

## **Asha Vahishta Seminar II #5: Synopsis**

The fifth session of AVSS Phase II, built upon the momentum for constructive transformation of faith and fellowship, from the previous session.

Both the fourth and fifth sessions were dedicated to a discussion of an Articles of Faith (Tenets of Belief) that represent a diasporic 'mission statement', 'operating system', and social justice identity for Daena Mazdayasni in the 21st century.

Articles 24-34 were cleared. That is to say, they were digested, discussed, and general consensus regarding their necessity and inclusion within a diasporic mission statement for Daena Mazdayasni, was accepted.

This is ground breaking and extremely encouraging! Why? Because Articles 1-34 (of a draft of 101 Articles) represent the path towards the articulation of resolutions regarding ALL issues that plague contemporary Zoroastrianism. Moreover, the Articles represent a Covenant within which all adherents and participants of Daena Mazdayasni abide. A glance at the Articles provides proof that this includes Priests/Officiants/Executives, and is not just a code of conduct binding laity.

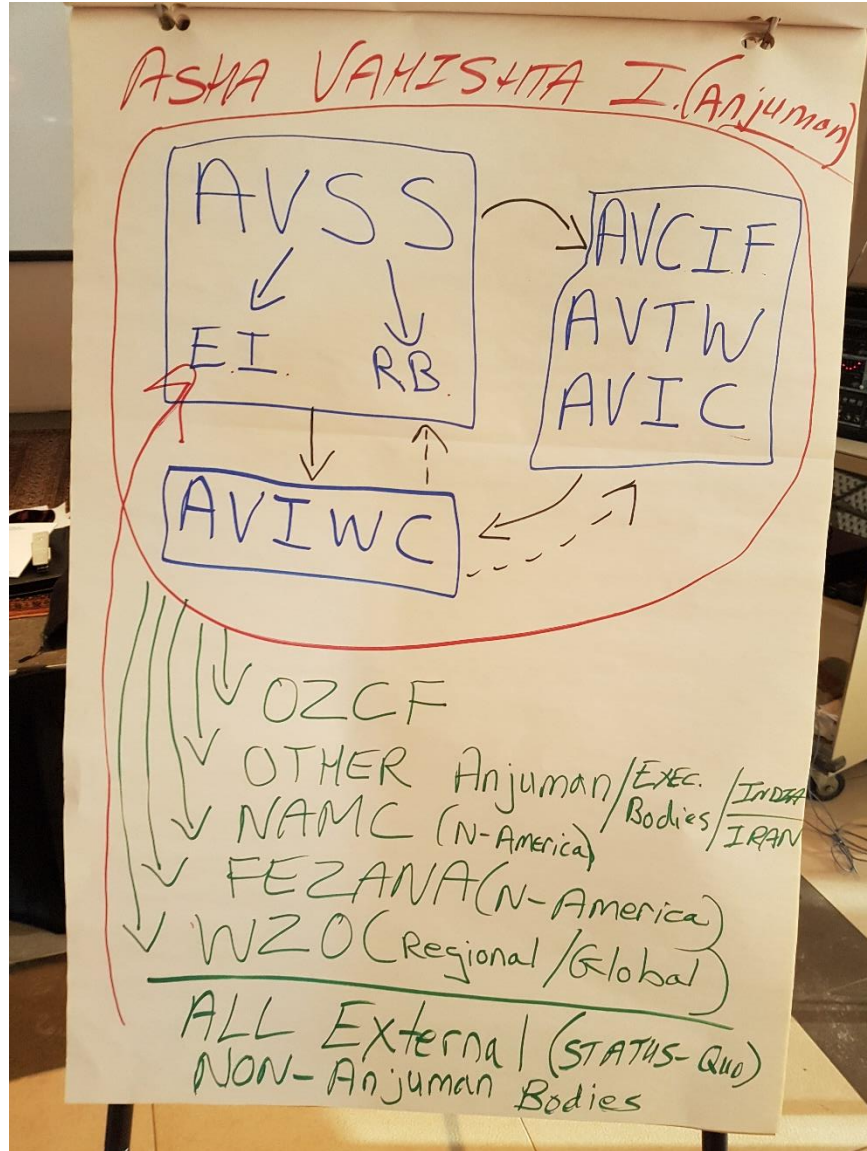
The Articles IMPOSE responsibility. They are meant to be adhered to, rather than administrated. The Articles form the 'justification of faith' that provides the Anjuman project of the Asha Vahishta Initiative (AVI) with its legitimacy. This is the only way an intimate, lived, and dynamic faith and fellowship can be sustainable. Authority resides in the Anjuman! It extends outward.

Faith must be the decentralized expression of locally administered and organic leadership! Anjuman Priests, Anjuman Executive, although they may belong to external body memberships, must consider their primary responsibility as service to the Anjuman (i.e. a non-compete). In this way, there will NEVER be disharmony between clergy and congregation. Moreover, clergy and exec., because they are nominated or vetted by the Anjuman, remain committed to administering and adhering the Anjuman vision of its faith and fellowship (as per the Articles).

Finally, the Articles provides the platform for a renewed interfaith and secular-community engagement. This is because as a public attesting of faith and fellowship, the Articles bind the Anjuman to service and vision. This prevents tendencies towards xenophobia, introversion, and a check to any insular non-critical practise of dogma. The Articles is therefore, also a means to check stagnation of Daena Mazdayasni and prevent it from regression into non-relevance in the hearts/minds of its adherents.

The Asha Vahishta Initiative (AVI) has employed education (AVSS: the AV Seminar Series) to mobilize the Anjuman to faith and fellowship action. The AVI now seeks to create a Working Committee (AVIWC) to make actionable, the resolutions from Phase I and Phase II of the AVSS.

A lingering question remains.....can current, external, status quo governing bodies (OZCF, NAMC, FEZANA, WZO...etc.), align themselves to the AVI? Can these bodies aid in the realization of the AVI, or do they present obstacles?



Join us in 2 weeks (Jan 27) for a Conversation in Faith session. Dr. Panthaki welcomes the participation of Ervad GM Panthaki and Ervad Dr. J Bagli upon stage, to address these concerns.