

A FEW MARRIAGE SONGS OF THE PARSEES AT NARGOL.*

(Read on 6th October 1926.)

I had the pleasure of passing a few days of the hot season of 1907 at Umbergaon near Dehviér in the seashore house of Mr. Kavasji Gorewalla. From there, I visited the village of Nargol, which is situated on the other side of the Umbergaon creek. There was a wedding there in the house of the Wadia brothers, Messrs. Ruttonji, Sorabji and Bapuji Navroji Wadia, and I was a guest there for two days. I enjoyed my stay there, because a Parsee marriage in the mofussil villages has several enjoyable features of its own. Though the strictly religious ritual is well-nigh the same in all Parsee marriages, there is some difference in the social functions related to marriage. In the case of the religious ceremonies I observed one additional function which is absent from Bombay Parsee marriages. It is this, that while in Bombay the *ashirwad* or benedictions are recited on the marrying couple only, there, in Nargol, a few benedictions, known as those of the *tan-darusti* were recited also over the two persons who were to stand as witnesses in the marriage ritual proper. I remember with grateful pleasure the two days I passed at Nargol, not only for the hospitality but also for the insight I had into the life of my co-religionists there from the social point of view.

The marriage songs like other folk-songs are often interesting and even instructive. They are not always composed by men of letters. At times they are composed by very illiterate persons. But they generally give expression to the simple inmost thoughts and feelings of the people. It is, as it were, not the composers who speak but the simple folk of the place who speak, and they speak from their heart of hearts. So, in my wanderings out of Bombay, I have tried to hear and understand such songs. So, what drew my special attention at the marriage

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festivities of Nargol were the marriage songs. On leaving Nargol, I had requested our genial host, Mr. Bapuji Nowroji Wadia, to kindly send me a copy of all the songs as sung by the Parsee ladies of the village on various occasions pertaining to marriage. He kindly did so, with his letter dated *roz* 5 Spendarmad, *mah* I Farrokh Farvardin 1277 Yazdazardi (18th September 1907).

I propose placing before the Society the songs, with my translations and notes, as they give a view of Parsee life in the Mofussil, on the occasion of a marriage.¹

The songs sung at Nargol on the different occasions attending marriage festivities are the following :—

१. ढोकी आववा अगाडि गावानुं.
२. ढोकी आव्या पछी गावानुं.
३. मुडुरत षेर रोपनी वभते गावानुं.
४. छथ सुपडां धरे ते वभते गावानुं.
५. पापड करे त्यारे पडी पाडती वभते गावानुं.
६. पीडी येरे त्यारे गावानुं.
७. पीडी येरीने धरमां लावीने गझामां गझसुतर पहेरा-
वती वभते गावानुं.
८. सखुगार लछि जती वभते गावानुं.
९. वडुने धरमां सखुगारनां कपडां पहेरावती वभते गावानुं.
१०. लगनते दिवसे सडतारे कुवापर वरधीआं भरवा नय त्यां गावानुं.
११. वरधीआं भरी कुवा उपरथी घेरे आवती वभते गावानुं.
१२. छेकराने अगीआरीमां नाडांन नवरावा जतां गावानुं.
१३. छेकरे नाडांन नडाय अथवा नाडी छे तेनुं गावानुं
(अगीआरीमां येडां येडां गाये छे)
१४. उपखुंज गायन थीछु ढपे इरेवी गावानुं.
१५. नडांन नवरावी अगीआरीमांथी घेरे लावतां गावानुं.

¹ I beg to draw the attention of those who take an interest on Parsee songs to my previous paper entitled "Parsee Life in Parsee songs, Cradle songs" (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. V, No. 8, pp. 429-43). Vide my Anthropological Papers, Part I, pp. 140-157.

१६. नवज्जेत ज्येसती वज्जेत गावानुं.
 १७. सोपासो इरेवती वज्जेत गावानुं.
 १८. सांजे वरष्णी वरधोडो (सहाजन) इरे त्यारे गावानुं.
 १९. योरी सराया पछी छोकरा तरङ्गनाञ्जे गावानुं.
 २०. परष्णी उक्या पछी वरने धरे लावती वज्जेत गावानुं.

