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THE BABI RELIGION, III. The Law promulgated by Bahauilla.

The chief work of Bahauilla is the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*, (lit., the holiest book) which contains the law given by him to his followers in addition to his claims and alleged proofs of his Divine mission. Before dealing with the latter, we shall consider the commandments which Bahauilla gave to his followers to be observed in practice. The observance of these commandments is thus enjoined in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* itself: "Hold fast by the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* which the Merciful has sent down with His holy and mighty power; verily it is the balance of God among you with which are balanced all the deeds and it is from the Mighty, the Powerful," (page 84). In the very beginning of this book, its author tells us that two things have been made obligatory upon all men in the new dispensation, the first of these being his own recognition as a manifestation of God, and the second the observance the of injunctions or "Divine limits" laid down in the book. "One of them cannot be accepted unless it is accompanied with the other: this is what the source of Revelation has said."

The law of Bahauilla is taken almost entirely from the Islamic law with certain variations which appear to have been introduced with the object of affording some facility to his followers. Thus the four fundamental principles of Islam are retained with some

modifications in them. The number of obligatory prayers which is five according to the Islamic law is reduced to three, and the number of *rak'ats* in all the prayers is stated to be nine. "Verily the prayers have been made obligatory upon you, nine *rak'ats** for God, the sender of signs, (at three different times) when the day declines and in the morning and in the evening, and the rest we have annulled." This modification shows a trace of the Shiite sect of Islam, for the Shias generally combine into one the two afternoon prayers and the two prayers after sunset. As in Islam, the prayers are declared to be obligatory from the time when a person attains to puberty. The different gesticulations of the body are nearly the same as in Islam, and *sajdah* or the act of prostration is clearly enjoined. In saying his prayers the Muslim turns his face to the K'aba, the holy temple at Mecca, but the Babi is enjoined to turn his face to "the holy place where the higher beings make a circuit," an expression which must be understood to mean Akka, the place of the imprisonment of Bahauulla. The order relating to the saying of prayers in assembly as given in Islam is declared to have been abrogated except in the prayers which are said for a deceased person. The ablution or the washing of the hands and the face before saying one's prayers is also retained. Prayers are dispensed with in case of sickness and old age, and herein also there is a great departure from the principles of Islam which requires prayers to be said under all circumstances so long as a person is able to say them. When a person is journeying, the following course is suggested for him in the place of his ordinary prayers:—

"And for you and the females who are with you when on a journey is a single act of prostration in the place of each prayer after you halt and are comfortably lodged in a place of safety, and when prostrating yourselves say, 'Holy is God, the Lord of greatness and glory and goodness and grace'; and he who cannot repeat this formula might say only 'Holy is God.' And after the completion of the act of prostration, both the men and the women should sit on the temple of unity and repeat eighteen times, 'Holy is God, the Lord of earth and heavens.'"

Fasting is also made obligatory, but as the Babi month comprises

*One act of bowing the head and the body is called a *rak'at*.

nineteen days, the number of fasts is reduced from thirty to nineteen. Fasting is declared to be obligatory upon all the followers except when a person is on a journey or when he is sick and except in the case of pregnant women or those who suckle babes. Before the month of fasting sets in, a few days are set apart for enjoyment while the *Nairoz*, or the Persian New Year's day, is declared to be the *Id* of the Babis, the day of feasting and rejoicing which follows immediately the Babi month of fasts. The fast is to be kept from sunrise to sunset.

As regards *zakat*, the setting apart of a fixed portion of one's property for the poor, which is the third fundamental principle of Islam, we have the following direction in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*. "Verily it is made obligatory upon you to purify provisions and what is besides them by payment of *zakat*. This is what the sender of signs has ordered you in this powerful paper. In future we shall detail to you its *nisab* (the amount of property the possession of which renders payment of *zakat* necessary) when God wills and intends it." I have not been able to find these details anywhere in the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas*. Pilgrimage to Mecca is also made obligatory upon the Babis. Thus on p. 11 of the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* we read: "Verily God commands those of you who are able, to perform pilgrimage to the *Bait*, (the holy temple at Mecca)." Women, however, are made an exception to this injunction.

Polygamy is also sanctioned by Bahauddin. On page 22 of the *Kitab-ul-Aqdas* we read: "Verily God has enjoined marriage upon you but beware that you do not marry more than two wives, and as for him who contents himself with one woman only, he himself and the woman will both live in peace, and there is no harm if a person keeps a virgin for his service. So has the commandment been written with truth by the pen of revelation. Marry, O people! so that from you may spring up those who should remember me among my servants." No marriage is legal without *mahr* (payment of a sum to the bride), different amounts of which are fixed for people living in towns and people living in villages. When the husband goes on a journey, it is obligatory upon him to fix a limit for his return of which he should apprise his wife. If he is unable to return at the end of the time fixed for any good cause, he should inform his wife of it and try his

best to return as soon as he can. But if he has either no good cause for lengthening his stay beyond the fixed limit or does not come back at the time agreed upon, the wife should wait for nine months and then she is at liberty to contract a new marriage. 'Iddat, or waiting for a prescribed time before contracting a second marriage, is also necessary for the divorced wife and the widow by the law proclaimed by Bahaualla. If there is disagreement or hatred between the husband and the wife, the husband cannot immediately divorce his wife, but he must wait for a full year. If during this period, the disagreement or the hatred is not removed, then the husband is at liberty to divorce his wife. There is no objection to the marriage of the divorced parties so long as the wife does not contract a new marriage.

The law of inheritance follows in principle the Islamic law of distribution of property into parts. The property of the deceased is directed to be divided into seven unequal portions in the following proportions: eighty-one portions for the children, sixty-four for the husband or the wife as the case may be, forty-nine for the father, thirty-six for the mother, twenty-five for the brothers, sixteen for the sisters, nine for the teachers. Immediately after this division we read the remark: "When we heard the crying of children in the backs of their fathers, we doubled their portions, reducing those of others." If a person dies and he has no children, their portion is directed to be paid into the *Bait-ul-'Adl*, lit., the house of justice, so that the trustees thereof may spend it for the welfare of the widows and the orphans and for the benefit of the public. But if a person has children and there are no inheritors besides them, two-thirds of the whole property is directed to be distributed among the children while one-third goes to the *Bait-ul-'Adl*. In case there is none of the inheritors named above, but there are other near relatives such as children of brothers and sisters, two-thirds of the property go to them. In their absence the same share is inherited by the paternal and maternal uncles and aunts, or by their children if the uncles and aunts are dead, the remaining third in each case going to the *Bait-ul-'Adl*. If none of the persons named is alive to inherit the deceased the whole of the property goes to the public fund. The house in which a person lives and the clothes which he wears belong as of right to the male among the children, the daughters and all other inheritors being excluded.

Some random directions are given here and there. For instance, there is an injunction requiring the members of the sect to change completely the furniture of their houses after the lapse of nineteen years. This number nineteen occupies a very prominent place in the Babi religion and a high degree of sacredness is attached to it. Houses should be built and decorated in the best possible manner but there should be no pictures in them. The "rehearsing of the signs of God" or reading one of Bahauddin's books to others is not permitted in a standing posture. The reciter should sit down on a chair on a raised platform, for, we are told, "God loves your sitting on chairs and raised platforms." The kissing of hands is forbidden. Gambling and use of opium are also prohibited. The feet should be washed once in every twenty-four hours in the hot season and in every seventy-two hours in the winter. Some other very minute details are given which it would be mere waste of time to describe here. The law given, however, is by no means a complete law, and while directions are given on some very trivial points, most of the most important matters are altogether neglected, and no fundamental principles of the law are given.

Injunctions are also laid down for the punishment of certain offences. "Burn the person who burns a house intentionally." The severity of this punishment is a little softened further on where after stating that culpable homicide should be punished with death, it is added: "And if you order them to be imprisoned for life, there is no sin upon you in the book." Adultery is not looked upon as a criminal offence, nor is the aggrieved party entitled even to damages. "Verily God has ordered for every adulterer and adultress a payment into the *Bait-ul-'Adl* of nine *misqals* of gold," a *misqal* being equal nearly to sixty grains. This punishment is a little enhanced when the crime is repeated by the same offender, the amount to be paid into the *Bait-ul-'Adl* being doubled. For the thief is deportation and imprisonment, but if he commits theft a third time, his forehead should be marked with a mark by which he may be recognised wherever he goes.

