

MYSTICS AND SCIENTISTS 35

The Mystery of Consciousness and Western Meditation Traditions

BOOKING DETAILS

Venue: The University of Winchester is set in attractive surroundings overlooking one of the oldest cities in Britain. One hour by train from London Waterloo.

Accommodation

On site – in single rooms. Please indicate if you require special accommodation considerations due to a physical disability.

Off site – we have reserved 20 en suite rooms at the Winchester Hotel, with a bed and breakfast rate of £153.00 per room for two nights. These rooms will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis **and must be booked and paid for directly by delegates (i.e. not through the SMN office) in addition to the non-residential conference fee.** Address: the Winchester Hotel, Worthy Lane, Winchester SO23 7AB, telephone 01962 709988/ fax 01962 840862. You will need to quote the booking reference SMN2004. The rooms will only be held until the end of January.

Fees: Fees include accommodation (for residential delegates), lecture programme, and all meals, except breakfast for non-residents. They are payable in full on booking. Vegetarian meals provided. A small number of bursaries are available – please contact the office to discuss.

Cancellations: A fee of £25 will be retained, or £75 after 1st April; after 10th April, no refund.

Booking: Places are strictly limited so early application is essential. Send cheque for full amount, payable to "Scientific and Medical Network". Detailed information about the venue will be sent with the booking confirmation.

WE CANNOT GUARANTEE BOOKINGS MADE AFTER 10th APRIL

Please send to: **Conference Administrator, Scientific and Medical Network, PO Box 11, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 0ZF.** Tel: +44 (0) 1608 652000, Fax: +44 (0)1608 652001, Email: info@scimednet.org

BOOKING FORM

PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name

Address

E-mail

Phone

CONFERENCE OPTIONS

SMN Members

Residential £250.00
Early Bird (prior to 31st January) £230.00

Non-residential £215.00
Early Bird (prior to 31st January) £195.00

Non-Members

Residential £265.00
Early Bird (prior to 31st January) £245.00

Non-residential £230.00
Early Bird (prior to 31st January) £210.00

Please send me a joining form and another leaflet so that I can enrol at the Members' rate

Please tick here if physically disabled and give details

How did you hear about the conference?

MEALS - are you? Vegetarian Vegan

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS:

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Cheque/Bank Draft/Money Order (payable to "Scientific and Medical Network")

Credit/Debit card (VISA or MasterCard)

Card No.:

Expires: Security Code:

Signature:

Company limited by guarantee, registered No. 4544694 England. Registered charity No. 1101171 UK

HOST ORGANISATION

The Scientific and Medical Network was founded in 1973 by George Blaker, Dr. Patrick Shackleton, Dr. Peter Leggett and Sir Kelvin Spencer. The founders believed that neither orthodox religion nor conventional science was sufficient to answer pressing questions about human existence and the cosmos, and that new ways of thinking were needed.

The Network provides interdisciplinary education exploring the frontiers of science, consciousness and spirituality. It draws on a worldwide community of scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers and theologians to provide events, publications, and courses that link insights from the spiritual traditions and the arts, with the study and application of science and medicine.

The Network assumes that there are many ways of knowing the world and ourselves, of which science is just one, albeit one highly effective and reliable, way of gaining knowledge. In order to do justice to the full spectrum of human experience and the complexity of the cosmos, it encourages dialogue and interaction between the spiritual, the scientific, the philosophical and the arts in open-minded enquiry. See www.scimednet.org

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MYSTICS & SCIENTISTS 35th Anniversary Conference

The Mystery of Consciousness and Western Meditation Traditions

20th–22nd
April, 2012

University of
Winchester

Chairs:
Dr. Peter Fenwick
David Lorimer

Speakers:
Rabbi Nilton Bonder
Prof. Robert Frager
Laurence Freeman, OSB
Dr. Anne Runehov
Dr. Raymond Tallis

 The Scientific and Medical Network

The Mystery of Consciousness and Western Meditation Traditions

The **Mystics and Scientists** conferences have been held every year since 1978, and are dedicated to forging a creative understanding of the complementary roles of scientific and mystical approaches to reality. The conferences always provide a highly engaging and creative opportunity to come together with like-minded people in a spirit of exploration and dialogue. We greatly look forward to your participation.