I render into English the titles of the above twenty songs:—

1. The song to be sung before the arrival of the drummers.
2. To be sung after the arrival of the drummers.
3. To be sung on planting the *ber*, i.e., willow or bamboo, for the *moorat* or good auspices.
4. To be sung when the *supran*, i.e., the winnowing fans, are taken into hands.
5. To be sung when they strike the *padis*¹ for *pâpats*.
6. To be sung when they apply the *pithee*.
7. To be sung when the couple enters the house and when *gal-sutar* is put round the neck.
8. To be sung when the *sungâr* (lit. decorations, i.e., dresses, ornaments, &c.) are carried (from the house of one party to that of another).
9. To be sung when the bride is adorned with a new set of dress in the house.
10. To be sung on the marriage day when they go to the well to fill up the *varadhî* pots.
11. To be sung when they return from the well to the house with the *vardhiâ*-pots filled with water.

¹ I will explain the words at their proper places when I will translate the songs.

12. To be sung when the bridegroom is taken to the Agiari (i.e., Fire-temple) for the *nāhn*¹ bath.
13. To be sung when the bridegroom takes the (sacred) *nāhn* bath and when he finishes the bath. (This is to be sung in the Fire-temple.)
14. The same song to be sung in another way.
15. To be sung when the bride groom is returning to the house from the Fire-temple after taking the sacred bath.
16. To be sung when the Naojote² ceremony performed.
17. To be sung when the *sopalo* is taken round.
18. To be sung in the evening when the *varni* and *varghoda* (*shāhjan*) go round.
19. To be sung by the ladies on the side of the bridegroom after the *chori*, i.e., the marriage ceremony.
20. To be sung after the marriage ceremony when the bridegroom is taken to his house.

Now, I give in this first paper, the first two songs which are named after the Dholi or drummer.

ढोली आववा अगाडि गावानुं गीत.

१. ढुळु ओ नहि आवीओ ढोलीगनो पुत,
२. मे तो डोडरे पजडांणु मांडीआरेः—
३. ढुळु ओ नहि आवी योड यांदणु षडेन;
४. मे तो डोडरे पजडांणु मांडीआरेः—
५. ढुळु ओ नहि आवी गीद गायणु षडेन,

¹ Vide for the word my "Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees," p. 95.

² *Ibid* p. 178.

૬. મેં તો કોડેરે પગડાંણુ માંડીઆરિ:—
 ૭. હજી ઓ નહિ આવ્યો એરવદ જાયો પુત,
 ૮. મેં તો કોડેરે પગડાંણુ માંડીઆરિ:—
 ૯. હજી ઓ નહિ આવી સંધણુ સીંધણુ બહેન,
 ૧૦. મેં તો કોડેરે પગડાંણુ માંડીઆરિ:—
 ૧૧. હજી ઓ નહિ આવી સંજોગ વાંજોગ બહેન,
 ૧૨. મેં તો કોડેરે પગડાંણુ માંડીઆરિ:—

(Translation of the first song.)

I. THE SONG TO BE SUNG BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE DHOLI ¹

1. O! still the son of the drummer has not arrived.
2. I have fondly² made all the³ arrangements.
3. O! still the sister (who does the work) of *chok*⁴ *chāndan*, i.e., decorations, &c., has not arrived.

¹ Dhol is Pers. duhul (دھول) drum. Dholi is a drummer. The proper Persian word for a drummer is duhul-baz (دھول باز). The word *dholidā* (دھولیدار) used in the first line of the song is a slang or pet form for *dholi*.

² કોડે from કોડ “holding admiringly or fondly.”

³ પગડાંણુ seems to be a corrupted form of પગડાં (from પગ foot), i.e., marks or પગલાં steps. What is meant is: I have been fondly ready with all arrangements for marriage.

⁴ ચોક *chok* are “the figures drawn by women on the threshold” with a white powder on holidays, &c. (Gujarati and English Dictionary by Shapurji Edalji, 1863).

