

Wisdom Thinkers

ROUNDTABLE

Searching for Answers and Wisdom in a Post 9/11 World:

*Emmy Award Winner, **Arthur Miller**, in a public
dialogue with the Wisdom Thinkers Network*

8:15 to 9:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 8, 2011

92nd Street Y, Lexington at 92nd St., New York, N.Y.



ON 9/11 EVERYTHING CHANGED. OR DID IT?

Immediately following the attacks, Americans seemingly came together, conversations were more civil and religious institutions saw their attendance rise. But within months, we were back to “normal,” increasingly dominated by fear and narrow ideology. Are we destined to live in conflict or can sharing wisdom from both our sacred and secular traditions help break the gridlock and lead to better informed decisions for peace? How can we nurture our children to become engaged citizens and create a more compassionate, pluralistic, civil society? And what role can each of us play?

Moderator:

Arthur Miller, Emmy Award winning moderator of the Fred Friendly Seminars, and currently University Professor, NYU Law School

Convener: Ralph Singh, Chair, Wisdom Thinkers Network

Panelists:

- > Karolyn Buys, international youth leader and conflict mediator
- > James R. Doty, M.D, Founding Director, Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University
- > Richard (Dick) Ehst, President and COO, Customers Bank, ranked 4th in the nation
- > Dr. Noor Gillani, Chairman, Pyar Foundation and ret'd NASA scientist
- > Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, Co-President Clal, popular Washington Post Commentator
- > Dr. Stuart A. Kauffman, complexity theory pioneer, author of “Reinventing the Sacred”
- > Rabbi Irwin Kula, Co-President Clal, Walter Cronkite Award Winner
- > Dr. Nina Lynn Meyerhof, Ed.D., Founder, Children of the Earth
- > R. Gustav Niebuhr, Professor and Noted Journalist
- > Iya Amibelle Olatunji, African American Matriarch
- > Carlos Portes, distinguished Latino representative and liaison at Ground Zero
- > Diane Schenandoah, Native American artist and Wolf Clan Faith Keeper
- > Dr. Naresh Singh, one of world's leading experts in poverty reduction and advocates for sustainable livelihoods
- > Asma Uddin, lawyer, and founder and editor-in-chief, *altmuslimah.org*

Sponsors:

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Panelists



Karoline Buys, is the International Program Coordinator for Children of the Earth, an NGO that inspires and unites young people world-wide to create a peaceful and sustainable world through personal and social transformation. A frequent speaker at world events, she carries a powerful personal story of forgiveness from her childhood in Colombia. She currently lives in Munich, Germany. Part of her work is to encourage young people to expand their consciousness, as well as become young peace builders in their own respective countries.



James R. Doty, M.D., Clinical Professor of Neurosurgery, Founder and Director of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford, whose founding patron was the Dalai Lama. Jim lectures world-wide on the scientific basis of compassion and its importance in leading a full and meaningful life. An inventor, entrepreneur and philanthropist, he Chairs the Dalai Lama Foundation, and supports various international peace initiatives and programs to improve medical care to third world countries.



Richard A. (Dick) Ehst, President and Chief Operating Officer of Customers Bank. A former Executive V-P of Sovereign Bank, Dick had been an independent consultant to more than 70 financial institutions in the mid-Atlantic region. Educated in Europe and the U.S., he served as a U.S. Marine in the Vietnam War. He is an Honored Member of Who's Who Worldwide and has been the recipient of community service awards from more than 20 civic organizations over the past 30 years. Dick's passion is his family, economic development and mentoring, and a lifetime commitment to overcoming prejudice.



Dr. Noor Gillani, a retired Principal Research Scientist at the National Space Science and Technology Center affiliated with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville AL. He is now focusing on further development of his PYAR Foundation which aims to help the cause of the world's children in distress. Inspired by comments of His Highness the Aga Khan, Dr. Gillani has developed a model of Islamic Humanism based on his personal interpretation of the Qur'anic concept of man, which addresses both the purpose of human life and that of balancing our Muslim religious heritage with non-Muslim Western environment.



