CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

For centuries, the identity of Isa AS was an almost non-debatable issue. The Torah and Bible provided a long accepted tradition that Isa AS was the only Son of God, and became a man to die on a cross to pay the penalty for human being sins. He rose from the dead three days later, never to die again, proving his claims about himself.

In the 7th century, as Islam began its rise, what generally accepted about the identity of Isa AS came into doubt. There are many questions which come to mind when the name Isa AS is mentioned. What a terrific! In the Quran, all that questions about Isa AS answered and obviously proven. *First*, Isa AS was born of a virgin (Maryam), but God was not his father. *Second*, Isa AS was a prophet but not the Son of God. *Third*, Isa AS taught Islam and the coming of Mohammad PBUH and *fourth*, Isa AS never went to, or died on the cross or raised from the dead.

Those statement above was written in many verses in the Quran as an evidences. But the case has not been settled, discuss about the death of Isa AS and his raised from the earth to the side of God was so complicated. Some people believed that Isa AS was dead since hundreds age ago without any

crucified¹ and absolutely never went to this earth anymore, but others believed that he still alive till this present and raised to the heaven by God. He never dies, Allah SWT raised and saved him by His side and will descend at the appointed time, end all wars and bring peace to the world.

Take the case of the easter of Isa AS in the Quran cannot detatched for three verses, are:

1. Ali 'Imran (3): 55

إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَعِيسَىٰ إِنِي مُتَوَقِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَى وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَجَاعِلُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱلَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ اللَّهُ فَوْنَ اللَّهُ اللَّ

"(Recall) When Allah said: "O Isa! I will now recall you (from your mission) and raise you unto Me and I will purify you (of the balsphemies) of those who disbelieve, and I will set up those who follow you above those who disbelieve till the day of ressurrection. Then unto Me is your return and I shall judge between you in regard to that wherein you used to differ.²

2. An-Nisa' (4): 157-158

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا ٱلْسِيحَ عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَفَا صَلَبُوهُ وَفَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَيكِن شُبِهَ هَمْ أَوْإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُواْ فِيهِ لَفِى شَكِّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُم بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا وَلَيكِن شُبِهَ لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا وَلَيكِن شُبِهَ لَهُمْ بَهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا وَلَيكِن شُبِهَ لَهُمْ بَهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا وَلَيكِن شُبَهَ فَكُمْ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ أَوْلَا لَا اللَّهُ عَزِيرًا حَكِيمًا وَبَاعَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ أَوْلَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيرًا حَكِيمًا

Baitul Quran) 2000, p: 75.

¹ It is clearly written in holy Quran Surah an-Nisa 157: "...We slew the messiah Isa son of Maryam, Allah's messenger—they slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them..."

² LA'L, DR Muhammad Chawla, Verse by Verse-English Translation of Holy Quran (Pakistan:

"And for their saying "We have slain Al-Masih Isa, son of Mary (maryam), the messenger of Allah". And in fact they didn't slay him, nor did they crucify him, but only a likeness of him was shown to them. And those who differ therein are surely in doubt thereof. They have no knowladge about it, but only follow a surmise, and they slew him not of certainly. Nay, Allah raised him unto Himself. And Allah is ever-Mighty, Wise.³

3. Al-Maidah (5): 117

I spoke unto them naught but as Thou commandst me, (saying): Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when Thou tookest me, Thou was the Watcher over them. Thou art Witness over all things.⁴

In these verses the easter of Isa AS view talked about. Interrelated to the Easter of Isa AS, the Quran extend it by two different word. *Firstly*, word rafa'a (to raise) wrote in surah an-Nisa verse 158. *Secondly*, word tawaffa (to die) wrote in surah al-Maidah verse 117. Whereas, in surah Ali 'Imran verse 55 the word rafa'a (to raise) and tawaffa (to die) in a row together.

Begins from that two different word used in the Quran, the complication turned up between *mufassir* (interpreters of the Noble Quran), some of them told that Isa AS still alive and will come down to the earth in the

⁴ Ibid, p: 177.

³ Ibid, p: 142.

end. This opinion suggest by a verse in the Noble Quran surah Maryam (19): 15.

"Peace be upon him, the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he will be raised up alive"

In other verse—surah Maryam (19): 33—, Isa AS made himself secures:

"And peace be upon me, the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive".