This year we are exploring the mystery of consciousness with specific reference to the Abrahamic traditions. **Fr. Laurence Freeman** brings a unique perspective on Christian meditation, while **Rabbi Nilton Bonder** is making a special trip from Brazil to share insights from ancient Jewish traditions. **Prof. Robert Frager** combines his expertise in transpersonal psychology with a training in a Turkish Sufi tradition and Aikido. **Dr. Raymond Tallis** and **Dr. Anne Runehov** will consider the implications of neuroscience for understanding of consciousness and its relationship to spiritual experience.

SPEAKERS and PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 22nd April

Opening Wine Reception followed by dinner and introductions



David Lorimer:
Introduction: Scientific and Contemplative Ways of Knowing

David Lorimer is Programme Director of the Scientific and Medical Network, President of

Wrekin Trust and Vice-President of the Swedenborg Society. He is editor of *Thinking Beyond the Brain, Science, Consciousness and Ultimate Reality* and co-editor of *A New Renaissance*. He is author of *Radical Prince*, and co-author of *The Protein Crunch: Civilisation on the Brink*.

SATURDAY 23rd April



Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB:
Ways of Knowing and Unknowing

Consciousness takes many forms. Different ways of knowing complement each other in the way to full consciousness over a

lifetime and through the history of a culture. Laurence Freeman will explore how the "way of unknowing" in the Christian tradition relates to the other forms of understanding that are all unified in the 'vision of God'.

Fr. Laurence Freeman studied English Literature at Oxford and is a Benedictine monk of the Olivetan Congregation and the Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation. Before entering monastic life he had experience with the United Nations, banking and journalism. In the monastery his spiritual teacher was John Main

with whom he studied and whom he helped in the establishment of the first Christian Meditation Centre in London. He is involved both in the recovery of the Christian contemplative tradition and the development of inter-religious dialogue from the common ground of meditation. His latest book is *First Sight: The Experience of Faith*. www.wccm.org



Prof. Robert Frager:
Models of Consciousness in the Sufi Tradition

There is a wide variety of models of consciousness in Sufism. For centuries Sufi sages have described Sufism as a path that includes

distinct stages of consciousness. These include models of the levels of the heart and models of the stages of different virtues on the Sufi path. Of particular interest is the model of the stages of the *nafs*, which might be translated as self or ego. There are generally considered to be seven stages of the *nafs*, ranging from the completely self-centered, narcissistic *nafs* to the pure *nafs*, the stage of the development of a sense of unity and loss of ego. This model of inner transformation has important implications for both psychotherapy and spiritual guidance.

Professor Robert Frager is the Founder of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, California, where he is a Professor of Psychology and the founding Director of the Masters degree programme in Spiritual Guidance. He received his doctorate in Social Psychology from Harvard University where he worked with Erik Erikson and Stanley Milgram. For over 25 years he has been a Sufi teacher in the Turkish Halveti-Jerrahi Order. Frager is also an Aikido instructor and was a personal student of the founder of Aikido. He is the author of *Personality and Personal Growth; The Wisdom of Islam; Heart, Self, and Soul; The Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance, and Harmony*; and *Sufi Talks* (in press). He is the editor of *Essential Sufism; Love is the Wine: Teachings of a Sufi Master in America*; and *Sharing Sacred Stories: Current Approaches to Spiritual Direction and Guidance*.



Rabbi Nilton Bonder:
The Mystics of Media

In a time when science was not capable of fostering imagination on the marvels of the universe, it was the role of religion to manifest human speculations on wonder and awe. We will look at Jewish ancient traditions and references to the possibilities of media and communication as a way of survival and mystical speculation. Was there a Windows 1751? Were priests and prophets able to devise the principle of a "net"? Of a CWW, a Cosmic Wide Web? Why was the ancient fiction interested not on "Time Travel", but "Space Travel", or as they called it, "Jumping the Way"? From where could they have derived a concept of "virtual reality"? What are the connections between "virtual reality" and the Messianic ideas as well as the Resurrection of the Dead?

