



The Janki Foundation
for Spirituality in Healthcare

The Psychology of Meditation: Research and Practice

With Professor Michael West and Sister Jayanti

The Janki Foundation Annual Lecture, 27th September 2016, 7pm, GCH, LONDON

SHORT REPORT

With around 240 people present and 50-60 joining online, MC, Consultant Psychiatrist, **Dr Sarah Eagger**, introduced the evening led by **Professor Michael West, Senior Fellow at The King's Fund and Professor of Organisational Psychology at Lancaster University Management School**, who captivated everyone for 45 minutes with a scholarly and beautifully researched presentation on the therapeutic value of a meditation practice, as well as the powerful and positive impact a meditation practice can have on any individual's overall health and well-being. Some of the benefits that were explored by Professor West were how on a personal level meditation can bring about the following:

- Profound peace of mind
- Deeper sense of the meaning of existence
- Connection, compassion and altruism
- Deeper meaning of existence, insights about the conditioning of the mind.

This was framed by eloquent poems by **Dr Rachna Chowla**, on the interconnectedness of existence: *Come and see and live out of your own story's mask!*

Then followed a fascinating conversation between **Sister Jayanti** and Professor West. Sister Jayanti shared many points on the profound benefits of her many years of experience as a practicing Raj Yogi, including how there are many seeming paradoxes that exist. Professor West had noticed and shared that *'When I sit by my pond and I feel the wind.....there are times of real stillness which are very here and now, and are filled with feelings of gratitude and love...this then feels transcendent and it is connecting'*.

Sister Jayanti shared how *'often what it doesn't say on the tin with secular practices like mindfulness is that it will take you to experiences that are far more meaningful than just the therapeutic experiences. Mindfulness fits in with Raj Yoga meditation. There is the experience of Om...I am present.....coming to the awareness of the peace and stillness that sits within'*.

The evening was closed with a meditation commentary by Sister Jayanti, and MC Dr Sarah Eagger thanked both the speakers saying *'we appreciate your presence and your roles as amazing people doing amazing work in the world'* and thankyou's were given to Rachna for the beautiful poetry as well as to the whole organising and production teams for the evening.

ENDS