



## PURSIŠNĪHĀ

**PURSIŠNĪHĀ** (Questions), a collection of 59 questions and answers in Avestan and Middle Persian relating to matters of Zoroastrian religion. In support of the answers, the text includes fragmentary Avestan quotations, which are the main claim to fame of these questions. The title *Pursišnīhā* comes from the first word of the superscription in manuscript TD2. As in the case of many other Zoroastrian texts, there is no mention of the names of the author/compiler of the text, the person who poses the questions, or the one who answers.

Questions are on a variety of subjects: religious rituals (questions 1, 9-11, 19, 21, 22, 28-32, 37); religious law (8, 25, 26, 40, 41, 46, 47, 50, 53-57, 59); wisdom and moral edicts, which pertain to the genre of wisdom literature; good deeds and sins (3-7, 12-18, 20, 23, 24, 27, 33, 35, 36, 39, 42-45, 48, 49, 51, 52, 58); and questions about the afterlife (2, 34, 38). The answers generally follow the pattern of a short answer in Middle Persian, a supporting Avestan text, and the Middle Persian version of this with occasional words in Pāzand, which are sometimes accompanied with glosses. The style of the text is simple, and the Middle Persian is late. Questions range from the direct:

Question 52

*kē ahlāyēnidār ēg-iš pad mēnōyān mizd pādāšn az kū dahēnd  
az ān ī wahman dahišn*

*ašātcīt hacā vanhāuš dazdā \*az ahlāyīh čēgām-iz-ēw ān-iš ī vohuman  
dahišn*



(If) one is the practiser of righteousness, then from what do they (Ohrmazd, Vohuman, Ardibehešt) give him reward and recompense in the spiritual (world)?

From the gift of Vohuman.

*On account of [any] righteousness whatsoever, that of the Good is given.*

From any righteousness whatsoever, that which is the gift of Vohuman.

(Jamaspasa and Humbach, ed. 1971, pp. 74-75).

to the wordy, long, and convoluted:

#### Question 31

(If there is) a man who orders to perform many Yašts and Yazišns, and that prayer, praise, worship and invocation of the Yazats all with one and the same kind of Avesta recitation: When (the priests have) to recite the [Avesta](#) at one time [the Yazišn is performed properly (when) during the same day and the same (day-)time he completes that same Yazišn], and secondly when they (have) to perform other (ceremonies like) the Myazd [see [DRŌN](#)] and glorification of many recitings, for what reason do the good ones (i.e., the Yazats) not become troubled and grievous by that supreme Yazišn, hearing and [Āfrīn](#)-reciprocating, and why does it not appear tedious to them?

(Jamaspasa and Humbach, ed. 1971, 48-49)

The Avestan fragments in *Pursišnīhā* were first edited and published by [James Darmesteter](#), designated as Fragments [Tahmuras](#) (1892-93, III, pp. 53-77; 1898, I, pp. 275-299); [B. T. Anklesaria](#) published the Avestan text of the first 44 questions (1925, pp. 331-44); [Ch. Bartholomae](#) used the lexical material of the text in his *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (1904); and finally K. M. Jamasp-Asa and H. Humbach edited the complete text—the Avestan quotations in their full context with their original Pahlavi versions (1971).

Two main manuscripts are available for *Pursišnīhā*: TD2, containing the complete text, which formerly belonged to B. T. Anklesaria, and the incomplete manuscript R242 belonging to the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Library, Bombay. The latter was copied in 1766 from an older manuscript in India and contains the text of *Pursišnīhā* 12-15 and 31-34. All other copies are made from TD2 and R242 manuscripts: D51, Mulla Firoz Library, Bombay; F24, Dastur Meherji Rana Library, Navsari; and J3, [K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Library](#), Bombay (Humbach and JamaspAsa, 1971, pp. 6-7).



Jamasp-Asa and Humbach used as their main source the folios 327v.-354r. of the manuscript TD2 and folios 4r.-10v. of R242. Facsimiles of both form the second part of the publication (Pt. II, pp. 1-56; Pt. II, pp. 56-60).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Idem, *The Zend-Avesta*, Sacred Books of the East IV and XXIII, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1895.

K. M. Jampaspa and H. Humbach, *Pursišnīhā; a Zoroastrian Catechism*, Wiesbaden, 1971 (reviewed by D. N. MacKenzie, *BSOAS* 35/2, 1972, pp. 372-75).