



# Spiritual Exercises, Self-transformation and Liberation in Philosophy, Theology and Religion

ONLINE CONFERENCE 22 – 24 MAY | LUND UNIVERSITY & KARLSTAD UNIVERSITY

The conference *Spiritual Exercises, Self-transformation and Liberation in Philosophy, Theology and Religion* is inspired by Pierre Hadot's pioneering work on philosophy as a way of life (*manière de vivre*). It builds on the significance Hadot attributed to spiritual exercises (*exercices spirituels*), arguing that these were, beside philosophical discourse, constitutive of philosophical enterprise in Greco-Roman antiquity and beyond. Hadot's initial insight was subsequently developed, in his own distinctive manner, by Michel Foucault in theorizing the *technologies of the self* and *care of the self*, and has ever since received considerable attention from scholars working in the field of philosophy, theology as well as religious studies.

Hadot defined spiritual exercises (*exercices spirituels*) as "voluntary, personal practices intended to bring about a transformation of the individual, a transformation of the self" that rises the individual from an inauthentic condition of life to an authentic one, providing peace of mind (*ataraxia*), inner freedom (*autarkeia*) and cosmic consciousness. Furthermore, relying on the work of Paul Rabbow, Hadot acknowledged that the expression *exercices spirituels* is derived from the Catholic theologian Ignatius of Loyola's *Exercitia spiritualia* (1548), but that this phrase had a philosophical, Greco-Roman origin that was later inherited by Christian monks who employed it to denote their own practice.

The purpose of this conference is to initiate interdisciplinary research on spiritual exercises in global perspective, identify primary sources in philosophy, theology and religious writings addressing these practices, and to address a number of relevant themes and challenges that such research entails. The conference also aims to help establishing an interdisciplinary, academic network that will allow for future collaborations in the research activities that will be defined in a research project to be submitted to the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) in 2024.

## Registration

Please visit <https://konferens.ht.lu.se/spiritual-exercises/registration> and fill in the registration form no later than 19 May 2023.

For more information e-mail [ervik.cejvan@ctr.lu.se](mailto:ervik.cejvan@ctr.lu.se) or [pawel.odyniec@kau.se](mailto:pawel.odyniec@kau.se)

Supported by The Erik and Gurli Hultengren Foundation for Philosophy at Lund University.



## DAY 1: MONDAY, MAY 22

11:00 - 11:40 CEST  
19:00 – 19:40 AEST  
14:30 - 15:10 IST  
17:00 - 17:40 CST  
10:00 - 10:40 BST

**Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad** | Lancaster University, UK | “What else than as a way of life?, or Indian philosophy on its own terms”  
*20 min Q&A*

12:00 - 12:40 CEST  
20:00 – 20:40 AEST  
15:30 - 16:10 IST  
18:00 - 18:40 CST  
11:00 - 11:40 BST

**Matthew Sharpe** | Deakin University, AU | “Spiritual exercises and the question of ‘religion’ in Pierre Hadot”  
*20 min Q&A*

13:00 - 13:40 CEST  
21:00 – 21:40 AEST  
16:30 - 17:10 IST  
19:00 - 19:40 CST  
12:00 - 12:40 BST

**Xiaojun Ding** | Xi’an Jiaotong University, CN | “Philosophical Practice as Spiritual Exercises towards Truth, Wisdom, and Virtue”  
*20 min Q&A*

## DAY 2: TUESDAY, MAY 23

11:00 - 11:40 CEST  
19:00 – 19:40 AEST  
14:30 - 15:10 IST  
17:00 - 17:40 CST  
10:00 - 10:40 BST

**Marta Faustino** | Nova Institute of Philosophy, PT | “Spirituality without God. On the Philosophical Nature of Hadot’s Spiritual Exercises”  
*20 min Q&A*

12:00 - 12:40 CEST  
20:00 – 20:40 AEST  
15:30 - 16:10 IST  
18:00 - 18:40 CST  
11:00 - 11:40 BST

**Karl-Stephan Bouthilette** | Manipal Academy of Higher Education, IN | “List-Making as Spiritual Exercise in South-Asian Gnosticism. The Interrelation of Ritual, Taxonomy, and Philosophy in Contemporary Practice”  
*20 min Q&A*

<https://konferens.ht.lu.se/spiritual-exercises>

13:00 - 13:40 CEST  
21:00 – 21:40 AEST  
16:30 - 17:10 IST  
19:00 - 19:40 CST  
12:00 - 12:40 BST

**Jordi Crespo** | Independent scholar, ES | “Back to the Future: Playing with Time as Galen’s Solution to Distress”  
*20 min Q&A*

## DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

11:00 - 11:40 CEST  
19:00 – 19:40 AEST  
14:30 - 15:10 IST  
17:00 - 17:40 CST  
10:00 - 10:40 BST

**Jessica Frazier** | Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, UK | “Brahman and the View from Above: The practice of cosmos-comprehension in the Upaniṣads”  
*20 min Q&A*

12:00 - 12:40 CEST  
20:00 – 20:40 AEST  
15:30 - 16:10 IST  
18:00 - 18:40 CST  
11:00 - 11:40 BST

**James Madaio** | Oriental Institute Czech Academy of Sciences, CZ | “The techné of attention: reality and transformative technique in medieval Advaita Vedānta”  
*20 min Q&A*

13:00 - 13:40 CEST  
21:00 – 21:40 AEST  
16:30 - 17:10 IST  
19:00 - 19:40 CST  
12:00 - 12:40 BST

**Eli Kramer** | University of Warsaw, PL | and **Kevin Taylor** | University of Memphis, US | “Spiritual Exercises in the Rinzai Zen Tradition: Imminence and Disruption in Ikkyū Sōjun and Hakuin Ekaku”  
*20 min Q&A*