In adition to it, there are some *hadits* of Prophet Muhammad SAW which argued that Isa AS will be revert to this world approaching the doomsday.

Ibnu Abu Hatim berkata, Ahmad bin Sinan telah bercerita kepada kami, Ahmad bin Sinan telah menerima cerita dari Abu Mu'awiyah, Abu Mu'awiyah telah menerima cerita dari Manhal Ibnu Umar, Manhal Ibnu Umar telah menerima cerita dari Said bin Jabir, Said bin Jabir telah menerima cerita dari Ibnu Abbas, bahwasannya ia telah berkata, ketika Allah akan mengangkat Isa AS ke langit, beliau keluar untuk menemui para pengikutnya yang berjumlah 12 orang. Kemudian beliau berkata kepada mereka "Ada di antara kalian yang akan kufur kepadaku dua belas kali setelah sebelumnya ia di serupakan dengan wajahku, untuk dijadikan sebagai penggantiku hingga ia akan sama derajatnya denganku nanti". Tak lama kemudian seorang lelaki yang paling muda di antara mereka berdiri dan berkata, "Aku bersedia!". Akhirnya beliau berkata "Baiklah, kamu yang akan melakukan hal

⁶ Ibid, p: 462.

⁵ Ibid, p: 460.

itu". Akhirnya pemuda tersebut diserupakan wajahnya dengan wajah nabi Isa AS. Sementara itu beliau diangkat ke atas langit melalui lubang angin di rumah tersebut.

Ibnu Abu Hatim berkata, maka tak lama kemudian orang yahudi datang dan menangkap pemuda tersebut, lalu membunuh dan menyalibnya pada sebilah papan kayu.⁷

"Ibnu Abi Hatim said: Ahmad bin Sinan told us, Ahmad bin Sinan had received the story of Abu Mu'awiyah, Abu Mu'awiyah received the story of Manhal Ibn Umar, Manhal Ibn Umar received the story of Said Ibn Jabir, Said Ibn Jabir received the story from Ibn Abbas, that he has said, when God will lift Isa AS to the heavens, he came out to meet his followers who numbered 12 people. Then he said to them "Any of you who would be *kufur* to me twelve times after he had been in compare to mine, to serve as my successor so that he will be equal in rank with me later". Soon a young man who most of them stood up and said, "I'm willing!". Finally he said: "Well, you are going to do that". Finally, the boy has been likened with the face of the prophet Isa. Meanwhile he was appointed to the sky through the vent in the house.

Ibnu Abi Hatim said it was not long before the Jews came and arrested the young man, then killed and crucified him on the blade of a wooden board."

Just the opposite, some of the *mufassir* (interpreters of the Noble Quran) rebutted that argument and said that those *hadits* are *ahad* which cannot brought on solidify. Then, they said that Isa AS was dead since hundreds age ago.

Besides *mufassirin* (interpreters of the Noble Quran), there are many people expressed their deeply-felt concern over the easter of Isa AS. In the

⁷ For more detail, see: Abu al-Fida' Ismail bin Katsir, Qishash al-Anbiya', p: 703.

same manner as the mufassir, they also forwarded their opinion into some concepts. Some of them are: Tom Terry and Josh McDowell-from the Christian representative—, Yahya Emerick, Ahmed Deedat, Irene Handono, Harun Yahya, Abu Musa Jibril and many others.

From those famous names, this case will take a focus to one famous name is Syeikh Ahmed Deedat. Ahmed Hussein Deedat was a muslim apologist, scholar, writer, charismatic public speaker and Islamic missionary of Indian-South African descent. He was born at first of July 1918 and dead at 8th of August 2005. Deedat was best known for his numerous inter-religious public debates with evangelical Christians, as well as pioneering video lectures most of which centered around Islam, Christianity and the Bible. He also established the IPCI (Islamic Propagation Centre International), Deedat wrote and mass-produced several booklets on Islam and Christianity. He was award the prestigious King Faisal Award in 1986 for his 50 years of missionary work.

According to Deedat, Isa AS was just an apostle of God. He is definitely not God.⁸ Isa was anything other than a natural man and a prophet of God, sent unto the house of Israel to bear the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God, which prophesy was fulfilled with the advent of the holy prophet Muhammad saw.9

Talking about the raised of Isa AS and his resurrection to this world, in his book, Was Jesus Crucified?, Deedat wrote it in a special sub-title. "The

Ahmed Deedat, The God that Never Was. p: 6.