The word *chāndan* (ચાંદણુ) may be another form of *chandalo* (ચાંદણો) “an ornamental and painted patch made by females on the forehead” or “the present of money on a marriage occasion.” The word seems to come from *chānd* (ચાંદ) moon, because the patch or mark on the forehead of women is made in the form of a “moon.” (Vide my Paper on “The Marriage Customs of Parsees” read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay on 22nd February and 26th July 1899. Vide my “Symbolism in the Marriage Ceremonies of different Nations,” a Lecture delivered before the Ladies’ Branch of the National Indian Association at Seth Minar on 21st January 1909, p. 15). Or the word may be derived from *Chādu* (ચાડું) “a small earthen vessel for holding light” because, on such occasions, a lamp is kindled.

4. I have fondly made all the arrangements.
5. * O ! still the sister who sings songs has not arrived.
6. I have fondly made all the arrangements.
7. O ! still the son born of an Ervad¹ (priest) has not arrived.
8. I have fondly made all the arrangements.
9. O ! still the sister (who has to do the work) of cooking² has not arrived.
10. I have fondly made all the arrangements.
11. O ! still the sister who has to see the good and bad conjunctions has not arrived.³
12. I have fondly made all the arrangements.

દોલી આવીઆ પછી ગાવાનું ગીત.

૧. આવેઓરે આવેઓ દોલીડાનો પુત,
૨. આજે માહરો માડવડો હંસી રહીઓરે:—
૩. આવીરે આવી ચોક ચાંદણ બેહેત,
૪. આજે માહરી ઓસરી હંસી રહીરે:—
૫. આવી રે આવી ગીદ ગાયણ બેહેત,
૬. આજે મારી ખડકી હંસી રહીરે:—
૭. આવીઓ રે આવીઓ ઝેરવદ જયો પુત,
૮. આજે માહરો ઉભરડો હંસી રહીઓરે:—
૯. આવી રે આવી રાંધણ સોંધણ બેહેત,
૧૦. આજે મારી રાંધણી હંસી રહીરે:—

¹ Ervad is the later form of Pahlavi Haêrbad, Avesta Aêthra-paiti, meaning one who is "master of learning," i.e., a priest.

² "rândhan sidhan" comes from "રાંધવું સોંધવું," i.e., to cook. The second word "સોંધવું" seems to be a corruption of sijavvun (સીજવવું) "to purboil, to poach."

³ Sanjog (સંજોગ) means "coincidence, conjunction, meeting, opportunity." The word is made up of સ and જોગ, i.e., good conjunction or combination (of stars). Vâjog વાજોગ is opposed to sanjog (સંજોગ). Vâ વા means "without." What is meant here is "good or bad," i.e., auspicious or unauspicious.

११. आवी रे आवी संजोग वांजोग थेहेन,
 १२. आगे माहरे ओरडे हंसी रहीओरे:—

(Translation of the second song.)

II. THE SONG TO BE SUNG AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE DHOLI OR DRUMMER.

1. O! The son of the drummer has come, (he) has come (after all).
2. (So) To-day my bower¹ (or pavilion) is all cheerful. (lit. feels laughing).
3. O! The sister of *chok chāndan* (i.e., decorations) has come, has come;
4. To-day my steps of the front-door² are all cheerful;
5. O! the sister who sings songs has come, has come;
6. To-day my verandah³ is all cheerful.
7. O! the son born of a priest has come, has come;
8. To-day my threshold is all⁴ cheerful.
9. O! the sister of cooking has arrived, has arrived;
10. To-day my cook-room is all cheerful.
11. O! the sister of good and bad conjunctions has come, has come.
12. To-day my room is all cheerful.

¹ Mandavdo (मं०डव०डो) is a slang or pet form of मं०डव which is another form of मं०डव (a bower, an arbour, a way). A temporary pavilion of branches of trees, bundles of grass and such other products is known by that name.

² Osari ओसरी means: Steps leading up to the front door.

³ Khadaki (खडकी) is the verandah of a house. It also means the front first room next to the verandah. The word also means a street. As the preceding couplet speaks of the front steps (osari), the meaning here seems to be the next place, the verandah.

⁴ उभरडी is another form of उभरे or उभरे, the threshold.

These two songs refer to the beginning of the marriage festivals in a house. The first song represents the lady of the house ready to begin the festivities. She had been making all preparations for days together. She was now ready with everything and is waiting for the following persons.

