overlook the Zhaniyy

nature of their evidences and just belief in their beliefs to be at a saver side (احتياطاً)?

3: Islam is a religion purified from Zhann (conjecture) and fallacies. And the reason it spoke against the Zhann propagated by the polythiest.

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا

"And most of them do not follow (anything) but conjecture; surely conjecture will not avail aught against the truth;" Suratu Yoonus verse 36.

4: The basis and fundamental about the invisible beliefs is that we shouldn't believe anything about it; unless what is explicitly and clearcut proven with convincing evidences. And the basis in aqedah is to negate and nullify until strongly proven otherwise by the one establishing the belief.

A Muslim who belies the second coming of Isa:

A Muslim who belies the second coming of Isa should not be tagged an oreintalist and should not be called a kaafir. He didn't belie any cogent fundamentals of the religion. This matter is subjected to interpretations and Zhaniyy evidences that are further verified upon authenticity and weakness. We can regard his stance as a wrong one but it hasn't gotten to the level of declaring him a kaafir. So far such Muslim isn't using that opportunity to abuse, curse, and vilify the companions of the

Prophet; Abu Hurayrah, Aa'ishah, and their likes. Or any of the early scholars of hadeeth that strove for this knowledge; Imam Bukhari, Muslim, and others before and after them. If such person is doing so, then his stupidity and ignorance should be dealt with in a better matured and intellectual way. If he persists, he will be tagged a misguided fellow that must not be taken serious in matters of the Deen.

As for the hadeeth that says:

"whoever belies the coming back of Isa becomes a Kaafir, whoever belies the appearance of Mahdi becomes a Kaafir, whoever belies the appearance of Dajjal becomes a Kaafir, whoever does not believe in the good and bad of destiny becomes a kaafir...."

This hadeeth is no doubt a fabricated and extremely weak one. Sheikh Al-Albaani said in his silsilatul da'eefah Vol 3 pg 201 that this hadeeth is extremely weak and fabricated.

In conclusion:

Just like I said in the first paragraph, issues should be discussed with evidences and respect. Name-calling and abuses should be avoided. The religion belongs to Allah only and no man's property. If you will refute, make it a comprehensive one and in the same intellectual nature for proper perception. Leave your emotions aside. Do not turn religious affairs into we versus them.

You may be wrong, they maybe right and vice versa. May Allah reward us all.

Wa solla Allahu ala Sayyidinaa Muhammadin, wa ala aalihi wa sahabihi ajma'een.

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