

THE BABY LANGUAGE AMONG THE PARSEES.¹

The subject of this brief Note is suggested to me by an interesting monograph on the Lhota Nagas by Mr. J. P. Mills (I. C. S.), wherein the author gives at the end of the book, at the close of the chapter on the language of the tribes, a brief para, headed as "Baby Language." He says: "An English mother who says to her baby 'Didums wantums bottleums denums?' uses language sufficiently like that in ordinary use to be intelligible to a mere bachelor, but the Lhotas have a curious custom, when addressing small children, of using words, which are in no way connected with the speech of every day life." Mr. Mills then gives a few instances and adds: "The origin of this baby dialect is unknown but it is noticeable that the Aos use almost identical words in addressing their children."²

Babies among all people seem to have two kinds of languages. The one is the kind of mute language which they utter both in their smiles and cries. It is this kind of language which Christ refers to in the New Testament (St. Mathew XXI. 16), when he says: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."³

But there is another kind of "Babies' Language" spoken by the babies when they begin to prater. They learn it easily from their mother's lips and it is this language which, as it were, forms the ground work of their attempts to speak.

¹ This paper was read before the Anthropological Section of the eleventh Indian Science Congress held at Bangalore in January 1924. Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, Vol. XIII, No. 5, pp. 410-11.

² The Lhota Nagas by J. P. Mills, (1922) p. 225.

³ "15 When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased.

16 And said unto him, "Hearest thou what these say?" And Jesus saith unto them, 'Yea; have ye never read: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' (Mathew XXI. 15, 16).

I give here few words of the "Baby-language" of the Parsees.. It will be interesting for the sake of comparison, if members of other communities will collect words of the Baby-language of their people. I give the words in Gujarati with their transliteration and translation.*

	<i>Words.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>
ગો ગો	go go	Medicine.
મામ-મામ	Mâm Mâm	Water.
તુ તુ	Tu tu	Dog.
મ્યાંઉ	Myâu	Cat.
બાઉ	Bâu	Some frightening thing.
બમ-બમ	Bham-bham	Drum.
તન-તન	Tan-tan	Coins. Money.
ચો-ચો	Cho-cho	
તી-તી	Ti-ti	Hen.
ચાઇ-ચાઇ	Châi-châi	Toy or any fine thing.
પા-પા	Pâ-pâ	Bread.
ટિક-ટિક	Tick-tick	Watch.
મં મં	Mê mê	Goat
જી-ઝો	Ji-o	To sleep.
આખુ	Âkhu	Call of nature.
છી	Chi	Filth.
બુ-બુ	Bhu-bhu	Bath.
અપા	Appâ	To eat.
હાટ-હુસ	Hât-hus	This word is used to remove away a thing.
ખાઉ-ખાઉ	Khâu-khâu	Eatables.
હેલે-માલી	Hêlê-mâli	Used to express some kind of movement.
બમ	Bham	Fall.

As said by Mr. Mills in the case of the Baby-language of the Lhota Nagas, the origin of the Parsee Baby-language also cannot be well traced. But some of the words may be taken as onomatopoeic, e.g., Tick-tick (watch), Ti-ti (hen), Mê-mê (goat).