



ĀŠIRVĀD

ĀŠIRVĀD, “blessing, benediction” (Skt. *āśir-vāda*) in Gujarati (called *payvand-nāma* in Persian), a set of prayers and admonitions recited by the two officiating Parsi priests in the Zoroastrian marriage ceremony. It follows the actual marriage vows (*paymānī*, consisting of the priests’ questions and the couple’s response), which are recited before the witnesses three times; and it completes the solemn part of the ceremony. The *āširvād* is divisible into a set of exhortations directed to the couple and a blessing of some length which invokes the beneficence of the Amahraspands and other *yazds*. In Parsi usage the *paymānī* and *āširvād* are recited in Pazand and then repeated in Sanskrit. The latter is followed by three passages from the Avesta (*Yasna* 59.30-31, 54.1, 68.11), the Pazand *Āfrīn ī wuzurgān* (Blessing of the ancestors), and the *Do’ā-ye paymānī* (a well-wishing to the married couple).

According to tradition (see Modi, *Ceremonies*, p. 39), when the Parsis settled in Sanjan, they promised the “Jādi Rānā” to celebrate their weddings after sunset and to conduct the service in the Indian language, i.e., Sanskrit. Until recently the *āširvād* ceremony was performed twice, once after sunset and again early in the Ušahīn Gāh (dawn day-division), about 2 a.m. Sunset remains the usual time of the ceremony, in contrast to Irani Zoroastrian usage, which prefers the morning.

The Pazand text of the *āširvād* is edited in E. K. Antia, *Pazand Texts*, Bombay, 1909, p. 112ff. Cf. a Pahlavi version of it in B. N. Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khūrtak Avistāk*, Bombay, 1927, p. 217ff. A transcription of the Pazand text in Gujarati characters appears, with English and Gujarati translations, in P. S. Masani,



Pazand Prayers Series, no. 2, Bombay, 1920; another English translation is given by Modi, op. cit., pp. 35-39. For the Sanskrit version, see S. B. Bharucha, *Collected Sanskrit Works of the Parsis I*, Bombay, 1906, pp. 42-48.

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Cf. also D. N. MacKenzie and A. Perikhanian, "The Model Marriage Contract in Pahlavi," *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 103-09.

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