⁹ Ibid, p: 6.

post crucifixion prophesied events never happened"¹⁰. According to it, he said that the Jews never crucified Isa AS. It established by some facts that he wrote in that book as a proof.

On the contrary, in his other book Deedat also wrote that Isa AS was crucified and dead in the cross. Moreover, in his lecture as transcript by John Gilchrist entitled *The Crucifixion of Christ; A fact not Fiction* Deedat declared that the crucifixion of Isa AS whom called as Jesus was a fact. This is the point which the researcher looking for to find out in this thesis.

B. Identification of The Problem

From the long explanation above, the very primordial problem that have to be identification is find out the causal factors in using different word (tawaffa, rafa'a or tawaffa and rafa'a in a row together) in three verses mentioned above. Then, how was the mufassir interpeted the verses, especially the words and how was Ahmed Deedat's view about the easter of Isa in his works.

C. Statement of The Problem

The cores of this study are:

1. Is Ahmed Deedat had a different argumentation toward the *mufassirs* on the easter of Isa AS?

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¹⁰Ahmed Deedat, Was Jesus Crucified?, a transcript of the Debate of Ahmed Deedat vs. Josh McDowell, August 1981 in Durban, South Africa.

2. What was the reasons of Ahmed Deedat to argue the contradict interpretation with the *mufassirs* on those three verses about the easter of Isa AS?

D. Objective of Study

The general objectives of this study understanding the interpretation of the Easter of Isa AS in the Quran and knowing Ahmed Deedat's view about it based on his works.

Moreover, the detail objectives of this study such as list below:

- To find out Ahmed Deedat's opinion about the easter of Isa AS in his works.
- 2. To analyze the reasons of Ahmed Deedat's different argumentation about the Easter of Isa AS.

E. Definition of The Key Terms

In order to make this study guided and compatibility, it is better to confirm the concerning of the problem that analyzes, that consists of list below:

Easter : The Day Christians celebrate the Easter of Christ¹¹.
 Nevertheless, Easter in this work, means the ascension of Isa AS when the Jews tried to catch and kill him.

¹¹ Martin.H.Manser. Oxford learner's pocket dictionary. (Oxford University Press, 1995) p: 133.

- Isa AS : One of the prophets in Islam was born of the virgin Mary (Maryam), God's messenger to descendants of Israel (Bani Israil) and the apostle revealed Bible as a miracle.
- 3. Ahmed Deedat: A Muslim apologist, Islamic missionary of Indian-South African descent. Founder and the president of *Islamic Propagation Centre International* (IPCI). Also, the author of numerous books about Isa AS or in Deedat's work wrote as Jesus PBUH.

F. Significance of Study

This study is important and useful because the discourse of the Easter of Isa AS never dies. It's because this case belonging to *israiliyaat* verses category. Either among the Christians and Muslims debate or intern Muslims themselves, this case never end to debated, rebutted or discussed.

This study hoped can refresh the discourse of the Easter of Isa AS based on the *mufassir*'s interpretation and giving the right understanding about it words using in those verses. Then, give the general view of Ahmed Deedat's opinion in the ascension of Isa AS.

Not at all, the researcher hopes that this study theoretically will enrich the knowledge about the topic discussed. While practically, the researcher hopes by this study the society—especially Muslim society—will have the right view of the Easter of Isa AS, and the last, researcher hopes that this study

will useful for students of Quranic studies as the review of literature that can help them in their study. At list, this study useful to researcher as the student of Tafsir and Hadis Faculty.

G. Review of Literature

Until now, the study of the easter (ascension) of Isa AS has been mostly done by the theologian and others with a variety of approaches and methods. Take the case of the easter of Isa AS was unresolved issue until now. The researchers who wrote and published books on this subject also very widely. Questioning the easter of Isa AS, there are two case that are often debated and tried to be maintained by the writers of the books. First, some books took the conclusion that Isa AS was died and will never return to the earth. Others said that Isa AS still alive and stay in Allah side until now and the day after.

In this study, writer was inspired by two books written by Ahmed Hussein Deedat—one of the figures that almost all the title of his book talking about the Divinity, Isa AS (Jesus PBUH) and Muhammad SAW—titled *The Choice; Islam and Christianity* and *The Crucifixion of Christ; A fact not Fiction*. Not only as the author of the book, Ahmed Deedat also a public speaker who often commit available lectures and debates about Islam generally and especially about the status of Isa AS. What makes the writer interested to take this title is a difference of views and opinions submitted by Deedat about the easter (ascension) of Isa. In some of his books, he declared

that Isa AS had died. In another section, Deedat declared that Isa AS was alive. He did not die on the cross, he just fainted for a moment at that time.

