

A CATECHISM OF THE DRUSE RELIGION.

(Literal Translation.)

THE FORM OF THE DRUSE OATH.

I, A. B., swear by our Lord who governs by his own order (will), the highest, the righteous, the Lord worshipped in every direction in the form of the creature, the created Astitanil, who is the point of the compass, with the four limits of unity, and by the manhood of the form, and by the hidden wisdom, and the lord of the limit and victory, and by his Hedger (?) and its builder, and by the wisdom of the Ancient of Days, and by what could be measured, and by the calling of my lord Baha Eddeen and the termination, together with the five and four, which are the boundaries and storms, and by the honour of the one hundred threescore and four shepherds, and by every article read in our Khilwat and places of council, of the books of Hamzi, the son of Ali-Hadi, the answerer (of prayer), and who revenges himself on the polytheists with the sword of our Lord, the sole governor, whose remembrance be glorified; or else I shall be clear of him, and a denier of the lord of the sent ones, the first ones, and the last ones, and I shall be also a discloser of the secrets of religion, and of the secrets of the sublime boundaries or limits, and a denier of the conquering lords, and I shall be alienated from the company of the Unitarians¹ (of both sexes), if I have but taken such and such a sum from such and such a person, and that I owe him not a single derhim (farthing) more, and that I never intended to do him any harm by the form of this claim against him. If I swear falsely, or mean to pervert my sayings, or if my oath be in any way whatever contrary to my religion, or if I did not swear to the truth, whether it be out of any intention to take unlawfully the money of any of the polytheists who are without our unity-law, or for the purpose of doing him any harm, or for any advantage to myself, or out of any covetous intention, or if I have only repeated this form of oath, then I shall be clear of my worshipped Lord, the sole governor, and of the advantage of the limits, or I shall be excluded from the congregations of Hajúj and Majúj (Gog and Magog), and my soul shall be clear of them, and I shall be a denier of my Lord, who rules by his own command, and of Ismael and Hamzeh and Satanaiel and the Migdaad, together with the five, and a denier of my own law and the ten shrines, and the law of the Karamita, and be excluded from their articles (of religion), and a denier of the appearance of the Highest, who has appeared *ten times* in the form of mankind, and also a denier of the transmigration and the transfer of the spirits, and a denier of my own belief, which is denied by every other denomination, and I shall be considered as dishonouring Karín and Ashfilosh, and all the Greek philosophers, and the inhabitants of China, together with the one hundred threescore and four shepherds, and the godly conquerors, and have denied myself of all that which is lawful to me according to my religion, and of all that I confess as regards fasting and prayer and pilgrimage and religious tithes, and the

¹ The word Unitarian is used throughout for Druse.

rest of the seven obligations which were abolished by our Lord the sole governor, and I shall be considered as honouring and kissing the *Black Stone* found at El Kibleh (south), which is honoured by the polytheists. *Amen.*

This form of oath should be read or repeated in the presence of the learned and godly men of the Druse.

THE EPISTLE OF WARNING.

I trust in the Lord, the righteous, the all-knowing, the highest, the most high, the king of kings, who could never be conceived by the mind or imagination, who is above the description of all describers, and the understanding of all men ; in the name of our Lord the most glorious, the most high, the shepherd of the Imaams, from the servant of our Lord the sole governor, who professes the unity openly and in secret, the leader to unity and faith, and from Hamzitter the purchased one of our Lord, praised be he whose glory has no end, who is the *son* of the leader of the answered ones whose prayers are answered, and the revenger of the polytheists, by the sword of our Lord, and the power of his own dominion. I have written to the company of Unitarians, that they may understand how to walk according to religion.

We command the company of the Unitarian shepherds to observe the mystery of religion in their deeds, and not to let any of the Kafirs who do not believe in the governor and his prophets, who were mentioned in the Form of Oath, to understand the religion of our Lord, of whatever religion they may be—no, not even those of your own religion, who are of the Ja-hi-leen (*i.e.*, not true believers) or the apostate ones. *Take care ! Take care !* not to let any one understand your religion or your belief, or even take notice of it. Be careful ! Be careful ! and if after your being careful you know of any of the polytheists who have acquired any knowledge of the truth of your religion, you must destroy him, and if you cannot destroy him, then poison him secretly, and whatever you do secretly is lawful to you.

If any one come and tell you that he be of the Unitarians, do not acquaint him with the truths of your religion, because there be many who may come in a subtle way merely to know the truth of your religion, and the mode of your worship.

