A Younger Avestan Blessing.

'In this house

may listening prevail over not-listening

peace (over) strife;

generosity (over) stinginess,

embodied truth (over) disregard (for it);

the straight-spoken word (over) the false-spoken word,

through truth, (may) untruth (be overcome).'

Yy60:5, my translation.

vainīṯ ahmi nmāne sraoṧō asruštīm

āx štiš   anāx štīm

rāitiš   arāitīm

ārmaitiš   tarōmaitīm

aršux δō vāx š   miϑaox təm vācim

aṧa   drujəm

Yy60:5

Geldner 1P p. 310 (line divisions are mine)

A linguistic discussion is footnoted.[1]

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[1] In this blessing, the verb is expressed only in the first sentence, and is implied in each of the phrases that follow.   We know this is so because the first word of each phrase is nom. sg. (and therefore the subject of the verb), and each second word is acc. sg. (and therefore the object of the verb), as the list of these words shows (detailed below). Most of the linguistic information here is from Skjaervo's Young (and Old) Avestan Indexes and Lessons, and Jackson's *Avesta Grammar*, unless otherwise stated.

nmāne is loc. sg. of the ntr. YAv. noun *nmāna-* 'house' (Old Av. *dəmāna-*), so loc. sg *nmāne* 'in this house'.

ahmi is loc. sg. of the demonstrative pronoun *a-* 'this' (Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index). Loc. sg. *ahmi* belongs
     with loc. sg. *nmāne*, giving us *ahmi nmāne* 'in this house'; *ahmi* is also the word for 'I am' (1p sg. pres.
     of the verb *ah-* 'to be') but in this context, that clearly does not fit.

vainīṯ is the only expressly stated verb, (from the stem *van-* 'to prevail over, to overcome'). In Avestan, a word
     that is expressed is often subsequently implied in the same paragraph, and that is what we have here;
     this verb is first expressed and then implied throughout the rest of this section.

sraoṧō nom. sg. of masc. of YAv. *sraoṧa-* (Old Av. *səraoṧō*); this word (in my opinion) means 'to listen and
     implement' (detailed in *Part Three: Seraosha*), but is routinely translated as 'obedience' by most
     linguists.

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asruštīm acc. sg. of fem. *asrušti-* (Skjaervo's Old Av. Index); the prefix *a-* before a consonant, (or *an-* before a vowel) is a negative prefix; thus "non-listening".

āx šti š nom. sg. of YAv. *āx šti-*; Skjaervo's YAv. Index shows *āx šti-* fem. 'peace'. For fem *i-* stem words the -*iš* inflection is nom. sg.

anāx štīm acc. sg. of fem. *anāx šti-* 'non-peace' or 'strife'. For fem *i-* stem words the -*īm* inflection is acc. sg.

rāitiš nom. sg. of fem *rāiti-* 'generosity' (Skjaervo YAv. Index).

arāitīm acc. sg. of fem. *arāiti-* 'non-generosity' or 'stinginess'. For fem *i-* stem words the -*īm* inflection is acc. sg.

ārmaitiš nom. sg. of fem. *ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth'; linguists are in substandial disagreement regarding the meaning of *ārmaiti-*;   many of their meanings apply only to mortals, yet *ārmaiti-* is a quality of the Divine in both the Gathas and later texts;   'embodied truth' fits all instances of the use of *ārmaiti-* in the Gathas, and is relevant to both the Divine (perfectly) and mortals (imperfectly), detailed in *Part One: Beneficial-Sacred Embodied Truth, Spenta Aramaiti.*

tarōmaitīm acc. sg. of fem. *tarōmaiti-* 'disregard (for embodied truth)'. Skjaervo in his YAv. Index thinks that YAv. *tarōmaiti-* means 'disdain'. In my view, (based on the ways in which Old Av. *tarəmaiti-* is used in the Gathas, it means the opposite of *ārmaiti-* 'embodied truth', so perhaps 'disdain for, or disregard of embodied truth'.

aršux δō vāx š;   each word is nom. sg. of its respective stem: *aršux δa-* [adj.] 'straight-spoken'; and *vāx š* 'word' < *vak- vac-* (Skjaervo's YAv.); The *š* inflection (*vāx š*) is one of the nom. sg. forms for words ending in a consonant.

miϑaox təm acc. sg. of [adj.] *miϑaox ta-* 'something spoken wrongly' (Skjaervo's YAv. Index). The -*əm* inflection is acc. sg. of -*a-* stem words.

vācim acc. sg. of *vac-* 'word', the -*im* inflection is one of the acc. sg. forms;

aṣa drujəm, Geldner shows *aṣa.drujəm*. His choice is based on 6 (or 7) mss. which he shows as "J2 K5.15, Jp1, H1, P6, Jm4...". He also shows that mss. Pt4, F2, Mf3, K36, Lb16 have *drujim* only; whereas mss. J9 and H2 have *aṣa.drujim* Geldner 1P p. 210 ft. 3.