These differences of Ahmad Deedat's view invites confusion to writer about his true opinion about the easter of Isa AS. It is because of ambiguity which made, it can be misleading and misunderstanding to the readers

In addition to Ahmed Deedat's books, there are also some literatures discussing specifics about the easter (ascension) of Isa AS. Among the books, there was a book called نظرة الإسلام إلى عيسى عليه السلام الله the work of Ibnu Katsir, which later translated into english language by Muhammad Tamir Abu As-Su'ood with the title "The Islamic View of Jesus Peace be Upon Him". This book tells in detail about the life of Jesus PBUH since he was not born until the differences version about the story of his death.

Moreover, Ibn Kathir also explained about the history of Isa AS in his book entitled عيسى عليه السلام, a small book titled عيسى عليه السلام, the series of story books of the prophets. This booklet contains only the life history of Prophet Isa since she was born and growing up, but the story of his death is not telling in that book. Harun Yahya in his book entitled *General Knowledge from the Quran* is also explained in detail the story of the prophet with reference to the Quran. One is the story of the prophet Isa. In this book Harun Yahya was not explain by his own argument, but he just copied and cites from the Quran translation, then arranged it based on the run down of the history and described it into his book.

Please note that the book discusses the easter of Isa AS very much, but none of the literature that the writer found make it as a single theme even as a book title. Hence this paper will attempt to discuss it.

So it is conclude that this research by the title "The Easter of Isa AS in the Quran (Study of Ahmed Deedat's works)" is never done by anyone, so it is still original.

H. Method Of Study

Research method used in this study writing is as follow:

1. Research approach

The approach for this thesis is library research. The data needed in this review of literature is taken from it resource by the library research. By collecting the books that having relation with the topic subject will be discusses.

Exactly the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. It is done by discourse the literature such: articles, documents, thesis, exegetical, history, and many more. The focus of this method is describing and analyzing the problem, then concluding the results.

2. Data Resources

The data resources in this study divided into two categories:

a. The Primer Data resources are numerous of Ahmed Deedat's books related to the Easter of Isa AS, especially in his two famous books

entitled Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction? and The Choice; Islam and Christianity.

b. The Secondary Data resources such the supporting books, researcher needs the holy Quran and some Muslim exegetical works. In this thesis, the researcher tried to restricted and focus in five tafsir (exegetical work) collection books. The first is Tafsir al-Misbah of Quraish Shihab, second Tafsir al-Azhar as Hamka's exegetical book, third Tafsir al-Maraghi of Ahmad Musthafa al-Maraghi, forth Tafsir al-Manar the work of Syaikh Muhammad Abduh and the last Tafsir al-Quran al-'Adhiem the book of al-Hafidz Imaduddin Abu al-Fida' Ismail Ibnu Katsir al-Dimasyqi. Besides, the researcher also uses some books discussed about Isa AS that related with this study.

3. Step of Analysis

As the type of research by library, so it is absolutely a literary technique in collecting data, that some library books have a same orientation with the writing object should be accommodate. It is done by writing, editing, clarifying, reducing, browsing, and then presenting it by giving description clearly, analyzing and concluding.

I. The Outline of Writing

The outline of this study will be explained to the five chapters below:

Chapter I: Introduction. A background of the study to introduce the problems that will be discusses. This chapter consists of background of study,

identification of the problem, statement of the problem, objective of the study, definition of the key term, significance of study, Method of study and the outline of writing.

Chapter II: The Easter of Isa AS in the Quran. This chapter will came afterward, contain of the history of Isa AS, the meaning of tawaffa and rafa'a in the Quran and thought of mufassir's about the Easter of Isa AS.

Chapter III: Ahmed Deedat's View about the Easter of Isa AS. This chapter containing Biography of Ahmed Deedat that covers his education background, functions and activities, his books or works and his thought about The Easter of Isa AS.

Chapter IV: The analysis of the data. Containing the main analysis of the Easter of Isa AS based on Ahmed Deedat's opinion.

Chapter V: Conclusion. This last chapter contains conclusion and some suggestions.