I have therefore prepared this Epistle to make you understand how to walk. Cling to it and depend upon it. I have arranged it in the way of questions and answers.

Q. What is required of a man when he is admitted to the religion of our lord ?

A. It is required of him to be under the yoke of our lord.

Q. Who admits him ?

A. The Imaam.

Q. In what way is he to be admitted ?

A. By earnestly entreating the Unitarians for the term of *two* full years, that he may be accepted amongst them, and be accounted one of

them. When he is accepted, then the Imaam admits him, and he is accounted one of them, and his conduct shall be according to their conduct.

Q. What is the form of admittance ?

A. He is to be brought before the Imaam by the company of the Unitarians, and the Imaam is to give him the orders, and to admonish him to keep the secret, and then he will explain to him the truth of religion and its rites, and he will give him *one dry fig* to eat, and will address him saying, Man ! do you believe that you can obtain the religion through this fig, and become a member of the Unitarians ? and he shall answer, I believe. Then the Imaam will give him the arm of help, and shall announce him as one of them.

Q. How ought he to behave after his admittance ?

A. He ought to make a show of modesty and civility, and to be genteel and patient, and to put on a becoming raiment, and to smile gently when speaking or saluting others, and to resemble his brethren, the Unitarians.

Q. What ought he to do in order to be a thorough Unitarian ?

A. He ought to sign a document of covenant and hand it to the Imaam.

Q. What is the covenant which he ought to sign ?

A. This is its form verbally. In the name of the Imaam, our greatest Lord, the one, the unique, the single, who is in need of nothing whatever, and who is without a son, the mighty, who is neither created nor begetteth, and there is not any one like unto him. I, *a b*, the son of *c d* and *e f*, have intended and decided to lay my soul and body, and state, and wealth, and wives and children, and property, and all that my right hand and my left hand possess, under the yoke of obedience to my lord and sire, the sole governor, the high, the highest, the king of kings, the Imaam, the king of all might, the all-mighty, over all beings and created things—yea, I have resigned myself to him, and promise to rely upon him. I here confess the perfect confession, and declare before my brethren and my lord the Imaam, that I deny every other religion that exists, or that shall be hereafter, and that I neither desire anything that may contradict, nor cling to what is averse to the unity, and that I confess that there is neither in heaven any worshipped God, nor on earth any existing Imaam but my Lord and sire, the highest governor, who is great in management, and who is the sole governor, and is my helper and defender, and to him I commit all my affairs ; and I hate and deny and despise, and shall waste all that may interfere with and contradict his worship and service and obedience. I have written this document against myself out of my own free will, while possessing soundness of mind and body, neither being forced to it, nor compelled to draw it. I also acknowledge the existence of the *shepherds*, and the *authorised ones*, and the *limits*, and the owners of truth who believe in our Lord, the sole governor, the faithful. Written in such and such a month, and in such and such a year from the year of our Lord, and his possessed Hamzi, the son of the Kadi of the answering ones, who revenges himself of the polytheists by the sword of our sire and the might

of his revenge, and his sole dominion, and there be none worshipped besides him.

Q. And how is he to appear and converse with men ?

A. Patiently, and with Nah-na-ha (*i.e.*, Hem, the noise made by sudden expiration of the breath), for the nah-na-ha when addressed to a believer indicates a blessing, and when addressed to an unbeliever it indicates a curse. A nah-na-ha when addressed to a Mohammedan means *forty* curses, and when addressed to a Metawileh it indicates *fifty* curses, and when to a Christian it indicates *thirty* only, and when to a Jew it indicates only *twenty* curses, and when speaking to any of the polytheists one can use as many nah-na-has as he pleases. When women have to speak to any of the above-mentioned they all use the word, Bech, Bech, and add to it Walnabel Kazim (*i.e.*, Capital by the gracious prophet !), for it is not becoming that women should use the nah-na-ha, and also our secret will be disclosed to unbelievers, and then they will conclude that it is an agreement between us.

Q. And if we talk about religion how shall our answer be ?

A. Our Lord has commanded that we should cloak ourselves with the prevailing religion, whether it be Christianity or Islamism, for our Lord the governor has said, "Whatever religion prevails, follow it openly, but keep me in your hearts."

Q. How is it possible to us to agree with the Christians or Moslems in their religion while we have signed a bond against ourselves, that we worship none other but our Lord ?

