

In Lower Burma also, there are two classes of Phongys like those of the upper Burma. One is known as Dwaya and the other as Kan. The Dwayas of Lower Burma correspond to the Shwegyin of upper Burma and the Kan to the Thudama gaing. Those of the Upper classes in both Burmas, viz., the Shwegyin and the Dwaya, when they go to the houses of laymen, do not pray together with the Phongys of the other classes—the Thudama gaing and the Kan, whom they consider to be somewhat inferior.

Like the Pater noster of the Christians or the Ahunavar of the Zoroastrians, they have a short prayer formula which is considered very sacred and often repeated. Mr. Po Lok thus rendered it for me :

“ I promise that I will not kill and I will keep that precept (or promise).

I promise that I will not steal and I will keep that precept.

I promise that I will not commit adultery and I will keep that precept.

I promise that I will not have any liquid or solid that is an intoxicant and I will keep that promise.”

## A VISIT TO NASIK ON THE OPENING DAYS OF THE PRESENT SINHA PILGRIMAGE.<sup>1</sup>

(Read on 27th. August, 1920.)

### I.

At times, I like to be in the midst of crowds, because crowds give us good opportunities of studying Human Nature and the different phases of

Introduction.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was unavoidably kept back from publication at the proper time.



that nature. The largest crowd, in which I remember having ever been, was that at Paris on 6th November 1889, the closing day of the great Exhibition of that year which had lasted for more than six months.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Walter Scott thus speaks of the gaiety and folly of crowds :—  
 “ It was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow ; hopes that will never be gratified, promises that will never be fulfilled ; pride in the disguise of humility ; and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.” It was with the eye of youth, that I saw and moved about in the great crowds that met at the Paris Exhibition on Sundays and especially in the great crowd referred to above ; but it was with the eye of experience of a man of advanced years, that I saw the crowd at Nasik,—though not at all as great as that at Paris—on the 15th of July 1920, the second opening day of the great twelve-yearly pilgrimage of the river Godavari at Nasik.

It is in a beautiful way that a poetess, Mary Howell describes the thoughts, with which, and the Pilgrimage of Shrines and Pilgrimage of Life. ways in which, both the young and the old pilgrims of Christendom went to the Holy Land of Palestine for a holy pilgrimage.

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<sup>2</sup> I find in my note book the following note of that day's crowd :—

“ ઝો ! આજના જેવી ભીડ હું ધારૂં છું કે હું કોઈ દહોડે જોઈશ નહીં. ટ્રોકોડેરો તરફ જવાના રસ્તાના પુલના દાદર ઉપરથી ભીડનો ગંજવર દેખાવ મેંજ માફક આવી અડે. ત્યાંથી રોશની નો ઘણો ગંજવર દેખાવ.....કદાચ એવી આજના જેવી સુંદર રોશની પણ હું કદી જોઈશ નહીં. આટલી ભીડ છતાં સર્વ ખુશ મીનજ.”

i.e., “ Ah ! Perhaps I will never see a crowd like that of to-day's. A grand sight of the crowd from the top of the steps of the bridge leading to the Trocodero. Waves after waves coming and striking ; a good sight of the illumination also . . . . . Perhaps I will never see again such grand illuminations like those of to-day. Notwithstanding such a great crowd and rush, all where in good humour.”

" With hoary hair, and bowed by age,  
 He goes forth on his pilgrimage,  
 An old man, from his forest-cell,  
 With sandalled feet, and scallop-shell ;  
 His sight is dim, his steps are slow,  
 And pain and hardship must he know—  
 An old wayfaring man, alone,—  
 And yet his spirit bears him on :  
 For what ? The holy place to see ?  
 To kneel upon mount Calvary ;  
 Golgotha's dreary bound to trace ;  
 To traverse every desert-place  
 In which the Saviour trod of yore ;  
 For this he beareth travel sore,  
 Hunger, and weariness, and pain :  
 Nor longeth for his home again."

Though the times are changed and the ways of travelling  
 are, for the majority, more convenient than before, both in  
 Palestine and in India, we are reminded of the above picture,  
 of old Pilgrims, when we are moving about among the present  
 day Pilgrims of the sacred Godavari, especially on the road  
 leading to the sacred hill of Trimbak, about 18 miles from  
 Nasik.

The same poetess gives us a picture of young pilgrims.

" Now see another pilgrim, gay  
 And heartsome as a moon in May ;  
 Young, beautiful, and brave, and strong,  
 Like a wild stag he bounds along ;

\* \* \* \*

He kneels at cross and altar stone  
 And where dark pagan rites were done ;  
 In groves, by springs, on mountains hoar  
 In classic vale by classic shore

\* \* \* \*



Oh ! 'tis a fond and ardent quest ;  
 Yet leaves its pilgrim ill at rest ! ”

You see all this at Godavari also. The poetess seems to refer only to male pilgrims, but, at Nasik, you see old and young pilgrims of both the sexes. Even in these days of railways and automobiles, thousands of pilgrims,—and these mostly of the Sâdhu or monastic class,—whose number during the first two or three days of the pilgrimage was, as said by a Police Officer, about 50,000, came yb foot from long distances. One of my frequent questions to some of these pilgrims was : “ From which part of the country you come ? ” The replies showed, that pilgrims came from all the four corners of India, from the Himalayas in the North to the furthest end of the Madras Presidency in the South, from Sindh and Punjab in the West to Bengal in the East.

But why all this trouble ? Why these long journeys and the accompanying discomforts and worries ? The reply is “ To prepare ourselves for the great pilgrimage.” The above Poetess draws the lesson

“ Behold once more—from youth to age  
 Man goeth on a pilgrimage ;  
 Or rich or poor, unwise or wise,  
 Before each one this journey lies ;  
 'Tis to a land remote, unknown,  
 Yet where the great of old are gone—  
 Poet and patriot, sage and seer :  
 All men we worship or revere  
 This awful pilgrimage have made,  
 Have gone to the dim land of shade.”

I have enjoyed my visit to Nasik during this period of the great pilgrimage from all these points of view ; in short, I learnt and I pondered. I left Bombay at one o'clock on



the 15th of July, arrived at Nasik at about 5 p.m., went immediately to the river and wandered for about two hours among the pilgrims on the left bank of the river. Then, I spent about four hours, the next morning, first on its right bank and then on the left, among the pilgrims both on the banks and in the temples. The most interesting time I spent was that of about three hours in the afternoon and evening of the 16th and about four hours in the morning of the 17th among the Sâdhus or Monks who had encamped in different camp at Panchvati, about a mile from the banks of the river. I spent the 18th of July at Trimbak, about 18 miles from Nasik, and returned to Bombay by midday on the 19th. Before speaking of the pilgrimage of Nasik, I will say here a few words on the original idea of a pilgrimage among different people.

## II.

The English word 'Pilgrimage' seems to be another form of 'peregrinage,' meaning "going abroad," from 'per' through or over and 'ager' or 'agri' a territory. Literally, it is going over from your country to another country. In that sense, it differs very little from travelling; but latterly, it is restricted to, or specialized for, travelling to sacred places. The Sanscrit word Yâtra यात्रा which comes from the root *yâ* या to go, also has the notion of going abroad. The practice of pilgrimage is very old and exists among various nations, the Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Hebrews, Buddhists. The idea grew with the idea of the attachment of the life traditions of a great or pious man of a tribe or people to, or round, a certain place. The birth-place or the death-place of a great hero or a holy man of a tribe or people, or the place with which his feats of bravery or holiness were connected, became dear to the men of that tribe. What is dear, is, to a certain extent, held to be sacred. Thus, these places began to be held as dear and sacred. The thoughts and the deeds of

these heroes and pious men inspired many a man and woman who visited these places and led them to success in their undertakings. Thus, the sanctity of the places grew in estimation. A number of such heroes and pious men have been deified—instances of which kind are not wanting in our own times of the twentieth year of the twentieth century—and thus, the places latterly began to be connected with gods and goddesses.

