TWO INSTANCES OF *KHIL'AT* IN THE BIBLE.

IN both the Old and the New Testament there occur frequent references to gifts of raiment, robes of honour, and clothing. They occur, indeed, throughout literature on Oriental subjects, and though at times there would appear to be no political significance in the gift,¹ beyond perhaps ordinary friendship, some do belong to the class known as *Khil'at*.² My attention was attracted to this aspect by the following passage in Niccola Manucci's *Storia do Mogor* (ed. W. Irvine) vol. ii p. 44:—

'For the King of Balkh, he [Aurungzēb] sent as a remembrance many pieces of costly brocade, . . . and nine costly and beautiful sets of robes, with the whole of which the envoys were much satisfied.

'Ignorance made them thus satisfied, for they were not aware that the King of the Moguls sends *sarāpās* (sets of robes) to subjects only. To send a *sarāpā* to any one is to declare him to be a subject. If he submit to this, no further present need be added. . . .'

The whole passage from pp. 36–45 is of interest as shewing that while it was impossible to conquer Balkh by force, diplomatic symbolism succeeded.

Now the Persian word *sarāpā* merely means 'from head to foot' (*cap-à-pie*) and is descriptive of the manner in which it is worn. Its Arabic equivalent *Khil'at* describes its nature.³ *Khil'at* is derived from the verb *khal'aa* (he took off), and we have definite cases where additional honour was shewn by the king or prince *taking off* his own coat and putting it on the subject he wished to honour.⁴ There would seem, then, to be some significance underlying the idea of the robes having been worn by the donor, for it would seem clothes could not only transmit disease,⁵ but also authority⁶ and healing power,⁷ and in addition, if Manucci is to be believed, could assert suzerainty.

Of the two cases I wish to examine one is taken from the Old Testament (2 Kings v), the other from the New Testament (Matt. xxii 1–22). When Naaman the Syrian decided to visit Elisha he brought

¹ e.g. 1 Kings x 25.

² Cf. Gen. xli 41–42, Isa. xxi 121, Num. xx 28, and the Mantle of Elijah, 2 Kings ii 8. 13, 14

³ Vullers *Lexicon Persico-Latinum* ii 257, also s.v. *khil'at* 'proprie—vestis quam aliquis e corpore suo exutum dat'. Cf. Lane *Arabic Lexicon* Bk. I ii p. 789.

⁴ v. A. von Kremer *Culturgeschichte des Orients* i. 154; and Sir John Shore's visit to the Mughals at Benares, Feb. 7, 1797 (*Life of Lord Teignmouth*, by his son, i. 404–405). Cf. H. M. Chadwick *Heroic Age* pp. 340–341 and references.

⁵ e.g. Lev. xiii 47–59. Cf. E. W. G. Masterman *Hygiene and Disease in Palestine* p. 41.

⁶ e.g. the mantle of Elijah, 2 Kings ii, Num. xx 28.

⁷ e.g. Mk. v 25, vi 56, Acts xix 11, 12: but *not* Matt. xxvii 35 which has no significance relevant to these notes.

with him 'ten changes of raiment' (v 5). His arrival sorely troubled the King of Israel, who saw in the mission but an excuse for war (v 7), and shortly after the visit 'the King of Syria warred against Israel' (vi 8). Hence it may be supposed that relations between the two kingdoms were strained, and I suggest a political significance in the mission, as the King of Israel imagined, for the following reasons.

1. The word *hāliphōth* used for changes of raiment is a derivative of the verb *halph*, which means 'to pass on' and is akin to the Arabic *Khalafa*, the root of *Khilāfat*, the succession.¹ Hence 'changes of raiment' is equivalent to 'raiment to be passed on', which was the function of the *Khil'at*. That the 'changes of raiment' here had the essential characteristic² of the *Khil'at* is shewn by the fact that Gehazi caught Naaman's leprosy by accepting garments which Elisha more wisely refused, recognizing what they were. The use of the word *hāliphōth* here is an interesting parallel to an intimate connexion which may exist between the *Khilāfat* and *Khil'at* in Islām.³

2. The rebuke to Gehazi, 'Is it a time to receive money and to receive garments?' (v 26), combined with the political factors already noticed, suggests that Elisha's firmness in refusing the garments, as well as Naaman's pressure on him to accept the garments,⁴ was due to political considerations. For it would seem that Gehazi had thereby become a subject of the King of Syria, a vassal of Naaman, and a traitor to the King of Israel. The writer takes advantage of the infection of leprosy⁵ to enhance the prophetic reputation of Elisha. Gehazi was smitten with Naaman's leprosy, but Elisha only proclaimed the fact, it was no prophecy (v 27).

