

Global Mind Change

Dialogs on Spiritual Ecology and Transforming Individual and Planetary Consciousness

**Free Interfaith Symposium
Monday, September 21, 2020
11:00 am-1:00 pm EST**

Livestream and Simultaneous Translation in Spanish and Portuguese

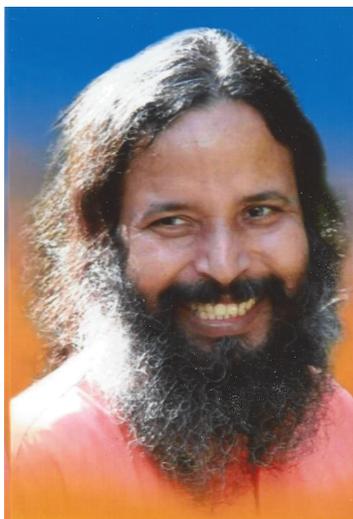
Spiritual ecology is a 40-year old academic field in religious studies recognizing that there is a spiritual facet to all issues related to conservation, environmentalism, and actions that support the flourishing of the planet. This symposium will explore through interfaith dialogue, humanity's underlying attitudes and beliefs that have led to the depletion of species, global warming, and over-consumption. Proponents of Spiritual Ecology assert a need for contemporary conservation work to include spiritual perspectives and for contemporary religion and spirituality to include awareness of and engagement in ecological issues. The evening symposium panel will consist of four speakers who represent Hindu/Vedantic, Islamic and indigenous perspectives on the subject.

Program Agenda

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| 11:00 am | Welcome from FIU: John Stack, PhD, Founding Director, Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs

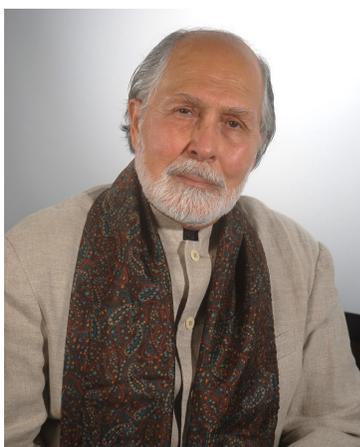
Moderator: John Thomas Lopategui, Ed.D, Kriya Yoga Institute |
| 11:05 am | Opening Address: Paramahansa Prajnanananda, Spiritual Leader, Kriya Yoga Institute |
| 11:25 am | Audience Question and Answer: Paramahansa Prajnanananda |
| 11:30 am | Melissa K. Nelson, PhD, (Anishinaabe), Ecologist and Professor Indigenous Sustainability, Arizona State University |
| 11:55 pm | Audience Question and Answer: Dr. Nelson |
| 12:00 pm | Seyyed Hossein Nasr, PhD, University Professor of Islamic Studies, George Washington University |
| 12:25 pm | Audience Question and Answer: Dr. Nasr |
| 12:30 pm | Open Discussion: Audience and Speaker Question and Answer |
| 12: 45 pm | Closing Remarks: Paramahansa Prajnanananda |

SPEAKERS



Paramahansa Prajnanananda is the current spiritual leader of an authentic and unbroken lineage of Kriya Yoga masters represented by Kriya Yoga International Organizations. Today, Paramahansa Prajnanananda is revered as one of the most eminent spiritual personalities of our times. A prolific author, he has written and translated books on spiritual topics, skillfully interpreting ageless philosophies in the light of modern science. His metaphorical explanations of the Holy Scriptures of East and West are unique. The multilingual master is a treasured guest speaker around the world. In 1999, as a speaker at the Parliament of World Religions Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, he gave two powerful plenary talks: "Alleviation of Poverty: A Spiritual Outlook" and "Yoga: The Hope of the Future." Over the years he has been invited to innumerable conferences and events in the USA, India, Europe, Canada, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. His lectures on various themes include excerpts on

love for humanity and world peace. His most recent book, "I Will Collect Flowers for Thee," also addresses the global ecological crisis, and the need for mankind to be more environmentally friendly. Paramahansa Prajnanananda founded Prajnana Mission, which provides health services, secular and spiritual education, and many other charitable activities around the world. One such notable project is *Hariharananda Balashram*, a residential school for underprivileged children in Arua, Odisha, near his own birthplace, Pattamundai, Odisha, India.



Seyyed Hossein Nasr, PhD, is an Iranian professor of Islamic studies at George Washington University, and an Islamic philosopher. After receiving an MIT SB degree in physics in 1954, Nasr obtained a master's degree in geology and geophysics in 1956, and went on to pursue his PhD degree in the history of science and learning at Harvard University. He is the author of scholarly books and articles. Nasr speaks and writes on subjects such as philosophy, religion, spirituality, music, art, architecture, science, literature, civilizational dialogues, and the natural environment. He has also written two books of poetry (*Poems of the Way* and *The Pilgrimage of Life and the Wisdom of Rumi*) and has been described as a "polymath". Nasr is the author of over fifty books and five hundred articles (a of which can be found in the journal, *Studies in Comparative Religion*) on topics such as Traditionalist metaphysics,

Islamic science, religion and the environment, Sufism, and Islamic philosophy. He has written works in Persian, English, French, and Arabic. In year 2000, a volume was devoted to him in the Library of Living Philosophers and in 1999 he was the recipient of the Templeton Religion and Science Award.