We said above, that the practice of pilgrimage existed from old times among many nations. Looking to human nature, the Parsees should not be any exception. But, we do not find in the extant Iranian Literature the mention of any town or towns, as being held as a place or places of pilgrimage for the sake of their being associated with the names and deeds of great heroes or pious men.

Rev. Dr. Littledale, while speaking on the subject of pil-

grimage, says : "The ancient Zend creed  
The ancient Ira- of the Medes and Persians, having no  
nians and Pilgrim- temples for worship, had no pilgrimage."  
age.

But, even in later times, when they had great fire-temples, they had no pilgrimage in the sense in which we understand the word now. People visited fire temples on grand occasions for worship. Some Sassanian kings are represented as visiting the great fire-temple of Azer-Goushap before and after great wars. But they had no other places of pilgrimage or monasteries.

But, in one of the Rivâyats from Persia which form the mediæval religious literature of the Parsees, a place is referred to in Persia as a place of Pilgrimage for the Parsees of Persia of later times after the Arab conquest. This Rivâyat is known as the Rivâyat of Bahman Asfandyâr. It was written in the time of Shâh Âbbâs the Great of Persia (1567-1628) in the year 996 A.Y. (1036 Hijri, 1627 A.C.). In the letter headed as "Ketâbat az-



Turkâbâd," i.e., the letter from Turkâbâd, we read as follows :<sup>1</sup>

معلوم دستوران و پیربدان و موبدان و بهدینان کشور هندوستان  
بوده باشد که بهدین بهمن بن اسفندیار در ایران شهر در ولایت ترکا باد  
تشریف آورده و چند روزی بخدمت بود و چون برای گشتی و  
قرآن دریا آمده بود اورا توجش لازم بود و آنچه دین قاعده دین  
زرتشتی بود اورا توجش فرمودیم قبول کرد و تمام بجای رسانید  
و اورا برشتم کردیم و نر شوه داشت و خدمت آب و آتشها و آتش  
برهوام آنچه قواعد دین بود کرده تا واضح بوده باشد

و دیگر معلوم بوده باشد که خدمت خاتون بانو پارس که  
زیارت گاهست هم کرد و آنچه که قاعده بود در هر باب کرد

*Translation*:—Let it be known to the Dasturs and Herbad-s and Mobads and Laymen of the country of Hindustan, that Behdin Bahman bin Asfandyâr had come to (our) native town of Turkabad in the country of Iran and was busy for some days; and, as he had come by the way of ships and boats<sup>2</sup> of sea, he had to go through penitence (tojesh). We ordered penitence, as it was (enjoined) in<sup>3</sup> the law of the Zoroastrian Religion. He accepted all that and did all that (ba jâi-rasânîd). And we gave (Lit. did) him the Bareshnûm (purification) and he kept (the subsequent) ten nights (nêh shavêh, i.e., the ten nights' retreat) and he performed the necessary services of Water and Fire and Fire temple, as were the rules of the religion, so that, what is legislated (vâzaâ) may be done. Again, let it be known, that he also did the service (i.e., the pilgrimage) of Khâtûn Bânu of Pars which is a place of

<sup>1</sup> I quote from Hormazdiar Framroz's Manuscript Rivâyat, belonging to Mr. Pestonji Navrojee Kapadia, but now presented to the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, f. 346, l. 6.

<sup>2</sup> قرآن from tar, moist, wet. In India also, the word tar (तर) is still used for a platform-like boat which works only in small creeks. It is used only for crossing small shallow creeks and is worked by means of long poles pressing the ground below water.

<sup>3</sup> The word is written as دین, so it seems to be the Persian reading of the Pahalavi word 𐭌𐭎𐭕 din, dayan, dar.



pilgrimage (Ziârat-gâh), and he performed all that was required by rules.

Thus, we see, that we find no case of pilgrimage in older Avesta or Pahlavi Literature, but we find one case of pilgrimage in the mediæval Persian Literature.

As to the Khâtûn Bânû (i.e., the lady Khâtûn), the tradition in Persia is this<sup>1</sup>: She was a daughter of the last Parsee king Yazdagard. On the defeat of her father, she, with other members of her royal family, left Madâyan (Ctesiphon) to have refuge in the fortress of Haft Âzar. The army of the enemy prevented her from doing so. So, she directed herself to a Burz (tower) on another adjoining mountain. On her way thither, she became very thirsty, and so went to the cottage of a *burzigar* (agriculturist) in the neighbourhood, and asked for water. Unfortunately, there was no drinking water with him. So, he milked his cow to supply her with milk. To add to her misfortune, no sooner was the milk gathered in a vessel, than the cow kicked the earthen vessel and broke it. Thus disappointed, she went to a mountain two miles farther and prayed to God to save her from the pursuing enemy. God accepted her prayer; the ground on which she stood, cleaved into two parts and she was buried. Her followers were bemoaning her loss, when there came up the agriculturist with a pot full of water, but, finding what had happened, he also mourned her loss, and, bringing there the particular cow which had disappointed him and the lady, sacrificed her on the spot. He also asked her followers and others to hold the spot sacred and to sacrifice cows now and then there, in honour of the lady. Hence arose the practice among the Persian Zoroastrians of sacrificing cows and of going to pilgrimage there. They called the place Dar-i-Din. They say, that unexpectedly, there issued forth, a spring of water on the spot and made the pilgrimage of the visitors comfortable.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide my Introduction to Darab Hormuzdyâr's Rivâyat, p. 35, Banu of Pars."



In India, in the case of Hindus, pilgrimages are connected with places which are associated generally with gods or deified heroes. Among the

Places of Pilgrimage in India.

Mahomedans, as among the Christians to a certain extent, pilgrimages are associated with the tombs of saints. The people of different places are anxious to have in their neighbourhood some place which can be a convenient place of pilgrimage. It is said of Richard Burton, the well-known traveller, who travelled under disguise, that in a Mahomedan village where he had made a long stay, he had become very popular for his piety. One day, a friend told him to leave the village, as he had come to be held in very great esteem for his piety and was therefore likely to be killed. He was told, that the people of the village got anxious, lest he may go to some other place and die there. In that case, they would lose the good fortune of having the tomb of a great pious saint in their midst. To avoid missing that good fortune, they thought of killing him, so that he may die in their village and the village may have the honour of possessing the tomb of a great saint, which may attract pilgrims from different countries.

It is believed, that if one performs the pilgrimage of the following four places which are on the four sides of India, that is sufficient to secure to him all the meritoriousness of a good life. These places are : Bidrinâth in the North, Râmeshwar in the South, Jaganâth in the East, and Dwârkâ in the West. If one performs the Shrâdh ceremony at Benares, that is sufficient and no other Shrâdh ceremonies are necessary.

### III

Coming to the subject proper of our paper, our Vice-President.

The special significance of the Sinhast period of pilgrimage for the Godavari. Proverbs connected with it.

