

## **Asha Vahishta Seminar II # 9: Synopsis**

The 9<sup>th</sup> session of AVSS (Phase II) was inspirational, literally and figuratively. Literally, the discussion pertained to an investigation of the remaining 101 Inspirations articles which had not previously been explored in past AVSS sessions. Figuratively, participants indulged the moderator's opinion that the adoption of the coherent articulation that is the AVI (Asha Vahishta Initiative) vision document (101 Inspirations), would lead to a resolution of contemporary issues plaguing Zoroastrianism "in 5 minutes!"

Table groupings were given the opportunity to peruse the entire document (101 Inspirations: on OZCF website) in order to offer criticism, remark on the use of language, and/or to ask questions regarding the relevance of any/all articles (within the 101 Inspirations). Through such discussions within table groups, it was found that individuals began to articulate the reasoning behind many of the articles for themselves. For example, when person-A brought up a particular issue with article-(x, y, or z); another person(s) would respond by reflecting upon the reasons for the inclusion, use of, and pertinence of the article in question.

Herein lies the culmination of the exercise of the AVI, and the illustration of the AVI Vision Document as empowering a diasporic, anjuman-centred, Daena Mazdayasni. Having completed numerous examinations of identity and belonging, questioned the rationale for faith and fellowship, and interrogated the nature of a relevant system of belief within an urban multicultural and secular society—it was clearly illustrated in the last session, that participants understood the need for an articulate vision statement of themselves and their religion, which would simultaneously act as a resolution mechanism for "all problems". Indeed, the moderator found that there was little to no moderating necessary in the last session, at least by way of prompting conversation or redirecting focus. Participants engaged in spirited and inspired defence of numerous articles within the 101 Inspirations.

Clearly, the understanding of the fundamental basis for a re-imagined faith and a re-claimed fellowship, were understood by most participants. Moreover, it is also perhaps true, that participants who brought up issues with any given article (from the 101 Inspirations), may have had their original hesitancy overcome through discussion with their peers. This means that the 101 Inspirations began to transition from the academic model and framework of its author, to an inspiration vision-document for adherents to articulate their faith and fellowship. Indeed, the session moderator was greatly encouraged by the malleability of the document (101 Inspirations) in the hands of the participants, as they began through free-association to link various articles across the breath of numbers 1-to-101. In this way, the AVI Vision Document also demonstrates its ability to be 'user friendly' as a guide to decipher and

rationalize the 'operating system' of a diasporic Daena Mazdayasni. This is a fitting close to the second phase of the AVI (Asha Vahishta Initiative).

In Phase III, the AVI shall now begin an effort to concretize vision and resolution, toward the promotion of a diasporic identity for faith and fellowship.