



Reykjavík 2019, 30 May – 1 June

## Discovering Harmony in a World of Difference Spiritual Resilience in Practice

### CONCEPT PAPER

**Our world is characterised by diversity and interdependence.** These are the virtues of healthy societies and harmonious ecosystems through which our world has flourished for millennia. However, in our current times the presence of difference can often engender dynamics of tension and anxiety. When people have divergent needs and interests, together with varying degrees of access to resources, opportunities and power, such dynamics can easily divide people and communities. Such divisiveness can lead to antagonistic relationships, and ultimately dehumanisation. Dehumanisation has been at the root of much institutionalised discrimination, inequality and injustice, resulting in poverty, exploitation, war, and the violent displacement of people and of entire communities. Such struggles and discords can render our world hostile.

**How can we transcend these struggles and reach a state of acceptance and compassion?** This requires a deep shift in human consciousness from fear and separation towards a rediscovery of the inherent harmony that is present within the wholeness of our own being, in our human relationships and also in the natural world. In fact, one reflects the other as we begin to see the profound connection between the state of human consciousness and the state of the world. This shift can enable us to understand difference in a new way: difference is what defines our very being in the world rather than a source of tension and conflict. Celebrating this aspect of our existence enables us to look beyond that which separates us and to see difference as not only already constituted in harmony, but as a creative driving force for harmony. Indeed, harmony is the coming-together of divergent things, an on-going dynamic and fluid process of inter-dependence and collaboration, towards compassionate and generative relationships amongst all that is.

**Harmony therefore has spiritual qualities such as Love at its core which is the creative energy that has the possibility of binding all the parts in an integrated whole.** Sustaining harmony requires us to develop our inner capacities of compassion, resilience, peace and wisdom to engage with and connect to this creative energy that transcends difference and gives rise to deep interconnectedness. Equally, our spirituality can inspire us to act with care towards each other. The potential of harmony to transform our relationship with nature, relationships among ourselves, within institutions and societies, as well as between nations, is immense.

**To reaffirm our deepest love for each other and our spiritual bond, and to reweave the broken threads of our communities and our world into wholeness,** the fourth Spirit of Humanity (SoH) Forum, to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> May- 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019 in Reykjavík, Iceland, seeks ways to rediscover harmony in a world of difference.

**It invites leaders at all levels to explore, amongst myriad approaches to harmony, how spiritual qualities can strengthen our resilience** and sustain us in an inner state of peacefulness, despite pressures, fears and disquiet that drive us towards the contrary. The Forum aims to do so by providing spaces for dialogue, listening, contemplation and experience. Participants are encouraged to share, inspire and be inspired, and to collaborate in pursuit of harmony in our personal, communal and political lives



**The questions to be discussed during the SoH Forum 2019 include:**

- What relational practices could we foster to deepen interconnectedness and how might our spiritual resilience help sustain generative relationships and harmony?
- How might leaders be, to actively nurture spiritual qualities in individuals, communities and institutions? Which stories can we share to inspire our actions to transcend difference?
- In what way can spirituality help shift social institutions and systems towards greater harmony and peace?

**The SoH Forum 2019 will feature a wide range of activities:** inspirational personal sharing, panel dialogues, experiential workshops, collective narrative and storytelling, case studies and exemplars, contemplative reflection, informal conversations and rich Icelandic natural, cultural and artistic experiences.

**SoH Forum 2019 particularly welcomes** leaders, practitioners, professionals and thinkers from the following fields:

- Arts, Music and Humanities
- Business and Economy
- Education, Social Work and Health
- Politics, Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation
- Science and Environment

**For further information** about Spirit of Humanity Forum and enquiries about how to participate in SoH Forum 2019, please contact:

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