This last word *aṣa.drujəm* or *aṣa.drujim* (as a compound word) poses a puzzle. There can be no doubt that *drujəm* is acc. sg. of *druj-* (Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index); Jackson 1892 says both *drujəm* and *drujim* are acc. sg. forms of *druj-* (§ 281, p. 82).   So *drujəm* or *drujim* are acc. sg. (and therefore the object of the verb). And there is no dispute that *druj-* has been translated as 'the Lie', 'deceit', 'false', 'wrong', 'untruth' etc.

In the Gathas, *aṣa-* 'truth' and *druj-* are opposites. And *aṣa-* means more than factual truth, it includes the truths of mind/heart/spirit. So for an English equivalent for *druj-* in *meaning*, I think 'untruth' is more accurate (following Taraporewala). The supporting evidence for these conclusions is detailed in a ft. in *Part Two: The Houses of Paradise & Hell.*

So *aṣa-* 'truth' and *druj-* 'untruth' cannot be part of one compound word in this context. If that were so, then the last part of this blessing would have 'truth-untruth' being prevailed over.

> *aršux δō vāx š   miϑaox təm vācim aṣa.drujəm*
> 'the straight-spoken word [*aršux δō vāx š*] (over) the false-spoken word [*miϑaox təm vācim*], (over) truth-falsehood [*aṣa.drujəm*].'

It simply does not fit the context. So (not surprisingly) many translators think that *aṣa.drujəm* is a scribal error, which is easy to understand when we consider that Avestan manuscripts were copied and recopied down through many centuries, when the grammar and vocabulary of the Avestan language were not

understood. Can we puzzle out what the original composer intended?   Well, we have three alternatives. You can take your pick.

1. We can adopt the versions in mss. Pt4, F2, Mf3, K36, Lb16 which give the last word as only *drujim*, giving us:

> 'the straight-spoken word [*aršuxδō vāx š*] (over) the false-spoken word [*miϑaox təm vācim*], (over) untruth [*drujim*].'

This alternative is linguistically defensible.   It (more or less) fits the context. And it is the only alternative which works without emending (changing) the text. But it raises some troubling problems:

(i) It lacks the poetic structure of the entire blessing in which each good thing overcomes each bad one;

(ii) The 'straight-spoken word is a narrower concept than *aša-*. It is only a part of *aša-*, and therefore is not the opposite of *drujəm*; whereas all the other couples are opposites.

(iii) And one has to wonder: Why do 6 (or 7) other mss. each add *aša* to *drujəm* as a compound word? Where (for them) did the word (or idea of) *aša* come from?   I can think of no answer.

These reasons, (and unanswered questions) make it unlikely (in my view) that this first alternative reflects the intention of the original composer of this blessing.

2. It is possible that the original composer intended *aš.drujəm* instead of *aša.drujəm*. Skjaervo's Old Avestan Index shows that *aš.* in the first part of a compound word means 'great', he shows

> *aš.aojah-* 'having great (bodily) strength;
> *aš.x ratu-* 'having great guiding thought (*x ratu-* has been differently translated, see *Part Three: Xratu*).

Thus *aš.drujəm* would mean 'great-falseness', or 'great-deceit', or 'great-untruth'. This alternative also is linguisticaly defensible, and (more or less) fits the context, but I doubt that it was the original composer's intent for reasons (i) and (ii) given under 1. above.

3. The third alternative is that the original composer intended *aša* 'truth' and *drujəm* 'untruth' to be two separate words, instead of one compound word. Truth (*aša-*) and untruth (*druj-*) are foundational opposites. In the Gathas - *aša-* comprises all that is true, good, right, and *druj-* comprises all that is false, wrong, harmful, evil. And truth (in its entirety) overcoming untruth (in its entirety) is a foundational teaching of Zarathushtra's who speaks of delivering untruth (*druj-*) into the hands of truth (*aša-*), in Y30:8 and Y44:14. I therefore think the original composer of this blessing intended both *aša-* and *druj-* to be in opposition in the last line of the blessing.

And it is easy to see how the scribal error of turning these two words into one compound word may have happened. Anyone who has studied the mss. is aware that they often mix up compound words and separate words. The reason (from a scribal point of view) is simple - especially for subsequent copiers. In Avestan script, words are separated by a space, a dot, and another space. If a scribe (to save parchment) made the spaces small, subsequent copiers might easily copy the two separate words as a compound - separated only by a dot, with no spaces. If we take these two words as separate, then *aša* is (YAv.) instr. sg. 'through truth', and *drujəm* is acc. sg. (which requires implying the previously stated verb *van-* in this last line also - which is in accord with a normal feature of Avestan syntax), giving us the concluding line:

> Through truth [*aša*], (may) untruth [*drujəm*] (be overcome).'

This is the alternative I find most persuasive. It is linguistically correct. It fits the poetic structure of each line, in which each good thing overcomes its opposite. It forms an inclusive last line, in that truth includes all the foregoing good things, and untruth includes all the foregoing bad things.   And it fits a foundational thought of Zarathushtra's - thus reflected in this YAv. blessing - that it is through truth, that we overcome

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untruth, which forms a fitting conclusion to this blessing. This last idea is developed more under the *Seventh Gem,* in *Part One: Seven Gems From the Later Texts.*