This informative article is taken from "A Sequel to Essentials of Zoroastrianism" – by Dr. Saheb Framroze S. Chiniwalla.

NASKS - THE HOLY WRIT OF ZARTHUSTRA

We have said above that Zoraster was instructed by Ahûrmazd. Avesta says Ahûro Mazdao Zarthushtrai fra vavach. Ahûrmazd instructed Zarthushtra Fra Zarthushtro Gaethabvo Astavaetibvo and in turn Zoraster proclaimed the instructions to the perishable universe. These instructions are written in what are called Nasks. Nask means holy writ. This holy writ is of four gradations made according to the intelligence required to understand them. Each set of these four gradations consists of 21 books. The number 21 has a special denotation and connotation. The number 21 denotes the plan of Ahûrmazd to create and to save and connotes the strange working of Nature. According to the capacity of understanding them, they are divided into four varieties named (1) Fashusho Mathra, (2) Mathra Spent, (3) Staot Yasn, (4) Avesta Mat Azyanti in Zand Avesta (Avesta word Azyanti, Pazand) word Zand mean commentary, interpretation. When Ahûrmazd instructed Zarthushtra, it was revealed in the language of Yazats, when Zarthustra revealed the instructions to the humanity they were spoken and written in the understandable language of men. There is a great gulf between the language of Yazats and of man. That gulf can be crossed by writing in riddles. These riddles want further explanations. The language of Yazats is the heavenly one called Asmani language, in Avesta called as Ukhda Vachanga (ઉપ્દ વચંઘાઠ). To make heavenly language understandable by man, a divine science was introduced called 'Staot-Yasn', the science of all sciences Faranghane Farhang. These four are the original Nasks prepared in the life time of Zarthustra by Himself and by His most advanced 'Havisht' i.e. disciples in His presence and direction. 'Fashusho Mathra' Nasks were prepared by Him. Staot-Yasn Nasks were dictated by Him. The other two sorts were written by His disciples in His presence and direction and supervision which contained His authoritative seal. An edition from these Nasks of the above said four sorts was edited by one of his disciples named 'Sain' in three main parts called Gathic part, Datic part and Had Manthric part which also contained his seal. This edition is called Soshiento-Mathra. Soshiento Mathras called 'Avesta Mat Azyenti' or Zand Avesta contain a part called Khorde Avesta for the use of common laity which consists of Yashts and Niyaeshs. This Soshiento Mathras contain the other part called 'Greater Avesta' with its Azyenti for sacrificial purposes. This Avesta called Shoshianto Mathras i.e. Zand Avesta are current now a days.

Thus there are Nasks of four sorts: (1) 21 Nasks of 'Fashusho Mathra' written by Zarthushtra in the language script of the heavens, which contain all the events of all times big or small. (2) 21 Nasks of Mathra Spenta written by His disciples in His direction of supervision in the language script of humanity. They contain the above subject of Fashusho Mathra written in the original human language in riddles. (3) 21 Nasks of Staot Yasn. They are prepared from the last Nask of Fashusho Mathra. These are the 21 Nasks of the divine science and art of Staot and their mysterious working in Nature. Staot is the divine energies on which the universe is built up. Everything, every particle divine or

sinful, permanent or temporary has as its basis in Staot. Thus the language has the basis of Staot. The knowledge of Staot is divine and grabbed by holy men who have acquired intelligence fit to probe in secrets of Nature. Zarthustra has set up this divine science in the last Nask of Fashusho Mathra from which He has created 21 Nasks called 21 Nasks of Staot Yasn. Staot Yasn in nature is the heavenly art and science of creation and recreation by annihilation to a higher standard of the universe, from the heavenly material named Staot. The universe is created from Staot by Ahûrmazd and his Yazat. Zoraster was taught this science of Staot Yasn by Ahûrmazd. He created on earth a science and art of Staot Yasn in the likeness of that of the Heavens as said above from the last Nask of Fashusho Mathra. This was taught to the best of His disciples. These divine Masters of these Staot-Yasn Nasks called Shosiants and Ashvan Nara who are the disciples of Zarthustra have translated 21 'Fashusho Mathra' Nasks of the Divine language script into the 21 'Mathra Spent' Nasks of the human language script. This human language script was the source of languages on earth. This 21 Nasks of Staot Yasn also explain the riddles of creation written in Fashusho Mathra and Mathra Spent Nasks. In short 21 Nasks of Staot-Yasn explains about Staot the very basis of the universe and all its contents. The master of this Staot-Yasn Nasks only can explain Avesta prayers of Yasn. These Nasks of Staot-Yasn contain explanations of the riddles of the Mathra Spent and Fashusho Mathra Nasks learnt and understood only by holy Ashvans and none other. 21 Nasks of Azayanti i.e. Zand i.e. explanation of the above said riddles for ordinary men written in Avesta Mathra and in the Pehelvi tongue.

