UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF RELIGION
DORNSIFE COLLEGE OF LETTERS, ARTS AND SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

OCTOBER 18TH – 19TH, 2013

"THE LIFE, LEGACY, AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA"

SPONSOR: DHARMA CIVILIZATION FOUNDATION

LOCATION: USC Davidson Conference Center | 3415 South Figueroa Street | Los Angeles | CA 90089
The intensive love that humanity has ever known has come from religion, and the most diabolical hatred that humanity has known has also come from religion. No other human motive had deluged the world with blood so much as religion; at the same time, nothing has brought into existence so many hospitals and asylums for the poor; no other human influence has taken such care, not only of humanity, but also the lowest of animals, as religion has done. Nothing makes us so cruel as religion, and nothing makes us so tender as religion.

-Swami Vivekananda

On 11th September 1893 at the Art Institute of Chicago, as a presenter at the Parliament of the World’s Religions for the Columbian Exposition, Swami Vivekananda addressed an American audience for the first time as an unknown monk from India; he left the Parliament as a national celebrity. As the New York Herald wrote, echoing the viewpoint of several other national newspapers: "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions.” He spoke at the Parliament several times on Hindu thought, Buddhist principles and, most famously, interfaith understanding. He spoke of his longing for the beginning of religious hospitality: “[I] fervently believe that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of the representatives of the different religions of the earth, in this parliament assembled, is the death-knell to all fanaticism, that it is the death–knell to all persecution with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between brethren wending their way to the same goal, but through different ways.” Vivekananda, who had planned on leaving the USA after his presentations in Chicago, remained in America for several years at the insistence of various benefactors and lectured extensively not only on the philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga, but on the critical necessity of interreligious understanding and compassionate action for the disadvantaged and oppressed.

Vivekananda is known for diverse contributions that profoundly shaped the perspective of intellectuals in India, Britain, and the United States. These insights include deep pluralism; equal respect for the world’s religions; advocacy and service for the poor and dispossessed; championing of women’s rights to education and leadership, and a call to spiritual liberation for the world and national liberty for India. His philosophy of active, compassionate, world engagement as a lived spiritual practice is now considered vital by religious leaders across nations to address the interrelated concerns that face humanity. Caring for all life, as the paramount form of worship for persons of all faiths, has become norm for today’s spirituality. Vivekananda’s vision was ahead of its time, and many of the causes that he championed are yet to be fulfilled in India or abroad.
Welcome Addresses by USC School of Religion and Office of Religious Life

SESSIONS | FRIDAY OCT. 18TH

PLENARY SESSION
9:00 – 11:30 AM

PLENARY SPEAKER
9:00 - 10:00 AM

Arvind Sharma, Birks Professor of Comparative Religion, McGill University, Montreal | CANADA

*From Secularism to Pluralism: The Role of Reciprocal Illumination*

PLENARY PANEL
10:00 – 11:30 AM

*Reflections on Pluralism in the Study of Religions*

MODERATOR: Varun Soni | The Dean of Religious Life, USC
Donald E. Miller | Firestone Professor of Religion | Executive Director, Center for Religion & Civic Culture, USC
Najeeba Syeed-Miller | Assistant Professor of Interreligious Education | Claremont School of Theology | CA
Duncan R. Williams | Chair, School of Religion | Co-Director, Center for Japanese Religion and Culture, USC
Rita D. Sherma | Swami Vivekananda Visiting Faculty in Hindu Studies, USC

FRIDAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
12:30 – 1:15 PM

Joseph Prabhu, California State University, Los Angeles | CA

*Swami Vivekananda’s Practical Vedanta and Religious Pluralism*
FRIDAY PANELS

PANEL I Vivekananda and Pluralism | 1:30 – 3:30 PM
PRESIDER: James McHugh, University of Southern California

Jeffery D. Long, Elizabethtown College | PA
   Complementarity, not Contradiction: Swami Vivekananda’s Theology of Religions

Makarand Paranjape, Jawaharlal Nehru University | INDIA
   Swami Vivekananda and the Idea of Universal Religion

