



ĀTAŠ NIYĀYIŠN

ĀTAŠ NIYĀYIŠN, the fifth in a group of five Zoroastrian prayers (*niyāyišn*), which is addressed to fire and its divinity (see *ādur*). It has seventeen “verses” or sections, and like almost all Avestan texts is a composite work. *ĀNy.* 7-16 corresponds to *Y.* 62.1-10, a part of the *yasna* service which is devoted to the veneration of fire. The complete *ĀNy.* is found in the *Ḳorda Avesta* (q.v.), since it is regularly recited during private prayers by both laity and priests. It is also said while tending a fire, whether a hearth or a temple one.

The opening and closing sections of *ĀNy.* consist of verses from Zoroaster’s *Gāthās*, i.e., *ĀNy.* 1-3 = *Y.* 33.12-14, *ĀNy.* 17 = *Y.* 34.4. These sections are not found in *Y.* 62, presumably because the entire *Gāthās* have been recited earlier in the *yasna* liturgy. There are sections of *ĀNy.*, i.e., vv. 7, 13, and 16, which are addressed specifically to the hearth fire, and which may be older in content than the *Gāthās*, although the language is Younger Avestan. It seems reasonable to conjecture that in its earliest form the *ĀNy.* consisted of these apparently very ancient verses enclosed by those from the *Gāthās*, the whole forming a brief liturgy to accompany the regular offerings made to fire (see *ātaš-zōhr*). On this conjecture, the incorporation of most of the *ĀNy.* into *Y.* 62 would be a secondary development, as would the general devotional use of the text.

In its existing form *ĀNy.* includes such generally recurring elements as the short profession of faith (see *fravarāne*) and the prayer appropriate to the time of day (*gāh*), both in v. 4. It also embodies the *xšnūman* or ritual dedication to *Ātar*, vv. 5-6, which corresponds to *Sīrōza* 1.9. Several other verses contain



petitions to Fire. Some, being strikingly defective in grammar, are clearly late.

A Pahlavi translation of the Avestan text, with glosses, is assigned to the late Sasanian period. In glosses on vv. 5-6 the references to Fire, son of Ahura Mazdā, and to X^varənah; to Mount Asnavant; and to Mount Raēvant, are interpreted as referring respectively to Ādur Farnbāg, Ādur Gušnasp and Ādur Burzēn-mihr, the three greatest sacred fires of that epoch. The Avestan verses are accordingly held by priests to express veneration for these three fires. A Sanskrit rendering of the ĀNy., based mainly on the Pahlavi but with occasional direct use of the Avestan text, was made about A.D. 1200 by the Parsi priestly scholar, Neryosang Dhaval (q.v.). A Persian translation was made from the Pahlavi sometime between 1600 and 1800, and a Gujarati one in 1818.

In making the offerings to a temple fire of the lowest grade, a Dādgāh fire, a single ĀNy. suffices, as it does for offerings to a hearth fire. For those to an Ātaš-e Ādorān Parsi priests recite three ĀNy., while for those to an Ātaš Bahrām they vary the number according to the watch (*gāh*), i.e. eleven in Hāvan Gāh; nine in Rapiθwin/Second Hāvan; seven in Uzērin and Aiwisrūθrim; and nine in Ušahin. In general, it is declared that anyone unable to recite the ĀNy. can acquire the same merit by saying the *Ahunwar* sixty-five times.

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