Rao Bahadur P. B. Joshi, has given an interesting article in the *Times of India* of 10th August 1920, pointing out the significance of the Sinhast period of the pilgrimage at Nasik. Godavari is one of the seven sacred rivers of India, the other six being Indus,

Ganges, Jamnâ, Sarasvati, Narbuddâ and Câveri. The period, when at the end of every twelve years, the Brahaspati or Jupiter enters into the sign of Sinh, *i.e.*, the Lion, is held to be especially sacred for the pilgrimage to Godavari, because it is believed, that during this period, even the other six sister-rivers or the goddesses presiding over them, come to the pilgrimage of Godavari and have a sacred bath in its waters.

The twelve-yearly pilgrimage of the Godavery has given us one or two proverbs. From the fact of the Sinhast pilgrimage occurring every twelve years, we have the proverb ગાદાવરી વર્ષે ગાદાવરી *i.e.*, Godavari after twelve years. It is used when the rarity of an event is intended to be expressed. Again, the word Godavari is used for the number 12. For example, ગાદાવરી રૂપિયા *i.e.*, "Godavari Rupees" means "twelve Rupees." The pilgrims speak of the rivers as ગંગા માતા *i.e.*, the Mother Ganges. The Ganges which is the most sacred of all the Indian rivers, gives its name for colloquial sacred phraseology to the Godavari and to other sacred rivers. This has given rise to the proverb મન ચંગા તો ફેડેલી ગંગા *i.e.*, if the mind is good or inclined towards faith, any place (*i.e.*, any source of water) may be Gangâ or Ganges. The proverb has a variant, *viz.*, મન ચંગા તો ફેડેલમાં ગંગા *i.e.*, If the mind is good, water even in a tray, serves as Ganges.

Nasik is one of the five places held in India to be very sacred.

The special signification of Nasik as a sacred place of Pilgrimage.

The other four are the following:—(1) Prayâg or Allahabad on the confluence of the Ganges, the Jamnâ, and the Saraswati which is not visible, because, leaving the Himalayas to the west of the Jamnâ and passing Thaneshwar in the Punjab, it loses itself in the sands near Sirhind about 400 miles from Allahabad.<sup>1</sup> (2) Gaya in the

1 It is believed by the Hindus that, though the Saraswati loses itself in the sand far away from Allahabad, still it joins the Ganges and the Jamna under the ground at Allahabad. Some water trickling from the rocky walls of a place near the fort is taken to be the water of the lost Saraswati. The place is also known as Tri-veni, *i.e.*, the triple spring.



Patna district, the residence of Sakya Muni, the founder of Buddhism, where an old tree is pointed out as the fig tree under which Buddha meditated for about 5 years. (3) The tank or lake of Pushkara (*lit.*, blue lotus) about five miles from Ajmer, held to be one (the last) of the seven Dwîpas or insular continents stretching out from the mythical mount Meru and supposed to be surrounded by oceans.<sup>1</sup> (4) Naimisha or Naimishâranya, a forest on the Gomati or Gumti river in Oudh, where the Mahabharata was recited before an assembly of Rishis by the sage Sauti.

The reasons, why, of all the other places on the bank of Godavari, Nasik is especially chosen for a place of pilgrimage to the river, are several. (1) Firstly, some of the events of the lives of the heroes of the great Ramayana are connected with Nasik. Here, on the left bank of the river are pointed out to us pools, where the great Rama and his consort Sita and his brother Laxman bathed. The pools are named after them and known as Rama kund, Sita kund and Laxman kund respectively. Some other *kunds* also are pointed out to us, but they are connected with some heroes or deities of less renown and sanctity. During the monsoons, when the Godavery flows at times in torrents, the pools are all covered over with mass of running water, but in dry seasons, the pools appear distinct. (2) Again, about two miles from Nasik, on the bank of the river, they point out to us a site whence the great demon Ravana carried away Sita. (3) The vicinity of Kushavarta as a sacred place, situated, about 18 miles from Nasik, where the Godavari takes its rise, adds to the sanctity of Nasik. (4) Again, it is held that as the Ganges is more sacred when it flows northwards and the Jamna when it flows westward, so the Godavari is more sacred when it flows southward. It is at Nasik that the river

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<sup>1</sup> Jala, *i.e.*, fresh water, is said to be the circumambient ocean round Pushkara, the oceans round the other six being full of salt water, sugar-cane juice, wine, *ghee* or clarified butter, *dahi* or curds and *dudh* or milk.

flows southward. So, that fact adds to the sanctity of Nasik.<sup>1</sup> (5) Again, the fact, that other 7 streams join the Godavari near Nasik adds to its sanctity. This being the case, the occasion of the pilgrimage drew to Nasik thousands of pilgrims from all the four quarters of India. Even some Cuchi Mahomedans were seen as pilgrims. There are in all about 60 temples at Nasik, and so, it is spoken of as the Benares of Western India.

#### IV

The first thing we notice on entering into Nasik, is the fact, that on the outskirts of the town, we find a number of Brahman priests waiting to welcome the coming pilgrims and to take them to their houses. They have in their hands, what may be called, their visitors' books, in which they have been writing, or get written by the visitors themselves, the names of the visitors who had at one time or another taken board and lodging with them. If your fathers or grandfathers or other ancestors and relatives have at any time visited Nasik on a pilgrimage, their names are well nigh sure to be found in the books of some one of these Brahmin hosts. On your arrival at Nasik, at a certain place on the road from the station on the outskirts of the city, they wait and ask from the coming visitors, the names of their districts and their *gotras*, and then looking into their books point out the names of their fathers or other relatives, who may have formerly visited Nasik and taken board and lodging with them. In that case, it is as it were, your filial pious duty to take your board and lodging at the house of the same Brahmin or of his heir and successor. This Brahmin then, during your stay at Nasik, acts as your host and as your guide, friend and philosopher. You are to pay all the usual fees for the various ceremonies you want to go

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<sup>1</sup> Before the introduction of the Railway at Nasik, it was held essential, that the pilgrims should enter Nasik from the East or the West and not from the North or South.



through. As to the boarding and lodging charges, it is left to your discretion. Disputes arise rarely, and the pilgrims, who, at times, spend hundreds and thousands over these pilgrimages, do not grudge to pay well their Brahmin hosts who are generally spoken of here as Pandas, *i.e.*, persons possessing wisdom, learning ( पंडित ). The word seems to be the same as *pandits*.

The above practice of keeping the visitors' books and of inviting the pilgrims to their houses as paid guests, reminds me of a similar practice I observed in Kashmir at the famous temple of Martand. There, not only the Hindu visitors or pilgrims, but even non-Hindu visitors, whether Mahomedans, Christians or Parsis, form as it were the clientele of the Pandits, whose hostship extends generally to the work of being the guides of visitors. The Pandits there have their visitors' books, in which they make you enter your names, if you have put yourselves under their guidance. On observing the approach of visitors, they present themselves with their books, and press you, Hindus or non-Hindus, to place yourselves under their guidance on the ground, that such and such distinguished visitors had their names in their visitors' book. I was in Kashmir, at first, in 1895 ; and then, I and my three sons and two friends had placed ourselves under the guidance of a pandit, Pandit Lachiram, when visiting Martand on 21st May 1895. Then, on my second visit to Kashmir, when I went to Martand again, the Pandit, asking my name, soon remembered my first visit, and pointed out from his book my and my party's names written in our own hands, and took me and my party again under his guidance. In the books of some leading Pandits of the place, we find entries as old as those of 1827 and 1829. Again, we find the names of distinguished visitors like Elphinstone and Hardinge, Wedderburn and Roberts. I saw the name of General Roberts both as a Lieutenant and as Commander-in-Chief. He had visited the place three times. The

modern Pandits preserve with scrupulous care these visitors' books of their fathers and grandfathers.