Rabbi Nilton Bonder studied Mechanical Engineering at PUC-Columbia University in Brazil and was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary, NYC. He is part of the board of the program Education for the Future of the UN and a Member of the Council for Dignity, Forgiveness, Justice and Reconciliation - *Ara Pacis Initiative*, in Rome. Born in Brazil, he is a best selling author of nineteen books in Latin America. He leads one of Brazil most influential Jewish congregations and is also active in the civil rights and ecological causes. His books are available in eleven languages in Europe, Asia and the US.

SUNDAY 22nd April



Anne Runehov:
Do Neuroscientific Explanations of Religious Experiences lead to Naturalism?

We are currently living in the age of neuroscience. There has been an explosion of interest in the psychological and the spiritual on the part of neuroscientists over the last twenty years. Perhaps the most dominating endeavour has been to find the neurological underpinnings of religious experiences. Broadly, these endeavours result in two contradicting conclusions of how to

understand religious experiences. On the one side we find explanations of religious experiences in terms of the neuroactivity that generates these experiences (for example, Persinger). On the other side we find explanations in terms of having found important neuro-correlations of a set of specific religious experiences (for example, Newberg). My aim is to present contradictory neurological understandings of religious experiences in order to show how those versions of naturalism can be and are used and argue that the comprehensive ontological naturalistic version is insufficient to understand the complexity of being a human being.

Dr. Anne L.C. Runehov currently works as a guest senior researcher at the department of Systematic Theology at the Copenhagen University. She is editor in chief for the forthcoming 4-volume *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions* and of the *Copenhagen University Discussions in Science and Religion*. She is also editor for the *European Journal of Science and Theology*. She is the author of *Sacred or Neural? The Potential of Neuroscience to Explain Religious Experiences* (2007), which is based on the doctoral thesis for which she received the 2006 ESSSAT research prize. Furthermore, she is the director of the *Copenhagen Network for Science and Religion*, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. Her main research interests have been neuroscience, cognitive science and quantum mechanics studied from a perspective of philosophy of religion, philosophy of mind, epistemology and philosophy of science.



Dr Raymond Tallis:
Why Neuroscience Will Never Explain Consciousness

The belief that consciousness is identical with activity in certain parts of the brain, so that 'you are your brain' is now widely accepted. It is, however, mistaken. While the brain is a *necessary* condition of every aspect of consciousness, from the slightest tingle of sensation to the most exquisitely constructed sense of self, neural activity is not *sufficient* by itself to explain consciousness. This is evident from the fact that there is no fundamental difference between that small

minority of neural activity correlated with consciousness and that which is not associated with consciousness.

Acknowledging that the failure to arrive a neural account of consciousness is not a temporary problem which will be resolved by further research will open the way to a necessary fundamental re-think that will help us towards an understanding the difference between brains and people.

Dr. Raymond Tallis, FRCP, DLitt, FMedSci Raymond Tallis was Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manchester and a consultant physician in Health Care of the Elderly in Salford between 1987 and 2006. He also advised the government on health care of older people and in particular on the development of stroke services. Most of his 200 research publications are in the field of neurology of old age (epilepsy and stroke) and neurological rehabilitation. He has published original articles in *Nature Medicine, Lancet* and other leading journals. In 2002 he was awarded the Dhole Eddlestone Prize; in 2006 the Founders Medal of the British Geriatrics Society; and in 2007, the Lord Cohen Gold Medal for Research into Ageing.

He has also published fiction (a novel and short stories), three volumes of poetry, and 20 books on the philosophy of mind, philosophical anthropology, literary theory, the nature of art, and cultural criticism. These offer a critique of current predominant intellectual trends and an alternative understanding of human consciousness, the nature of language and of what it is to be a human being. He writes regularly for *The Times* and has a column in *Philosophy Now*. His latest book is *Aping Mankind. Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity*.

