Following the recent UK riots and the Norwegian shootings, the battle lines have been drawn around the idea of ‘Multiculturalism’. Concepts such as ‘Inclusion’, ‘Diversity’ and ‘Respect’ are being discussed with increased fervor and the issue of Minority Rights and Majority Fears is one that has people of many political persuasions quite excited.

Ashok Panikkar, a conflict resolution professional experienced as a Conflict Management Consultant, Mediator, Facilitator, and Director of training throughout the United States, India, and Europe, will offer a different approach to talk through these issues. His explanation will help us discover how all of us, including Human Rights activists, Mediators and Peacemakers, would be well served by taking a less romantic and more ‘real’ approach toward addressing conflicts between seemingly irreconcilable groups. He will provide an understanding of the differences between ‘Diversity’ as a lived experience and the notion of ‘Multiculturalism’. Because simplistically equating ‘minorities’ with ‘victims’ and ‘majorities’ with ‘oppressors’ while there is still the ‘threat’ of ‘outsiders’ in relatively insular societies increases global chaos at every level — ecologically, economically, culturally, socially, and morally — we will recognize why it is necessary to move beyond these comforting platitudes and easy solutions.