Certain rights to the property of the propaganda Bahauddin claimed for himself. Nearly one-fifth of one's possessions must be made over to him by every follower. "The person who owns a

hundred *misqals* of gold, nineteen *misqals* are for God, the Creator of earth and heavens. (God here means Bahaualla himself.) Beware, O people, lest you keep back your souls from this mighty grace. This commandment we have given you though we stand in no need of help from you and from all who are in earth and heavens say, by this it is meant to purify your properties and make you attain the stages which are not attained by any except him whom God wills. O people, be not dishonest in paying the dues of God (Bahaualla,) and do not in any way handle them except with his permission." In fact, all properties set apart in the way of alms are the sole property of Bahaualla and after him of his sons. "Verily what is set apart for charity returns to God, the manifester of signs. No one has any right to handle them in any way except with the permission of the rising-place of revelation, and after him the charge of such property shall be solely in the hands of the *Ghusns* (the *Ghusn-i-Azam* and the *Ghusn-i-Akbar*, the two sons of Bahaualla) and after them this right shall vest in the *Bait-ul-'Adl*, if it is firmly established in the country." Thus Bahaualla himself had the charge of all charities and the fifth in his life-time, and after his death all sums were to be paid to his sons. The *Bait-ul-'Adl* which is mentioned here was really an association of the followers of Bahaualla. Every city where there were Babis was required to have a *Bait-ul-'Adl* having eight members or more who should be trustees of the public funds.

These are some of the laws laid down by Bahaualla and the observance of these is obligatory upon all those who follow him. The principle laid down in the very beginning of the *Kitab ul-Aqdas* is that the acceptance of his claims is useless unless a man acts upon the injunctions given by him, just as the performance of these obligations is useless unless the claims of Bahaualla are accepted. And as every one of the injunctions is mentioned, it is accompanied with the remark that it is a Divine commandment. In one place it is said after relating the forms of prayer: "These are the limits of God which have been written by the great Pen in books and tablets. Hold fast by the injunctions of God and His commandments and be not like those who follow laws laid down by themselves, and throw the laws laid down by God behind them because they follow conjectures and whims." And again, "And

the sincere ones find in the limits of God the water of life for people of all sects and the lamp of wisdom and success for those in the earths and the heavens Beware lest you refrain from acting upon anything which has been plainly laid down in the tablet." It would be interesting to learn how many of the Western followers of Bahaulla believe in and follow the laws laid down by him. The Babi missionaries in the West never mention that Bahaulla prescribed forms for many of the deeds which should be daily done, and these directions he asserted could not be changed, at least not for a thousand years. Misconceptions actually prevail on many of the points taught by Bahaulla, as, for instance, in relation to polygamy which, it is thought, Bahaulla actually prohibited, while as a matter of fact he plainly taught that a man could have two wives at one and the same time. Had the Western missionaries of Babism preached it in its true colours, this religion could not have gained the ground which it has now done in the West.

The Purity of the Text of the Holy Quran.

10.—The theory of Abrogation.

We have shown so far that there is not a single saying of the Holy Prophet lending any support to the existence of abrogated passages in the Quran or showing that any passage which once formed a part of the Holy Quran was afterwards excluded from the Holy Book. There are, no doubt, certain traditions in which it is related that certain companions thought that some passages met with in the Holy Quran were abrogated, but these were only their individual views, not supported by the other companions and in some cases even rejected by them. We will now consider what the Holy Quran says about abrogation. As I have already said, there are only two verses which are cited by the upholders of abrogation in the Quran in support of their assertion. The first of these verses runs thus : *ما ننسخ من آية أو ننسها نأت بخير منها أو مثلها لم تعلم أن الله على كل شيء قدير* "Whatever *ayat* We abrogate or cause it to be

forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it" (II: 100.) The second verse reads thus: *والله اعلم بما* "And when We change, one *ayat* for another, and God knows best what He sends down they say, thou art only a fabricator. Nay, but most of them have no knowledge" (xvi: 103).

No other verse of the Holy Quran is cited in support of the assertion that abrogation has taken place in the Quranic verses. In both the verses quoted above there is mention of an *ayat* being abrogated or an *ayat* being changed, and the word *ayat* I have left untranslated as its meaning is the chief point in the controversy. *Ayat* according to the highest authorities on Arabic lexicology means a sign or a warning or a message or communication sent from one person or party to another, or a collection of words of the Book of God, or a portion of the Quran after which a suspension of speech is approvable, or a portion of the Quran denoting any statute, or ordinance, of God, whether it be (what is generally termed) an *ayat*, (i. e., a verse,) or a chapter (*surat*), or an aggregate and distinct portion of the latter. The question is, what does the word *ayat* mean in the two verses quoted above? The upholders of abrogation in the Holy Quran think that the word *ayat* in these places means only a verse of the Holy Quran. Supposing this to be the true significance, we shall proceed to consider what the two verses mean. Both of these verses speak of one *ayat* being revealed in place of another, so that the old verse was replaced by the new. Hence even supposing that *ayat* in these two places means only a verse of the Holy Quran, the only conclusion that follows is that the abrogation of a passage in the Holy Quran meant only its being replaced by another passage, and hence that in the Quran that we have in our hands there does not exist a single abrogated passage. If any passage was ever abrogated, it has no place in the Holy Quran, and accordingly we must resort to trustworthy traditions for the evidence of its existence. But as we have already shown in a previous article on the same subject there is not a single tradition showing that any verse or passage which once formed a part of the Holy Quran was afterwards removed from the Holy Book. Hence if tradition shows anything it shows that the meaning attached to the

word *ayat* in the two places under discussion is not correct.

Another objection to the correctness of the meaning attached above to the word *ayat* is that the context does not bear it out. Take the verse in the second chapter. The preceding verse speaks of the enmity of the Jews and shows the error of their belief that a revelation could not be granted to any person outside the chosen people of Israel, while the verses following it deal with a similar subject. The other verse which is said to bear on the subject of abrogation is the opening verse of a new *ruku'* (section) of the sixteenth chapter, and immediately following it are verses which show that the Quran was not a fabrication of the Prophet, but that it had been brought down by the Holy Spirit. Thus there is nothing in the context on both these occasions which should show that by the abrogation of *ayat* is meant the abrogation of a Quranic verse.

We would now proceed to discuss what is the correct meaning that can be attached to the word *ayat* to make the two verses tally with the context in each case. For this purpose it will be necessary to quote the original verses preceding and following the verses under discussion. We take the hundredth verse of the second chapter first. The five verses, from the 99th to the 103rd verse read thus :—

99. "The unbelievers among the people of the Book, and among the idolaters, do not wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord : but God singles out for His grace whom He wills, for God is of great bounty and grace.

100. "Whatever *ayat* We abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that God has power over all things ?

101. "Knowest thou not that the dominion of the heavens and of the Earth is God's ? And that you have neither friend nor helper save God ?

102. "Would you ask your Apostle as of old it was asked of Moses ? But he who has exchanged faith for unbelief has erred from the right way.

103. "Many of those to whom the book was given would like to bring you back to unbelief after you have believed out of selfish envy, even after the truth has been clearly shown to them. Forgive

them then, and shun them till God comes with His decree. Truly God has power over all things."

