The Naojote ceremony of the Parsees

Modi Jivanji Jamshedji
Title: The Naojote ceremony of the Parsees

Author: Modi Jivanji Jamshedji

This is an exact replica of a book. The book reprint was manually improved by a team of professionals, as opposed to automatic/OCR processes used by some companies. However, the book may still have imperfections such as missing pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were a part of the original text. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections which can not be improved, and hope you will enjoy reading this book.
THE NAOJOTE CEREMONY
OF
THE PARSEES
BY
JIVANJI JAMSHEDJI MODI, B. A., PH. D.

Küstik...dakhshak-i Yazdán bôndakih nîshân
-idin fardân barashnih.

(Dâdistân-i Dinik, Chap. XXXIX, 32)
The sacred thread is a token of the service of the
Yazatas and a sign of following the command-
ments of Religion.

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

Second Edition

BOMBAY,
1914
PRINTED AT THE
“Fort Printing Press,” By J. V. Minezes,
No. 1 Parsee Bazar Street, Fort, Bombay.

FOR
Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B.A.
Mithi Lodge, Colaba.
To
THE SETH JEJEEBHOOY DADABHOY FAMILY
AS
A TOKEN OF RESPECT AND GRATITUDE
FOR THE FOUNDER OF THE FAMILY
AND AS
A SOUVENIR OF THE SEVERAL OCCASIONS
ON WHICH I HAD THE PLEASURE OF
INITIATING SEVERAL YOUNG
MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY
INTO THE FOLD.
A FOREWORD

This paper is the result of a short study for a monograph on the subject of Naajote. Many a Parsee, now-a-days, invites non- Parsee guests to witness the ceremony; and so, a small brochure of this kind explaining the ceremony, is in demand. It is especially the second part of the paper that will be of some use for the purpose.
## CONTENTS

I.—Signification of the Ceremony.
- Naojote, the Initiation of the Parsee child into the fold of Zoroastrianism   1
- Meaning of the word Naojote   1
- A child's age for the ceremony   2
- The sacred bath   3
- Preparations for the ceremony   4

II.—The Ceremony proper of the Investiture.
- The Recital of the Patet   5
- The Investiture proper   6
- 1. The Declaration of Faith and the Investiture with the Shirt   6
- 2. The Investiture with the Sacred Thread and the Recital of its Prayer   7
- 3. The Recital of the Articles of Faith by the Child   7
- 4. The recital of the Tan-daručti or Benediction   8

III.—The Symbolism of the Sacred Shirt and Thread.
- Sudreh. Meaning of the word   10
- The structure of the shirt   10
- The Gireh-bān of the shirt   11
- Kusti. Meaning of the word   12
- Kusti. Its structure and preparation   13
- Symbolism and signification of the structure of the Kusti   13
- Kusti, a symbol from very ancient times   15
- Kusti, when to be tied and untied   15
- How to put on the Kusti   16
- Signification of the knots   16
- Kusti to be put on the waist   17
- Symbolic signification of tying the Kusti on the waist   17
THE NAOJOTE CEREMONY
OF THE PARSEEES.

I

SIGNIFICATION OF THE CEREMONY.

The initiation of a Parsee child into the fold of the Zoroastrian religion is known as Naojote. The ceremony of the initiation consists of the investiture of the child with a sacred shirt called *sudrah* and a sacred thread called *kusti*. A Zoroastrian may put on any dress he likes, but he must put on the sacred shirt and the thread as the symbol and badge of his religion.

The word Naojote is made up of two words Nao (Avesta, *nava* ; Sans. *nava* ; Lat. *novus*) new and Zote (Avesta *zaotar* from *zu*, Sans. *hu* to offer prayers) one who offers prayers. Hence, the word would mean a new initiate to offer Zoroastrian prayers. The ceremony is so named, because it is after its performance that a Zoroastrian child is said to be responsible for the duty of offering prayers and observing religious customs and rites as a Zoroastrian. The ceremony of Naojote among the Parsees, corresponds to that of ' Confirmation' among the Christians.
Seven is the age, at which it is enjoined to initiate a child. According to Herodotus (Bk. I, 136) and Strabo (Bk. XV, Chap. III, 18), the ancient Irânians commenced the education of their children at the age of five. It seems, that a part of that education was religious education, which prepared them for the ceremony of the investiture. Plato (First Alcibiades, 37) gives the age of education as seven. This, then, must be the regular age of the commencement of secular education after the Naojote ceremony. The Vendidad (Chap. XV, 45) and the Dinkard (Vol., IV, Chap. 170) support Plato’s statement.

In case a child is not sufficiently intelligent to understand the ceremony and to know its responsibilities, and in the case of some other unavoidable causes, it is permitted, that the ceremony may be postponed to any age up to fifteen, at which age the investiture must take place. A Zoroastrian without the sacred shirt and thread after the age of fifteen is supposed to be out of the fold and likely to fall into evil paths (Vendidad XVIII, 54). The Sad-dar (Chap. X, 1) says, that "It is incumbent on all those of the good religion, women and men, every one who attains to fifteen years, to wear the sacred thread girdle, because the sacred thread-girdle is to be a girding of the loins and to preserve obedience to the Lord." If

---