

"Muhammad is . . . the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the Prophets . . ."—  
HOLY QUR-AN, 33 : 40. "There will be no prophet after me."— MUHAMMAD.

# *The* **Islamic Review**

FOUNDED BY THE LATE AL-HAJJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

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MUHARRAM, 1362 A.H.  
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## A DECLARATION

I, Miss Betty W. Miller of Phipps House, Westway, W. 12, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship one and only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus and others and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

*La Ilaha ill-Allah Muhammad-un-Rasul Allah.*

There is but one God (Allah) and Muhammad is God's Messenger.

*Dated 9th November, 1941. (Sd.) B. W. MILLER.*

# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## THE WORLD BEFORE AND AFTER MUHAMMAD

MIRZA MASUM BEG, B.A.

### DAWN FOLLOWS DARKNESS

We notice in the physical world that whenever a drought prevails on earth and the sky ceases to pour down rain, the land becomes dead and dreary ; springs and streamlets dry up ; even the water of larger rivers ceases to sustain life, and dead fish float on its surface. The good and green vegetation withers away and decays, and fearful famine stalks through the land. Epidemics of all kinds break out and carry away men and animals in large numbers. Physical life, to be short and succinct, gets into a frightful fix. When matters come to such a pass, the mercy of the Most Beneficent God is enkindled, and He, out of His grace, sends down rain from Heaven. It quickens life into the dead sod ; the refreshing waters begin to flow again, and luscious fruits and fragrant flowers reappear in abundance. Anew, the earth is full of life and luxuriance.

Even so in the spiritual sphere. A spiritual drought occurs when the soul-stirring revelation ceases to descend from On High. For Divine Word is to human soul what rain water is to the still soil. Human mind, during this period, becomes dead and dreary, having exhausted the good and righteousness that resided therein previously. People fall away from the Right Path whereon their spiritual guide, the Prophet, had set them, and lose themselves in the labyrinth of worldliness and vice. Spiritual darkness spreads on earth, and Religion becomes corrupted and confused. But just as a physical drought is followed by life-stirring rain, and the darkest night by delightful dawn, likewise spiritual droughts have been followed by the Heavenly rain of Divine revelation which revived life into the still and sullied souls.

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### SPIRITUAL DROUGHT

History bears testimony to the fact that whenever such a dreadful darkness has prevailed on earth, and the affairs of men have fallen into a hopeless mess, the Most Merciful God has ever raised a Spiritual Luminary who has dispelled all their dark doubts, and putting their tangled skein in order has directed them afresh into the True Path whence they had strayed away. Such indeed has been the Immutable Law of God working in His Spiritual Kingdom. The Holy Qur-án has referred to this great law when it stated *وان من امة لا خلا فيها نذير*, “Not a people there has been but a Warner has gone amongst them” (35 : 24). And Lord Krishna of India too meant to expound the same law when he taught in the Bhagavada Gita (4 : 7) “Whenever there is decay of Faith and exultation of unrighteousness, then I come forth. For the protection of the good and the destruction of evil, for the sake of the firmly established righteousness I am born from age to age.”

Now let us recall a time 14 centuries back. A spiritual drought of a very dreadful nature, the ancient annals tell us, had spread in all the four corners of the world. For 600 long years, ever since the time of Prophet Jesus of Nazareth, Divine revelation had not descended from On High, and the Heavens were closed up as it were. The laws of God were violated without any compunction, and His limits transgressed without the feeblest tremor of the soul. Clouds of darkness and dishonesty, of ignorance and infidelity prevailed everywhere, and libertinism and unchastity contaminated the social order. The whole world was in a deplorable condition—socially, morally as well as spiritually.

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### BARBAROUS EUROPE

The continent of Europe, in the 7th century of the Christian era, was still grovelling in the filth of barbarism, and committed inhuman atrocities in the name of Religion. Whoredom and wine-bibbing were the most appalling of their vices.

The ancient empires of Rome and Greece had tumbled down. All their greatness and glory was gone, and the culture which they had imparted to the world had fallen into decay. The Romans worshipped a number of deities which their imagination pictured as presiding over their hearth, the farm and the forum. Jupiter was the king of their gods. Mars Silvanus watched over their fields. Lupercus was the god of fertility, and also protected their sheep against their enemies. Vulcanus was the god of fire without whose help artisans could not carry on their work. Neptunus was the god of the sea to whom sailors addressed their prayers. Penates and Lares were the divinities of the fireside and were worshipped in every home. When a Roman went abroad, he prayed to the Penates for a safe return, and when he came back he hung his armour and his staff beside their images and gave them thanks. In every occasion of sorrow and joy the multitude of divinities were called upon for sympathy or help. Feasts and festivals were held in their honour. The religion of the Romans had not much to do with morality. It was mainly based on the enjoyment of earthly pleasures. If the ceremonial rites were duly observed, the demands of the Roman religion were satisfied. It seemed to bring earthly guilt and punishment into relation with its divinities. When the gods were angry and nobody could be laid hold of as definitely guilty, they could be appeased by one who voluntarily gave himself up. Physical pleasure had

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become the business of life with the Romans, and morality had been relaxed to a frightful extent. Women had become very corrupt, and the watering-places presented scenes of unblushing wickedness.

The Carthaginians worshipped another malignant deity called Baal-Moloch. He was the fire-god rejoicing in human sacrifices, and in parents' tears. His worshippers gashed and mutilated themselves in their religious frenzy. Baal was said to be the devourer of his own children. Tanith or Astarte was the goddess of wedded love. Her worship required immorality, nay she consecrated it. The abomination of the Sidonians was also the abomination of the Carthaginians.

A Greek in his own house was the master of the lives of his children. His wife was his slave. When he died, he became the object of their worship, their god. He was believed to feel all the wants, the pains, the pleasures of his earthly life; and these must be satisfied by food, by clothing, and by the attendance of his wife or his slaves who must be slaughtered to bear him company in the spirit land. But in that land there could be no rest for him, if his body be not duly buried or cremated, and the funeral rites performed only by his legitimate son, born in lawful wedlock of a woman initiated into the family religion. Strangers were not admitted by the Greeks to their worship. The sacred fire, not to be tended by foreigners, was maintained perpetually in the Prythaneion or the holy places in the city. For strangers the state had no room. They had no right to protection whether of person or of property.

### DARK AFRICA

The continent of Africa was peopled with naked and nude savages who lived like beasts in the woods,

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and relished in the eating of human flesh. They were as dark in spirit as in skin, and may be said to have no religion at all.

### WICKED ASIA

Asia, no doubt, had been the home of light and learning ; but at the time of which we are speaking it too was steeped in gross immorality and irreligion. Mortal men with all their faults and failings had been raised to the dignity of Godhead, and prayers were addressed to them.

