

Asha Vahishta Seminar #2: Synopsis

During the second colloquium, we began to deconstruct Zoroastrian identity.

In order to do this, we first engaged in a self-reflective exercise. This entailed creating a schematic/pectoral representation of adjectives surrounding the word "ME". Participants were asked to take 5 minutes to complete this exercise, upon a piece of paper. Names were left off the page, and the pages were collected.

This exercise was then repeated; participants being asked to summarize "Zoroastrian" in the same manner (upon a page draw a circle in the centre, write the word Zoroastrian, and then write adjectives-single-words around the circle). These pages were then collected.

A group discussion was then conducted, which began to investigate how identity is determined. Responses contributed to a building of ideas surrounding the topic of which components of identity determine self-projection, inheritance, and interpretation by others.

The collected pages, from the initial exercises (ME and ZOROASTRIAN) were then randomly distributed. Group members were asked to guess whose paper (who) they received. It was found that most pages contained either non-descriptive or universal attributes. In essence, it could be no-one or any-one.

The group then began to attempt to relate Zoroastrian (self-identity) to Zoroastrianism (group identity and religion). Essentially, building upon the elements of the first colloquium, how faith affects fellowship, and what is the inter-relationship.