A. We do this outwardly and not inwardly, as our Lord has said, "Keep me in your hearts," and he has given us an example of a man who puts on a garment, whether it be white, or black, or red, or green ; the colour of the garment has no effect upon his body, whether the body be sound or diseased it remains the same, and likewise the several religions resemble the garment. Your religion resembles the body, therefore put on whatever garment you please, and embrace openly and outwardly any religion you please, provided you be at ease.

Q. But if we be required to perform the prayers of that religion (we embrace outwardly), are we to comply with that ?

A. Agree with them, for there is no objection to any outward religious performances.

Q. But how can we agree with the Mohammedans by confessing that Mohammed is a prophet, and that he is the noblest of all prophets, and of all creatures ? And is he a prophet ?

A. No, he is not a prophet ; but our prophet is the governor, who has neither a son nor is begotten, but is destitute of everything that is attributed to man, but this Mohammed is descended from the Arab tribe of Korisheh, and his father's name is Abdallah, and he had a daughter whose name was Fatima, which was given in marriage to Ali, the son of Abi Tālib. Outwardly we confess that he is our prophet, merely to be at peace with his people only ; but inwardly we believe him to be a monkey, and a devil, and one not born in wedlock, and that he has allowed what is

not lawful, and has committed all kinds of shameful deeds. He has done all the evil he could, and has considered all women to be lawful to him ; and therefore our Lord the governor has cursed him in every age and time. But a Druse believer can confess that he is a prophet without committing a sin, as has been mentioned above.

Q. Since he is a monkey and a devil, and not born in wedlock, why do we therefore chant his name ?

A. By the name of Mohammed, which we chant, we mean our Lord, Mohammed Baha-ed-Deen (Brightness of Religion), surnamed our Lord the faithful.

Q. And what shall be the condition of his followers in the day when our Lord, the highest, the governor of governors, cometh ?

A. He will dye the breast of the choicest of them violently, and their condition shall be very mean, and they shall serve instead of dogs, and he will pay the wages to each of them twenty dinars annually, and they are those whom the *Book* calls Ya-hûd (Jews), the helpers of the followers of Mohammed.

Q. Are we to believe Esa (Jesus) to be either a God or a Prophet ?

A. Esa is neither a God nor a Prophet, but he was an eloquent man, and a teacher by signs ; and through his knowledge he made himself a nation, and has attributed to himself what belongs to our Lord, and he pretended to be the one of whom Matthew and Mark and Luke and John spoke of ; they spoke of our Lord, but he (Esa) through his skill and good management has made to himself a nation ; he was a friend to Mohammed.

Q. Who are these four whom you have mentioned by the name of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ?

A. These four are those who were employed by our Lord as his secretaries, writing down by our Lord's dictation all the events of their days, and Jesus has taken their writing to be his, and said that they were his missionaries to proclaim his signs, and all that is said of Esa (Jesus) in their writings, is to be attributed in reality to our Lord, and not as the Christians say, for they have altered some words and omitted some other words.

Q. What would become of his people when our lord puts them under examination ?

A. They shall be in a piteous state, for he shall cover the hem of their left sleeves with lead, and they shall be naked all through, and barefoot ; they shall carry on their backs fuel to the ovens and baths, and in the ear of each of them a ring of black glass, which shall be caustic in summer and snow-pinching in the winter, and the value of each of them shall be forty dinars.

Q. And the Metawileh, the followers of Ali, what do you say about their prophet—is he a prophet or not ?

A. Ali is a cuckold fellow, and an accursed one, even by his own religion ; far be it from him to be a prophet.

Q. What shall be the condition of his followers at the day of account

A. They shall be used as donkeys by our lord. The secretaries of our lord shall ride them. Their prophet is from the followers of Mohammed.

Q. And what are we to believe about Musa (Moses), the son of Amram-- is he a true prophet or not ?

A. He was a man of deep and genuine understanding—he led his people by his wisdom, for he used to ascend up the mountain and write down all that he wanted to write ; and when he came down he pretended to have seen the Creator, who, as he said, had dictated to him all his writings, and by that he had followers, who obeyed his commands ; but he is neither a prophet nor is in any way connected with us. Esa and Mohammed speak very highly of him ; they recommend him as a man of sound understanding. The number of the curses to his followers ought to be less than any other denomination.