The power of Persia was also in a declining condition. Their religion was Zoroastrianism but only in name, for the doctrines of ancient Magianism which inculcated the worship of the powers of Nature, heroes and ancestors had crept into it. The Persians had come to believe in two gods : Ormuzd who ruled over the kingdom of light and was the giver of all good, and Ahirman who was the king of darkness and the source of all evil, moral as well as physical. All that existed, according to them, appertained either to the kingdom of Ormuzd or to that of Ahirman, whether rational or irrational, animate or inanimate. The kings of the Persians were very licentious, and lewdness was their aristocracy. The king once demanded whether it was lawful for him to marry his own sister, and the council, knowing that it was his purpose to do so, replied that the law allowed the king of the Persians to do what seemed to him good. Yazdgard V, who lived about the middle of the 5th century A. C., married his own daughter. The priestly class was still worse. Mazdak, a high priest, arose in the reign of Khosru Kobad and polluted the Persians with his devilish doctrines. He pretended himself an apostle sent from God. He abolished marriage ; and women in his system were to be the wives of all. King Kobad himself



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shared the opinions of this impostor to whom he gave leave to lie with the queen, his wife ; but Anushirwan, his son, with much difficulty prevailed upon Mazdak not to make use of it.

The ancient land of Aryavarta (India), it is no gainsaying the fact, had been the birthplace of great knowledge and philosophy, but it too presented a painful picture at the time. The Hindus worshipped countless deities to whom they ascribed highly immoral actions.

The kingdom of China fared no better. The spiritual fire kindled by Confucius had, through the lapse of ages, spent its force and cooled down. The Chinese groped grievously in the dark. They worshipped the souls of their dead fathers, and did not believe in the life after death. The poorer sort of people put their children, the females particularly, to death with impunity. Prostitution, gambling and slavery were the most glaring of their national vices.

In fine, every country of the world was degenerate, and every nation disgracefully depraved. The 7th century of the Christian era had been the darkest age that ever overshadowed our earth. The whole world was sunk in lustful luxury and suffered from hopeless degeneracy of manners. Such widespread corruption had never previously existed in the world's history. How beautifully has the Holy Qur-án summed up the whole situation in one eloquent sentence *ظُر الفساد في البر والبحر* i.e. "Corruption appeared on land and sea."

We have had an aeroplane view of the most important countries of the world together with their civilizations. Let us now turn more pointedly to, the great systems of religion which prevailed at the time under review—the Hinduism of India, Judaism and Christianity.

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## 1. HINDUISM

The earliest faith of the Indo-Aryans, we are inclined to believe, was undoubtedly monotheistic in origin. The Supreme, Self-existent God did communicate His will to certain holy men, called the Rishis, for the instruction of mankind. Even in the present mutilated edition of the Vedas we come across passages which point to a dim underlying monotheism: "That which is One," "There is in truth but one Deity, the Supreme Spirit, the Lord of the Universe, whose work is the universe." "That One wherein abide all things existing" (*Yajur Veda* 17 : 30).

### POWERS OF NATURE

But as time went on they fell away from the true monotheistic faith and took to the worship of many gods. They were so much impressed with the golden dawn of this country, the powerful mid-day sun, and the dark thundercloud that ultimately they clothed these phenomena of nature with divine attributes. The Sun-God (Surya), the Goddess of Dawn (Usha), the Storm-God (Indra) and the Fire-God (Agni), together with a whole host of other gods, came to be worshipped as powerful deities, and hymns containing great devotion were composed in their praise. These sacred songs were, later on, incorporated in the pages of the Holy Vedas.

*Indra* was the chief deity who reigned over the blue sky, and battled with his thunderbolt against the demons of drought and darkness that withheld the reins of Heaven. *Agni* came next in prominence. All riches were at his disposal. (*Rig.* II, 6.) He was the "maidens' lover" and the "matrons' lord," children being his special gifts. *Varuna* and his brother *Mitra* were the gods of day and night; they presided over all the numerous phenomena of which sky is the

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seeming scene. *Surya* was the Sun-God, and *Vayu* the God of Wind. These and a great galaxy of other gods the ancient Aryans admired and adored. The gods had their spouses too—*Indrani*, *Varunani*, *Agnani*, etc., *Aditi* being their mighty mother. They received no less respect and reverence at the hands of their worshippers.

The ancient Aryans thus took to the worship of the Powers of Nature. They prayed to them for health, wealth and long life, for offspring and cattle, for victory in battle and freedom from the bonds of sin. We read in the *Yajur Veda* (XX, 14—16): “Gods, Deities, whatever fault of ours have stirred the wrath of gods, may *Agni* set me free from that iniquity and all distress. If in the daytime or at night we have committed acts of sin, may *Vayu* set me free from that iniquity and all distress. If when awake or in sleep we have committed acts of sin, may *Surya* set me free from that iniquity and all distress.” As they sang hymns to invoke these gods, offerings of ghee, curdled milk, rice, cakes and juice of the *Soma* plant were laid upon the altar. The fire consumed the gifts and carried them to the gods. Animal sacrifices were also presented.

The number of these deities was 33 in the beginning, but it gradually rose to 3339. The *Rig Veda* says (Book III, Hymn IX, Verse 9): “Three times a hundred gods and thrice a thousand, and three times ten and nine.” This number, later on at the time of which we are speaking, swelled to 330 millions which exceeded the entire population of India.

The early Aryans had no temples; they did not invite the deity to dwell in houses of men's building. Priests they had none, nor idols nor images, and each patriarch lighted the sacred fire in his own hearth

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and invoked the gods. There were no caste distinctions, as we find to-day, and all of them were a united people bearing the name 'Visas' which means 'people.' Woman enjoyed an honoured place in society. The ancient Aryans believed in a future life and a happier world where the good and the virtuous went after death.

The faith of the Indo-Aryans passed through five distinct stages in succession.

1. The Vedic Age, from 2,000 B.C. to 1,400 B.C.
2. The Epic Age, from 1,400 B.C. to 800 B.C., in which was fought the Great War between the Pandus and the Kurus, called the Mahabharata.
3. The Age of Law and Philosophy, from 800 B.C. to 315 B.C.
4. The Buddhist Age, from 315 B.C. to 500 A.C.
5. The Puranic Age, from 500 A.C., to the coming of the Muslims.

It is with the last age only that we are concerned in the present article.