Rabbi Brad Hirschfield Co-President of Clal, acclaimed author, lecturer, rabbi, and commentator on religion, society and pop culture, offers a unique perspective on the American spiritual landscape and political and social trends to audiences nationwide. His blogs appear in outlets from Fox to Beliefnet. His book, "You Don't Have to be Wrong for Me To Be Right," aptly describes his active engagement and commitment to constructive dialogue with everyone.



Dr. Stuart A. Kauffman, MacArthur Prize winner, frequent contributor to NPR's blog – Cosmos and Culture, is a pioneer in the field of complexity theory. A biologist, trained as a medical doctor, who studies the origins of life and the origins of molecular organization, his most recent book, "*Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion*" redefines God as the natural creativity in the universe itself, proposes a novel metaphysics.



Rabbi Irwin Kula As Co-President of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, he received the 2008 Walter Cronkite Faith and Freedom Award for his work "toward equality, liberty and a truly inter-religious community." Fast Company magazine and Religion and Ethics Newsweekly (PBS) both named him one of the leaders shaping the American spiritual landscape, and he was listed three years in a row in Newsweek as one of the Top 10 of the "Top 50 Rabbis in America." Irwin's award winning book is entitled, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*.



Dr. Nina Lynn Meyerhof, Ed.D.,

President and Founder of Children of the Earth, has made a life of advocating for children and youth. Long recognized as an innovative educator committed to global responsibility through authentic learning, she authored *Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom*. Recipient of several awards including The Mother Theresa Award among others, Nina continues to travel and work in 50 countries assembling adults and young people to build programs for peace recognizing our spiritual unity and scientific knowledge that we are all interconnected, as reflected in her World Spirit Youth Council.



Arthur R. Miller, University Professor, NYU Law School

While famous as a brilliant and demanding lawyer and professor, Miller became the first law professor to appear regularly on television, hosting *Miller's Court*—the TV show that pioneered making real-life lawyering accessible to a lay audience—from 1979 through 1987. The show created media buzz, and led to a 20-year stint as *Good Morning America's* legal editor. He has also hosted a weekly show on Court TV, won an Emmy in 1984 for one of three Fred Friendly seminars he moderated for PBS's 13-part series *The Constitution: That Delicate Balance*, and garnered three American Bar Association Gavel Awards for promoting public understanding of the law.



R. Gustav Niebuhr

Director of the Religion and Society Program, Syracuse University. Writing for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*, Gustav has established a reputation as a leading writer about American religion. His work has been published in books, magazines and on the internet; he also does occasional commentaries on religion for the National Public Radio program "All Things Considered." His latest book is ***Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America***.



Iyafin Amiebelle Bush Olatunji was nurtured in Alabama. She received her B.A. from Talladega College in 1950, as the third female generation of her family to graduate from Talladega. She traveled to Europe to study the Romance Languages in the summer of 1950, then received her M.S. (LS) from Syracuse University in 1954. Iya accompanied her husband, Dr. M. Babatunde Olatunji, who was a delegate to the first All African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana in 1958. In 1970, she founded the Int'l School Without Walls, with the first student traveling from Lagos, Nigeria to Morehouse College, and in 1990, she founded the performing group, Olatunji Third Generation. She has traveled extensively on five continents and continues to serve as a community activist and spiritual mentor to all people. Last but not least, Iyafin believes that her life's legacy to the planet earth is a commitment of unconditional love for the development of all people.



Carlos Portes Former Chairman, The Portes Group. Reflecting on his life's journey as a manifestation of God's greatest purpose, Carlos's arrival in the U.S. from Cuba, alone as a 10 yr. old, as part of the largest airlift of children ever conducted (Operation Peter Pan), has served to inspire his continued crusade to serve others and give back. A recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, appointed Special Ambassador for Latin American Affairs by fmr. President Carter, he has worked with U.S. Presidents on major domestic and foreign policy issues including Cuba. As Chair of the Red Cross, Greater NY, MAO, he worked at Ground Zero assisting Latino families, including those without a voice, and reuniting children in foreign countries with their surviving parent, and helped shape the services to the Chinese Community. Serving the underserved and Conflict Resolution are among his greatest passions.