During the first two days of the Nasik *Jâtrâ*, there must have come about 50,000 pilgrims from different parts of India. Of these, some took their residence with the Pandâs or priests. For some others, there were provided various Dharamsalas. For example, a Madras rich man had provided a separate Dharamsala for the Madrasis. There were some *Sadvarts* where the very poor were provided with free board and lodging for a certain number of days.

Morning is the best time to have a leisurely stroll, with pen and note-book in your hand, among the thousands of visitors, some getting themselves shaved, some bathing, some performing, under the guidance of their Brahmin Pandâs, funeral ceremonies in honour of their dead dear ones, some saying their little prayers alone, some visiting the temples and ringing the temple-bells, some crowding round a half-naked *sâdhu*, and some going several times round sacred places. With open eyes and ears and a thinking mind, you learn a good deal, not only of religious rites and observances but of the different phases of human nature. O! What crowded hours of interest you pass among these thousands of pilgrims—pilgrims perhaps from a thousand different villages and towns from all the districts of India and of all Hindu castes and creeds, old and young, men, women and children, literate and illiterate, rich and poor, healthy and ill, well-clad and well-nigh naked. We all are Indians, but very few of us know the various beliefs and manners and customs of nearly ninety per cent. of our sister communities, castes, sects and creeds. It is a Hindu gathering, but a gathering of Hindus of a number of types. Such occasions of great pilgrimages are, as it were, grand Exhibitions of Humanity, but still not of all Humanity.



From talks with various pilgrims, I learnt that their expenses varied from a few rupees to thousands. With a few, pilgrimage was as it were the profession of their life. They travelled on foot from one place of pilgrimage to another. They spent not a pie of their own but travelled and lived on the charity of others in various *sadāvarts*. The rich spent hundreds and thousands. A merchant of Sind Hyderabad, staying in the Dharamsala of the Maharaja of Kupurthala, who travelled with his daughter and son-in-law, told me that the pilgrimage would cost him about Rs. 2,000, of which Rs. 500 will be the cost of train and other fares and Rs. 1,500 for food and offerings. Wherever they went they stayed in Dharamsalas and cooked their own food. They travelled leisurely seeing some places of interest on their way.

#### V.

The first function in the pilgrimage of Nasik is that of a complete shave of beard, moustache and hair on the top. So, the first functionary one even preceding the priest, is a barber. When you go to the banks of the Godavari, you see a number of barbers doing good business. The barbers play a certain part in the religious ritual and ceremony of a Hindu household. They have rights and privileges. We know, that at one time, in Europe, they had their guilds in common with the surgeons. France had, at one time, its barber-surgeons. In India, almost all social events have a religious bearing. The first hair of children are cut off with a hair-cutting ceremony in which a barber plays an important part. I remember having learnt at Kashmir, that among the Pandits there, the barbers had their own rights and privileges in some domestic events such as that of cutting the first hair of a child. I remember that upto a few years ago, Parsee mothers took a vow that the first hair of their children shall be cut only at Udwarâ, where they can immediately afterwards be taken to the old sacred Fire-temple of Irân Shâh.

As said above, the whole of the face and head was shaved except the small curl (बुल्लु) on the top of the head. What is the object of this preliminary shaving by a pilgrim? Some take it as a kind of sacrifice. The pilgrim offers a sacrifice of his best bodily possessions, his beard and moustaches, which give beauty or dignity to his features. Hindus get themselves shaved on occasions of deep mourning. In that case there cannot be any idea of cleanliness. It is that of a kind of sacrifice in honour or memory of the deceased.

Some take the object to be a step towards cleanliness. The fact of being clean-shaved may be connected with perfect purification. When we take the signification to be an idea of cleanliness or purification, then we are reminded of the present fashion in which males get their beards and moustaches all clean-shaved. Some attribute this fashion to cleanliness, saying that the moustaches harbinge some impurities, which, with drink or food, are likely to be swallowed.

In some old tribes, the custom of shaving off the hair of early boyhood, like the custom of pulling off a tooth, was a part of the ceremony of Initiation into Manhood. In the Old Testament (Ezekiel V, 1-5), the Judgment of Jerusalem for their rebellion is shown under the type of hair which are directed to be cut and burnt in a peculiar manner. I have spoken at some length on the subject of the Iranian ideas connected with hair in my paper before the Society, entitled "Two Iranian Incantations for burying Hair and Nails."<sup>1</sup>

We see in the huge gathering at Nasik a variety of customs about the keeping or cutting of hair. We see the pilgrims all clean shaved on the banks of the Godavary. But, when we go to the camps of thousands of monks, a little away from the bank of the river, at Panchvati, we find

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. VIII, No. 8 pp. 557-72. *Vide* my Anthropological Papers, Part I, pp. 340-352.



a number of *Sādhus* with unusually long hair. I will refer to this matter later on when I speak of the *Sadhus*.

A kind of sacred bath is observed among all religious communities, the Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Parsees. The ancients also had their baths, and these especially on the occasions of special social events in one's life, *e.g.*, initiation, marriage, etc. Similarly, a bath in the sacred river was, after shaving, the next principal function at the pilgrimage of Nasik. The pilgrims removed what was "old" on their body, what was, as it were, a centre of some kinds of impurities and then purified themselves. Before entering into the river for a bath, they gave to the river, what they called "Ganga bhet (गंगा भेट) *i.e.*, a gift, to the Ganges river, for the service which the river was going to do them by purifying them. For such a gift they threw a coin in the river. At some places on the ghauts, there were close by, a number of swimmers who dived and picked up the coins mixed up with mud. The *kunds* of Ram, Sita and Laxman were the principal places where coins were thrown as gifts to the river. Flowers also formed a kind of gift.

After the bath, the pilgrim generally drinks a handful or two of the sacred water. At the time when I visited Nasik, it was raining and the Godavari was running in torrents. The water was renewed every minute or every second at one place. So, perhaps, there was little danger to health. But when the current is very slow and pilgrims drink water from partly confined places where it has got impure by the washings of hundreds and thousands, it is no wonder if some epidemics like cholera follow. I was surprised to see pilgrims drinking from a small and shallow reservoir at Trim-bak, the source of the Godavari, 18 miles upwards, wherein a number of people took a dip with a view of getting a purification at the very source of the river which gave purification. But the faith of the pilgrims was, as it were, a preventive in itself.

We speak of faith-cures, but here, to a certain extent, were cases of faith-preventives.