Historians of high repute have all agreed in saying that the Puranic period, of all the periods of Hindu history, has been the darkest. Polytheism of the rankest type prevailed during this period, and it assumed so large proportions that the number of gods went up to 330,000,000. Superstition of the darkest type loomed large, and ghosts and demons, demi-gods and deified saints, household gods, tribal gods, local gods and universal gods, in countless numbers were worshipped and adored. The keepers of these shrines were licentious and lewd. They kept in the holy temples dancing girls whom they euphemistically called 'Devadasees,' i.e., the female servants of the gods, but the profligate priests committed immoral acts

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with these girls of the gods, the worst of it being that all this was done in the name of religion.

Woman, in the Vedic Time, enjoyed a place of honour in the society, but now she had been reduced into a state of subjection. "Women," says Manu, "have impure appetites; they show weak flexibility and bad conduct. Day and night must they be kept in subjection." She was treated like other movable property, and staked in gambling bouts. The pernicious practice of polyandry by which a woman had several husbands to attend to at a time, was also indulged in freely. A widow was not allowed to remarry; she was, on the other hand, obliged to burn herself alive with the dead body of her husband.

### CASTE-SYSTEM

In the early Vedic Age, there was no caste-system that divided people into water-tight compartments. But later on when the fair-skinned Aryans proceeded southwards, they came into contact with the aboriginal races of India, who were dark people of short sizes. The strong and stout Aryans seized their lands and also made them domestic drudges. In the holy hymns they have been contemptuously called "fiends" and "dark skins." In this way, the colour distinction came on the stage, giving rise to the notorious caste-system of the Hindus. Men of the Aryan blood became the three upper classes—the Brahmans or priests, the Kshatriyas or warriors, the Vaisyas or husbandmen, whilst the aborigines and half-bloods constituted the lowest caste called the Shudras.

This strange social system was, at the time under review, functioning with all its relentless rigours. The Brahman was the chief of all created beings; the world and all in it were his; through him indeed other mortals enjoyed life. His person and power were protected by

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the severest laws in this world, and the most tremendous denunciations for the next. He was exempted from capital punishment even for the most heinous crimes. His offences against other classes were treated with remarkable lenience, while all offences against him were punished with tenfold severity. The touch of a person of the lower caste would defile the Brahman. His cooking utensils, the cooked food, and even the fire-place must be jealously guarded from defilement of even the shadow of a person of the low caste.

The duty of the despised Shudra was to serve the other classes, particularly the Brahmans. A Brahman must not read the Holy Veda even to himself in the presence of a Shudra. To teach him the Law or to instruct him in the mode of expiating sin, would sink a Brahman into the Hell called Asamvrita. A Shudra was to be fed by the cleanings of his master or by his refuse grain, and clad in his worn-out garments. He must not amass wealth even if he had the power, lest he should become proud. If a Shudra used abusive language to one of a superior caste, his tongue was to be slit. If he sat on the same seat with a Brahman, he was to have a gash made on the part offending. If he advised a Brahman about his religious duties, hot oil was to be dropped into his mouth and ears. The proper name of a Shudra was directed to be expressive of contempt. The religious penance for killing him was the same as for killing a cat, a frog, a dog, a lizard and similar creatures.

Men of the first three classes were permitted to indulge freely in the choice of women from any inferior caste, provided they gave them not the first place in the family. "A Shudra woman," enacted the Manu Smriti (III : 13), "must only be the wife of a Shudra ; she and a Vaisya of a Vaisya ; they too and a Kshatriya

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of a Kshatriya ; all these and a Brahman of a Brahman.” But the son of a Shudra by a Brahman woman was a “Chandala,” *i.e.*, the lowest of the mortals, and his intercourse with women of higher classes produced “a race more foul than their begetter.” “Chandalas” were regarded with the greatest abhorrence. Their profession was to carry corpses, to execute criminals, and perform other offices reckoned to be the most unclean and degrading. Nothing could equal the contempt to which it was the lot of these people to see themselves exposed. They were condemned to live in a sequestered place by themselves, that they might not pollute the very town in which they resided. They were not allowed to use the village well, and knew nothing of the meanest comforts of life.

### TRANSMIGRATION OF SOUL

The transmigration of the soul into various orders of being, reviving in one form when it ceases to exist in another, is another tenet of Hinduism. Besides this general description of the future allotment of different souls, a few examples of particular dooms may be mentioned here. “Sinners in the first degree,” says the ordinance of Manu, “having passed through terrible rigours of torture for a great number of years, are condemned to the following births at the close of that period. The slayer of a Brahman must enter the body of a dog, a boar, an ass, a camel, a bull, a goat, a sheep, a stag, a bird and a ‘Chandala.’ He who steals the goat of a priest shall pass a thousand times into the bodies of snakes and chameleons, of crocodiles and other aquatic monsters, or of mischievous blood-sucking demons. He who violates the bed of his natural or spiritual father migrates a hundred times into the forms of grasses, of shrubs with crowded stems, or of creeping and twining plants, carnivorous animals, beasts, with sharp teeth or cruel brutes.”

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### 2. JUDAISM OR THE RELIGION OF THE JEWS

The people of Israel commonly called the Jews had been subjected to a cruel oppression in Egypt. Not only were they forced to toil at public works but measures were taken to prevent their rapid increase. The cruel Pharaoh had ordered that every male child born to them should be cast into the Nile.

A deliverer, however, arose in the person of their great leader and law-giver Moses. From Egypt, Moses led his people through the Red Sea and the desert wilderness to the Mount of God (Sinai). Here they entered into a covenant with Jehovah in terms of which they became His particular treasure. They pledged themselves to serve Him alone and eschew the worship of images (Ex. 3 ; 12.) The children of captivity thus became the chosen people of God, selected from amongst the nations of the earth. By successive supernatural revelations they were turned from idolatry, which they had learnt from the Egyptians, to a purer faith and a higher moral order.

But later on when they came into contact with the idolatrous tribes in their wanderings in Syria, they made void their covenant and acted corruptly. (Deut. 28.) The pure Monotheism of Moses was contaminated by heathen elements. They indulged in immoral practices and committed wickedness on the earth (Num. 25 ; 1-3.) The Great God raised a large number of prophets for their good and guidance ; but the jejune Jews paid no heed to them. On the other hand, they accused them of imposture and slew many of them unjustly. Jeremiah was put in prison. Isaiah was done to death. Zacharia was stoned till he was killed. John the Baptist was beheaded. A dreadful design was devolved against the life of Jesus, and a grievous calumny was spoken against his holy mother



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Mary. Briefly speaking, the Jewish people had been guilty of "all the righteous bloodshed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. 23 : 35).

The Most High God was incensed against them by reason of their infidelity and punished them with a grievous punishment. He smote them with plague whereof 24,000 persons died. Powerful invaders "endowed with exceeding strength in war" were sent upon them——Goliah and his hordes ; Sennachadnezzar, the Assyrian king ; and Nebuchadnezzar, the Governor of Babylon, who stormed (B.C. 586) Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. They were subjected to the terrible oppression of the Gentile powers.

