

## **Aredvisura's Anahita's Impression in Avesta Transcripts**

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**ABSTRACT** — In many of the Avesta transcripts, water has been praised as a pure and divine element. This element has different symbols including creation, productivity, death and revival. According to Avesta transcripts, Aredvisura is a form of water sanctification. In Avesta, water is considered as a heavenly, cosmic, essence of life, tonic, cleaner and immortal element. This research is to represent the water praise legend from Avesta transcript standpoint. The present article, through adopting a descriptive –analytic approach and based on Zoroastrians religious sources aims at investigating impression and importance of Anahita Aredvisura.

**KEYWORDS:** Apamnapat, Aredvisura Anahita, Avesta, Water

### **Introduction**

Archaeological studies show that entrancing of Aryans in the middle of second millennium BC to this land and their matrimony to native nation has faced many evolutions and changes. The most important souvenir the Aryan brought to this land was religious thoughts and beliefs along with Gods with nature shapes. These religious beliefs like other religions consisted of godlike elements, legendary and ethical elements. Legend is mostly considered as one of the most immortal phenomenons. A phenomenon explaining the creation of existence and praises the forces involved in this creation, and explores the existence. Roger Bastide believes that “before the legend is thought and expressed, it has been experienced and lived. Legend is the word, the vision, a motion which preserves the real limitations in heart before it is recorded and set in a narration or allegory.” [1]. Legend has an eternal existence which talks about states. The legends are reflection of human needs from the creation and the diversity of needs accounts for different legends creation. Donna Rosenberg writes about that: “Legends are reflection of human nature with all of its needs and requirements, desires, hopes and fears and frights. Legends expose the human limitations and mood states. Creation legends satisfy the seeking need of human. Productive and prolific legends respond to economic stability and steadiness requirements in the unpredictable and unsteady world. Heroic or epic legends are the pattern for humans’ behave and beliefs in their conduct.” [2]. By recognizing the legends, one can find about nations’ beliefs and thoughts. Beliefs that are the constructors of nations’ culture and civilization and these different beliefs and views account for cultural diversities; in another word, legends are symbols of human experiences and are manifestations of spiritual values of one culture, therefore each nations tries to preserve its special legends because they think that their inside world views are the main reason of that culture immortality and eternity. The similarity between all the legends is that they are the determinants of the relationship between human and Meta-physic existences; Existences which their underlying reality is created by human group minds and accounts for national unity. The legendary thoughts are constantly changing and they take a contradictory impression in a special era. As in Aryan arrangement, Gods are divided in two categories: Asuras (Ahor) and Dew (demon); which in India, Dews are considered pure and divine and as Gods and the Asores has gained a satanic recognition; nevertheless in Iran Dews has gained satanic and Asuras has gained pure and divine recognition.

### **Water: Creator and Demiurge:**

Water is a cleaning element and is considered divine for Iranian; especially the role and position of water in the creation is considerable. Avesta transcripts consider water as the creator of “Ohormazd”, cleaner, cause of good productivity and prosper, bless giver, merciful, cause of life, tranquilizer, and health. More important is that it is considered as the essence of life, like a question that was asked from the Heaven of Wisdom about the position of water in land who answers that water in earth is like blood in human bodies [3]. In Bundahesh the human body is also compared to universe: “... That the human body mimics universe, because universe is made from tear water. Such (it) says that this creation was all tear water in the beginning, people are also from tear water as the universe has equal length and width, people are the same way: each is long (in measure) equal to his width. Skin like sky, flesh like earth, bone like mountain, vanes like rivers and blood in body like water in river, bowel like sea and hair like vegetable...” [4]. This is in Avesta that Ohormazd created all from water but the ovum of people and sheep’s. “...That the first created was all from tear water, because all was from water, but ovum of people and sheep’s, because that is fire ovum. It, first, created sky for the return of Ahriman and Divan (the devils), May that it begins (that creation), created water