These Nasks of four sorts are holiest of holy guarded by 99,999 Fravashis. They cannot be made current in all different periods of the Darego Khodat of 81,000 years which is the age of our sinful earth as said above. The life-time of our earth of 81,000 years show different sub-epoch - periods of time - appropos to the mentality of the humanity living in them. In every such period - sub epoch dire sins are committed with such atrocities that it would appear that the earth would perish untimely before its assigned age of 81,000 years. Hence a Soshient i.e. a world redeemer comes and instructs humanity of five genera through their leaders.

Asho Zarthustra has left behind Him His successors. These successors are named after him as Zarthustrotemo i.e. one like Zarthustra. Their seat is in what is named as 'Avithrishva' a place beyond the visible world. From these successors, quite unknown to the world, emerges a Soshient i.e. world redeemer at the opportune time on the public platform. These Soshients are anointed of Ahûrmazd. They are holiest of holy possessed of divine powers and authority. They are remembered in Gatha's 'Has chapters, (48-9; 48-12; 45-11; 46-3; 34-13; 52-2). They are all proficient in the above said four sorts of Nasks. They, for the regeneration of the Zoroastrian religion, make use of the edition prepared by Saen (अअज) by the order of the Prophet under His guidance. They follow up that edition moulding it according to the need of their age. They first of all measure the burden of the sins of their ages, preparing the edition accordingly. This edition is known as 'Avesta Mat Azaynti' i.e. Zand Avesta with its Pehelvi interpretation. This interpretation of the Avesta also has its 21 Nasks.

The new edition of 21 Nasks drawn from that of Saen is divided into three parts each of 7 Nasks. The first 7 Nasks are called Gathic Nasks as they give description of the creation and the creatures, including humanity, and their activities. The second seven Nasks are called Datic Nasks as they deal with all laws and their usefulness. The third seven Nasks are called Had-Mathric Nasks as they treat about Yasns and their usefulness. This new edition of 21 Nasks divided in three parts with its Azayanti of Avesta Mathra was first edited by a great-disciple of Zarthushtra named Saen who was the first Soshient after Zarthushtra. This edition is carried down to us with alterations appropos to the age in which they are to be published. Those former Nasks of four sorts are safe in Avithrishva (one-third part of this world which is inhabited by holy men). They are guarded by 99,999 Fravashis. Of the new edition with Azayanti mathra of Zand Avesta called Soshient Mathra a very small necessary part is left with us. The Pehelvi commentary in 21 Nasks of this new edition of Soshient Mathra is very nearly lost to us as a very meagre and broken and irregular part is present in a mutilated Pehelvi book called 'Din-kard'. From these Pehelvi Nasks of the commentary different special subjects of high import were written in books called Nikiz which are all lost to us. Hence it is that in the absence of original native knowledge the present Western study of Avesta is far far removed from its real spirit which has shattered the faith. There is a full line of these Soshients who began from Saen 300 years after Zarthushtra. The Soshient of our present age is Adarbad Marespandan who has lived in the time of the Sassanian king Shapur the second who is called Shapur the Great in 320 AD. It should be noted that these Soshients are annointed of God given authority by Ahûrmazd who possess wonderful powers. They assert their authority by doing miracles called Nirangvar. The Soshient of our age Adarbad Marespandan had performed the Nirang-var of pouring and holding 60 maunds of molten metal on his chest.

It is predicted that a new Soshient will appear after about 50 years by name Beheram Varzavand who will establish the separated Kayani Khoreh back in Iran and will restore the sinful world to the path of virtues through the leaders of different religions. He will restore Iran to its own original rule and religion by the help of the Kayani Khoreh.