But all to no purpose. The stubborn and stiff-necked Jews persisted in setting at naught and defying the Divine commandments. The prophets protested against them. David cursed them by his tongue, and the last grim warning was uttered to them by Jesus, son of Mary : "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21 ; 43.) And so it happened. The Kingdom of Heaven was taken away from the children of Israel and given over to the Sons of Ishmael. The gift of Prophecy was, in this way, transferred to the Muslim nation.

The Jewish people, having fallen from the grace of God, broke up into several sects and sub-sects. The most important of these sects were the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenese.

*The Sadducees* tried to bring the Mosaic Law into harmony with the Greek philosophy, and abandoned the Monotheism of Moses for the sensuous worship of the Greeks. They also denied the authority of the

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Traditional Law. They did not believe in the future life nor in the existence of angels. "The souls died with the bodies," they said, "and there were neither rewards nor punishments in the Hereafter." They took to the eating of the forbidden flesh of the swine, and also renounced their distinguishing mark of circumcision.

*The Pharisees*, on the other hand, were strict adherents of the law. They observed fast to the letter, sacrificing the substance for the form. Their conduct, thus, became very scrupulous and ceremonious. They made long prayers in public places. On their bodies they made certain signs inscribed with scriptural passages. They practised washings and fastings without number, and made piety a kind of trade in order to gain by it permanent power over the people. They thought themselves contaminated by the breath of the Gentile world, and washed themselves after coming from the marketplace. Converts were not admitted to an equal footing with themselves, since none of the Gentile birth could stand with Hebrew blood. It was an article of the Pharisaic creed that non-Pharisees would not participate in the resurrection of the dead. For their daughters it was regarded as better to fall into the lion's mouth than to marry a non-Pharisee.

*The Essenes*: Besides the Sadducees, which was a semi-worldly sect, and the Pharisees, or the separated sect, there was yet another sect who pass in history under the name of Essenes. They shunned populous cities because they found it easier to fly from than to conquer temptation. They proscribed marriage and regarded those who had children on an inferior scale of sanctity. Among them all pleasure was regarded as sin, and the entire extinction of the passions was the only real virtue. They abstained from animal food and

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even from the use of oil. They only spoke by permission or in return to a question of the superior. They were forbidden to spit except in certain directions. "Touch not, taste not, handle not;"—these three negatives they held to be the key to the door of virtue. Essenes in their extreme separatism out-Pharised the Pharisees.

The religion of the Jews, in short, had sunk to the lowest ebb. They corrupted the Pentateuch and published false copies of it. They changed the true sense of the Book, twisting words to suit their own lusts. The Jews were not permitted to fish on the Sabbath Day. To get out of this difficulty they built dams and locks, and when the fish entered there on the Sacred Sabbath, they closed the locks and caught the fish on the next day.

They were forbidden to take usury. "Thou shalt not lend money upon usury to thy brother." (Deut. 23 : 19.) But the Jews, in direct contravention of the Law, became exclusively a money-lending people, charging exorbitant interests on their monies. They kept the sons and daughters of the debtors in bondage, and spoiled them. No strange woman passed through their streets but she was maltreated and molested. A story is told of the Jews of Arabia which amply shows the depth of moral degradation to which they had sunk. A woman came to their street to have her ornaments made by a goldsmith. The Jews began to tease her. She was a good lady and refused to be taken in. One of the Jews slunk behind her and opened the fastenings of her dress while she was engaged in her business with the goldsmith. She was unaware of the Jew's rascality so that when she got up to go, her dress fell down and she became naked. The Jews had a hearty laugh and poked fun at the good lady.

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They believed in all kinds of enchantments, divination and sorcery, and ascribed it mischievously to the teachings of the Prophet Solomon.

And there can be no better a finishing touch to our description of this race than a quotation from the Old Testament (Ezekiel 22 : 8—12) :

“Thou (Jerusalem) hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood; and in thee they eat upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their fathers’ nakedness; in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with her neighbour’s wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister his father’s daughter. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten Me, saith the Lord God.”

### 3. CHRISTIANITY

From the ashes of Judaism arose Christianity, the religion preached by the Prophet of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ. Jesus was raised to revive the Monotheism of Moses and restore it to its pristine purity. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,” (Matt. 4: 10), taught he with all the force of a prophet of God. Of himself he is reported to have said that he was a Messenger, an Apostle of the Divine Being: “And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and *Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*”

Prophet Jesus was winsome in his manners and affable in his speech. To this add the gracious words that flowed from his mouth. He soon created an

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impression upon the minds of the people. But his teaching, since it sought to eradicate the evils that had crept into the Mosaic dispensation, was not in good odour with the conventional religion of the times. The sacerdotal class, in particular, was much exasperated and they conspired together and concocted charges against Jesus, one of them being: "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king" (Luke 23 : 2.). All this was done to provoke the wrath of the Roman Government. Jesus was apprehended and impaled upon the cursed cross wherefrom he escaped only with the skin of his teeth.

Then followed a time of great affliction for the believers in Christ. His disciples were not only flung into prisons and flogged, but many were mercilessly done to death also. The Imperial Government carried on a ruthless campaign to crush Christianity, for it seemed to threaten the existence of the state. Converts to the new religion condemned official Paganism as idolatrous; they refused to swear by Pagan gods in courts of law; they would not bow nor burn incense before the statue of the Emperor which stood in every town. The Christians were outlawed and subjected to a cruel persecution in various parts of the Roman Empire. This persecution went on relentlessly for three centuries, so that the followers of Christ were reduced to an utterly abject condition.

Things, however, began to change in the early part of the fourth century. King Constantine sat upon the Roman throne. He was of a despotic disposition and wanted to rule without any constitution or external control. But such a thing was not possible in the democratic atmosphere which prevailed in Rome then. Constantine was a clever king. He resorted

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to a ruse to fulfil his political designs. He saw that the people of Rome were divided into two groups at that time. The powerful aristocratic class of nobles who were all worshippers of the sun-god Apollo, and the contemptible commons who led a life of slavery and servitude, were mostly Christians. The best way to win over these masses, Constantine contemplated, was to embrace their religion—Christianity. But to overthrow the old inherited faith, the royal religion of the Romans, was certainly no easy task. The clever king, while retaining every dogma and detail of the ancient faith, ingeniously installed Jesus upon the pedestal of Apollo, and in this way killed two birds with a single stroke. The upper classes were satisfied, since they found no change in the rites and rituals of their worship, and the lower classes, the Christians, were besides themselves with joy, for the king had accepted their faith. They were, no doubt, ignorant people and knew not much of their religion; the mere fact that Jesus was now worshipped was enough to make them devoted to the rule of Constantine, however despotic it might be. In this way, the ancient cult of sun-worship was concealed with the cloak of Christianity, and Jesus was clothed with all the paraphernalia of that cult.