Some bathers performed, after the bath, the Shrâdh, a funeral ceremony in honour of their deceased relatives. Those who wanted to do so, had, first, a bath in the river and then they came to the banks of the river and sat shivering before a priest. They did not dry their wet body with a towel. The ritual of the Shrâdh as seen on the occasion, was interesting, because a number of people, some of them strangers to one another sat down—not on any mat or carpet but on their feet as some do during their meals—in a line and the priest dictated the ritual. Each had the offering before him placed on a leaf. It consisted of what they called *pindas* which were small balls made of flour. For each deceased relative, in whose honour the pilgrim wished the ceremony to be performed, there was a separate *pinda*. These *pindas* were placed on large leaves of trees (*patrâvar*). Besides the *pindas*, which the pilgrims themselves prepared from a small quantity of flour supplied to them and with the water before them in their *lotas*, they had as offerings some *kunkun* (pigment), *halad* (turmeric) and a *pâvitrî*<sup>1</sup> (पवित्र). Again, each had a *lotâ* or water pot before him. The recital was dictated by the Brahmin priest in his Marathi vernacular. After dictating the recital of the prayer which was common for all, when the priest came to that part of the ritual, where each celebrant pilgrim had to mention the names of his deceased relatives, in whose honour he desired to perform the Shrâdh and for whom he had prepared a separate *pinda*, he halted, and asked each celebrant to mention the name of their deceased relatives. He said आपाया नाम जेवा, माईया नाम जेवा, काकाया नाम जेवा, आपाया आपाया नाम जेवा, etc., i.e., each may now recite the name of his deceased father

1 पवित्र pavitra "two blades of kusa grass used at sacrifices in purifying and sprinkling ghee; a ring of kusa grass worn on the fourth finger on certain religious occasions." (Apte).



or mother or uncle or grandfather. In case the above relatives were living, their names were not to be recited. So, he warned them, saying, if any of the above relatives were living, they were not to mention his or her name. Wherever in the ritual, the celebrants had to pour water from the water-pots on the offerings, he told them so. His long instructions ended with the words, *पैसा धेयुन देवा* i.e., Lay down the fees. One anna was generally the fee. Then, all laid down on the ground the fees of the priests. All the celebrants then made a *tillā* (a red pigment mark) on the forehead of the priest, and the priest in his turn made *tillās* on the foreheads of the celebrants. They all put on the *pāvitri* ring on their right hands.

During the celebration, he placed a *pavitri* ring on a finger of the right hand of each celebrant and said : " Pray, that God may give you prosperity (*barkat*) in your profession and work (*dhandhā*). " At the end of the whole ritual, he said with a loud voice : " Remember Balkrishna Mahadev, " i.e., he asked them to remember his name, so that, in case they came some other time on a pilgrimage, or sent their children or relatives they may try to find him out and become his clients. I saw a boy-priest of the age of about seven dictating the Shrādh prayer to a poor pilgrim. A few pice formed his fee.

In addition to the above fee for the Shradh, all paid according to their choice, some *dakshina* to the priest. They then went into the river again and threw the *pīndas* therein. They also offered some flowers to the river. Some offered milk also. They then had another bath. They took a drink of a handful of water, returned to the bank, clothed themselves and then went to visit the sacred shrines. The two peculiarities which I marked in this Shrādh ceremony were that it was performed in the language which they understood, and that it was performed by themselves under the guidance of the priests. These two good elements are wanting in the similar ritual of the Parsees.

Just as the Hindus have their *snâns* or religious baths, the Parsees have their *nâns*, which is the same Indian word with the first letter 's' dropped. All that I saw at, and after, the *snâns* on the banks of the Godavari reminded me of what I had seen as a boy and as a young man at the Jejeebhoy Dadabhoy Fire-temple at Colaba, during the Farvardêgân or Muktâd holidays, when pious Parsees thought it desirable to go through the *nân* bath or purification. When there was a large number of applicants, they were made to sit in one row, and the priest, with a loud voice, gave the necessary directions for chewing the pomegranate leaf and drinking the nirang.<sup>1</sup> Again boy-priests of the age of 11 or 12 were not rare among the Parsees in those days.

## VI.

I observed, that during the pilgrimage, some tin smiths, on the banks of the river, were doing some roaring business in preparing and sealing various kinds of tin-boxes. Not only did the pilgrims bathe in and drink the sacred water of the river but they carried it home in such tin-boxes. They purchased tin-boxes of various sizes from the tinmen, took them to the banks of the river, filled them with the water of the sacred river and returned with the boxes to the tinsmiths who then sealed them, so that water may be securely kept in them. I learnt on inquiry that such water, on being taken to their homes, was drunk with pious thoughts by those members of the family who could not go to the place of pilgrimage. This water was preserved by the family for 8 or 10 years and it was much sought after by neighbours and others of the village or town, in cases of extreme difficulties and illness, as a kind of charm or cure. Some drink it on death-bed to secure meritoriousness.

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<sup>1</sup> Vide my Paper on the Purification Ceremonies among the Parsees before this Society (Vol. XI pp. 169-85. Vide my book on the religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees, pp. 95-102).



When on a short visit a few years ago to the banks of the sacred Narbudda, to see the famous grand Banian tree, known as *Kabir vad* from the name of Kabir, the great devotional poet of Gujarat of the Bhakti School of belief, whose devotion to the Deity was associated with that place, I had heard, that there was a kind of regular traffic in such holy waters. There were some professional carriers of such water. They at times travelled on foot hundreds of miles from the place of pilgrimage carrying waters of the sacred streams or rivers. It was thought improper to carry such sacred water by Railways and such other ways of transit. The water is believed to preserve its religious efficacy if carried by a Hindu on foot without coming into contact with any non-Hindu.

It is not rare, even now, to see a Parsee man or woman carry small pots of water—the sacred water of Avân Ardvi-çura Anâhita from the shore of the great sea at Back-bay, to their homes—where others apply it to their eyes, and then the water is sprinkled in all parts of the house with a pious hope that it may bring good luck to the house. I fully well remember the days of my boyhood, when I accompanied my good mother to the seashore at Colaba. After our prayers, we brought home a small potful of the sea water and sprinkled it in all parts of our house. The efficacy attributed to the water reminds a Parsee of the efficacy, which was at one time attributed, and is even now attributed to some extent, by some to the *rakhyâ* or the ash of the sacred Fire of an Âtash Behrâm. When carried home, this ash was not drunk or eaten, but applied by the absent worshippers to their foreheads and even kept in their cupboards as something that may bring good luck.

## VII.

Among the various classes of people who attended the Nasik pilgrimage, it were the Sadhus who interested me most, because I had never seen this fraternity in such a large number anywhere as I saw there. Very few had made their own arrangements.

The Sadhus or  
Hindu Monks.

They did not care much for comforts. Some lived under the shelter of very small temporary huts which could give them only a little sleeping accommodation. Some had an umbrella-like tent-covering of their own. There were about three to four thousands of them at the pilgrimage, and most of them had camps of their own on the other bank of the river near Panchavati. The camps consisted of a variety of small tents or tent-like coverings. Various provinces had their own camps. The Baroda monks had even put up a sign-board of their own at the centre of their camp. Some of the monks were rich. They had estates and money of their own, but, for some reason or other, or with one thought or another, they took to monastic life and spent their money for their monk-brothers. I was told of one Sadhu from Upper India, that he had set apart a sum of about Rs. 20,000 to make all provisions for the monks of his district during this pilgrimage. In these camps, they had regular commissariat arrangement of their own. All the four great Hindu castes had Sadhus of their own. The Brahmin and Khshatri Sadhus put on *janoi*. The Sudra Sadhus had none.

