



Sir Roger Penrose Receives 'Bhaumik Prize' in Consciousness Research at Tucson Conference

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(L) Sir Roger Penrose and (R) Dr. Mani Bhaumik

Newswise — The first 'Mani Bhaumik award' for consciousness research was presented to Sir Roger Penrose at the 20th anniversary 'Toward a Science of Consciousness' conference in Tucson, Arizona. Penrose, the esteemed British physicist renowned for work on general relativity, quantum mechanics, cosmology and consciousness, shared the 1988 Wolf Prize for mathematics with Stephen Hawking for understanding of black holes and the universe. His 1989 book "The Emperor's New Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness", questioned whether human understanding and consciousness were purely computation, and suggested quantum connections to the structure of the universe were required. The book helped launch modern approaches to the science of consciousness. Penrose later teamed with University of Arizona anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff in a controversial theory suggesting consciousness is based on quantum computing in microtubules inside brain neurons.

Sir Roger Penrose was Keynote speaker at the consciousness conference, and also spoke at the University of Arizona's Steward Observatory on "Seeing signals from before the Big Bang", his idea that the universe is serial, rather than parallel, sponsored by Astronomy, Planetary Sciences, Philosophy and the Center for Consciousness Studies.

Dr. Mani Bhaumik is a UCLA physicist, inventor, author and philanthropist. Earlier in his career he directed the Laser Technology Laboratory at Northrop Corporation, and in 1973 showed that 'excimer' lasers could cut through living tissue without burn damage, a feature which became essential for 'Lasik' eye surgery.

Dr. Bhaumik passionately advocates for public awareness of quantum physics, cosmology and their implications for humanity and spiritual development. He established an award of \$10,000 to be presented to Sir Roger at the Tucson conference.

Dr. Mani Bhaumik: "Until Sir Roger Penrose boldly lent his prestigious support to its scientific study, consciousness was a skeleton in the physicists' closet. Now they recognize consciousness as an elephant in the living room, but ignore it nonetheless. Against the tide, Penrose has valiantly argued our scientific worldview, for example as embodied in a 'Theory of everything', must include consciousness. Science awaits a breakthrough on consciousness, and I aspire to provide a stimulus."

Sir Roger Penrose replied: "I was completely delighted and honoured to have received the most generous prize...I hope that it will continue to encourage others to contribute importantly to our understanding of consciousness...and ultimately change the way that we look at ourselves, in a positive and fruitful way."

Dr. Stuart Hameroff, University of Arizona anesthesiology professor, conference organizer and Penrose collaborator said: "Philosophy aside, understanding consciousness could profoundly improve mental health and cognitive function. Without such an understanding, current approaches are flying blind".

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