The sun-worshipping cult was in vogue long before the time of Jesus Christ. Apollo and Dionysus were the sun-gods of the Greeks; Hercules of the Romans; Mithra of the Persians; Adonis of the Syrians; Osiris, Isis and Horus of the Egyptians, etc. All these sun-gods had the following features common to them:

1. Every one of these sun-gods was born on or about the 25th of December.
2. Every one was born of a virgin.
3. Every one was born in a cave or some underground chamber.

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4. Every one lived a life of suffering for mankind.
5. Every one was overpowered in this life by the forces of darkness.
6. Every one went underground where Hell is.
7. Every one was called by such epithet as intercessor, saviour, healer and light.
8. Every one rose again from the dead, went up to Heaven, and was worshipped by the people.
9. Every one founded a school of saints and a church in which people were baptized and admitted as disciples.
10. Every one was commemorated through the Lord's Supper.

All these superstitious beliefs—Virgin-birth and Divinity, Redemption and Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension, Baptism and Holy Communion, etc.—were ascribed to Jesus, and the Isrælite prophet, the son of a humble village carpenter was installed upon the throne of sun-gods.

To do things thoroughly, however, the text of the Bible was also tampered with. This was done when the Bible was rendered into Greek from Hebrew. A Prophecy in Isaiah (7 : 14) was caught hold of and mistranslated thus : “Behold a *virgin* shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.” The Hebrew word in the original was ‘Alamma’ which means ‘grown up woman’; in Greek it was rendered into ‘Parethnos’ which means ‘virgin’; and a few verses to this effect were inserted into the text in Matthew (1 : 22, 23). A poor mortal, in this way, became a Sun-God.

Christians are now opening their eyes to the absurdity of these beliefs, although the paid ministers of the churches are holding fast to them. A few

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opinions of Christian scholars will not be out of place here. Writes the Rev. R. J. Campbell in his book. "The New Theology," p. 103 : "The birth stories (of Jesus) belong to the poetry of religion, not to history. To regard them as narrations of actual fact is to misunderstand them." The Rev. Frank Ballard states on p. 409 of his famous book, "Christ and Christianity" : "It is not necessary to Christian faith that every miraculous incident should be accepted just as it is now found in our (Gospel) records." In reply to Bishop Gore's "Challenge to Criticism" the Rev. Prof. Sanday wrote a pamphlet entitled "A Reply to the Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter on the Basis of Anglican Fellowship." He wrote therein : "Nature miracles were attributed to Jesus in this form by the *imagination* of the early Church, and that their rejection does not invalidate the Christian creed, and that the Ascension, in the sense of the physical elevation of the Lord's body, was not an objective occurrence, and that it is not possible to draw any clear line of demarcation between the New Testament and the Old upon the subject of the growth of miraculous stories. Luther says somewhere, I think, that God's anger against the sinner was so fierce that He could only be appeased by the blood of His Son. This is sheer Paganism." ("Hulsean Lectures" by the Very Rev. J. M. Wilson, D.D., p. 50). With regard to the Doctrine of Ascension, Dean Inge states : "If we put our beliefs in such a crude and materialistic form, they are little better than a fairy tale. We both impoverish the ideal and add a spurious form which cannot be defended in argument."

To return to our story. The Christians, as time rolled on, fell away from "active graces, zeal and devotion," as George Sale has put it in the Preliminary



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Discourse to his English Translation of the Holy Qurán, and “on the contrary, what by the ambition of the clergy, and what by drawing the abstrusest niceties into controversy, and dividing and subdividing about them into endless schisms and contentions, they had so destroyed the peace, love and charity from among them, which the Gospel was given to promote; and instead thereof continually provoked each other to that malice, rancour, and every evil work, that they had lost the whole substance of their religion, while they thus eagerly contended for their own imaginations concerning it; and in a manner quite drove Christianity out of the world by those very controversies in which they disputed with each other about it. In these dark ages it was that most of those superstitions and corruptions we now justly abhor in the Church of Rome were not only broached but established; which gave great advantages to the propagation of Mohammedanism. The worship of saints and images, in particular, was then arrived at such a scandalous pitch that it even surpassed whatever is now practised among the Romanists . . . This corruption of doctrine and morals in the princes and clergy, was necessarily followed by a general depravity of the people; those of all conditions making it their sole business to get money by any means, and then to squander it away when they had got it in luxury and debauchery.” (P. 26.)

With the Christians of the sixth century killing of their opponents was an act of pleasure. The Emperor Julian is reported to have said: “No wild beasts are so hostile to men as Christian sects in general are to one another.” “The condition of Constantinople under Justinian, the Christian and glorified legislator, is the best index to the demoralised and degraded state of society all over Christendom. Public or private virtue

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had no recognition in the social conceptions ; a harlot sat on the throne of the Cæsars, and shared with the Emperor the honours of state. Theodora had publicly plied her trade in the city of Constantine, and her name was a by-word amongst its dissolute inhabitants. And now she was adored as a queen in the same city by "grave magistrates, orthodox bishops, victorious generals and captive monarchs." The empire was disgraced by her cruelties, which recognised no religious or moral restraint. Seditions, outbreaks, and sanguinary tumults, in which the priesthood always took the most prominent part, were the order of the day. On these occasions, every law, human or divine, was trampled underfoot ; churches and altars were polluted by atrocious murders ; no place was safe or sacred from depredations ; the bonds of society were rent asunder, and revolting outrages were perpetrated in broad daylight. . . Humanity revolts from the accounts of crime which sully the annals of Christian Constantinople. Whilst the Prophet of Islam was yet an infant, one of the most virtuous Emperors who ever ascended the throne of Byzantium was massacred, with his children and wife, with fearful tortures at the instance of a Christian monarch. The emperor was dragged from his sanctuary, and his five sons were successively murdered under his eyes ; and this tragic scene closed with the execution of the emperor himself. The empress and her daughters were subjected to nameless cruelties and then beheaded on the very ground which had been stained with the blood of poor emperor Maurice. The ruthless treatment meted out to the friends, companions and partisans of the imperial victim, serves as an index to the morality of the Byzantine Christians. Their eyes were pierced, their tongues were torn from the root, their hands and feet

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were amputated ; some expired under the lash, others in flames, others again were transfixed with arrows.” (Syed Amir Ali’s ‘Spirit of Islam.’)

