



DĀMDĀD NASK

DĀMDĀD NASK, the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) name of one of the lost *nasks* of the *Avesta*. It is probably the traditional “learned” rendering of an Avestan word **dāmi.dāti-* “the creating of the creation,” as a real derivative of this word would have become **dāmyād* (see *dāmi-*). Alternatively it may be a Middle Persian coining from the phrase *dām dād* “he (Ohrmazd) created the creation.” Knowledge of its contents comes from two sources. The older is the description of the *nasks* in book 8 of the Pahlavi *Dēnkard*. There (8.1.10) it was put at the head of the seven *nasks* of the *haḍa.mqθra* class, between the so-called *gāhānīg* “gathic” and *dādīg* “legal” classes. Other traditions preserved in Persia were brought to the Parsis of India in the form of the Persian Rivāyats in the 17th century C.E. In the Rivāyat of Bahman Pūnḷiya, which is in agreement with the *Dēnkard*, the *Dāmdād* is named as the fourth *nask* (corresponding to the fourth word *aθā* of the twenty-one-word prayer *yaθā ahū vairyo*). In that of Kāma Bohra all are displaced by the setting of the last, *Stōdgar Yašt*, at the head, making *Dāmdād* the fifth *nask*. There, too, it has somehow acquired the name *Dwāzdah hāmāst*, explained however by corrupt spellings of *Dāmdād* (*dar imdād*, *dar āmad dād*). It is said to have comprised thirty-two sections (*karda*).

According to the summary of its contents in the *Dēnkard* (8.5), *Dāmdād nask* dealt with “the act of creatorship and the creating of the best creation (**kunišn ī dādārīh ud dād ī dām <ī> pahlom*), first spiritually, how it was kept as spirit, its change into the material, formed and made for the strife against the onslaught (of Evil), its endurance and organization and continual worthiness



until the end; the strength and duration of the state of the onslaught; the classes and sorts of the creation and their being (*stī*) and seed (*tōxmag*) and parts (*sraxtag*), nature (*čīhr*) and task (*kār*), and so on: the reason for their creation and their final fate (*abdom ō čē rasišn̄th*); and the adversary (*petyārag*) of that creation and the harm and evil caused by it, and the manner and means of overcoming and destroying it, and saving and freeing creation from it.” This summary corresponds closely to the contents of the *Bundahišn*, and a Pahlavi translation (*zand*) of the *Dāmdād nask* must have been one of the main sources for the latter compilation. In the *Selections of Zādspram* the *nask* is twice mentioned, as giving details of which limbs of the sole-created ox the various plants sprang from (3.43) and of the different species of animals (3.57). In the *Šāyest nē-šāyest* it is quoted as the source for two statements: that the good deeds that a son performs accrue also to the spiritual benefit of his mother to the same extent as to his father (10.22, 12.15) and that when the consciousness (*bōy*) of man is severed (at death) it goes to the nearest fire, then to the stars, then to the moon, and then to the sun (12.5).

In the Rivāyat of Kāma Bohra the contents are paraphrased as an account of “the creation of the upper world and the lower world and a description of the whole of that, and of what God has mentioned (*yād kardā*) in the sky and on the earth, water, plants, and fire, men and quadrupeds, grazing animals and birds, and what he created (*bāfarid*), and their advantages (*manfa‘at*) and organs (*ālāt*), and the like; further, the resurrection (*qiyāmat, restaxīz*) and the way (*šerāt*) [to heaven or hell], the assembling and dispersing [of mankind], and the nature of the resurrection for doers of good and evil, through the weighing of every good and evil deed they have done.” A very similar description is found in other Persian Rivāyats, and in the so-called *Dīn-Wizīrkard* (effectively a Persian Rivāyat in Pahlavi script), all from the same period.

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