Q. What would be the condition of his followers the day they see our Lord ?

A. Their condition shall be more tolerable than others, because our Lord, who is great in majesty, will make them keepers of his accounts and his secretaries, without any advantage to themselves ; and they shall be naked all through, but he will supply them with food only, because our prophet and governor has appeared to him on Mount Sinai, in the form of a *mükari* (*i.e.*, a camel-driver), under whose command was 1,000 camels. And he was also called a Jew, after the name of the followers of Moses ; and he has since then allowed us to eat camels' flesh. And as the followers of Moses have been honoured with seeing him in a visible form he was therefore pleased to raise them a little higher than others.

Q. And, as regards other religions, such as sun-worshippers and the like, how are we to agree with them ?

A. The sun-worshippers and the like are as the grass that has no strength or has no power ; when its day comes it fades away, and then their spirits or souls depart with the wind and shall be mentioned no more.

Q. You have already explained to us all religions and the worshipped ones, but you have neither explained to us to the form of (worshipping) our Lord the sole governor, nor anything about ourselves.

A. A war has taken place between our Lord and the Being who has created the universe. And our Lord has ordered the winds to tear him, and the winds did tear him to pieces. And David the prophet has described this by saying, " Did fly, yea, did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His secret place, His pavilion round about Him, and there is nothing dim in the clouds of the air." And their own lord has taken the dominion from him, and he has neither an equal, nor the like, nor is he comprehended by the mind nor is measured by any measure. And we, whoever of us performs his duties, as he is bound by the seventy-two covenants, is bound to obey our most high Lord in every age. And whoever be found corrupt in any age, all his ages shall be corrupt ; and whoever shall be found standing according to his covenants, he shall be of the choicest of our Lord, and shall have a vote in the council of our Lord.

Q. And where are these bonds written against each of us to be found ?

A. Our Lord has kept them under custody in the Pyramids of Egypt.

Q. What has our Lord made lawful to us, and what has he forbidden us from ?

A. As our Lord is mystery he has therefore enjoined upon us to keep our religion as a secret. And on this condition, whatever is done secretly and privately is lawful to us, and whatever be revealed or made known to others is unlawful to us. Therefore we admonish the company of the brethren to observe the secret. Warning ! Warning ! from any infringement of the secret of our Lord.

Q. How are we to distinguish our believing brethren from the unbelievers ? For it may be that an unbeliever may disguise himself in order to examine our religion.

A. We are not to accept him before conversing with him.

Q. How are we to converse with him ?

A. By saying—Man ! do they grow the Thlilij (Myrobalan tree) in your country ? If his answer be, Yes, it is planted in the hearts of the believers, he is therefore one of us. Then we are to present to him two earthen water-bottles, the one full and the other empty. If he pours the water from the full one into the empty bottle then he is certainly one of us, because by this he acknowledges the transmigration of souls, as the water is poured out from one vessel into another. Then we will willingly admit him and disclose to him all that we have, and are not to deny him anything, either of our property or of our fame, or of our influence. For the rule of generosity is, that brethren must be of great advantage to each other in the time of distress. And we are also to have confidence in him as regards our houses, and wealth, and wives, and children, because he is a brother and an equal believer with us, and is not like any Christian priest, who could not be trusted with a salad leaf. But if he could not answer the above questions, then he is an intruder and a deceiver, desiring to acquire the knowledge of our religion. Therefore he must be destroyed at once, either by murder or by poison, or by any possible means.

Q. Where does our Lord reside now, and when will he manifest himself to us ?

A. He now resides in China. He appeared or manifested himself five times. The first time he appeared in Persia, and was known by the name of Selman el Farisi, and he was a geometrician. The second time he appeared in Egypt, and was called El Hakim Biamrihi (the Sole Governor), and his occupation was the civil government. The third time he appeared in Algeria, and was known by the name of Baha üd-Deen (Brightness of Religion), and his occupation was a silversmith. The fourth time he appeared in Andalusia, and was known by the name of El-hikmet (Wisdom), and was a physician. The fifth time he appeared in El Hijaz, or Hedjaz (on the eastern shore of the Red Sea), and was known by the name of Mewla El Akil (Lord of Reason or Understanding), and his occupation was camel-driver, and he had under his command 1,000 camels, and thence he disappeared. He foretold his disappearance for a time and hath commanded us to abide by his obedience until he comes ?

Q. When will he come ?

A. When the cycle of time turns over, and the ages be completed, and the Da-i-rah (circle) turns to the point of the compass, and the wolf walks together with the sheep, and the tiger with the ass, and when he is seen by the eyes and the understanding, and when the secrets are disclosed, then cometh the mighty and powerful one, with howling and thundering, glory and numberless army.