### THE PENINSULA OF ARABIA

A word in passing about the country of Arabia. The Arabs were a nomadic people. In life they had no dwelling place to abide in, nor any grave after death. Of true religion they knew nothing. They did not believe in the Day of Judgment nor in the life-after-death. The Arabs practised idolatry of the worst type, bowing down before pieces of stones, trees and sand-heaps. They had also raised temples for the adoration of demons, sons of God who residing in the planets and fixed stars, governed this earth. In the Ka’ba alone there were 360 idols and deities, each tribe having its own deity. In honour of these gods human victims were immolated.

Adultery, fornication and incest were practised unblushingly, and the shameful acts were boasted of and published in all sorts of immoral poetry. Women adorned their persons with their best clothes and ornaments and went out to the outskirts of the desert where they met young men with whom they indulged in the most lustful deeds. In public places too they mixed with strange people unreservedly and exposed parts of their bodies to public gaze. Female slaves were instructed in singing and dancing and were allowed to sell their favours, the price of their prostitution being appropriated by their masters. Fornication was not considered a crime nor a sin. Hinda was the wife of Abu Sufyan, the leader of opposition against the Prophet. She excited the passions of her warriors by singing the following song : “ If you advance, we will embrace you and prepare for you beds of sexual intercourse ; but if you go back, we will leave you the leaving without a joy.”

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The Arabs were extremely addicted to wine and other strong liquors, and during the state of drunkenness acts of the most shameless vice and profligacy were indulged in by the whole assembly. Gambling and other games of chance were the favourite amusement of all without exception. Usury was also practised to a great extent, and often the borrower's wife and children became the subject of a mortgage.

Robbery, pillage and murder were of very common occurrence. Human blood was almost shed daily without remorse or horror. Trifling disputes between individuals would lead to terrible conflagrations of war and blood feuds extending from generation to generation. Females taken captive during a war were made slaves by the victors, and acts of indecency were committed on them in the open fields.

The worst and most cruel of their customs was to kill their daughters or to bury them alive. When a daughter grew up to the age of five or six, the father would dig a deep pit in the desert, take his daughter to the pit, push her into it and in spite of her cries bury her alive. Women were regarded as mere chattels. Sons were allowed to marry their step-mothers. The fair sex was indeed in a very wretched and degraded condition. Men were at entire liberty to marry as many women as they pleased. Brutal games were a passion with them. Women were sometimes tied to the tails of horses which were then made to gallop so that the poor victims were crushed to death.

Arabia in the sixth century A.C., to be short, was, of all the countries of the world in the worst possible state that could be imagined. Having no ruler or king of its own, it was torn into pieces by the rivalries of its own unruly tribes and by the intrigues of its neighbouring foreign states.

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*In fine, the entire world-horizon was, at the time of which we are writing here, overcast with clouds of irreligion and immorality. Virtue of a high order was absolutely unknown all over the surface of the earth.*

### ADVENT OF THE WORLD-PROPHET

Now if it is a Law of Nature that hot and sultry weather draws rain water from heaven, and the dark and dreadful night is followed by a delightful dawn; if prophets came at a time when nations sank in irreligion and immorality; if Lord Krishna appeared, in accordance with his word spoken in the Gita, when *adharma* prevailed on this earth; then the 7th century of the Christian era was, of a surety, the most opportune time for the fulfilment of these truths. The whole world was crying for a MIGHTY MAN who could bring about a world-wide reformation. This Great Soul, the Splendid Saviour of the world, arose from the sands of Arabia which is situated at the centre of the Eastern Hemisphere, on the 12th of Rabi'-al-Awwal (April, 571 A. C.). His name was MUHAMMAD, peace and the blessings of God be upon him. He proclaimed with all the voice at his command, "O ye people, verily I am God's Apostle to you all." (The Holy Qurán 7: 158.) "I have come for the complete reformation of man."

Ever since the dawn of human life, this earth has been visited by prophets and apostles from On High. The Holy Prophet Muhammad was the last of them—the Seal of Prophets, as the Holy Qur-án has put it. There are many points which mark out and distinguish his dispensation. We shall, in view of the short space at our disposal, deal with three only in this article.

#### 1. *His Amazing Success*

The astounding success which the Prophet of Arabia achieved in his mission has been admitted both

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by friends and foes. Writes the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: "Of all the religious personalities of the world, Muhammad was the most successful." 'The Great Religious Teachers of the East' is a modern book written by Alfred Martin. Says the famous author therein: "To his (Muhammad's) ever-lasting credit it must be said that in lifting to a higher plane of life the communities of his day and place, he achieved that which neither the Judaism nor the Christianity of Mediæval Arabia could accomplish. Nay more, in the fulfilment of that civilizing work Muhammad rendered invaluable service, not only to Arabia but also to the entire world." Judaism and Christianity had, for centuries together, done their level best for the reformation of the Arabs, but had miserably failed. But Muhammad, the MIGHTY MUHAMMAD, reformed them within a short space of twenty years only; and the regeneration was so complete that it was said of him that he created a new earth and a new heaven in Arabia. The semi-savages of the desert became God-inspired and attained to the pinnacle of spiritual glory. They carried the Message of Truth to the farthest corners of the world, and wrought a vigorous revolution in the domain of Religion.

### 2. *Universal Brotherhood*

People of different denominations had on account of their pride and prejudice assumed and arrogated to themselves different positions. The followers of Arya Dharma called themselves 'Ishwarputras,' i.e. the Sons of God and all the other nations inhabiting this great globe were 'mlechha' and unclean. The Supreme God, according to them, had been pleased to reveal His will unto the four Rishis who lived in the holy land of Aryavarta and all the other countries of the vast world have been left to wallow in ignorance and illiteracy. The people of Iran asserted that it fell to

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their lot only to behold the Light Divine of Yazdan, and that others had not been blessed with it. The Jews and Christians likewise looked upon themselves as the Chosen Children of God and precluded all others from this privilege. They could not even think of the coming of a Divine Messenger among the non-Israelite nations, whom they condemned as the *caput mortum*, the rejected residuum. Thus each nation while claiming Divine origin for itself, had denied the same to others. This spirit of exclusiveness fostered in them feelings of conceit and contempt for others. But blessed be the name of Muhammad who lifted man above all considerations of clime and colour, and restored moral equipoise among the nations. He taught that all the peoples of the world are but a single nation: *كان الناس امة واحدة* "My Lord," he prayed to the Most High God, "Thou art our sustainer, as well as the sustainer of the whole world. I stand to witness that all Thy people are *brothers among themselves*."