The commentators who think that some passages of the Holy Quran were abrogated tell us that the occasion of the revelation of the verse under discussion was that the Jews taunted the idea of abrogation and that the verse was meant as a reply to their taunts. A tradition, which however has no place in any trustworthy collection, is cited in support of this assertion and it is to the following effect: "The Jews taunted the Muslims and said, Do you not see Muhammad; he gives his companions one commandment and then gives them a prohibition against it and gives a commandment against the first, and he says one thing to-day and turns from it to-morrow." It is really on the basis of this tradition that the verse is thought to speak of the abrogated verses of the Holy Quran, but as is the case with many traditions relating to the occasions of the revelation of particular verses, the tradition seems to have been fabricated to lend colour to a particular meaning. That the Jews taunted the Muhammadans for believing that one commandment could be abrogated by another would appear to the clearly absurd when it is borne in mind that the Jews themselves were believers in the doctrine of abrogation. Supposing that the Muslims also believed in the abrogation of one commandment by another, it is not clear how the Jews could taunt them when they themselves held the same belief. Rodwell in a footnote to the translation of this verse says that "the doctrine of abrogation is taught in the Talmud," and this is the book from which most of the Jewish doctrines are drawn. And as the tradition itself is based upon the alleged taunts of the Jews, we have reason to believe that it is a mere fabrication. Even if the Muhammadans believed in abrogation, the Jews could not taunt them, for they themselves believed in the same doctrine. Again, the tradition tells us that abrogation in the Quran was so frequent that commandments were given one day and abrogated the other. Had this been the case, we should have had many traditions speaking of passages that were abrogated by the Holy Prophet. But as a matter of fact not a single tradition contains the statement that any passage of the Holy Quran was ever abrogated by the Holy Prophet. This consideration also shows that the statement made in the tradition is false, for it is not possible

that commandments and passages of the Holy Quran should have been abrogated every day by the Holy Prophet but not a single trace of them should have been left in any tradition.

Having thus disposed of the *Shan-i-Nazool* (the occasion of the revelation) of the verse under discussion, we shall now translate it by reading it in the light of the context. The verse immediately preceding it speaks of the Jews in particular who are also mentioned in the previous verses as rejecting the Divine revelation saying that they believed in what had been revealed to them (meaning the Israelite prophets) and refused to believe in what was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him. It is of these thoughts of theirs that mention is made in the 99th verse which says that "they do not wish that any good should be sent down to you." The Arabic word translated "good" is خير *khair*, which here means revelation, and so also the word رحمت *rahmat*, which has been translated as meaning grace. In fact, when it is said that "God singles out for His grace whom He wills," it is meant that He chooses for His revelation whom He likes. The commentators are all agreed upon this and the context also shows the truth of this meaning. What the *Ahl-i-Kitab* disliked was not the idea of Divine revelation itself, but the idea that a revelation should be granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. As Razi tells us, "they disliked that a revelation should be sent down to you," meaning the Arabs who were of the children of Ishmael and not of the children of Israel to which tribe they themselves belonged.

It is to the circumstances related in the above paragraph that the hundredth verse of the second chapter refers. It is in fact another reply to the objection of the Jews as related in the previous verse. Why another revelation was sent down, and why was a law containing new commandments promulgated? This question was still to be answered. In the previous verse they were told that Almighty God had not set any limits as to the tribes or people to whom He should reveal His word, for the Israelites thought that revelation could not be granted to any person outside the chosen people of Israel. That was an error and they were told that God sent down His revelation upon whomsoever He liked. But then a belief in the

new revelation required that the new Law should be acted upon and this involved an abrogation of the law of Moses. Hence they were told that Almighty God did not abrogate laws in vain, and here we have the verse under discussion: "Whatever *ayat* We abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it." The meaning is now clear: the verse refers to the abrogation of the previous laws and commandments which were abrogated by the Law of the Quran. Some of the commandments given in the Holy Book were like the commandments given before and this the Quran itself tells us on several occasions, as for instance in this very chapter: يا ايها الذين امنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم "O believers! fasting is enjoined upon you as it was enjoined upon those before you." But in the case of most other teachings, it was a change for the better that was brought about by the Holy Quran, and it is to this change that the verse gives prominence by stating it first.

To make this point clearer, I may refer to the nature of the Mosaic Law. This law which was based on a Divine revelation was partly of a universal nature and partly of a temporary and local nature. In other words, there were in it certain commandments which could be observed by all men at all times and there were others which were necessitated by the peculiar condition of the Israelites and the circumstances under which they were placed. Hence the new Law as given in the Quran retained some of the old commandments while it gave better injunctions in place of others. This is in fact true of all laws which abrogate previous ones, and hence the verse under discussion does not speak particularly of this or that law, but makes a general statement to the effect that whenever a commandment is abrogated by Almighty God, one better than it or one like it is always brought in its place.

Is this significance of the word *ayat* in accordance with Arabic idiom? Our answer to this question is that certainly it is. I have quoted above Lane's Lexicon showing that the word *ayat* means a warning, or a message or communication sent from one person to another or a collection of words of the Book of God. Any one of these significances of the word *ayat* would do. In fact, the use of the word *ayat* as meaning a verse of any of the previous books is

very extensive, and that significance attached to the word *ayat* as used in this verse of the Holy Quran solves the whole difficulty. The people of the Book who are addressed in these verses in particular are told that no verse has been abrogated but there has been given in its place one better than it or one like it. Why should they then reject the Holy Quran? It contains nothing which is inferior to what is contained in the previous books, and those who accept those books can not reject the Quran.

The verses that follow bear out this interpretation. They show that the *Ahl-i-Kitab* are particularly addressed in these verses. The verse that immediately follows the verse under discussion indicates the necessity of a universal law for all people and all ages. "Knowest thou not that the kingdom of earth and heavens is God's."? The Jews, as I have already said, thought that Divine revelation could only be granted to the Israelites as they were the chosen people but they were told that God was not only their God, but He was the God of all men, the God of earth and heavens, and hence He bestowed His favours upon all and gave a law that was meant to be a guidance for the whole world and not like the Israelite law for the Israelites alone. If any meaning other than the one I have pointed out above is adopted, no reason can be given for saying that in the place of an abrogated *ayat* is given one which is either better than the abrogated one or like it, for it is absolutely meaningless to say that one verse of the Holy Quran was abrogated to be replaced by another like it.

One more point may be explained before taking up the other verse. It is stated that new verses or commandments are given in place of old ones which are either abrogated or caused to be forgotten. What is meant by verses or commandments which are caused to be forgotten? It is stated that since another reading of نَسِيَ (we cause it to be forgotten) is نَسَاكَ (we cause thee to forget it), therefore only passages of the Quran are meant here, for of the previous laws or books, which the Holy Prophet never committed to memory, it could not be said that Almighty God caused him to forget them. Now this reading is not mentioned in any reliable tradition as one that was permitted by the Holy Prophet and accordingly we cannot accept it so as to modify the plain meaning of the words of

the revelation. The reading itself even if it is possible to trace it to any of the companions might be nothing more than that companion's peculiar view. The mere existence of a reading does not justify its acceptance as has already been stated. Nor can we take it as explaining the meaning of the text unless there is the clearest testimony that it was permitted by the Holy Prophet. Besides this, if we accept this reading as explaining the true significance of the text, our position will be virtually this that Almighty God at first revealed a verse to the Holy Prophet, then immediately made him forget it and then instead of revealing again the same verse to him revealed another verse in its place which was like it. It is ridiculous to think that any such thing ever happened. There is no trustworthy tradition showing that any verse of the Holy Quran was thus irretrievably lost from the Holy Prophet's memory. If, however, we take the word *ayat* in a general sense, there is no difficulty of this sort, for the previous laws had lost many of their injunctions on account of their not having been preserved with sufficient care through long ages that elapsed since their revelation. These were the commandments which had been lost from the memories of men, and in the new and perfect code of law which was given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, they were replaced by better or similar laws according to circumstances.

We come now to the other verse which is cited as supporting the existence of abrogated passages in the Holy Quran. It is the 103rd verse of the sixteenth chapter of the Holy Quran and I quote it here along with the two verses which follow it.

103. "And when We change one *ayat* for another, and God knows best what He reveals, they say, thou art only a fabricator. Nay, but most of them have no knowledge.

104. "Say, the Holy Spirit has brought it down with truth from thy Lord that He may make firm those who have believed, and as a guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims.

105. "We verily also know that they say, surely a person teaches him. But the tongue of him at whom they hint is foreign, while this Quran is in the plain Arabic."