During my college days I had studied the subject of the Christian monasteries as I had competed at the Elphinstone College for an Essay on "The Dissolution of the Monasteries in England." It was the interest created by that study, that had led me to visit some monasteries in Italy during my visit of Europe in 1887, and it was the same interest that had led me to spend long hours for some days together, at the three *gumpās* or monasteries of the Tibetan Lamas in and around the hill station of Darjeeling. I have submitted before the Society some of my impressions of what I saw and studied there in the form of three papers. It was with some interest that I had read some years ago Mr. J. C. Oman's "The Mystics, Ascetics and Saints of India," wherein the author has dwelt on the question of the influence of the monastic life of these classes on the religious, social,



intellectual, industrial and political life of India. According to this writer, nearly one-fourth of the population of the provinces of Bengal and Behar led an unproductive life like that of the above classes. In the North-Western provinces nearly one-tenth of the people led such a life. According to him, a handful of Englishmen ruled peacefully over the vast continent of India, because of the mildness of the great mass of the Hindu people, a mildness generated and influenced by the above ascetic classes. So, what interested me most at Nasik were the Sadhus in whose various camps on the other side of the Godavari, I spent an evening and a long morning, and in whose company on the hill of Nil-parvat near Trimbak I spent a few interesting hours. I will speak here at some length about what I saw of them in these camps, and of the various thoughts suggested to me by what I saw of them and what I heard from them.

The monastic orders seem to have grown as follows:—

The growth of  
Monastic orders.

At first, a person here and a person there thought of retiring from the world for one reason or another. He did so and passed his time in a kind of meditation. Then two or three such individuals happened to meet. They exchanged views and formed a small group at first. The group increased in numbers, and they formed a particular panth (५५) or order. Then, with the idea of disassociating themselves from worldly affairs, there came an idea of being of some use to the world. So, the group or the individual members of the group took to some kind of work *e.g.*, to teach. In the West, they began to teach as well as to attend the sick. Then they began to form larger groups and to live in one common place, the *math* or the monastery. The panths<sup>1</sup> or the groups so formed then chose one of themselves as a leader. Here, at the Nasik pilgrimage

<sup>1</sup> The word *panth* has given to the Parsees their words, *panthak* and *panthaki*. Panthak is the group of laymen to whose religious and spiritual wants a Parsee priest, called *panthaki*, attends.

most of the Sadhus belonged to some particular group or groups. Most of the groups were according to the districts or provinces from which they come.

In the East as well as in the West, the groups or *panths* of monks, headed by their leader have, at times, gone to war, mainly for what they took to be religious purposes. In the West, such groups of monks went as Crusaders to fight the Crusades for protecting the right of Christian pilgrims in Palestine. They thus founded the Military orders of monks. Some of the groups took to attending the wounded in the war in their war-hospitals. From there, they extended their sphere of usefulness to other hospitals and other fields for relieving distress. Thus, we see the rise of several orders like the Hospitallers, Friars, etc. The early Knights of Christendom were, to a certain extent, connected with such Hospitallers and other groups of monks. In the East, we find that the Tibetan monks, like their confrères of the West, take to fighting. The Tibetan chief Lamas, the Delai Lama and his colleague the Tashai Lama, are both the temporal and the spiritual heads of their monastic orders, and in their wars, with China and India, the Lama fraternity had taken to arms and formed large Lama armies.

Here, there were some Sadhus who drew our particular attention. (a) I saw a Sadhu, who had taken a vow not to speak a word for 17 or 19 years. He was spoken of there as a "mugo mûni," i.e., the dumb ascetic. He lived with a disciple in a small wretched hut on the left bank of the river. He took the above vow about five years ago. He expressed his thoughts by signs or wrote on a piece of paper or slate. In reply to my question, he wrote in Hindustani in beautiful hand in my note-book, that he came from پریای Prayag or Allahabad and had proposed to keep the above vow for بارہ برس یا چودا برس i.e., for 12 or 14 years. (b) I saw another Sadhu who sat and slept over



a board with pointed nails. The *kharâu* or the sandal which he put on, also had pointed nails. (c) A third Sadhu slept on a bed made up of *babul* thorns. (d) I saw a Sadhu at Tapvan, *i.e.*, the jungle (van) where Ram had gone through a long religious retreat (tap), who had hung himself head downwards from a tree, and, turning a rosary with one hand, was rocking himself by pulling with the other hand a string tied to a stone. There was a piece of cloth spread before all these Sadhus and the passing pilgrims laid their gifts of money, fruit, etc., on it.

The most peculiar kind of Sadhus whom I saw were the naked

Naked Sadhus. Sadhus at Trimbak, about 18 miles from

Nasik, where the Godavari takes its rise.

A large number of the pilgrims of Nasik go to this place also. It is no uncommon thing to see Sadhus and even others in India almost all naked with simply a *langoti*, covering the private part. But some Sadhus whom I saw at Trimbak on the hill of Nil-parvat (*i.e.*, the mountain (parvat) of sapphire (nil), so called, because they say that at one time sapphires were found there,) were stark naked. Their number was small. I saw about three or four. They moved about listlessly before the pilgrims of both sexes. The Sadhus who have taken this vow of going naked are spoken of as those of the class (*panth*) of the Digambars. There were many more on the hill at the time, who liked to come down the hill naked, to have their bath at the sacred stream which was the source of the Godavari, but they were prevented by the Police to come down the hill naked. This hill of Nil-parvat is a solitary hill and there are very few pilgrims who visit it. So nakedness is permitted, or rather winked at, upon this hill. It happened, that at the time when I visited the hill, there came up also the Inspector General of Police and other Government officials, and all the Sadhus on the hill grouped round them, soliciting permission to go down the hill naked. But it was firmly, though very politely, refused. I suggested, that the Sadhus

can raise a fund from among the pilgrims and put up a continuous screen of *kanât* on both the sides of the road of steps leading down from the hill to the bank of the stream down below, where they wanted to go naked for a bath. If they would do that, there would be no objection on the part of Government who had to look to the question of decency from the point of view of the public. They objected to this suggestion on the ground of expense as the screen may very likely cost about Rs. 3,000.

I was surprised to find among the above Sadhus, who pleaded for permission to go down the hill naked, one who was a graduate of an Indian University. In his way of dressing and living, he was like all the other Sadhus. The only difference which I could see was, that he put on his hand a wrist watch and had some Persian books with him. I had a long talk with him. He read pretty fluently from a book which was a Persian translation of the Gita. As it was several years since he had forsaken the world and was moving about among the Sadhus, he had parted with his command, whatever it was, over English and spoke it very incorrectly. I discussed with him the question of nakedness and expressed my surprise that an educated man like him, a graduate of an University, should ask for permission to move about naked. He said that he himself was not keen but a little indifferent on the subject, but he must preserve *esprit de corps* and plead for his *panth*. It is no wonder that it was so, when we find, that, even in advanced Christendom at present, we find, here and there, a distinct desire to stick to old forms, and observances. In a recent book named "Archaic England" we read: "Even to-day, after 2,000 years of Christian discipline, the clergy dare not in some districts interfere with the time-honoured tenets of their parishioners. In Normandy and Brittany the priests, against their inclination, are compelled to take part in pagan ceremonials, and in Spain, quite recently, an



archbishop has been nearly killed by his congregation for interdicting old customs."

One of our former Ex-presidents, a distinguished anthropologist, Mr. W. Crooke, has, in an issue of the last year of the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, written an interesting article entitled "Nudity in India in Custom and Ritual." Therein, he shows, that it is believed that some religious ceremonies and rites, if performed in a state of nudity have greater and better efficacy. Hence it is then, that the Sadhus on the Nil-parvat were anxious to be allowed to go down the hill naked to perform their *snân* or religious bath in the sacred waters of the river.