اللهم رب كل شئ اناشعدها لى عبدك كلم اخوة

Addressing humanity at large, the Holy Prophet proclaimed: "O men, verily, you have been created of a male and a female; and have been divided into tribes and families that you may know each other. Truly, the most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who is the most virtuous. Verily, God is Knowing, Aware." (The Holy Qurán 49 : 13.)

### 3. World-wide Peace

But the greatest distinction that the Prophet of Arabia enjoys lies in the fact that he has laid down the basis of a world-wide peace and harmony. To bring about peace and mutual goodwill between different individuals, between various tribes and families, is a tough task no doubt, but tougher still is to establish peace between contending religions of the world. The

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Jews reposing their faith in Moses only, had denounced all the other prophets with impunity. The Christians merely believing in Jesus as the Son of God, had condemned all the other Righteous Apostles of the world as "thieves and robbers." The Hindus, save and except themselves, had looked down upon the nations of the world as untouchable and unclean. Then came the healing Message of the Holy Prophet, saying: "Not a people there had been on this earth but a prophet appeared among them." If India had its Vedic Rishis, with Ram Chandra, Krishna and Buddha to follow them, China found its God-inspired Teacher in the holy person of Confucius; if Zoroaster had been sent to enkindle the spiritual fire in Iran, Moses and Jesus had been raised for the guidance of the Israelite nation.

"Surely We have revealed to you," reads the Holy Qur-án (4: 163), "as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. And We sent apostles We have mentioned to you before and apostles We have not mentioned to you; and to Moses Allah addressed His word."

There is a tradition of the Holy Prophet saying that a prophet of a swarthy skin had appeared among the Indian people, whose name was Kahin. The Prophet evidently referred to Lord Krishna in this statement. كان في الهند نبي اسود اللون اسمه كاها

To conclude, when we have accepted all the prophets and religious personalities of the world and reposed our faith into them, we have laid down the firm foundation of a peace which no human effort can set at naught and shake. Muhammad, as a matter of fact, is the Prince of Peace, and he has very aptly been called "The Mercy for the Nations" in the Holy Qur-án.



## THE EVIL OF NUDISM

BY MAULVI AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

“O Children of Adam ! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty, and clothing that guards (against evil) that is the best. This is of the communications of God that they may be mindful.”—

(The Holy Qur-an 7 : 25.)

Among the many disruptive ideas that misguided Christian Europe has produced of late, that of Nudism is one. In the beginning it formed a part of secret and licensed sinful amusement. Gradually it appeared on the stage as a part of art. Progressing still further it was taken up by serious-minded people as a culture, promising great many conveniences to humanity. Nudist colonies and clubs appeared all over Christendom and learned men began to publish standard magazines to further its cause.

Nay, even Science and Philosophy came to its aid. Serious and argumentative treatises began to be written to reveal the great truths which the cult was supposed to hide under its surface. Hitler may have suppressed this cult along with some other cancerous practices in Germany with a view to strengthen his war efforts ; but his being no moral or spiritual movement, the evil is sure to reappear as soon as the war ends and the people are free to enjoy their lives peacefully. The emotional or intellectual confusion that lies at the root of the cult is there, however much suppressed by administration. We have the instance of America before us—how it legislated forbidding the drinking of wine and how it had to repeal the law after a few years of unpleasant experiences. But the most disturbing fact in this connection is that the idea of Nudism is not confined to those who formally join it but has spread far and wide all over the civilized world,

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How many young men and women in the West are free from its spell to-day it is difficult to say. Nay it has infected even the Asiatics and this very badly in some cases. I have seen Indians residing in Europe, both young and old, arguing in favour of this cult. About a year ago while addressing a mixed meeting in an Assam town, I happened to refer to Nudism as one of the evils let loose on the world by the Christian West. In the question hour I had to face a hostile question on this score. But there was an even greater shock in store for me. I knew that in Europe college students living in the hostels and soldiers in the barracks do not mind seeing each other's nude bodies, although I myself had never any chance of witnessing such a scene. But here in India I had to face a scene worse than any of these. It was a river-side. The time was mid-day on a Sunday. Men and women of education and culture could be seen on both sides of the river and in the river itself in small boats. At this time and in this surrounding I found some young men making an unshamed exhibition of their nude bodies.

It was some relief to me to learn on inquiry that this bold lot were not Muslims. For the first time I came to learn the extent to which European evils have come to vitiate the atmosphere of the East. Will the East stand up in a dignified manner and correct such vagaries of the West, as it has always done whenever the West has gone wrong in the past, or will it go on aping the West, to the detriment of the latter and its own? This is the question I asked myself at that moment almost in a righteous indignation.

It is not for me to say what other religions have to say on the question—how far they support or oppose this idea and practice. I have seen serious-minded Christians quoting their Scripture on this subject:

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“To the pure, all things are pure.” I have seen responsible Hindu journals agreeing with the nudist view, and referring to the Kumbh Mela—a big fair in Northern India—where naked Sadhus are reported to pass in procession in open view of both sexes of the public. It is obvious that both these religions, if they have nothing positive in support of the cult, have nothing definitely against it, thus allowing latitude to the latitudinarians. The Holy Qur-án of Islam, however, cannot afford to be dilettantish like this. It claims to guide man unto all the truths that concern his social, moral and spiritual being. Naturally it cannot remain silent on such a vital question as is under discussion, because modesty and bashfulness has a great bearing on our morals. Rightly has the Prophet Muhammad said: “Modesty (or shame) is an essential part of faith.” This saying is, in fact, a part paraphrase of the Quranic verse quoted at the top. Organised and intellectual Nudism has advanced various kinds of argument—physical, moral, psychological, æsthetic and others. I will, in due course, bring each one of these into discussion. But their principal argument, which is also easily understandable by all, is that there is nothing of shame attached to the pudendum or the lumber region of the body. And it is remarkable that it is this very argument that the verse under discussion forestalls and rebuts, as if the Holy Qur-án knew centuries ahead that such a question would be raised. The Qur-án definitely states that certain parts of the body must be covered in the interest of modesty. In Islam the parts of the body—male and female—that must be kept covered are distinctly defined. The parts to be so hidden are termed “Saw‘át” a derivative of “Saw” meaning “to be evil or bad.” It is a beauty of the Arabic language that all derivatives retain the essence

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of the meaning of the root word. Thus the word that has been used to mean 'the pudendum' here has the sense of badness concealed in it. This may surprise our Nudist friends at first sight, but if they care for any reasoning they will not remain long in their surprise. Indeed, it surprises us to find that the point of body that contains the outlet for refuse and obnoxious matters from the body should not be considered necessary to hide, when we civilized men and women of to-day are so particular about hiding anything suggesting dirt and filth and ugliness in our physical surrounding. As a matter of fact, if we have any sense that distinguishes beauty from ugliness, it must first apply itself on our body before it can reflect on the surrounding. Taking a retrospective view of events we may say that the previous generations developed their sense of cleanliness, decency and proportion in matters of living because they were able to distinguish the decent parts of their bodies from the indecent ones. I am afraid as we come to feel that there is no ugliness or indecency attached to any part of the body, we are entering a phase of existence where we shall not be able to make any distinction between our bedroom and lavatory, or the mantelpiece and the drain. In other words, we shall be approaching an end of all civilization and culture. The Qur-án is, therefore, anxious to arouse and maintain in the minds of people a sense of ugliness for certain parts of the body, which are associated with dirt and filth. As for the sexual aspect of the question, it is enough for the present to say that so long as the act itself has shame and modesty associated with it and as such fit to be hidden (and I have not known any Nudist contending yet that it should not be so), it is only consistent that such parts of the body as are connected with it should be kept hidden as well.