Now the changing of one *ayat* for another may mean the

changing of one verse or one commandment for another, but the context shows that it does not mean the changing of one verse or commandment of the *Quran* for another. In the case of the verse already discussed, we were told that the verse speaking of abrogation was revealed because of the taunts of the Jews on the abrogation of certain Quranic passages. I have already shown the inaccuracy of this report, but in the case of the verse we are now discussing its inaccuracy is clearer still. The sixteenth chapter of the Holy Quran was revealed at Mecca and consequently the verse under discussion shall have to be presumed to have been revealed there also. Now there were no Jews at Mecca and therefore there could be no such taunts either. Therefore it can be declared with certainty that the verse was not revealed on any particular occasion which should have demanded the revelation of a verse speaking of abrogation in the Quran.

In the first place, take the verse itself. What it says is that when God changed one *ayat* (verse or commandment) for another, the unbelievers said that it was a fabrication. Now we know it for a fact that the unbelievers called the Holy Quran a fabrication when its revelation was announced by the Holy Prophet, and did not wait till an occasion arose, if it ever did, for the abrogation of a commandment contained in the Holy Quran or for the change of one Quranic verse for another. Had it been true that the unbelievers did not call the Quran a fabrication until an instance of abrogation had occurred in the Quran itself, the passage should have no doubt been taken as indicating a change of one *verse or commandment of the Quran* for another. But as it is absolutely certain that the Quran was from the first pronounced to be a fabrication by the unbelievers, it is also clear that the change of verse or commandment spoken of in the verse was not a change of a verse or commandment of the *Quran*, but a change of some previous verse or commandment for a verse or commandment of the Holy Quran. The statement that one verse or commandment was changed for another was in fact equivalent to saying that a new revelation or law was sent to replace the old laws and usages. The unbelievers were offended not because a commandment of the Holy Quran was at any time abrogated but because the law of the Quran claimed to supersede all former laws and usages.

There is another important point which must be borne in mind. The chapters revealed at Mecca generally contain dissertations on the Unity of God and prophecies of the future of the Holy Prophet and Islam, and there are very few injunctions or prohibitions contained in them. The whole law was almost entirely revealed at Medina. Hence there could possibly be no abrogation at Mecca. Only the Unity of God was preached there, the necessity of Divine revelation was dwelt upon, and prophecies of the ultimate triumph of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims over their powerful enemies were repeatedly announced. Prayers were also enjoined at Mecca at an early date but the whole of the law relating to fasts, alms, pilgrimage, marriage and divorce, inheritance, prohibition of intoxicating liquors and gambling, &c., was given at Medina, and consequently if the laws once given were ever afterwards abrogated, they could only be abrogated at Medina during the latter part of the Holy Prophet's ministry. The traditions in which abrogation of certain verses is spoken of all relate to the verses revealed at Medina, and similarly the five verses which Shah Wali Ullah considers to have been abrogated, the abrogation of other verses being considered by him to be untrue, were also revealed at Medina. Thus even if there was any abrogation of the Quranic verses at Medina, there was certainly none at Mecca, and the verse under discussion could not therefore refer to such abrogation. This consideration makes the meaning of the verse very clear. The changing of one verse or commandment could not mean the changing of a Quranic verse or commandment, for the verses or commandments which are declared to have abrogated previous verses or commandments had not been revealed up to that time. The word *ayat*, therefore, in this verse does not mean a Quranic verse or commandment, but an injunction which was acted upon previous to the revelation of, and which was abrogated by, the Holy Quran. Besides the considerations upon which we decided the meaning of the word *ayat* in the other verse under discussion, that is to say the hundredth verse of the second chapter, this consideration also applies to it, for that verse was revealed at an early date at Medina when very few injunctions and prohibitions of the Islamic law had been revealed.

If we take into consideration the verses immediately following the verses under discussion, we arrive at the same result. In the verses under discussion occur the words "and God knows best

what He reveals" and in the next verse we are told that the Holy Spirit has brought it down "that He may make firm those who have believed and as a guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims." Now if by the verse we are discussing the changing of one verse of the Quran for another or abrogation of the Quranic verses is meant, all these descriptions must apply to the verses which abrogated existing verses and not to the whole Quran. But if by the changing of one verse for another is meant the revelation of the Holy Quran itself in the place of previous revelations or prevailing customs and usages, then the descriptions must apply to the Holy Quran itself. Now it does not require any demonstration to show that such descriptions as the making firm of the hearts of the faithful and being a guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims do not and cannot apply to a few verses abrogating others existing in the Holy Quran, but to the whole of the Quran, and we meet with such descriptions of the Holy Quran in many other places. Again, the word *it* which occurs in this verse,—“the Holy Spirit has brought it down with truth from thy Lord,” ~~cannot refer to abrogating verses~~, but to the Holy Quran, while in the first verse it is the *ayat* which replaces another.

The next verse bears out the same conclusion. The false assertion of the unbelievers that a person taught the Holy Prophet did not relate to alleged abrogating verses but to the Quran itself. Thus, the subject matter of all these verses is the same. The Holy Prophet announced that Almighty God had sent upon him a new revelation which supplanted all old revelations and abrogated previous laws and practices. This is meant by saying that Almighty God had changed one *ayat* for another. The unbelievers said that what the Holy Prophet gave out was no revelation but his own fabrication. In response to this they were told that their allegations were based only on ignorance, that the revelation which they called a fabrication was brought down upon him by the Holy Spirit, and that this was evident from the wholesome influence which it produced upon the Muslims by making them firm in their faith under the heaviest afflictions and trials which they were made to suffer at the hands of their opponents, and from the glad tidings which it gave them of a triumphant future, because none but God

could announce such wonderful prophecies of the future at a time of such helplessness and weakness. I have quoted only three verses, but any one who reads the whole of the *ruku'* (section) which begins with the verse under discussion will be able to see for himself that it deals only with the objection of the unbelievers who called the Holy Quran a fabrication and has nothing to do with the abrogation of the verses of the Holy Quran.

Thus we have conclusively shown in this and the preceding articles that the theory of 'abrogation in the Holy Quran' does not find any support either from the Holy Quran or from any saying of the Holy Prophet. But it may still be asked, how are we to explain the occurrence of that idea in certain sayings of the companions of the Holy Prophet? That they did not draw these ideas from the Prophet himself is clear from the fact that in none of the traditions is the idea traced to the Holy Prophet which the reports would not have otherwise omitted to mention. The idea seems to have been borrowed from the abrogation of the previous laws or usages by the Holy Quran itself. In some of the traditions quoted in a previous article on this subject, we have seen that where a usage prevailing in Arabia before the advent of Islam was annulled by a Quranic law, the companions called it an abrogation, for it must be borne in mind that in the early days of Islam and so long as injunctions relating to particular subjects were not revealed, the Muslims acted only upon certain commandments of the previous laws or certain usages of the Arabs. The law of the Holy Quran was revealed by degrees and it gradually replaced all old laws and usages. The observance of some of these laws and usages by the Muslims identified them with such laws and usages in the minds of some of the companions, and hence they thought that as some laws and usages practised by the Muslims were abrogated by the Holy Quran, the laws and usages given by the Holy Quran could also be abrogated under certain circumstances, and consequently when one of them was unable to reconcile one verse of the Holy Quran with another he thought that one of them was abrogated by the other. This is the reason that we find that a verse which was considered by one companion to be abrogated was declared by the other not to be so, because the latter was able to effect a reconciliation which the former

could not. Thus arose a mistake which was not only left uncorrected by the later generations, but which was greatly aggravated by ingenious commentators of the Holy Quran.

It must, however, be added that the word *naskh* (abrogation) is very extensively used in the early Islamic religious literature in a sense entirely differing from its ordinary significance of annulling or making void. It is the sense of particularizing a general idea. The author of the *Fath-ul-Bari* says when commenting upon the concluding verses of the second chapter : *وَيَحْتَمِلُ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْمُرَادُ مَا نَسَخَ فِي الْأَحَدِ يَثْبُتُ لِتَخْصِصِ فَإِنَّ الْمَتَّقِدَ مِمَّنْ يُطْلَقُونَ لَفْظَ النِّسْخِ عَلَيْهِ كَثِيرٌ* "And it is probable that by *naskh* (abrogation) in the tradition may be meant *takhsis* or the particularizing of a general idea, for the earlier authorities use the word *naskh* in that sense very extensively." A similar remark is made by the same author in commenting upon another tradition. Taken in this sense there is no objection at all to the opinions expressed in certain traditions by certain companions, for none of the injunctions is made void but each holds good under particular circumstances.

