



AIRYAMAN IŠYA

AIRYAMAN IŠYA, Gathic Avestan prayer (named from its opening words, *ā airyāmā išyō*) of *Y.* 54.1. etc. It may originally have been intended to summon a hypostasis of the power of the tribe (*airyaman*) to safeguard the Zarathushtrian community. It may be translated: “May the desirable Airyaman come for protection / for both the men and the women of Zarathuštra / for the protection of Good Mind. Whichever Conscience will merit a precious reward / I ask for the desirable recompense of Truth, which Ahura Mazdā will apportion.” With the rapid assimilation of the prophet’s doctrine to traditional Aryan religion, however, the prayer came to be used as a formula invoking the god of healing, *Airyaman*.

Since physical ills and spiritual evil were regarded as having the same source, while healing by incantation was the highest form of medical art (*Yt.* 3.6), the *airyaman* prayer acquired special status in the religion. It was employed against “all sickness and death, all sorcerers and witches, all whores belonging to the Lie” (*Vd.* 20.12) and revered as “mighty, victorious, counteracting hostility, greatest of the utterances of Aša” (*Y.* 54.2). Like the *ahunwar*, it has power to arouse good thoughts, words, and deeds and thus overcome evil (*Vispered* 24.0-2). The specific reference to this prayer in *Yt.* 3.5 may be a late addition to a text intended to exalt formulae in general (cf. the Pahlavi translation, *Zand ī Xwurdag Abestāg*, ed. B. N. Dhabhar, Bombay, 1927, pp. 101-02). The Avestan Fragment 4, probably from *fragard* 23 of the *Varštmanšr nask* (cf. *Dk.* [Sanjana] 9.45.1), attributes use of the *airyaman* formula to the future Saviors; by means of it, Ahura Mazdā is master and Angra Mainyu



deprived of sovereignty. This *fragard* was titled Ermān (i.e., Airyaman), as were two others. *Sūdgar* 22 (*Dk.* 9.2) was similarly eschatological; it related Kay Kūšrow's encounter with the god Wāy and meeting with the savior Sōšāns at the fulfillment of the Renovation. *Bag* 22 dealt more precisely with the prayer itself, relating it to the conclusion of *Y.* 53 (*Dk.* 9.45). The exorcising power of the prayer thus endured in Zoroastrianism. Manučīhr, in his discussion of the *baršnūm* rite, notes its importance by quoting a question of Zardošt to Ohrmazd: "How shall I purify as long as there is not (recited) the *airyeme* (i.e., *airyaman* formula)?" (*Epistles*, Bombay, 1912, 1.7.10). In modern Zoroastrianism the prayer continues to be recited, apart from its context in the *Yasna*, as part of the Ašīrvad, the matrimonial blessing (Modi, *Ceremonies*, p. 37).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See B. Schlerath, *Awesta-Wörterbuch*, Wiesbaden, 1968, I, pp. 109-10; II, p. 35, for philological references.