to exclude thirst [ 5] . According to Avesta transcripts water will be created after sky for fifty days and bring it from darkness to light. "It created water to fifty five days that is from the face of Mehr, Month of Ordibehesht to Aban day, month of Tir, it stopped five days until day of Dey for the goodness (Mehr) of those five days of Gahanbar and named it Maidhyorshema, which is the report that it lighted the water, because at first it was dark" [6]. By studying the Avesta transcript and by comparing it to Veda transcripts it is recognized that water has equal position in the creation question, to such extent that when they asked the Menog khrad about the position of water in creation, it answered that sky and earth and water and all other things inside it, is egg shaped (i.e. all the beliefs of Hindus) just like egg of birds and the sky under earth, is arranged as an egg by the art of creator, the Ohrmazd; and similarity of earth among sky is like yoke among egg and water in earth and sky like water in egg .[7]. Like Veda transcripts, the Avesta transcripts are also full of many battles between Ahriman (devils) and Ahura (divine) Gods. In Vendidad, the fifth and eighth Fargard's, explains the battle between God of rain, "Tishtrya" and "Apausha" which explains how the God of rain defeated his rival in three battles and it rained for ten days and nights such that the Ahriman and its allies were all finished and then by blowing a strong wind, these waters were moved to a side and the sea of "Vourukasha" was thus created [8]. .In Mazdayasna religion the godhead element of water is led by a beautiful and powerful goddess, Aredvisura Anahita<sup>1</sup>. water goddess, is one of the most favourite Goddesses in Zoroastrian religion. In Mazdaism, Ohrmazd has assigned Amshaspands and angles to protect the good elements[9] and therefore the angle to protect of the water is of Aredvisura. Aredvisura is protector of a river as big as all the water on the earth which starts from Hekr Mountain. After descending from the side of Hukairyra Mountain, Aredvisura shakes the ocean and creates thousands of seas and rivers that falls to Farakh-kard (Farakh-kart) sea which is beside the Alborz Mountain. This sea covers one third of the earth [10] and all the waters of the world fall to this, after becoming pure [11] . Aban Yasht says the following about this: "All over the shore of Farakh-kart troubled and all (its) middle rise when flowing towards that, it moves toward that. Aredvisura Nahid the one who has thousand of lakes and rivers and each of these lakes and rivers has the height that a fast riding man should spend forty days passing such height.[12] .In Avesta, Aredvisura is presented as a beautiful, strong, graceful, by thin waist, tall, liberal and honorable girl, she also has four big and white and same race horses which are created for wind, rain, cloud and hailstone to defeat the enemies .[13]. In Bundahesh Aredvisura is known as the mother of waters [14] and the heavenly source of world waters and a magnificent position is contributed to her:

"Who has a thousand cells and a thousand channels : the extent of each of those cells , of each of those channels , is as much as a man can ride in forty days , riding on a good horse .In each channel there stands a palace , well-founded ,shining with a hundred windows , with a thousand columns, well-built, with ten thousand balconies, and mighty " [15].

Aredvisura is also praised for her power and magnificent force.

"I praise the always adored golden mountain of Hukairyra from where the Aredvisura Nahid descends from a height of thousand men length; she is as big as all the waters that flows on this earth (who) flows with all power for light and earth, I praise her with long pray." [16].

Although Ahura is the absolute author, but for teaching the creatures to worship and obey, he finds her praiseworthy as himself. Aban Yasht writes:

"To her did the Maker Ahura Mazda offer up a sacrifice to the Airyana Vaejah, by the good river Daitya ; with the Haom and meat, with the baresma , with the wisdom of the tongue , with the holy spells, with the words, with the deeds, with the libations , and with the rightly-spoken word" . [17].

Aredvisura the goddess of water has been praised for a long time by Iranian, to such extent that they sacrificed for her satisfaction and content .Water has been praised in Iran because of its curing ability, blessing, purity, and it being godhead and it has been praised in this way: "I praise the water of Aredvisura Nahid which is flown everywhere, and cures, and is the enemy of devils, has the religion of Ahura, and is praiseworthy in earthy world; a pure which empowers the soul, a pure that enhances the herd, a pure that enhances the world, a pure that enhances the will, a pure that enhances the country" [18].

Enhancing is one of the features of Aredvisura, the domain of this heavenly water is as much as all the waters of the earth which is the source of thousands of rivers and it satisfies the thirst of seven countries. Yasna sings this way about that: "that Nahid Aredvisura who owns thousand lakes, thousand falls.[19]. Who is praised among gods?" In Avesta, Aredvisura has a high position and for profiting from her gifts they pray to her, they sacrifice and they give away Myazad (an eatable votive) and them plea. Because of protecting the waters, because of being pure, life giving, cause of productivity and merciful and because she is the creator of Ohrmazd and because it flows and destroys devils and impurities, she is praised in many parts of the holy book of Avesta. Apam napat in the yashtha meaning "the source" or "water born". This word has showed up in different episodes in

<sup>1</sup> The Urdu word Sor-e-Anahita is composed of three adjectives "Ord" is the name of a legendary river, "Sor" means strong and powerful and "Ahiat" means impure which has a negative sense. In most transcripts "Aredvisura Anahita", is presented as a strong and pure river)