- (a) The drummer.
- (b) The woman who is to attend to decorations of the front doors for the wedding.
- (c) The family songstress and her party.
- (d) The family priest.
- (e) The cook-maid.
- (f) The woman who prescribed the proper auspicious times for the functions.

She had not to wait long. They all come in turn and she is overjoyed. So in the second song she gives an expression to her joy that all the necessary parties have come and that the festivities have begun in right earnest.

Now, I will say a few words about the functions of the above six persons for whom the landlady waited and whose arrival she welcomes.

The first person, who announces to the street and to the village the occasion of marriage in a house, is the drummer. He is generally accompanied by one or two other drummers and one or two pipers. They form, as it were, necessary functionaries in marriage festivities among the Parsees. It seems that, even in old Iran, a marriage was announced to the people by music at the door of the marrying couple. We read in the *Dinkârd*.¹

۴۴۴ ساسا ر ساسو و ساسا اوند ساسا ساسا
 ساسا ساسا ساسا ساسا ساسا ساسا ساسا ساسا

¹ Bk. Chap. 80 S. 15. *Dastur Peshotan's Dinkârd*, Vol. II Text, p. 87, ll 2-4. Translation p. 97.

Amat Shaur-i¹ duhulak² va surnâi³ bara hâmâ-i-shatra
âgâsyend âigh hanâ anshutâân khvitôdas yehvunet.

Translation :—When the sound (shaur) of the drum and trumpet inform the whole city that such and such persons get united in marriage.

The decoration of the front of the house forms a necessary requisite on a marriage occasion. Flowers

(b) The woman, decorating the house front with chok.

and *chok*, a kind of wedding sand, play a very important part in a Parsee marriage.

I have spoken at some length upon this subject in my paper read before this society on 26th June 1912 under the title of "The Wedding sand in Knutsford (Cheshire, England) and the Wedding sand (دھول) in India."⁴

The gâyans (گایان) or songstresses played in Bombay upto

(c) The Songstress.

a few years ago and play, even now, in mofussil towns, an important part on marriage and other similar gay occasions. They form

a party of three, four or more women. They know by heart all the songs to be sung on happy social occasions like birth, Naajote, marriage, &c. There are professional songstresses of that class who are engaged for the occasions on the payment of certain fees. Most of the joyful occasions have their proper songs and the party of songstresses sing them on particular occasions. In case of certain songs which are considered to be semi-religious or semi-sacred, they begin the songs in a

¹ Or it may be شور Nuptials; a banquet. It may be شور shûr, a brazen trumpet.

² دھول drum دھول Dastur Peshotan reads the word as surai (دھول), vide his transliteration in Avesta characters, p. 94, l. 4, but translates it, in English, as "drums." So it seems that on second consideration, he has read the word properly as duhul (دھول). (English Translation, p. 97). In his Gujarati translation (p. 95, l 1) he has translated the word as વજાન vâjân i.e., musical instrument.

³ سُر نای sûr-nâi, a trumpet, a clarion blown on feast days.

⁴ Read on 26th June 1913, vide my Anthropological Papers Part II, pp. 31-39.

solemn way after performing the *padyâb*¹ and *Kusti*. The song known as “*Հարգանք Յուր*,” *i.e.*, “Song in honour of Fire,” is one which is sung with all religious solemnity. It lasts for three or four hours. It serves for a kind of historical record in later times, as it gives the names of the fire-temples of the first grade and gives some description about their foundation, &c.

In a great centre like Bombay, on marriage occasions, the

(d) The family priest.

personal services of the family priest are required only during the marriage ritual.

They are required for giving the sacred bath to the couple.² But, as mentioned in the song, in the *Mofussil* towns, his presence is required from the beginning. He is present at the *moorat*, *i.e.*, the auspicious ritual of the beginning of the festivities.

(e) The Cook-maid.

The cook-maid does not require any long mention, as her functions and services are well-known.

(f) The woman who gives Instructions for the proper times of conjunction.

A number of Parsees attend to the question of planetary conjunction, &c., for all functions of the marriage.³

¹ *Vide* my book, “The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees,” p. 92.

² *Vide* my “Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees,” p. 191.

³ *Ibid.* p. 20.