



GŌŠURUN

GŌŠURUN, the Pahlavi name for the soul of the Sole-created Bull (*Gāw i ēwdād*, q.v.). The name itself derives from *gəuš uruuan-* (the soul of the Cow) and refers to the figure of the archetypal Cow who is at the center of a religio-literary theme that has reflexes in both Iranian and Old Indian literature; it is generally referred to as the “Cow’s lament.” The variants all have as their core the theme of the Cow who laments her mistreatment at the hands of violent men and her lack of an adequate protector, her protector being often a priest. Zarathushtra used this theme in his famous hymn, *Yasna* 29, to express his precarious position in respect to the religious vision (*daēnā*, see *deún*), which he was mandated by Ahura Mazdā to promote. While little is said concerning the nature of the *Gəuš Uruuan* in the Avesta, the Pahlavi books are fairly rich in details. There, according to the standard cosmogony, Ohrmazd created the Sole-created Bull as the fifth of his six material creations, it being followed by *Gayōmart* (q.v.) as the final creation. Together, the semen of the Bull and of *Gayō-mart* were destined to become the seed of cattle and humans respectively (*Bundahišn* 22.1 ff.). According to the *Bundahišn* (46.3 ff.), when *Ahriman* (q.v.) invaded the material world, he killed first the Bull then *Gayōmart*. As the Bull fell upon his right side, “*Gōš-urun*, as the soul of the Sole-created Bull, came out of the body of the Bull.” Then, in words reminiscent of but not clearly derived from Zarathushtra’s hymn, “she lamented to Ohrmazd . . . ‘To whom did you entrust the authority over the creation, when destruction lies upon the Earth, the Plant is dry [and] Water is afflicted? Where might that man be of whom you said, ‘I shall create [him] so that he may proclaim protection?’” And Ohrmazd said, ‘You are sick, *Gōšurun*,



from the Evil Spirit and you are bearing the illness and malice of the demons. If it were possible to create that man at this time, this oppression of the Evil Spirit would not exist’.” Dissatisfied with Ohrmazd’s response, Gōšurun then goes lamenting through the star, moon, and sun stations of Heaven until Ohrmazd “showed [her] the *frawahr* (q.v.) of Zardušt [saying] ‘I shall give him to the world, [him] who will proclaim protection’.” Unlike Zarathushtra’s Gəuš Uruuan, who protests against a priestly protector, “Gōšurun was content and acquiesced [saying], ‘I shall nourish creatures,’ and agreed [saying], ‘I should be created back to the world in livestock (*gōspand*)’.” A similar account is given in Book 9 of the *Dēnkard* in the summary of the Warštmānsar (ed. Madan, 825.15 ff.), where the consequences of Gōšurun’s decision to be incarnated in the material world (*gētīg*) are enumerated. In addition to the suffering to be endured from the demons, cattle will be consumed, after proper ritual slaughter, by humans. Thus, in return for their solicitous treatment of her, she agrees, according to Ohrmazd’s plan, to become an instrument for the aid of humans against the Evil Spirit.

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