

TechNews

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINCE 1928

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The mission of TechNews is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at technewsiit.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor may be submitted by anyone, but are subject to review by the editor-in-chief. All letters-to-the-editor become the property of TechNews upon submission. TechNews does not accept or publish anonymous letters.

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LOCAL & NATIONAL ADVERTISERS

To place an ad, contact us via email at business@technewsiit.com.

Who am I?

By Sneha Saraf
STAFF WRITER

Who am I, really? Why do bad things happen to good people? I want to be happy, but it always seems out of my reach. Why? These were some of the questions discussed at the Vedic Vision Society's first seminar of the semester, titled "Intro to Vedic World View."

Speaker Nityananda Pran first defined 'Veda' as "knowledge." Proper knowledge means knowing something as it is. The Vedas discuss topics like how and why things happen in this world (karma), whether God exists, what our purpose in life is, etc. To properly understand the Vedas, we need to keep an open mind, ask questions, and practically apply what we are learning.

After establishing the main idea of the Vedas, he moved on to the next question: what is 'happiness'? Is it satisfaction from gratifying our senses or fulfilling our desires? Is it simply a biological response which is short-lived? Nityananda Pran explained that happi-

ness depends upon our knowledge of "Who I am." If the understanding of 'I' becomes clear, happiness automatically follows. But what is our identity? We define ourselves in many ways: as a human, man, woman, student, American, etc. But these are simply descriptions that fail to explain "Who am I?"

Nityananda Pran went on to ask the audience about the definition of "problem." Many responses came up, but what arose from the discussion were some criteria to define a problem. A problem is something 1) which is common to all, 2) which no one wants, and 3) from which no one can escape. From the Vedic perspective, there are four such problems: death, disease, aging, and birth. But why is birth considered a problem? It was explained that from birth, all other problems manifest.

Coming back to the question of happiness, the speaker explained that the Vedas describe two characteristics of 'material happiness': 1) it is temporary, and 2) it is always one elusive step ahead of us. Such 'happiness' is derived only from the future promise- "One day I will get a job, with a high-paying salary,

and then I will be happy." Once achieved, the promise of happiness moves on to the next goal, leaving us hankering for it as before. Life passes on thus.

All living beings have four propensities: 1) eating, 2) sleeping, 3) defending, and 4) procreating. Most of our activities are driven by or are extensions of these propensities. But the Vedas propose that there is more to human life than this.

We have the spirit of inquiry, and the Vedas implore us to use this gift to inquire about the purpose of life. A person who questions life and is open to gaining knowledge uses this inquisitive spirit to understand the true nature of self. This brings permanent happiness from a platform of knowledge.

The discussion concluded with a free (and tasty!!) lunch feast, which we were told would happen every Friday.

Next Friday the discussion will continue on answering the question, "Who am I?" in the absolute sense. To learn more, visit vedicvis.com or email vedicvis@iit.edu. The spirit of inquiry starts now.

Dance & LAN Party!

Hosted by Illinois Tech Robotics, Alien Sound and Lighting, 33rd Street Productions, and LAN Party Club

Come Show Off Your Gangnam Style!

Where: ITR Robotics Lab, 3424 S. State Street
When: Saturday, September 15, 8 p.m. - 1 a.m.
More Information: Robotics@iit.edu

Refreshments will be provided



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