There is one more conception of *naskh* (abrogation) that must be stated. It sometimes happened that a person drew a wrong inference from a verse of the Holy Quran. Later on when another verse was revealed which made clear the meaning of the first verse and thus removed the error, the person whose error was thus rectified spoke of that verse as having abrogated the previous one though it only annulled an error and removed a misconception. Ibn-i-Taimia, a famous Imam, supports this view in his work *Al-furqan*. He writes (see pages 20, 21) : *وَكَانُوا يَسْمُونَهُ مَا عَارَضَ الْآيَةَ نَاسِخًا لَهَا : فَالنِّسْخُ عَذُّهُمْ اسْمٌ عَامٌ لِكُلِّ مَا يَرْفَعُ دَلَالَةَ الْآيَةِ عَلَى مَعْنَى بَاطِلٍ وَأَنْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ الْمَعْنَى لَمْ يَرُدَّ بِهَا وَأَنْ كَانَ لَا يَدُلُّ عَلَيْهِ ظَاهِرُ الْآيَةِ بَلْ قَدْ قَدْ فَهِمَهُ مِنْهَا. قَوْمٌ فَيَسْمُونَهُ مَا رَفَعَ ذَلِكَ الْآيَةَ بِهَا وَالْآيَةُ نَاسِخًا* "And they used to describe what appeared to contradict a verse as abrogating it. So *naskh* (abrogation) with them is a general name for any thing that might remove an error in the meaning of a verse though such meaning was never intended by that verse and though the apparent significance of the verse might not lend any support to the wrong conception. (Even if the verse was to be taken in its apparent sense), but some people

understood it to convey a different sense, the term *naskh* or abrogation was applied to denote anything which removed the doubt or the misconception." As examples of the term *naskh* being applied to the removal of such misconceptions, the same author quotes the verses mentioned in some of the traditions as having abrogated others. These remarks would suffice, I hope, to give the reader a clear conception of the theory of abrogation, and with this discussion, I bring to a close the article on the "Purity of the Text of the Holy Quran."

Christian Mission Work in India.

Two important suggestions have recently been made in Christian papers to ensure success for Christianity in India. Mr. Slater contributes an article to the *Sunday at Home* on the need of establishing Christian Missions among the Muhammadans and the Bishop of Madras advocates the concentration of all evangelical efforts in India on the Pariahs and other low-caste Hindus. Mr. Slater's view is that though Islam preaches the "one living and true God" and "a simple faith in the leading truths of natural religion," yet it lacks certain things which are vital to the life of religion such as the Messianic expectation, and that these defects are supplied by Christianity. "The defects of Islam," he tells us, "would seem chiefly to lie in what it denies or overlooks; so that Christianity is its supplement and complement fulfilling and realizing its deepest truths. It should, therefore, approach Islam, not in a polemical but in a sympathetic spirit."

From one point of view we are glad to notice this strategical change in the missionary camp. The polemical literature which Christian Missionaries have hitherto produced against Islam has generally been vulgar and scurrilous in the extreme, and Mr. Slater will have done a lasting good to the cause of Christianity if he prevails upon his co-religionists, the native Christians in particular, to assume a more respectful attitude towards Islam and its holy founder. It is not true, as Mr. Slater seems to think, that the Christian Church has not paid any attention to the preaching of Christianity among the Muslims, but the direction this preaching took was wrong, and

by the unscrupulous use of offensive language regarding those whom the Muhammadans hold most sacred, the Christian Missionaries and polemical writers have made themselves hateful in the eyes of Muhammadans. Some of the Urdu writings of the Christian Missionaries are couched in such offensive and vulgar terms that the more sensible followers of Christ expressed grave fear of danger at them and upbraided their authors for their vulgarity of style. The Christian editor of the *Shams-ul-Akhbar* warned Padri Imad-ud-Din of Amritsar in 1875 that he was far outstepping all bounds of decency in his writings against Islam and that if ever a mutiny like that of 1857 occurred again, it would be the result of his abusive and scurrilous writings. But such warnings had no effect. The holy founder of Islam was in these polemical works plainly called an adulterer, a fornicator, an impostor, a cheat, a dacoit, a worshipper of sensuality, a fool, a deceiver, a blood-thirsty barbarian, a companion of the devil, an anti-Christ and so on. In fact, no Muhammadan could read a line of these writings without a shudder.

This vulgar and abusive style has been followed by Christian writers till very recent times, and only a few years ago, the *Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam* of Lahore, a representative body of the Punjab Muhammadans, approached the Government of the Punjab with a memorial praying for the suppression of one such abusive work by a native Christian. Though most of the Christian Missionaries are seeing their errors now, it still requires a good deal of exertion on the part of the saner workers in the field of Christian missions to make the more fanatical among them alive to the need of a more respectful attitude towards the religious leaders of the Muslims. We are sorry to notice that the Missionary newspapers and magazines conducted in the vernacular language have still not learned their duty, and their writings instead of edifying the public are producing a most pernicious effect on the literature of the country, and generating a deep hatred instead of love. Even such of them as give assurances of a milder policy and more decent style are carried off in the heat of controversy to the same extreme of abusiveness and vulgarity as the early writers. An example of this is the religious magazine published in Urdu by the Punjab Religious Book Society or the Bible Society at Lahore. This magazine has made it a rule to refer to the founder of the *Almadiyya* movement under no other

name but "the greatest liar," and when we pointed out to it the impropriety of the use of such terms for a religious leader followed by hundreds of thousands of respectable men, it came out with the lausible reply that it did not know who the fools were that followed him and that as the writer was convinced that the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement was a great liar, that was the proper name by which he could be mentioned in writings. We do not care of course by what name he mentions a sacred leader of hundreds of thousands of men but it shows the meanness of the writer. What would he think of a Jew who instead of mentioning Jesus by name mentions him by any such epithet as a bastard or a liar because he is convinced of its truth?

To come back to Mr. Slater, we are of opinion that it is a very hard task to bring the Christian polemical literature against Islam within limits of decency, but if, having regard for the nobility of the task, some gentlemen like Mr. Slater set themselves in earnest to bring about this reform in the Christian controversial literature, they would do a great service to the cause of their religion. This reform will, we believe, take away much of the disgust which at present exists against Christianity on account of its offensive writings. The new course suggested by Mr. Slater, however, is not clear to us. "A devout Muslim," we are told, "holds a simple faith in the leading truths of natural religion," and also believes "in one true and living God." What else does Mr. Slater desire him to learn or have a faith in? Christianity, so far as we know, is not, as Mr. Slater would have it, the "supplement and complement" of Islam "fulfilling and realizing its deepest truths," but it is really a corruption of the truths which Islam presents. Had Christianity not corrupted the fundamental truths of revealed religion which Islam still presents in their purest form, it would not have been thus entirely swept off before the current of knowledge and science. Had religion not been presented to educated and advanced men in the form of Christianity, it would not have been held in the abhorrence in which it is now held in the West. Christianity presents religion in a most distorted form and thus it has done a great harm to the cause of true religion. The supposed supplements and complements to the pure religion of Islam are only certain dogmas which all thinkers even within the Christian circle are now openly rejecting and which the Holy Quran

condemned thirteen hundred years ago. But if Mr. Slater thinks it worth the time and money that the Christian Missionaries will have to spend on it, he may advise his brothers in the evangelical line to take such a course. Instead of abusing the sacred leaders of humanity, it is far better to present what one deems to be the beauties and excellences of one's own religion and to point out what one considers to be the defects in the principles taught by other systems of religion.

One point, in Mr. Slater's paper deserves, however, to be specially mentioned. He thinks that the great defect in Islam is the absence of all Messianic expectations. This is not true. There is no doubt that Islam does not put forward extravagant claims for the Messiah as Christianity does. It prophesies the advent of a Messiah in the latter days, but that Messiah according to Islam will only be a man, though we are bound to add that even the Muhammadans have heaped up a huge mass of errors round his name. And while the Christians from generation to generation hopelessly wait for one to descend from the heavens, the true Messiah has come at the prophesied hour. He has indeed not been recognised yet by those who ardently waited for his coming, for such is the Divine law of old. The Jews were given glad tidings of the advent of a Messiah before this, but the Christians need not be told how they received him when he made his appearance. Such is also the coming of the second Messiah or the second coming of the Messiah.