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The Holy Qur-án, however, wants to take us to deeper regions of thought. The words "clothing that guards (against evil) that is the best," point towards a deep connection between physical modesty and spiritual modesty called scruple and conscientiousness. The twofold utility of external dress as given here are (a) hiding the necessary parts of the body, and (b) increasing its beauty. Thus the augmenting of beauty by dress is encouraged, particularly in relation to the female sex. And here comes in for discussion one of the stock arguments of the Nudists. They hold that the dress should be discarded in the interest of continence, because dress aggravates the natural attractions of the sexes. A Muslim is likely to be amused at such arguments. In Islam all beauty-augmenting devices are allowed to the women, but they are not to appear in their make-up before strangers. While walking down the streets or mixing or talking with strangers on business, a Muslim woman is not only to discard or hide her attractive dress and make-up, but even carefully cover those parts of the body which generally arouse lust in the opposite sex. Then there are restrictions on the free mixing of the sexes. The Christian world has all throughout mocked at these restrictions of the Qur-án and now it is confronted with a situation which it is sought to be remedied by the discarding of all clothes. Really it deserves our pity.

As a matter of fact, organised Nudism is a frank adoption of the logical conclusion of a tendency which is condoned by the present-day European society. If Nudism is not abhorred in certain circles and under certain circumstances, why should it be abhorred in others? If a decent man can appear naked before another decent man, why cannot he appear so before

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all men ? If a decent woman can appear naked before another decent woman, why cannot she appear so before all women ? And where is the wrong in the intermixture of the two sexes in this condition ? As for semi-Nudism or pseudo-dressing it is almost universal. It is not the inner feeling but mere etiquette and fashion which determines the occasion and extent of a man or a woman's dress. Had it been otherwise naked statues and pictures, publicly displayed, could not have been a fashion that it is all over Europe.

The strict standard of decency in this matter, however, demands that a person should not appear before another person in naked body even if both be of the same sex. The only latitude which such a standard allows is that which nature demands as inevitable for procreation. And even here, it will surprise our Christian friends to learn, the high standard of decency in Islam recommends certain amount of modesty. The fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad has been described as "a person much more bashful than the virgins within their veils" has a bearing on this point. Muslim saints have testified to this by their own personal experiences. The present-day West is, however, incapable of even understanding such a sensitiveness of the soul. It is suffering from a lack of inner modesty at the moment.

But the external dress, we are told, should not be considered all. There is a dress of a higher order, without which our material dresses are reduced into mockery and that is the dress of piety and righteousness. The passage in question seems to imply that the external shame and bashfulness is only a reflection of the inner feeling of shame and scruple. That is, if a person or a nation is found exhibiting any sense of refinement in the matter of

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physical self or surrounding, he must have a corresponding refinement in his moral nature. A man or a woman with a sense of physical modesty cannot but be scrupulous and honest in his thought and behaviour. In other words, the source of physical modesty is a refined spiritual consciousness. One may say that it is the same inner perception that manifests itself differently in the two planes of our existence.

The Holy Qur-án forbids wholesale denunciation of any community. From personal experience, also, I know that there is a strong body of people in the West, both men and women, who are disgusted with the present state of affairs there. But the general trend one notices with pain is of immodesty, and the admirable qualities of honesty and straightforwardness which characterised Europe for so long are also seen gradually at a discount. And if the present tendencies are allowed to go on unchecked, we are sure to find before long the disappearance of all scruple from the minds of people there, with regard to moral conduct. The fall of France can be explained less from a military and political point of view than from a moral point of view, as the subsequent conduct of its leaders has shown. This should serve as a warning to the other nations of the world. What moral scruple exists to-day is the result of a spiritual energy generated in the past. The days that saw this energy produced were the days when the sense of physical modesty was at its highest. However much ridiculous it may appear to us of the twentieth century, the sense of shame as exhibited by men and women of the Victorian Age was an indication of the inner refinement to which the nation had attained at that period. It was evidently the result of a revived and enlightened faith which that era had witnessed in the form of the Protestant movement. Gradually, however, the European mind, further

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enlightened by the rising tide of rationalism, outgrew the light afforded by Protestantism, and the Christian creed, even in its Protestant form, became unbelievable. The heaven of religious faith accordingly disappeared from the minds of people and with it the resultant scruple and restraint.

The absence of the shame of Nudism is an indication of this inner vitiation. It may not express itself just now so clearly in social relationship but that it will so manifest itself in a not very distant future can be safely predicted. And even before that disaster comes, there will be an end of all that goes under the name of culture ; unless, of course, the West hastens to find out new and durable foundations for its religious life—foundations that may fit in with its advanced rationalism and scientific knowledge. And it may surprise it to know that such foundations can be provided to it by a religion which to them has appeared—thanks to the misrepresentations of their priesthood—unprogressive so long, *viz.* the religion of Islam, which will not only satisfy their religious intellectualism but furnish them with all that elaborate system of social guidance which a complicated society in an international age such as ours must need.

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### TO OUR PATRONS

With the present issue we enter, by the grace of Allah, the 31st year of our existence. The conditions created by the war, have told heavily upon our humble resources. The scarcity of paper is the most taxing of all the difficulties we have to face. We expect our patrons and supporters to stand by us and to share the hardships of our struggle. The least help we expect from them, in this critical hour, is a new subscriber each. The flag of Islam must be kept flying at any cost, and the cost suggested here is undoubtedly the minimum.

MANAGER,  
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Azeez Manzil, Brandreth Road, Lahore.



## WHAT IS ISLAM?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its technique. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

**ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.* the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-AN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number: Belief in (1) Allah; (2) Angels; (3) Books from God; (4) Messengers from God; (5) the Hereafter; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Pre-measurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) Prayer; (3) Fasting; (4) Alms-giving; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Makka.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of

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All the worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead-letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.