

## Opening remarks by: Erv Dr. Ramiyar Kananjia

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Hamāzor vesh kerfeh bād, hamāzor kam gunāh bād, hamāzor zarthoshti din rāstihā bokhtār bād, dine māddayasnān hakikat dorost bād.

“May we be united in performance of meritorious deeds. May we be united in abstaining from sins. May we be united in strength with the Mazdayasni religion which gives redemption through righteousness. May all the teachings of the Mazdayasni religion be properly preserved.” ( Afrin 1,1)

Hama Zor means “united in Zohr, i.e. spiritual energy”.

The **Jasa me avanghe mazda** prayer calls for *Fraspaayokhedhraam* “Unity for progress”, *nidhaanasnaithishem* “not using violence”, *khaetvadathaam* “self-dedication” and *Ashaonim*, “righteousness.”

All the above originate originate from the **mind**, which is the one who makes us love or hate. Hence we should first purify our minds. As the computer scientists have put it very succinctly – GIGA – Garbage in an garbage out. The same holds true for our mind. Feed it with hate and you get back hatred, feed it with love and we get back love.

Vohu Manah or Bahman is mind at its loftiest. Zoroastrianism promises that if we exalt our mind, then love, harmony, peace and brotherhood will come as natural corollaries and a natural result – not just for mankind but for all living and non living creations. One will not even have to make an effort to be loving and brotherly.

**Two aspects** necessary for the process of coming together:

**1. Respect** for other peoples viewpoints. This includes respect for those which cannot defend and speak for themselves – our religion and community. It is imperative to safeguard the religion and community which all of us so fondly cherish – it is better to stick with the time tested measures for its continuity which have proved successful in the past rather than meddle and experiment with it which had proved fatal in the past.

2. For ‘Coming Together’ another aspect required is tolerance, and understanding and love - typified by Spenta Armaiti, the feminine motherly divine being – a mother always loves her children – because she always **understands, tolerates** and **forgives**. If we learn these three values, hatred will stay away from us.

We have to start learning to **love** in concentric circles, start from the one closest to you and then reach out to other family members, and then to the society, village, country and the world at large. Once we start loving God and understanding that God is a part of everything, once we start seeing God in each creation and every thing, it will be very difficult for us to hate anyone. If at all we hate, it would be like hating God Himself.

God Himself is Love, once we learn to love, we would realise what we are missing by not loving the neighbour and the world. Thus following these simple tenets given by religions, we can start making the world a beautiful and safer place for all of us to live in.