But while the Christians generally look to the second advent of Christ as the time when all nations shall be completely gathered into the fold of Christianity, Mr. Slater thinks that the spread of the Western education will bring about a conversion of Muhammadans in large numbers. This is but a delusion. Speaking of the manner in which Western education must influence the Muhammadans, Mr. Slater writes: "The more devout and highly-cultured Moslem seeks relief from the burdensome trivialities of a ceremonial law in the mystical and pantheistic teachings of the Sufi School. The firm assurance that all the infidels outside Islam would sooner or later be gathered in is being shaken. There is arising a new and liberal Islam These antagonistic and disturbing forces within the pale of Islam are compelling younger and thoughtful Muhammadans to examine the grounds of their faith. Islam like

Hinduism must either be able to bear the light of day or yield to higher truths."

We do not hesitate to admit that Western learning is making many a young Muslim irreligious, but the question whether that learning will have the effect of dealing a death-blow to the fundamental principles of Islam in the same manner as it has dealt to Christianity in the West is quite different. Western education may have shaken the belief of some young Muslim students in some doctrines of Islam, but it is absolutely certain that it has done no harm to the fundamental principles of the faith of Islam. And even on points on which belief has been shaken, the circumstance is solely due to absolute ignorance of religion and not to any incompatibility between Islam and education. As we remarked some time ago: "In the West secular education went for a long time hand in hand with religious education, and the result was that with the light of education the Christians began to emerge from the darkness of superstition. But in the case of the young Muslim student in India religious education is altogether neglected, and accordingly as he is kept ignorant of the principles and doctrines of Islam, he is unconsciously influenced by the ideas which pervade the Western education. The European student discards his religion because he knows it, but the Muslim student discards his religion because he does not know it."

That what I have said here is not a prejudiced view of the power of Islam to withstand the tide of materialism and atheism which are the dominating ideas pervading Western education is clear from the remarks made in a recent issue of the *Civil and Military Gazette*. Under the heading "Are we educating or demoralising India?" the Christian editor of that paper who is much better informed than Mr. Slater remarks:—

"Of the dissolvent effect of secular education upon the religions of India there cannot be two opinions. The great majority of Indians who have passed through colleges have drifted away from the faith of their fathers. It was probably inevitable that English education should occasion a dislocation of religious belief in a Hindu, but there was no inherent necessity for a like fate to befall a Muhammadan. Even to a man of science there are next to no intellectual difficulties involved in the acceptance of Islam, and the disintegration of Muham-

madan belief is due rather to the atmosphere of a secular college than to any fundamental incompatibility between knowledge and the student's faith. Evidence of this may be found in the fact that the majority of Muhammadan students in an Indian college do not go through a period of struggle with unbelief such as many English undergraduates experience. They merely drift away from religion; they grow indifferent about it. Other matters, such as politics or social reform or the progress of their community, assume greater importance in their eyes, and religion slips into the back-ground of their consciousness."

One point more in Mr. Slater's paper requires to be considered. He considers that the cultured Moslem's seeking "relief from the burdensome trivialities of a ceremonial law" is a sign that Christianity will ultimately become acceptable to him. But this hope is far from being realizable. Conformity to practice is not a difficult thing when there is a conformity to principles. If cultured Muhammadans find any difficulty in or have any objection to conforming to the practice enjoined by the Muhammadan law, in Christianity it is the very principles which are openly declared to be incompatible with reason. The success of a religion depends on the principles which it teaches and practice is only a secondary thing. If the cultured Muslim finds any difficulty in the observance of certain practical injunctions, the cultured Christian condemns the fundamental principles of his religion, and while therefore Islam has every reason to hope to gather in the Christians, Christianity cannot entertain any hope to win over the Muslims. As regards the alleged "trivialities of a ceremonial law," they are, as I have said, nothing but directions for practical conformity with the principles of the Muslim law. It is a distinguishing characteristic of the religion of Islam that it not only teaches certain principles, but also points out the way in which those principles may be carried into practice. Islam is not satisfied with mere words but it requires one's deeds to be in conformity with one's utterances. The indifference of some cultured Muhammadans to the observance of practices enjoined by religion is solely due to their indifference to the principles themselves which is the result of their ignorance of the religion of Islam, but they are as far from Christianity as ever.

The other suggestion to secure success for Christianity in India

is made by the Bishop of Madras and it relates to the concentration of missionary efforts upon the conversion of outcastes. The Bishop has been advocating for some time that instead of wasting money upon the high-caste Hindus, the Missionaries should turn their attention solely to the low castes such as Pariahs and Sweepers. Not long ago we referred to one of his articles in which it was shown on the basis of figures how successful Christianity had been among the outcastes and how great its failure was among the higher castes. Naturally some Missionaries have been pained both at the disclosure of these facts and the suggestion made, and the Bishop clears his position in a Missionary Magazine. We may quote his words:—

“What I suggested was that we should concentrate our efforts more distinctly on those classes of the population who are ready and willing to embrace Christianity, whether in North or South, and spend less effort on the classes, which, for the last fifty years, have had the fullest opportunities of knowing the Gospel, and yet show no readiness to accept it. I am sorry that any one should be pained at the suggestion, because I believe myself that it is based both on common sense and the example set us by our Blessed Lord and his Apostles. I have myself watched carefully the work among the higher castes and educated classes in the cities of North India for sixteen years, and the work among the Pariahs and low caste people in South India for the last seven years, and have studied the history of modern missions in India for the last century, and I have become profoundly convinced that the way to the conversion of India lies through the conversion and elevation of the pariahs and aboriginal tribes all over India, and that the true policy for the Church during the next fifty years is, as far as possible, to concentrate on this great work, and do it thoroughly and well. The experience of the work in South India serves to prove that by far the best way to reach the Sudras in the villages is to convert the pariahs. This is not a mere matter of speculation. I have watched the process going on for the last five years. Let the Church definitely set herself to convert and elevate those classes which Hinduism has kept in a state of poverty, ignorance and degradation for the last two thousand years; they will be by far the most effective way to reach the Sudras, the great mass of the village people, and win them to Christ. Then, when the Sudras,

who form over 90 per cent of the population and are the back-bone of India, are converted, the battle will be won, and India will be a Christian country. At the same time, I also believe that the conversion of the pariahs is by far the most effective way of touching the hearts and consciences of the educated classes

It will not be the first time in the history of Church that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things to confound the mighty, and base things and things which are despised and things that are not to bring to nought things that are."

To educate the pariahs and to deliver them from the condemnation of being out-castes is no doubt a humanitarian deed, but what we fail to understand is the use of converting people who do not know and cannot understand anything of the Christian religion, but simply offer themselves to be baptized because they think that in the next generation they would be *schibs* and superior to their former masters. The essence of conversion to a religion is a conviction of its truth, but there is no pretence to such conviction in the case of the pariah converts. It would have been much nobler on the part of the Christian missionaries first to educate the ignorant outcastes, and when they were able to understand the Christian doctrine, then expound it to them. But as it is feared that education would make the pariahs as inaccessible to Christianity as the other educated classes already are, it is thought to be expedient to convert them first. From our experience of the conversion of the sweeper community in the Punjab, we can say that the conversion of the pariahs to Christianity would not make the position of that religion a particle better than it is now. It would only swell the numbers of Christian converts in the missionary reports. The missions which have set their hearts on the conversion of out-caste communities in India have necessarily had to change their ideas of conversion. As Mr. Butcher admits in the case of converts from the sweepers in the Punjab :—

"Our mission has no definite standard of requirements for baptism. Each celebrant must determine for himself whether to baptize or not. Whether it be accompanied by spiritual grace or not, baptism admits to the Christian community. So the first question to be determined is, whether we wish this person, this

family or this community to be admitted to the Christian community or not? *Most of us would insist that they should at least know something about us and our religion**; that there should be a real change of religion. Small children, many of the women and some of the men, may not have a very intelligent idea as to what they are doing, but the community, as a whole, should clearly perceive that they are changing their religion, and there should be some sort of an assurance that they are really accepting Christ, intend to obey his precepts and live as Christians do, if not, as they should do."