The Sadhus had their own castes and their own customs and manners. (a) The four principal Hindu Castes among Sadhus. castes had Sadhus of their own. The Brahmins and Kshatriya Sadhus only could put on *janoi*, not the Sudra Sadhus. Some for example, the Baishnu or Vishnu Sadhus kept beard but the Khâki Sadhus did not. The latter were so called, because they applied *khâk*, i.e., ashes or dust to their bodies. (b) They all had regular hours of meals. The principal dinner was spoken of by some as Râj-bhog,<sup>1</sup> i.e., kingly or big dinner. The breakfast or small dinner was called Bâl-bhog, i.e., small dinner, dinner of a *bâl* or *bâlak*, i.e., child. Some Sadhus were Falâdi Sadhus, i.e., they lived only on *fals* or fruits. They never ate any grain. (c) They had a variety in their dress and in their *âsans* or seats. (d) With some, a *chakra*, i.e., a metallic circlet, formed a part of their dress. They put it round their neck. (e) Various kinds of *dhajâ* or flags were seen in different camps. Every group spoken of as *akhâdâ* by some had its own *dhajâ*. (f) In one place I saw a Sadhu with a *chakki*, i.e., a grinding stone before him. People laid

<sup>1</sup> The word *bhog* means: "A feast, repast, banquet." This word and the word *bhoj* for *bhojan*, (भोजन), dinner, come from the same root *bhuj*, to eat.



offerings on it. When asked, why a grinding-stone should be an object of worship, I was told, that, as a grinding stone pounded flour for all, for the prince and the poor, so it was a worthy object of worship. Pride should be the last thing to be expected from the priestly class, but I observed the "pride of piety" in some of the chief Sadhus.

In various camps, the chief Sadhu of that camp, had a better class of tent where he made his *âsan* or priestly seat. The pilgrims paid their homages and laid offerings. Some rich pilgrims arranged with these heads, to give to the whole fraternity of that camp, or, in some cases, of more than one camp, free meals for one day. They made various inquiries and then settled the sum to be given to the head of that fraternity for that purpose. The amount varied by hundreds, according to the desire of the rich pilgrims to give a feast of ordinary meals or meals with sweets. I had the pleasure of watching the monks at one of their ordinary meals in the evening. Their general rule is that they should take their evening meal before it is dark.<sup>1</sup> They permitted none with shoes on, within their tents and at the place where they took their meals. So I had to observe them from some distance from their place of meals. They had their meals in an open space. They had no seats but they sat as it were on their own legs, in long rows. Each had his own *lotâ* or waterpot with him. They brought their own trays on which the cooks served them with rice and *dâl*, which were prepared in large cauldrons close by. When the rich pilgrims gave them free meals, they had extras like *puri* and other sweets according to the sums of money given by the pilgrims for the purpose. "Sitârâm, Sitârâm" was their word of grace before meals. The whole assembly shouted the word before beginning their meals.

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<sup>1</sup> That seems to be the custom of the priestly classes in other communities also. It is so in the case of Parsee priests engaged in particular long religious ceremonies. For example, those who are in the Ten



The Sadhus abstain from wine, but they indulge in other intoxicants like *bhâng* and *gânjâ*. On seeing *bhâng* being prepared near a respectable looking Sadhu with a large number of followers, I entered into some conversation with him, as to why they indulged in these drugs when they abstained from wine. The reason assigned was, that wine was prepared by other hands, while *bhâng* was prepared by their own hands. I questioned : " Why should a religious order like that of the Sadhus indulge in such intoxicating drugs ? " The answer was that *gânjâ* produced a kind of soothing cheerful intoxication which made them indulge in good and pious thoughts about God. From what I knew of the old Parsi point of view, the reply did not seem to me to be strange. When, according to the Pahlavi Viraf-nameh, Ardai Viraf, the Iranian Dante of the Sassanian times, was proposed to be asked to have a vision of Heaven and Hell, he was given to drink *mang*, which was a drink like that of *bhâng*. Zoroastrian writings do not speak of prohibition. A moderate drink of wine is permitted. It is said in a Pahlavi book, that if one drinks a little wine with *humata*, *hukhta* and *hvrashta*, i.e., with a view to indulge in good thoughts, good words and good deeds, that is permissible.<sup>1</sup> As among the Christians, so among the Parsees, wine is used as a symbol in religious ritual.

The order of female monks or nuns does not seem to be as large in the East as in the West. We have some female monks of this kind. I saw two such with two Sadhus, who lived in detached huts separated from the camps of the monks. On having asked who they were, I was told that they were their *chelis*, i.e., disciples. Besides the above two, I saw two other Sadhvis or

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Nights' Ritual of the Bareshnûm or those who are engaged in the long Nirangdin Ceremony lasting for about 18 days, and even the boy-initiates who go through their Navarhood for being initiated as priests, are all required to take their evening meal before it is dark.

<sup>1</sup> Vide my Paper on " Wine among the Ancient Persians."

female monks, all alone, as pilgrims. They were peculiarly dressed and talked very intelligently. In some monastic institutions of the West, women were kept out altogether, to keep away temptation. But there were, and even now there are, some institutions where male and female (nun) monks lived together in the same monastery in the holy bonds of chastity.

This subject of the female monks reminds me of what I saw in the Buddhist monasteries near Darjeeling some years ago. It is expected that the Lamas should lead a life of celibacy. Seeing women in the company of some chief Lamas in two of the monasteries there, I was told, that they were female monks and were called *annas*. They lived as wives with the monks. On being asked why was that, as they were enjoined to lead a life of celibacy, their reply was: "We are asked not to marry. We are not married but we have kept them." Another instance of observing religious precepts in their letter but not in their spirit, was what I observed in the monastery below Lebang in Darjeeling. Moving about at the back of the *gumpâ*, I was startled to see a meat-safe and a piece of beef in it. Buddhist books have forbidden to kill animals. So, asking the reason of their eating beef, I was told: "We are told: 'Do not kill.' We do not kill, but eat what is killed by others."

One of the things that struck me most among several *Sadhus* was their extraordinary long hair. An old *Sadhu*, who said he was about 100 years of age, had his long hair twisted into 12 rows or curls which were from 8 to 10 feet long. These they wound round their heads forming something like a turban. Some ladies take special care of their hair and take pride in their length, but one would never see their hair so long. On being asked the reason, the monks said that they never combed the hair. Then in that case they should produce filth

*Sadhus and their long Hair.*



and insects ! The reply was, No. They applied ash on the head and that kept off insects.

It seems that to keep hair is a custom for the priestly class among many religious communities. It is so among the Parsees. A Parsee initiate for Nâvarhood, the first grade of priesthood, is required to let his hair grow long for some months before his initiation. Shaving is prohibited among Parsee priests. They may occasionally cut the hair but never shave. They must keep beards. When they cut the hair, they do it themselves. They do not get them cut by barbers. When one who had entered into priesthood, left his profession, he got his head shaved by a barber and that was taken to be a signification of his having left his sacerdotal profession. Upto a few years ago, to say of a priest, ફલાણુએ માથું બોરાવી નાખ્યું છે, i.e., "such and such a priest has got his head shaved," meant : "He has given up priesthood."