Anantanand Rambachan, St. Olaf College | MN
   An Advaita Christology: Swami Vivekananda’s Reflection on the Meaning of Jesus

Sharada Sugirtharaja, Birmingham University | UNITED KINGDOM
   Swami Vivekananda and Muscular Hinduism

PANEL II Vivekananda in Relation to Hindu Philosophies and Philosophers | 4:00 – 6:00 PM
PRESIDER: Phyllis Herman, California State University, Northridge

Michael Stoebor, University of Toronto | CANADA
   Kūṇḍalinī Yoga in the Spirituality of Swami Vivekananda and in Modern Yoga Typologies

Andrew Nicholson, State University of New York, Stony Brook | NY
   Vivekananda in the History of Vedānta: Continuities and Contradictions

Gerald James Larson, University of California, Irvine | CA
   Swami Vivekananda’s Deep Appreciation for Samkhya-Yoga

Debashish Banerji, University of Philosophical Research | CA
   Flavors of Advaita in Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo

FRIDAY EVENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER
7:30 – 8:15 PM
T. S. Rukmani, Chair in Hindu Studies, Concordia University, Emerita | CANADA
   Swami Vivekananda and Adi Sankaracharya: Similarities and Differences

SESSIONS | SATURDAY OCT. 19TH

PANEL III Vivekananda’s Legacy of Service | 9:00 – 11:00 AM
PRESIDER: Shiva G. Bajpai, California State University Northridge, Emeritus

Kusumita Pedersen, St. Francis College | NY
   Reflections on Swami Vivekananda’s Teachings of Universal Love and Compassion

Contact: School of Religion | University of Southern California | 825 Bloom Walk, ACB 130 | Los Angeles, CA 90089-1481 | Tel: 213-740-0272
Pankaj Jain, University of North Texas | TX
Vivekananda’s Dream Fulfilled by Athavale? Swadhyaya Parivar’s Social Justice Experiment and the Swami’s Enduring Influence on Swadhyaya

Shrinivas Tilak, Independent Scholar | CANADA
Swami Vivekananda’s Legacy of Service: A Critical Assessment

Gwilym Beckerlegge, The Open University | UNITED KINGDOM
Vivekananda and his Organizational Legacy with Particular Reference to Seva within the Ramakrishna Movement

PANEL IV Science, Consciousness, and the Thought of Vivekananda | 11:15 AM - 1:15 PM
PRESIDER: Daniel Michon, Claremont McKenna College

Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles | CA
Many Yogas, Modern Yoga: Vivekananda’s Blueprint for Complementarity in Relation to the Paradigm Shift in the Understanding of Physical Laws

Sthaneshwar Timalsina, San Diego State University | CA
Religion and Reason: Rethinking Liberation through the Lens of Vivekananda

Swami Atmavidyananda, Vedanta Society, Hollywood | USC | CA
Vedantic Paradigms in Relation to Scientific Inquiry

Sangeetha Menon, National Institute of Advanced Studies | INDIA
Consciousness, Self-transformation and Yoga-Dharma

VEDANTA SOCIETY KEYNOTE ADDRESS
2:30 – 3:00 PM
Ven. Swami Sarvadevananda, Minister, Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood

SATURDAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
3:15 – 4:00 PM
Kapil Kapoor, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) | INDIA
De-subjugating Timeless Vocabularies – Swami Vivekananda as Intellectual Catalyst

PANEL V Vivekananda from the Perspectives of Different Sampradayas | 4: 15 – 5:45 PM
PRESIDER: Veena R. Howard, University of Oregon, Eugene | OR

Gadadhara Pandit Dasa, Union Theological Seminary | NY
The Cultivation of the Seed of Bhakti: Perspectives from Swami Vivekananda and Gaudiya Vaisnavism

Pravrajika Vrajaprana, Vedanta Society, Santa Barbara | CA
Vivekananda’s Contribution to Women’s Spiritual Empowerment

Vasant Joshi, Former Faculty, Univ. of California, Berkeley, | Chancellor, Osho Multiversity | INDIA
Leading from Ignorance to Empowerment: Osho and Swami Vivekananda