Q. Will his advent be as it was the first time, or with power and might ?

A. He will come with power, and blessed is he who confesses and worships one God, and who truly lives to fulfil and obey what he orders him to obey, and not only this, but also who rejects mean things, such a man has got the desired object and is worthy of such a call.

Q. In what manner does he come, and whereto does he go, and in what place will he reside ?

A. He will come in a time when all foreign nations and Frank troops shall attack these countries and war and sedition will take place, and the sword be used, when but little peace is found, and when Franks shall conquer the troops of Khorasan and take possession of Baalbeck—at that time news shall arrive, and war shall cease, and the strength of the two quarrelling parties shall faint, because they shall be sure of the approaching army from the East, and that they are to stop the raging war, and therefore they shall become more fierce in dashing and lashing against each other—each party aims at winning the day. Seven days before they approach him the sun shall be veiled above their heads, and they shall hear what terrifies them, because the neighing of the horses of our Lord shall be heard from the distance of seven days, and the lances of their spears shall hide the light of the sun from the earth for seven days, and they shall be in great confusion until they come near to him in the land of Hauran, where they shall meet the foremost of his army, which is divided into regiments, and each regiment numbers one hundred thousand soldiers. The first day they shall walk towards the east by the side of the army of El-hikmet (Wisdom); at evening they will see El-hikmet; and when they inquire of him whether he be the judge, his answer will be, I am not, I am but a minister and a secretary. The second day they shall march by the side of the army of my Lord Baha-ed-Deen (Brightness of Religion), and at the evening they shall draw near to him, and when they ask him whether he be the judge, he will answer, I am not, I am but a minister and a secretary. The third day they shall walk in a very mean way by the side of the army of the Imaam, even my lord Understanding, and at evening they shall see him, and when they shall ask him whether he be the judge, his answer shall be like the preceding answers. The fourth day they shall walk by the side of the army of El Hakim (the governor), as they have walked previous to this. And the fifth day they shall walk by the side of the army of my lord Selmān El Farisi, likewise. The sixth day they shall reach what they are aspiring after, and then all their fatigue shall pass away; for they shall see the noble and illustrious Lord walking

by the side of the beasts and animals, and a banner of clouds above his head in the sky ; and when he shall see them he will smile in their faces to refresh them, and to strengthen them thereby to walk with him and be in his service. Then he shall continue in his course until he reaches El Hedjaz and arrive at Mecca, and then he shall pull down the house (*i.e.*, Temple of Mecca), and shall scatter its stones through all the world. Then he shall proceed towards Egypt and shall open the pyramids, and then he will deliver to each of the believers seventy and two documents, in which they confess to be of the company of the believers, and whoever be found thus shall be worthy of his being of his own : and whoever be found corrupt at one time shall be corrupt for ever ; and then he shall order (assign) to every one, both of the Unitarians and the polytheists, of Mohammedans and Christians, of the Metawileh and of the Jews, as has been already mentioned. And our Lord will make his residence in Egypt (Cairo).

Q. How do you say they (two) shall walk by the side of the army of Baha-ed-Deen (Brightness of Religion), and Salmān El Fārisi (Salmān the Persian), and El-hikmet (Wisdom), and El-akil (Understanding), and Al Hakim (the governor), and that each of these two walk separately, and they are one—how is he divided?

A. Our Lord manifested himself in every cycle of his manifestations in a quite different form, and the form in which he once appeared will be a sign by which he himself shall be known afterwards, and none of the forms shall be forgotten, and when he comes again he will reveal himself in all these forms, for our high and supreme Lord had five manifestations, and five opposers.

This Epistle has been written to all the males and females of the Unitarians, that may converse thereof in their assemblies, and councils, that they may be sure of the order of our Lord the sole governor. May his remembrance be great!

Written in the month of Jamadil A-Kher, in the second year of the era of our Lord and his servant (equal to the year of the Hedge-reh 402, equal to the year of our Lord and Saviour 1012).

This copy, the Arabic copy, was taken on the 14th day of March, 1878.

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MORE NOTES ON PHENICIAN GEMS AND AMULETS.

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THE Phœnicians have been well termed the "middle-men" of the ancient world, for just at the time when the peoples dwelling on the banks of the Nile and of the Euphrates had arrived at a point when their respective

¹ This, and the other parentheses, are introduced by the Native Translator.