Diane Schenandoah, renowned Native American artist, Wolf Clan Faith Keeper. Inspired by her artist mother, Maisie Shenandoah, a Wolf Clanmother of the Oneida people and father Clifford Shenandoah, a sub chief of the Onondaga Nation and a talented musician, Diane attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she received her degree in Fine Arts/3D and Creative Writing. As a Faithkeeper for the Wolf Clan, the spiritual significance of her work is paramount. She counts it her privilege and duty to share her culture through her sculptures and carvings. Diane also shares Haudenosaunee legends, moral lessons and the importance of the social, spiritual and emotional well being of her people through her art, where women are held in high regard and make important decision, such as choosing the chiefs. Her works grace the permanent collections of Museums throughout the country. In addition to her sculpting, Diane is a published author and sings as backup singer for her Grammy award winning sister, Joanne Shenandoah.



Dr. Naresh Singh, One of the world's foremost experts on and advocates for sustainable livelihoods, Naresh now serves as Director General of Strategic Planning and Operations of (CPB) at CIDA. He was Executive Director of the U.N. Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor (2006 to 2008) co-chaired by Madeleine Albright and Hernando de Soto and hosted by UNDP; and UNDP's top poverty advisor.



Ralph Singh, Chair, Wisdom Thinkers Network; Ralph feels that stories have the power to change the world. That is his life story: from the powerful vision that drew him from New York to the feet of the great spiritual master, His Holiness Baba Virsa Singh, in India at 22 where he became Babaji's first foreign devotee and still serves as serves as director publications and P.R. for Gobind Sadan; his role in forgiveness and reconciliation following the post 9-11 arson attack on his spiritual community Gobind Sadan, USA; to his Parents' Choice award winning audio CD, "Stories to Light our Way," of sacred and secular wisdom stories, being used by educators and community groups as a way to foster a more compassionate, engaged, pluralistic, civil society.



Asma T. Uddin is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of altnuslimah.com. Asma is also a Legal Fellow with the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) and an international law attorney with The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. She edited Dr. Umar F. Abd-Allah's *A Muslim in Victorian America*, and serves as Associate Editor for *Islamica Magazine*, where she focuses on how American Muslims can rethink their social position within the American legal framework. Asma also contributes to OnFaith, Huffington Post, CNN.com, and Common Ground News. Her more scholarly work has been published by Cambridge University Press and the Rutgers Journal of Law and Religion.

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Giving Voice to Wisdom

We believe that stories have the power to change the world – and by reweaving the wisdom of our traditional stories, both sacred and secular, and new understandings into education and public life we will be able to strengthen our social fabric and foster a more compassionate, inclusive, civil society.

We seek a climate of wisdom so peace and justice may flourish for all, by: **Connecting the world**, especially our children, through the shared wisdom of our stories.

Modeling a path towards civil discourse and shared values through public roundtables at both the grass roots and at highly visible events.

Producing teaching tools based on our traditions and disciplines to support wise choices, and multi-cultural, interracial, and interfaith understanding.

Promoting sustainable livelihoods and service to those in need.

Giving voice to wisdom through all forms of media

Making wise decisions for a better world

What we do:

Stories to Light Our Way: We develop workshops using Ralph Singh's award winning audio CD and study guide for educators, community groups, and corporations, to use stories to build a positive culture for both the individuals, their neighborhoods, and their institutions.

We will provide a web portal for children's groups to share their stories online.

Wisdom Thinkers Roundtables: We convene roundtables of diverse people drawing on both traditional wisdom, both sacred and secular, and new understandings, to model how we can once again have a positive, civil conversation about the future of humanity. And we ask the public, what thread of wisdom they would you like to add to reinforce the fabric for the benefit of our children. Wisdom welcomes everyone, but leaves no room for hate.

We will also continue our roundtable discussions on our new web site.

info@wisdomthinkers.org
www.wisdomthinkers.org