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Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The People of India, Volume Five

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The Jogis figured in No. 205, Vol. IV., as snake exhibitors, must not be confounded with Jogis who are spiritual devotees, of whom the man represented in the Photograph is one. Jogis are of a higher grade, as devotees, than the Bairagees hereafter illustrated; they never, or rarely, enter secular occupations, never marry, and are under vows of celibacy, mortification, seclusion, and often of silence. Sometimes they are found migratory, or itinerant; in other cases they select some secluded situation, and remain there in daily penance, meditation, and prayer, ministered to by disciples, or by the people around them. They rarely eat cooked food; milk, butter, curds, with parched rice or coarse sweetmeats, the offerings of the people, being what they subsist on. Like Bairagees, Gosais, and other religious devotees, Jogis are of all castes, but more usually the higher than the lower, and it is by no means uncommon for a Brahmin to adopt the vows of a Jogi, and to devote himself to a life of abstraction and penance. Like the Bairagees, the penances of the Jogis are often of a fearful kind, and exceed in severity those of any other devotees: distorted members, stiffened arms and fingers, nails growing through the hand, sitting surrounded by fire in the sun, or standing for hours in the coldest water all are practised by them.

The institution of Jogi or Yogi-ism is very ancient, and was matured in the abstruse and meditative philosophy of Patanjula, the head of one of the great metaphysical schools of Hindoo faith. To be a Yogi involves restraints of the mind, accomplished by internal meditation. The mind thus gradually loses its secularity, and becomes absorbed in the divine essence. Should it fail, the being sought to be worshipped becomes secular. This restraint of the mind is called Yoga, and is of two kinds - meditative and non-meditative. By perfection in the first, the second is obtained, which is the highest condition of absorption, and which needs no adventitious assistance. The great object to be obtained is the separation of matter and spirit. When the spirit has thrown off all perception, or hindrance of matter - and only then - it becomes full of joy; the mind needs

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