

# The Quest

A Series of Lectures and Discussions  
2020-21



Illustration by Lindsey C. Harris  
Front cover of *The Sower and the Seed* (2015)

Programme director - Alan Mulhern  
2020-21

Times of meetings: 2-5pm

Location – Flat 3, 7 Eton Ave, Belsize Park, London NW3 3EL

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For related information you may see the website  
[alanmulhern.com](http://alanmulhern.com)

## Programme 2020-21

1. **Origins and History of Human Consciousness**
2. **The Development of the Western Mind  
Is there a Unity to Consciousness?**
3. **Is the Universe Conscious?  
Does the Cosmos Have a Soul?**
4. **Is there a Meaning to History?  
*The Sower and the Seed* "explained"**
5. **Sacred Architecture and the Soul ~ Chartres Cathedral.**
6. **The Nature of Capitalism as a System of Creative  
Destruction and its relation to evolving consciousness  
The Human Prospect ~ Growth, Dark Age, or Extinction?**
7. **The Quest for Spiritual Freedom. Does depth  
psychology offer insight and liberation.**
8. **Visions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.  
Are there Solutions to the Planetary Crisis?**

Our purpose is to help participants articulate their own vision. Our method is to critically study a series of visionaries. In addition to mystical works forming the backbone of the series there will be a selection of the most powerful political and economic visions that have shaped humanity – as well as new ones required if we are to survive. Select music and artists from Sufism, Hinduism, and the Romantics will be included.

A series of lectures will be given once a month in London by Alan Mulhern. Discussion groups follow lectures. Summaries of key texts, study guidance, suggestions for more reading, commentary on music/paintings, and questions for reflection will be provided. An optional pilgrimage-trip to Chartres Cathedral in France is planned for late Sept 2020.

## Information for the Programme

### 1. **Origins and History of Human Consciousness**

The story of human evolution from apes to Homo sapiens is examined. We explore when the psyche emerged, when we became 'human', the stages our psyche passed through, and how human emotions and even logic developed from animals. We use the perspective of anthropology, palaeoanthropology (study of ancient humans), and Analytical Psychology, especially its study of mythology, e.g. creation myths, as representations of the birth of human consciousness. We examine the stages of human consciousness: nature worship, the Great Mother; empires and patriarchal religions; the scientific revolution.

### 2. **The Development of the Western Mind. Is there a Unity to Consciousness?**

The development of the Western mind is told through Tarnas' remarkable book showing its organic development across millennia. Wilber argues for a unity of consciousness from its most material to its most ethereal manifestation. The different aspects of consciousness are akin to different colours of a rainbow refracted from the one light. McGilchrist presents a fascinating exploration of the differences between the brain's left and right hemispheres and how they have shaped the development of civilization itself.

### 3. **Is the Universe Conscious? Does the Cosmos Have a Soul?**

Buddhists believe that Mind creates the universe. William Blake suggested that if we removed the filters to our consciousness we should see everything as holy. Anne Baring reveals the "soul as the fathomless sea of being". We examine a growing literature that argues that consciousness is inherent in the universe. This meeting also explores the overall vision of the Wagner's Ring Cycle. Poetry, literature, and music that shifts our consciousness and opens up the soul is studied: select poems from the Romantic poets Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley; the novels *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *The Rainbow* by D.H.Lawrence.

### 4. **Is There a Meaning to History? The Sower and the Seed "Explained"**

We explore world history and ask if there is any meaning, development, or purpose in the history of the human race. The author of *The Sower and the Seed* will present the philosophy of creative-destruction that underlies human history and consciousness. Select poetry of the book will be read and illustrations shown.

## 5. **Sacred Architecture and the Soul**

As preparation for our visit to Chartres we shall study the architecture of the cathedral and some of its internal glories, for example the stain glass windows and the labyrinth. In complete contrast. An in-depth video on Chartres Cathedral from the *Great Courses Series* will be shown in the meeting. It examines the history of the cathedral, the structure of the building, the extraordinary stained glass windows, and the wonderful sculptures of this sacred monument.

## 6. **The Nature of Capitalism – a system of creative-destruction.; Its relation to evolving consciousness The Human Prospect**

This meeting will explore questions such as: is the human race self-destructing? Will science come to the rescue? What are the major dangers we face? Is there a metaphysical dimension to this? Could these visions work or are they utterly utopian? Is the human race being fused with artificial intelligence?

## 7. **What is spiritual freedom? Is Enlightenment Possible?**

The quest for spiritual freedom, the experience of transcendence or enlightenment is the centre of the individual quest. The “void” of the Golden Flower or of Buddhist meditation indicates that there is a state of being beyond normal consciousness which transcends opposites and states of emotional suffering. Is it possible that there could be such a heaven on earth, in this body, in this mind? Is this an experience just for individuals or is it, in some sense, available for the human race?

## 8. **Are there solutions to the planetary crisis? Visions for the 21st Century.**

What are the crises of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What visions are required in response? Are there practical solutions currently on offer embodying a new philosophy of the earth and mankind that could avert catastrophe? Does an economic vision exist for our civilization that is compatible with life affirmation and justice? We summarise our major visionaries with particular emphasis on those that provide guidance to the times we live in. We also look to the emerging visions of our times.

If the programme has started and someone wishes to join for one of the sessions, that is possible. Summaries of many key books, audios of lectures, and newsletters will be provided. To make a reservation or receive more information please contact Alan Mulhern at: [thepilgrimquest@gmail.com](mailto:thepilgrimquest@gmail.com)

It is possible to do this programme at distance via audio downloads and receive book summaries and the like by email attachments. Please contact for details. It is also possible to do a catch-up programme of past years of the Quest.

The cost of the series for the year is £264. There are 8 meetings from 2-5pm. Individual meetings may be attended for £40 – parts of meeting may also be attended at *pro rata* cost. For example the first half of a meeting typically lasting 90 minutes may be attended for £20.

Alan Mulhern is a practising Jungian Analyst in London with particular interest in dream analysis, the process of healing, and the history of ideas. He is author of *Healing Intelligence: The Spirit in Psychotherapy* (Karnac 2013) and *The Sower and the Seed* (Karnac 2015) – the latter is a visionary text and the platform for The Quest Series. He has also taught economics in the university sector with particular expertise in the History of Economic Thought.

<http://www.karnacbooks.com/Author.asp?AID=18642>

The programme will suit those who are strongly committed to a search for personal vision – that is our *raison d'etre*. As well as a programme shared with others an individual quest is also encouraged. Wisdom is the fruit of both knowledge and the development of the inner world. There are optional parts of the programme such as a meditation programme following the *The Secret of the Golden Flower* as well as pilgrimage-visit to Chartres Cathedral. This programme has the facility for distance learning since audios can be received of the meetings.