Melissa K. Nelson, PhD, is an ecologist and native scholar-activist. She is Anishinaabe/Métis/Norwegian and an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. Her work is dedicated to indigenous rights and revitalization, Native biocultural diversity, ecological ethics and sustainability, and the renewal and celebration of community health and cultural arts. Dr. Nelson is a professor of Indigenous Sustainability, at Arizona State University and president of the Cultural Conservancy, an indigenous rights organization. Dr. Nelson received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis in Ecology with an emphasis in Eco philosophy and Native American Environmental Studies. Her first edited anthology *Original Instructions – Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* (2008), focuses on the persistence of Traditional Ecological Knowledge by contemporary native communities. In 2005, Dr. Nelson was the co-producer of the award-winning documentary film, *The Salt Song Trail: Bringing Creation Back Together* and has co-produced several other documentary short films. Dr. Nelson is a Switzer Fellow (1996) and Environmental Leadership Award recipient and has received awards for teaching, experiential education, documentary filmmaking, and environmental stewardship.



HOST/SPONSOR

Kriya Yoga Institute's goal is to create a spiritual environment of love, compassion, cooperation, and service for sincere spiritual seekers and all of creation. The organization is dedicated to the service of humanity through spiritual, charitable, health, and educational activities. It promotes integrated growth—spiritual, physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual—through yoga, meditation, prayer, study, and service. The Kriya Yoga International Organizations are comprised of the three Kriya Yoga Center headquarters (Mother Centers) in the USA, Europe, and India and their subsidiary centers and groups in North and South America, Europe, India, Australia, and New Zealand. All three Mother Centers have non-profit status in their respective countries, and were founded by Paramahansa Hariharananda for spiritual, educational, and charitable purposes. The aim of the Kriya Yoga International organizations is to render philanthropic services to distressed and vulnerable sections of society, to promote feelings of fraternity among people irrespective of caste, class, nationality, religion and gender, and to promote unity and integrity within society and the nation. <https://www.kriya.org/>

CO-SPONSORS

FIU'S Department of Religious Studies

The Department of Religious Studies was established in 1995 and inaugurated an MA in 1996. Instruction is offered in all the major religions of the world and in a number of thematic areas. The department is closely linked with a number of interdisciplinary programs, including: African-New World studies, Asian studies, Environmental Studies, Judaic Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Women's Studies. The department offers instruction in all major religions of the world and in a number of thematic areas, designed to allow students to focus either on comparative topics or on the theory and practice of a specific religious tradition in its historical setting. <https://religion.fiu.edu/>

FIU's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) seeks to deliver high-quality educational training to its students and provide practical solutions to complex problems facing the hemisphere. Drawing upon the expertise of over 200 affiliated faculty and researchers and by engaging policy analysts and public and private sector representatives, LACC ensures a comprehensive approach to a better understanding of the region. To achieve its mission, LACC places special emphasis on forging partnerships with national and international academic and policy-focused organizations dedicated to addressing the most pressing issues facing Latin America and the Caribbean. LACC leverages its geographically strategic position in Miami as a powerful resource for the communities we serve. <https://lacc.fiu.edu/>

FIU's Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, The Ruth K. and Shepard Broad Distinguished Lecture Series

The Broad Lecture Series is the flagship speaker series of the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs. Generously supported by a gift from the Shepard Broad Foundation Inc. and a match from the college, the series provides students, faculty and the community with insights into the events and forces shaping contemporary global affairs. By enriching the school's academic programs and strengthening its outreach initiatives, the series actively supports Green School's mission. Notable Broad series speakers have included former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; Mark Medish, CEO of The Messina Group International; and Carlos Végh, World Bank Chief economist for Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://sipa.fiu.edu/about/>

FIU'S Global Indigenous Forum

The mission of the Global Indigenous Forum is to bring global Indigenous issues, voices and awareness to the FIU campus and world community through activities and academic programs. With the Indigenous leadership of the Global Indigenous Forum, the vision is for FIU to be known as a welcoming institution for Indigenous faculty, staff, students and Indigenous peoples from local, regional and worldwide communities. Recognizing our common values for land, territory, cultural preservation, a good life, and all our relations, through engaged partnerships and collaborations our mutual efforts focus on the issues and perspectives of Indigenous peoples locally and worldwide. Through GIF efforts, FIU will be recognized globally as a place for Indigenous issues to be openly and fairly discussed through courses, dialogs, conferences, media, exhibits, research publications, and engaged action-oriented activities.

<https://indigenous.fiu.edu/about-us/>

FIU'S Program for the Study of Spirituality

The Program in the Study of Spirituality is a self-funded initiative of the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs that explores "Spirituality" in a variety of traditional and contemporary contexts. We offer spirituality-centered curricula for students, we sustain research projects, and we also host many events and lectures by practitioners and scholars in order to stimulate multi-faith, multi-spiritual dialogue throughout the community. <https://spirituality.fiu.edu/>

The Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies

The Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies is devoted to the study of the challenges facing the Muslim world, the promotion of healthy dialogue among the world's faiths and Islam's sects, and the production of objective research and analysis to inform national policy. On campus, the center is a space for Muslim student life and a hub for intellectual and cultural activities for Muslim and non-Muslim students alike. The creation of the Jaffer Center is a response to a call from the South Florida community that Florida International University lead the way in the creation of an academic center that brings the power and reach of a major public research university to the current discourse on Islam and global Muslim communities. <https://jaffercenter.fiu.edu/>