

Asha Vahishta Seminar II #4: Synopsis

The fourth session of the second phase of the AVSS, was a Resolution Building session. Entitled, "Beyond Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds", participants began to contemplate the articulation of diasporic faith "Towards Articles of Faith" (complete session title being everything inside quotes).

Recalling the purpose and premise of the first phase of AVSS, participants were called upon to engage with a working document (Articles of Belief/Tenets of Faith). The Articles amount to a Cosmology rather than a Theology. That is to say, the Articles articulate positions regarding the nature of Creation and Divinity. More importantly, the Articles provide articulate utterance to the substance and meaning of good thoughts/words/deed, with reference to diasporic lived faith in the 21st century.

Reaching back to phase one sessions of the AVSS, the participants began to apply concepts such as identity, vision, location, belonging, faith, and fellowship, with reference to Articles of Faith.

The moderator of the session was both thrilled and stunned at the consensus reached by the end of the session. At conclusion, consensus regarding the substance and mostly also the form, of 22 articles, was reached (the working document contains 101 assertions/articles).

A summary of these points, and a brief rationale for their inclusion shall follow in a separate post.

This is encouraging for several reasons. The Articles of Faith are meant to constitute the premise upon which a reinvigoration of faith and fellowship can be realized, in diaspora. The Articles represent the articulation of a 'mission statement' for the 'Zoroastrian Operating System' of the 21st century, which participants previously discussed.

With such articulation, it is envisaged that ALL contemporary issues of Zoroastrianism may be resolved. This optimism arises from the notion that no organization, secular or otherwise, business or societal, government or civil, can effectively function without an articulate code of conduct. The formulation, transmission, and affirmation, of an Articles of Faith, seeks to address the gaping holes (evident from AVSS phase one sessions) formed at the nexus of Identity-Location-Belonging-Relevance-Experience.

To their credit, participants acknowledged the need for such a mission statement and 'operating system' represented by the Articles. It is not that the content of the Articles is not in the traditions, history, and scriptures of Zoroastrianism. Rather, it is that these, the very inspiration for the Articles, needs to be ARTICULATE, ANNOUNCED, and AFFIRMED.