Yasna. In Pahlavi language, Apamnapat is called "Borzyazd" and is known as highness adjectives, and king the fast horse .[20]. Apamnapat is one of the protector angles of water and is one of the Aredvisura's allies. Although in Avesta the main source of water is "Tishtrya" (god of rain), but the race of "Tishtrya" is known from "Apamnapat" and in fact "Apamnapat" is known older than "Tishtryr". [21]. As it is obvious from understanding the holy word, we praise "Tishtryr" the magnificent star, which is the location of water's ovum; who is powerful and giant and strong; who is forward seeing and high and smart and honorable; whose race is from "Apamnapat". [22]. also he is accounted for dividing the water. "Apamnapat" gives a special product of water to each of the countries of earth by the assistance of the adroit wind and the "Faar"s (magnificent) imbedded in water and the pure "Foruhar" (essence). [23]. The God who is the protector and divider of water considers Mitra and Varona as holy Apamnapats in Veda religion. This composition is found as Mitra-Ahora form in Avesta and as Zoroastrian religion grows we can see that Anahita replaces Apamnapat. In Avesta transcripts like Veda transcripts, Apamnapat is known as one who divides the water. It has been noted in Tir yasht that how Tishtrya makes the water of life to fall as rain and how Apamnapat helps him. Apamnapat is also known as the God of purifying who is the reason of waters existence. The growth of Zoroastrian religion accounts for shading of Mehri religion and the importance of Aredvisura. Gradually the Aredvisura Goddess (who is the soul mate of Apamnapat, in another interpretation) replaces the Apamnapat. We also understand from the Avesta transcripts that Apamnapat is respected and cared greatly by Ohrmazd to such extent that worshiping Apamnapat pleased Ohrmazd. Following is what Khorda Avesta contains about that: "For pleasure of Ohrmazd who is great and magnificent and victory causer, I say the most important complimentary with good productivity that I am a Zoroaster Mazda worshiper and enemy of evil and the follower of Ahora religion. I sing and please Apamnapat the protector of pure waters created by Mazda and I allege the best praises by Yazshan and adoration." [24].

### **Water Worshipping Customs:**

According to Avesta's text, water was created in the second Gahenbar in month of Tir. Many festivals have remained from ancient Iranian, in which water is praised and each has its own special legend. Water praise for Iranian has made them to allege special rules and rites to respect water. According to Vendidad transcripts, polluting water is against religious rules and helps the Dews (evils) to conquer, and if one disrespects the water he was panelized and even it would cause him to go to hell .[25]. From long ago, Iranian has considered water as the essence of purity and blessing and they alleged special festivals in different holy days for this holy element. One of these holy days is the sixth of Farvardin month in which they wash themselves and spray (throw) water at each other to be blessed and to avoid plagues. This day is known as day of the angle of water. The other festival which is executed for new year (Noruz) is water stealing from below of mills by ladies, who bring water from spring for the "Haft Sin" table as a sign of productivity and blessing .[26]. In Zoroastrian religion, there is also a rite named "Abzor"<sup>2</sup> [27] in which the clergies (Mobadan) provide a "Parahom" and mix it with water and they bless it by singing the hymns of Avesta and distribute it to springs and rivers to sanctify them .[28]. Other important Zoroastrian rite is "Tiregan" which is held in the day of Tir (thirteenth day of each month) in Tir month and water throwing rite is held beside springs and rivers. One of the interesting rites of this day is the omen of urn which among Zartoshtian is known as Chek and Doleh. It is carried out in this way that before the day of Tirgan, a lady fills a green urn "doleh" of spring water and each person throws a small thing in this, they put the urn under green tree (Mord or cedar) and the collected people start to sing and they simultaneously extract one of the things from the urn and this way each person considers the song hymn as a response to his/her intent. Legend of this rite is related to battle of Key Khosro and Afrasiab. When Key Khosro encountered a spring in the height of mountain, the Aredvisura Goddess reveals herself to him, and he passes out and he recovers by the water sprayed to him by Bijan. It seems that the rite of throwing the water is common from this time. Other important rite that is mentioned in Avesta, especially in Aban Yasht, is called Aban-gah. Zoroastrian celebrate the Aban day of Aban month interpreted as water and time of water. There are two legend for this day: one is related to the war times between Iran and Turan in which Afrasiab ordered to destroy the canals and streams and at the end of "Zou" Battle, son of "Tahmasb" ordered the dredging and people happily celebrated the return of water, and the other narrative is that by the end of eight year hunger and no rain, in this day, people go to the side of river and flowing water and they worship Ohrmazd [29].

### **Conclusion**

The Aryans consider Apehas (waters) and Apamnapat (child of waters) as the source of life, power and immortality and they believe each person can make his/her dreams come true and become prosper by worshipping water. Iranian worshiped water as a pure and holy element and they considered it as a creation of Ohrmazd and believed that the Ahorayi (godlike) element of water, is conducted by a powerful goddess called Aredvisura Anahita, therefore in order to please the goddess, they alleged prayers and gave away preys (sacrifices) and votives and considered her the warden of waters and destroyer of impurities and as a heavenly and universe element, they consider her the cause of life and immortality.

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<sup>2</sup> One of the conditions of performing the religious ceremony of newborns and formal entrance to Behdinan (followers of Zoroaster), is singing the five Gah Gahani of the good waters. For singing the Gahans, it seems that one should have memorized Yasna or parts of it. Yashtan of good waters, performing the Yasna is by Abroz, because in seventy two hymns of Yasna, "the good waters" is praised by the "Ahorayrei (godhead)" name. Singing the Yasna is also singing the "Yashtan", "good waters". [30]

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