I was surprised to see in the tent of two or three Sadhus Indian gymnastic instruments of various kinds. I enquired why should they be so much careful for their *body* ? There was an appropriate reply, that they preserved good health by gymnastics and good health was necessary for a religious life so that they may always be in a fit condition to pray to their God. I was at once reminded of one of the principal teachings of Zoroastrianism, about which Rev. Dr. Casartelli very properly said : "*La maxime mens sana in corpore sano* a toujours été un des dictions favoris du Mazdéisme" i.e., "the maxim '*mens sana in corpore sano*' has always been one of the favourite sayings of Mazdaïsm."

The possession of gymnastic instruments by some *sadhus*, and what, later on, I saw led me to the thought, that in the midst of their so-called unworldliness, there was a good deal of worldliness, not often of the best type. One morning, I was surprised to see a number of men of an Ambulance corps treating a number of wounded *sadhus* in one of the camps.

It was a result of a free fight among some who went from words to blows. In such conflicts, perhaps, the gymnastics of those who practised them helped them much. Worldliness and unworldliness may, at times, become relative words. If one likes, he can become one of the most unworldly men in the midst of all apparent worldliness and pomp. Such was the case with Janaka, a great king, who, in the midst of the so-called pomp of a royal court, led a pious unworldly life.

Almost all Sadhus had some rosaries of one kind or another in their hands. Some of the rosaries were  
 Sadhus and their Rosaries. unusually long, as they contained 1,000 beads of the wood of the sacred Tulsi plant.

I have spoken at some length before this Society on the subject in my paper <sup>1</sup> on Rosaries, suggested by what I saw in the *Gumpās* or monasteries of the Tibetan Lamas round about Darjeeling.

I saw mirrors of different sizes on the *āsans*, i.e., seats of various monks. Mirrors play a prominent part in  
 Sadhus and their Mirrors. the ritual of the Japanese, Chinese and Hindus. The Sadhus look into the mirrors after their bath and during a part of the ritual. They say, that by looking their *svarup* (स्वरूप), their own features in the mirror, they think, as it were, of the features of God, of his characteristics and powers. On the bathing *ghats* on the banks of the Hugli at Calcutta, and, at times on the ghats of our Back Bay, on holidays, I have seen Brahmins showing mirrors to their worshippers after the application of the usual required things on their forehead. It seems, that at first, from being a requisite for bath purposes, the mirror has latterly become an article of religious apparatus. It is said that the religious signification of a mirror among some Japanese is something like this: "If on looking into a mirror, you find your face wanting in physical beauty, try to make up for the deficiency by intellectual and spiritual beauty. If you find it

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay of 1913. Vide my Anthropological Papers, Part II, pp. 92-109.



to your satisfaction as possessing some beauty, try to see that the impression created by that physical beauty is no way spoilt by some defects in the beauty of your mind, the beauty of your head and heart."

The ways in which people of different communities *salâm* one another, *i.e.*, show courtesy and respect to one another, present many a thought to students of cultural Anthropology. Many such thoughts leaped into my mind, when I visited the monks in their various camps at Nasik and on the above-mentioned hill of Nil-parvat. These ways differed in degree from the use of hands in various ways to the various gestures of head and to the prostration at full length on the ground. The procedure at Nil-parvat was very peculiar. They laid down their head at the feet of the superior five times in a peculiar way. At first, they sat on their knees, then stooped down and then touched the feet of the superior. Dr. Sven Hedin tells us in one of his books of travels in the Himalayas, that some pilgrims to the shrines of Man Sarovar take a vow to go round the lake in a prostrating position. The pilgrim at first lies down, then gets up and walks up only upto the place which his head or his extended hands after prostration reach and lies down again. In this way, the pilgrim takes a number of days to finish his round. I remember seeing a Hindu lady coming from the Colaba village to the seashore at Cuffe parade in this way of prostrating posture. I learnt, that she had taken a vow to give offering to the sea, advancing in this posture, if her son recovered from an attack of small-pox. The son recovered and she fulfilled her vow and went to the seashore, in a procession with Indian music, going all the way in the above lying posture.

The higher class of Sadhus do not receive alms or gifts from us personally in kind. When at the end of a long interesting talk with a Sadhu, Alms to the Sadhus. I extended my hand to give him some money gift it was not accepted, and I was told, that I must

not hand it in his hand but place it down on the ground before him. It is considered *infra dig* by them to accept it in their hands. This explains, why I saw a piece of cloth placed before many Sadhus. The pilgrims placed on the cloth their offerings in cash and kind.

This custom suggests to us many a thought as to how several social manners and customs pass on from the dignitaries of the Church to the dignitaries of the Court and Society. The Oriental Court-custom of holding *nazars* before Royal princes and personages, is an example of this kind. These *nazars* are not handed but held before them. I had observed in the Court of H. H. the Maharaja of Cashmere, that those who were accorded the honour of an interview had to hold a *nazar* before His Highness, and that on a piece of cloth, *e.g.*, an handkerchief held in one hand. When a Parsee priest placed on the Sacred fire of an Atash Behram the offering of sandalwood presented by the worshippers, he is required to do so with a covered hand. He puts on gloves in his hand before doing so. The Sacred Fire also is spoken of as Atash Behram *pâdshah*, *i.e.*, Atash Behram the King. From the Church and the State, the practice has crept into Society. The domestics in well-conducted hotels or houses are expected to hand you money or small things not in your hands but on a piece of plate, etc.

It is not only pilgrims that offer gifts of money to the Sadhus, but the Sadhus of a lower grade, when they go to see the Sadhus of higher grades, offer their *nazars* or gifts. I saw at Nil-parvat, that when a number of Sadhus came to pay their homage to the head of their order, they placed before him gifts according to their means. They speak of three kinds of Durbars or Courts in this order :—1. Râj-darbâr, *i.e.*, the court of Kings. 2. Dev-darbar or the court or the seats of their gods and goddesses, *i.e.*, their temples and shrines, and 3. Guru-darbars, *i.e.*, the courts or seats of their gûrûs or spiritual leaders. All these courts require some gifts when you visit them. So, when you go to the Court of your ruler,



to your temple or shrine or to your spiritual leader, you must present a *nazar* or gift.

I have described above some of the customs and eccentricities of the Sadhus as observed in their camps at Nasik. This reminds us of the monastic institutions of the West, which also have their own customs. Mr. Workmann's "Evolution of the Monastic ideal" gives us an interesting and instructive idea of these. The final aim or ideal which we see at the bottom is, that of an "yearning of self-surrender." We find, that with that idea before them, some of the monastic institutions of the West try to keep off temptation as far as possible. In this case, there seems to lie some difference between the East and the West. Here in the East, the Sadhus move about freely in the world even in the midst of temptations. At Nil-parvat near Trimbak, where there lived some naked monks, there went some female pilgrims also, and the naked monks moved about as if there was nothing extraordinary. They seemed to have commanded complete control over themselves in the midst of temptations. On the other hand, we read that in some of the monasteries of the West, in order to keep off all temptations from before the monks, the entrance of women within the limits of the monasteries is altogether prohibited. Not only women, but also animals of the female sex. For example, one can take in, he-goats, cocks, dogs and such other animals of the male sex but not she-goats, hens, bitches and such other animals of the female sex. That is an attempt to keep off temptation with, as it were, a vengeance. They say, that some monks there take themselves as polluted if they touch a woman, even by an accident. It is said of a monk there, that he had not seen a woman for 50 years. When at the end of 50 years, he visited, with the permission of the head of his institution, his sister, he did so with bandages upon his eyes. He talked with her but did not see her. Such are some of the extreme eccentricities of the Christian monastic institutions of the West.

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