Prophecy of a great Religious Leader's death.

The *Observer* (Lahore) publishes in its issue of September 21st, 1907, a prophecy foretelling the death of the founder of the Ahmad-yya movement in the following words:—

"A Maulvi in Delhi is said to have prophesied that a big religious leader of the Punjab, who claims that he will never die of the disease, shall be stricken with the scourge and perish during the next plague season."

We do not attach any importance to the prophecy itself and think it to be the outcome only of a disordered brain, but the wonder is how easily such rubbish is published in otherwise respectable newspapers. The *Observer* is not unaware who is meant in the prophecy, and it would have done a service to truth if it had at least mentioned the circumstances which are referred to in the prophecy. The "big religious leader of the Punjab who claims that he will never die of the plague" is the founder of the Ahmad-yya movement, and had it not been for this knowledge, we are sure the paper would never have published the news in its columns. In fact, so good is its sense of justice that it would publish anything against the Ahmadiyya movement and its founder, but any refutation

* Italics are Ours. (Ed., R. R.)

of the accusations brought forward in its columns would be the last thing in the world that it would publish.

The prophecy relating to the immunity from plague of the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement was published by him on the outbreak of the plague in the Punjab. But the prophecy did not relate to him only but also to all those who lived in his house, there being about ten such families numbering nearly eighty persons. This prophecy was afterwards published in the *Kishti Nooh* (lit., the Noah's Ark) which was published in 1902, the year in which began the great havoc of the plague in the Punjab. It ran thus: "Verily I will protect all those from the plague who live within the four walls of thy house, and thee I will protect in particular." Since the publication of the prophecy, the plague has visited the town of Qadian itself four times, but in accordance with the prophecy not a single case has occurred within the house of the Promised Messiah.

It is not easy for any man, least of all for a religious leader on the failure of whose word the whole movement set on foot by him falls to the ground, to make a prophecy like the one referred to above and then to publish it in the whole world as a sign of his truth. This any body can see for himself. Now the fact of the fulfilment of that prophecy shows clearly that the prophecy came from a Divine source. There are other facts which show that such a claim of immunity from the plague could not be made by a mortal. Several persons imitated him and made similar claims but they soon died of that very disease. Only last winter, a leading member of the Arya Samaj of Qadian said that he too would not die of the plague and that a claim of immunity from the plague like that made by the Promised Messiah could be made by any body. This he announced in the presence of several witnesses though he never had the courage to publish it. Two months after he uttered these words, not only he himself died of the plague, but his whole family also was destroyed by the same disease. In fact, as the Promised Messiah has announced it several times, his immunity from the plague is a sign of the truth of his claims which God has given to the world, and therefore any one else cannot make such a claim; or if he makes it under similar circumstances, Almighty God will not allow him to enjoy that immunity, for the sign which He intends to show is thus obscured. The Promised Messiah has even

challenged his opponents to publish, if they have any connection with God and any assurance from Him, similar prophecies, viz., that they as well as those who live in their houses shall be immune from the plague, but no one has dared to put forward such a claim, and not only in the Punjab but in the whole of the world there is only one religious leader who claims, as a test of his truth, that he as well as all those who live in his house shall be protected from the plague.

The *Observer* now tells us that a Delhi Maulvi predicts that in the next plague season, i.e., in the first half of the next year, the Promised Messiah will die of the plague. This prophecy is opposed to the Promised Messiah's prophecy of immunity from the plague and those who wish evil for the Ahmadiyya movement will soon be convinced of the falsity of their hopes. But there is one thing which we would point out for the benefit of those who care for the truth. Many a time before this the opponents of the Ahmadiyya movement have predicted its ruin and the death of its founder by plague and all such prophesiers have themselves perished by the same disease. But no one takes a lesson from their end. There was a man named Chiragh Din at Jammun whom the Christians looked upon with such reverence that in the Lahore Bible Society's monthly journal, issued for the propagation of Christianity, the *Tajalli*, a permanent column has been opened under his name which will thus be remembered with honour by all Christian generations. This man claimed to be a prophet of God and, though himself a Muhammadan, his admirers were all from among the Christians on account of his Christian proclivities. This man claimed that he had been raised to destroy the Ahmadiyya movement, and in a prayer addressed to God he prayed that the man who claimed to be the Promised Messiah should be destroyed with the plague before his eyes. He had hardly written these words and handed them over to the copyist when his two sons were attacked by the plague one after another and both died before his eyes. Immediately afterwards he was also overtaken by the plague and perished. A facsimile of the manuscript of this prayer has been published by the Promised Messiah in his recent work, the *Haqiqat-ul-Wahi*. Another man named Faqir Mirza who lived in the Jhelum district published a prophecy to the effect that the Promised Messiah would perish

within a year. But before the year passed, he himself died of plague. A third man named Ilahi Bakhsh, who lived at Lahore, published several prophecies in his work, the *Asa-i-Musa*, stating that the Promised Messiah would be overtaken by the plague and the movement founded by him would soon perish. He also died of the plague last year. There are many other instances of the same kind but we need not mention them all. If the editor of the *Observer* has any respect for truth, he may investigate any or all of these cases. But hostility to the movement will not allow him to do it. In that case he may wait for another eight months and see if the prophecy of the Delhi Maulvi does not prove to be false. Then at any rate he should admit that the prophecy relating to his immunity from the plague published by the Promised Messiah years ago has turned out to be true, and that no prophecy against him has ever been fulfilled.

Review.

The Songs of Sidi Hammo, a Berber Muslim poet, have just been published in the English language. A Review of this volume has been sent to us by Mr. Wm. Heaford which, we hope, will be of great interest to our readers.

SIDI HAMMO.

("The Songs of Sidi Hammo," rendered into English for the first time by R. L. N. Johnston; London: Elkin Mathews, Vigo Street,—1907,—2s. 6d.)

Mr. R. L. N. Johnston, late British Consul at Mogador, has rendered a distinct service both to philology and letters by issuing to the world this admirable book. Sidi Hammo now for the first time introduced to English readers, and for generations past the poet-laureate of the Berbers, was the most famous poet-member of a society of wandering singers founded, according to an ancient tradition, by one Ali ben Nasr in the ninth century of the Hejira. These songs, studied by the Berber people and committed to memory, have passed from generation to generation retaining their native purity in despite of the vicissitudes of time and the corrupting

The name, Berber, is the common appellation of a collection of tribes which from the remotest periods of antiquity have occupied the extensive African sea-board fronting the Mediterranean. Their name is the Arabian transcription of the classic label *barbarians*, by which the Greeks and Romans were wont to describe every people who did not speak their autocratic tongues. The Arabs who penetrated into Morocco and politically dominated it fixed this name upon the indigenous tribes over whom they established their sway. The Berbers of Morocco call themselves Imaziren (singular : *amazir* ; feminine : *tamazirt*). Their language is commonly called Shilhah, but is better known as Tamazight, literally the "Tongue of the Free." The language has no written characters, but luckily all its sounds can be expressed in Arabic characters. Mr. Johnston has embellished his book with a splendid frontispiece reproducing an extract from the original manuscript in Arabic writing, prepared and illuminated by Mr. Johnston himself. This beautiful manuscript was afterwards purchased by the Bodleian and is preserved in their invaluable collection. A French edition of Mr. Johnston's work, shortly to be published at Brussels, will contain copy of the original text of Sidi Hammo's poems.

