

# Inaugural Regional SoH Forum, London, 3 November 2017

## *A summary*

Our day together in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> November was initiated by the inspiration of Catherine Allinson of Future Earth Ltd and in conversation with Kate Monkhouse of Creators of Peace-Initiatives of Change. The idea? To gather participants from Spirit of Humanity Forums and reflect personally what we have taken away, discuss what we have done in response to the questions posed at the main event and discern further how we can best make a contribution locally to cultivate SoH's values and ethos in our own spheres of influence.

During our collective pause for reflection at the start of the day, Sister Jayanti underlined that we often remember "humanity" but often forget the "spirit", indeed a new world is just a thought away, and during her welcome, Sister Maureen spoke of being a community of practitioners, when we come together we empower and encourage one another.

Hosted by Initiatives of Change, Jacqui Daukes, Partnerships Manager, spoke of the value in space holding, silence and stillness and that it is the individuals who bring their presence to a gathering, lending their power to the group as part of a greater community, part of the whole.

Our conversation began with different perspectives on how spiritual communities in the UK might help shift human consciousness from fear and separation towards love and connectedness. We articulated together the value of SoH in providing a safe, holding space, where people bring their presence to the gathering, care for one another and can secure their own trustworthiness. We talked about valuing silence and stillness in a busy world and knowing that through spiritual strength, we can accept not knowing the outcome of our endeavours for social change. Several shared they appreciated feeling part of a greater community with others who are also going on a personal learning journey to see the world with new eyes. We acknowledged we need fresh perspectives to see the complexity of what is happening in the world and how we can bring what is within us to help bring about new transformation.

The next part of our conversation focused on the theme of how we nurture the Spirit of Humanity community towards more human values in society. Professor Mike Hardy, Centre for Trust, Peace & Social Relations, called for 'care' to be the hallmark of the next season in our societal life together. These questions around 'care' are key for our

society at this time: how shall we care for each other? Is this the realm of the state or private sector? What about those at the edge? We talked about the importance of taking back our responsibility to care, having in our society given it away to the state or private sector, or even largely to international institutions such as the United Nations. As humans are designed to live in communities, our caring is a re-focusing, not a creating of something new, we now need to co-create actions and systems that share care, that don't leave care to the 'caregivers' and that aim for parity and commonality in our shared responsibility.

After lunch, we focused our conversation onto our 'duty of care' for the earth and how a growing collective consciousness might nurture our actions and be spready more widely. Catherine Allinson shared the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and invited everyone to share with a partner how their personal actions and professional influence helped uphold the objectives of these global milestones. What do we do with our wisdom and wealth for the good of humanity? As the SDGs are our social contract for the planet, we can each uphold their guiding principles to help all people live healthy, fulfilling lives by 2060. Tom Chick, Founder of Wired Social, encouraged us to continue 'living from the inside out'.

A highlight of the day was the launch of "Peacefulness: Being Peace and Making Peace", a new Spirit of Humanity publication, edited by David Cadman and Scherto Gill. The book brings together reflections from SoH participants, practitioners in different walks of life on themes around our ability to flourish through cultivating spirituality and relationship, within ourselves, with others in community and as citizens, with creation and in our economy and education systems.

Our time together was interspersed with Icelandic music, tasty food and readings from "Being Human: Poems for Unreal Times" (edited by Neil Astley), followed by quiet time to reflect on how to capture the inspiration we have been given and to continue to do this work with glad hearts. We went away with a shared sense of motivation to meet again next year, with a focus on the future via a gathering in a school, a focus on engaging tech companies and a focus on conversation about humanitarian values with parliamentarians. For each of us meanwhile, we must have the courage to talk about SoH more widely in whichever arenas we find our ourselves in, noting that many people are encouraged to hear about the values and ethos of trust, love and compassion.