3. Having succeeded in imposing a *Khil'at* on a subject of the King of Israel, the King of Syria proceeded in his attempt to convert the implied proclamation of suzerainty into a reality (2 Kings vi 8).

This inner meaning of the change of raiment appears to have been lost mainly because the Septuagint translator does not appear to have realized its significance. ἀλλασσομένης στολᾶς hardly conveys the idea of succession, although ἀναβάλλων (used in Isa. iii 22 Symm.), if the force of ἀναβάλλω—to put off—be pressed, might contain the meaning, and εἴματα ἐξημοιβά (*Odyss.* viii 249) seems still more close. The idea must

¹ I am indebted to Dr S. A. Cook for help in the matter of Hebrew philology, and I wish here to acknowledge his kindness in looking over this paper.

² v. n. 3 *supra* p. 197.

³ I suggest that a clue may be found in the Assyrian meaning of *halph* (*to don, to get into*) taken in connexion with *Kha'aa* (*to put off*): in the continued use of the *Khil'at* in bestowing office in Muslim countries; and in the case of the insignia of the Caliph. V. Prof. D. S. Margoliouth's essay on 'The Sense of the Title Khalifah' in the forthcoming *Essays to Professor E. G. Browne* pp. 322 and 326.

⁴ v 16. 'And he urged him to take it; but he refused'

⁵ v. n. 5 *supra* p. 197.

have been known in Greece, as is shewn by the eagerness to get possession of the fallen enemy's arms in the battle scenes of the *Iliad*¹ as well as in the New Testament, 'he taketh from him his whole armour wherein he trusted and—[then]—divideth his spoils' (Lk. xi 22).² The Vulgate reads *mutatoria vestimenta*, which is equally vague.

The second case is the Parable of the Wedding Garment in Matt. xxii 1-14. Commentators³ seem to miss the real significance of this parable by their unwillingness to face the really serious *crime* involved in the omission to put on the ἔνδυμα γάμου which was provided by the king. They are content to leave the omission as a mere breach of etiquette or bad taste and then to gloss over the gross injustice of the sentence of the king with allegorical interpretations.

Now, if *acceptance* of a *Khil'at* is an acknowledgement of suzerainty, neglect or refusal to wear it is a denial of suzerainty and act of treason. The host, it should be remembered, is the king of the country; the guests are his subjects, and he who had no ἔνδυμα γάμου was guilty of an open rejection of his sovereign, in his sovereign's presence. He knew quite well the nature of his offence, for he had no defence to offer when taxed with a question couched in friendly terms. The dramatic effect is raised by placing the 'casting out' as a punishment even more severe than the punishment of the murderers. Matthew appears to use Luke's parable as an introduction to his own version, to shew that indifference was as nothing to treason.

The parable, indeed, is a hard blow levelled at the Pharisees, and the shaft went home. It is a direct charge of high treason against God, the Heavenly King; that it was understood in this sense is shewn by the verses following. The Pharisees 'took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk' (v 15) into high treason against Caesar, the earthly king, by a discussion of tribute, the subject's duty, the counterpart of the king's grant of a *Khil'at*. Again the answer is based on a normal form of allegiance—the acceptance of the king's coinage.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the two examples quoted are two specific instances of a very prevalent association of the psychological effects of physical contact, direct and indirect. The idea is common throughout the East and there seem to be traces of it in the New Testament. In the two cases with which I have dealt, however, appears most clearly the extraordinary political importance attached to the custom.

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¹ H. M. Chadwick, loc. cit.

² Cf. Isa. iii 22, Zech. iv 4, where *hal'a* would appear to be the root of the participle used.

³ Particularly Trench (*Parables*, ed. 1886, pp. 219 ff) where he would have otherwise been saved much wasted apologetic. Matt. xxii 1-14 deals with treason, if my interpretation be accepted; Luke xiv 16 ff deals with 'a certain man', *not* a king.