The language of this interesting text is, as Mr. Johnston points out, one of the least known of all the existing branches of the Berber tongue. It is spoken by some two millions of Shluh who occupy some three hundred miles of the great Atlas range in Northern Morocco. Mr. Johnston assumes their tongue to be of Hamitic origin. Philology, he thinks, will perchance trace back the lineage of these descendants of the invincible Goetulians of Sillust to the land of Cannan whence, according to an old time legend, quoted by Procopius, they were driven out by Joshua, the son of Nun. When the Crescent rose over North Africa, tribe after tribe of Berber, embraced the faith of Mohammed. One of their great leaders, Mohammed ben Abdullah, his brilliant lieutenant Abd-el-Moumen, and their successors during the course of one sole century turned the tables on the decaying dynasty of the Morabtin, invaded and occupied all Southern and Northern Morocco, restored Islam to its original purity and summoning the faithful from every corner of the Sultanate with the magic cry of Holy War, crossed the Straits of

Gibraltar to establish for a second time Moorish supremacy in Spain. It was then, as Mr. Johnston tells us, that Fez became renowned all over Europe for its masters of science and that Moorish art burst in all its beauty upon the astonished eyes of Europe. The stately towers of the Giralda of Seville and the Kutoubeya of Marrakesh and many other monuments bequeathed to us by Abd-el-Moumen's grandson, the renowned hero of Alarcos, Yacoub-el-Mansour, bear witness to the high degree of civilization to which the Berbers rose. It is pathetic to think that this fair dream of civic loveliness should have been trampled under foot by the furious reactionary Catholicism which ultimately drove the Moslems out of Spain and stamped out the civilisation of two great peoples, I mean the Spanish and Moorish races. The sundering of these races which for so many centuries grew together from the Spanish soil and but for the baleful influence of fanaticism might have blended together for the lasting greatness of Spain, was no less a calamity to the conquerors than to the conquered. To Spain it meant fitful greatness and rapid decline and fall; to the Moors relegated to the birth-place of their ancestors it meant centuries of stagnation. Of the ancient glories of their race the modern Berber knows nothing. Berberland remains to-day as it was before Musa's Arabs entered Morocco. The Berbers are unconquered and uncontaminated by Western civilization. They have no written language. The songs of their beloved Sidi Hammo have been absorbed into the heart of the people and committed to memory. Though the singer is now little more than the shadow of a name, his songs comprise almost the entire literary wealth of Berberland.

Mr. Johnston had special qualifications for undertaking the present volume. More than twenty years ago he collaborated in the production of a volume, now very rare, "Moorish Lotus Leaves." Recently he published the lively little volume entitled "At the Sign of the Palm Tree" and "Morocco, the Land of the Setting Sun." He has lived for many years in the South of Morocco and has studied the Berber poetry thoroughly. He is moreover one of the few Englishmen to whom Arabic and Shilshah present no difficulties. Mr. T. L. Bensusan, to whose delightful preface we are indebted for many of these particulars, tells us that "El Mani," or "The Similies" were

taken from the mouths of the peasantry in the Haha and M'tooga provinces, and the Atlas villages, where the memory of "the lowly master of song" is kept ever green. Every verse published in Mr. Johnston's volume has been verified by at least half a dozen Berber scribes, and no proverb of questionable antecedents has been included. The work occupied the author more than three years.

The student of Shilhah will—so Mr. Johnston tells us—find some difficulty in approximating Sidi Hammo's rugged lines to any measure known to European prosody. Among the Berber peasantry these poems are sung, or chanted, to airs which will accommodate irregular pentameters, the redundant lines being slurred as in the refrain.

Arham—Arbbi—Sidi Hammo—Isinna—Igallin.

Or in the typical lines—

Inut—bab nwadil—igan—umlil,—urdifil.

Aman—Arkammas—ara-okan—istara—jnannat.

The couplet cited is a fair specimen of Tamazight versification.

I do not propose to plunder Sidi Hammo for specimen quotations. I prefer to recommend the book itself to the perusal of all lovers of folk lore. It is well that before the furious onslaughts of French and Spanish bucaniers make kind and cultured access to the Moorish mind an impossibility, Mr. Johnston should have rescued from oblivion the Songs of Sidi Hammo. I will allow myself only one word of criticism consisting merely in an expression of my regret that Mr. Johnston having transcribed the text and so left us the means of checking his version, did not venture—even at the expense of literal accuracy,—to give us a metrical translation of his author. All poetry loses by any translation but it is eviscerated when for the rhythm of the original, we only get some bedraggled equivalent in prose. A version in prose may be literal enough,—too literal sometimes. The letter will be there, no doubt, but the spirit will be evaporated. Mr. Johnston, we know, is quite capable of presenting us with a metrical rendering of his beloved author, and he will still further increase our sense of indebtedness if in the second edition of this book he will present his poet dressed as becomes a poet in the graceful garb of rime and metre.

Notes and Comments.

Muhammadans and Usury.

In the last year we wrote two lengthy articles on Usury and showed therein the absurdity of all attempts on the part of Muhammadans to legalize usury. Now again there is some talk in certain papers about a conference of the leading Ulemas of India which is proposed to be held at Lahore, the object being to obtain a judgment legalizing the taking of interest. While most Muhammadan papers are in favour of a relaxation in the prohibition of interest, we have some very sensible remarks on this subject in the *Mussalman* (Calcutta). It says: "It is really strange that any suggestion should be made to disregard Quranic injunctions. The Quran is the Word of God and the injunctions contained therein are made for all time and circumstances.

..... For sometime past a doubt has been expressed in certain quarters about the validity of taking interest from non-Musalman in India not in disregard of the Quran and in view of changed customs, but in accordance with Musalman law and usage; and we believed our co-religionists in Upper India won't have a gathering of Ulemas to discuss that question. But such a discussion would raise a variety of other unpleasant questions such as India being Dar-ul-Harb and Dar-ul-Islam, and should therefore be let alone. According to the Musalman Law it is as much a sin to pay interest as to take it. Musalmans have followed the latter injunction and disregarded the former. The poverty of the Indian Musalmans is due not much for refusing interest but largely for having had to pay it. True it is that when one wants money he has no alternative but to pay interest for it and has no choice in the matter, but those who have any experience of Muhammadan society in the country know that in 90 per cent of cases Muhammadans get into debt not to meet their necessities but for the enjoyment of luxuries. We think organised efforts should be made to prevent the Muhammadans from indulging in such luxuries and frivolities as bring about their ruin, and drive them to the money-lenders.

..... We would suggest that our rich co-religionists should invest their hoarded money in building some manufacture and promoting some of the Indian industries which would certainly give them a far better return than any bank can offer and will at the same time open a new field for the employment of our countrymen in general and Musalmans in particular. It would further help the development of the resources of the country and its material and economic progress."

Christianity and Divorce.

Christianity has been very slow to recognise the necessity of divorce. The old law given by Jesus Christ "whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery" has long since become obsolete in Christendom. In America especially divorce is granted for many causes, and and it is comparatively very easily obtained, but even there the following expression of views by a famous actress has caused a sensation. She says :

"My opinion on the subject of divorce amounts to a conviction. Divorce, I believe, is one of the world's greatest blessings. It is the greatest of the modern improvements. It is moral degradation for a woman and a man to live together as man and wife after love has gone. I cannot imagine a fate more horrible for a woman than to be fettered to a man she no longer loves. Our present social and domestic conditions make divorce a necessity. The objectors to divorce have much to say about the evils of divorce to the children of the divorced pair. I am convinced that even the children are benefitted by a divorce. Children should be brought up in an atmosphere of peace and affection, and to rear them in a home where the love of their parents has turned to hatred and where quarrels are daily events is wicked. No matter whom I may shock by my opinion, I am glad of the opportunity to say that I do not believe the marriage contract should be of necessity an everlasting one. How shall a man know a woman's true character or a woman a man's until they have married."

It is interesting to learn how Christendom is moving step by step towards Islam and recognising the truth of Islamic laws. Not only is the Islamic fundamental principle of the Unity of God recognised to-day by advanced Christian thinkers as the only true principle which can serve as the basis of a universal religion but the truth of its social laws is also gradually being admitted. The Quranic teaching on divorce contains the soundest principles of divorce. It teaches its adherents that the object of marriage is peace and affection and that if that object fails, there should be a separation then. "Retain them with gentleness or send them forth with benefit and kindness," the Holy Quran says in one place, and on another occasion it says: "Retain them and treat them with gentleness, or when this is not possible, put them away with kindness and generosity, but do not retain them in such a manner as to harm or injure them or be unjust to them." These injunctions give the key to the Islamic law of divorce which does not favor divorce but looks upon it as a necessity when there are quarrels and a disagreement and there indeed it is a blessing.