UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF RELIGION
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

OCTOBER 18TH – 20TH, 2013

THE LIFE, LEGACY, AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF VIVEKANANDA

LOCATION: USC Davidson Conference Center | 3415 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles |
CA, 90089 | (213) 740-5959
"I am the thread that runs through all these pearls," and each pearl is a religion or even a sect thereof. Such are the different pearls, and Reality/God is the thread that runs through all of them; most people, however, are entirely unconscious of it. —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.

Swami Vivekananda is known for diverse contributions that profoundly shaped the perspective of intellectuals in India, Britain, and the United States. Vivekananda’s insights were rooted in deep critique of injustices whether arising from tradition or colonialism. His transreligious perspective; emphasis on service as praxis, women’s empowerment, and advocacy for economic and political liberty in the face of colonial power, were pioneering ideas for their time and were often criticized by those who sought to maintain the status quo. Vivekananda’s philosophy of active world engagement as lived spiritual practice was derided as inappropriate for those who embraced a deeply religious life; but it is now considered vital by religious leaders across nations to address the interrelated concerns that face humanity. His legacy is claimed by both pluralists and nationalists, but many of the causes and ideals that he championed are yet to be fulfilled in India or abroad. The USC School of Religion’s International Conference on Swami Vivekananda will examine his complex legacy.

**USC SCHOOL OF RELIGION ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:**
Duncan R. Williams, PhD | Chair, School of Religion | Co-Director, Center for Japanese Rel. & Culture | USC
Varun Soni, PhD | Dean, Office of Religious Life | USC
James McHugh, PhD | Assistant Professor, School of Religion | USC

**CONFERENCE CHAIR:**
Rita D. Sherma, PhD | The Swami Vivekananda Visiting Faculty in Hindu Studies | USC

**SPONSORS:**
*Dharma Civilization Foundation* | Chairman: Manohar Shinde, MD | President: Shiva Bajpai, PhD | USA
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Contact: School of Religion | University of Southern California | 825 Bloom Walk, ACB 130 | Los Angeles, CA 90089-1481 | Tel: 213-740-0272
Welcome Addresses by USC School of Religion and Dharma Civilization Foundation

SECTIONS | FRIDAY

PLENARY SESSION
9:00 – 11:30 AM

PLENARY SPEAKER
9:00 - 10:00 AM

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

Beyond Secularism and Pluralism: Towards Reciprocal Illumination

PLENARY PANEL
10:00 – 11:30 AM

Reflections on Reciprocal Illumination in the Study of Religions

MODERATOR: Varun Soni | Dean, Office of Religious Life, USC
Donald E. Miller | Firestone Professor of Religion | Executive Director, Center for Religion & Civic Culture, USC
Sherman A. Jackson | King Faisal Chair in Islamic Thought and Culture, USC
Rita D. Sherma | The Swami Vivekananda Visiting Faculty in Hindu Studies, USC
Duncan R. Williams | Chair, School of Religion | Co-Director, Center for Japanese Religion and Culture, USC

LUNCH
11:45 AM – 1:15 PM

LUNCHEON SPEAKER
12:15 - 12:50 PM

Joseph Prabhu, California State University, Los Angeles | CA
Swami Vivekananda’s Practical Vedanta and Religious Pluralism
PANELS

PANEL I Vivekananda and Pluralism | 1:30 – 3:30 PM
PRESIDER: Shiva G. Bajpai, California State University Northridge, Emeritus

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: James McHugh, University of Southern California

Michael Stoeber, University of Toronto | CANADA
Kundalini 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, Rabindranth Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo

DINNER
7:00 – 8:30 PM

DINNER KEYNOTE SPEAKER
7:30 - 8:10 PM

T. S. Rukmani, Chair in Hindu Studies, Concordia University, Emerita | CANADA
Swami Vivekananda and Adi Sankaracharya: Similarities and Differences
SESSIONS | SATURDAY

PANEL III Vivekananda’s Legacy of Service | 9:00 – 11:00 AM
PRESIDER: Phyllis Herman, California State University, Northridge

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

Pankaj Jain, University of North Texas | TX
Vivekananda’s Dream Fulfilled by Athavale?: The Enduring Influence of Swamiji on Swadhyaya

Srinivas 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

LUNCH
1:30 – 3:00 PM

SATURDAY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
2:00 – 2:40 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 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM
PRESIDER: Deepak Shimkhada, Claremont Lincoln University

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS

SUNDAY | OCT. 20TH

ACADEMIC RETREAT ON FOSTERING HINDU STUDIES AND INDIA RELATED STUDIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Sponsored by the Dharma Civilization Foundation (DCF)

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

DCF SUNDAY ACADEMIC RETREAT

Morning Session 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Afternoon Session 1:30 – 5:00 PM

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