

CHICAGO CALLING



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The Birth of Twin Organizations

EDITORIAL



It all began with a unique prayer by a divine personality, Ma Sarada Devi to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Mother went to Bodh Gaya, a famous pilgrimage center in India, and, after seeing a prosperous monastery, she wept before the Master's picture and prayed, "O Lord, my children (the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrsihna) have no place to lay their heads. They have very little to eat. They trudge from door to door for a morsel of food. May they have a place like this?" The Belur Math was subsequently established by the grace of the Master.

Also, with the peerless ambition and adamantine will power of the holy, the beloved disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, founded the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission . He wrote on January 24, 1894, "My whole ambition in life is to set in motion machinery which will bring nobel ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate."

The ambition was considered a wild dream by many, and very little support came from the devotees, in particular, and society at large. In 1895 Swami Vivekananda wrote, remembering these days, "Rakhal (Swami Brahmananda), you may remember that after the passing away of the Master (Sri Ramakrsihna), all pooh-poohed us as good for nothing fellows..." On another occasion he recalled those days, "Who would sympathise with the imaginations of a boy? ... None – except one. That one's sympathy brought blessing and hope. She was a woman (Ma Sarada Devi). ...

When the future of an organized monastic order looked gloomy, God's blessings came in the form of a miracle, "One evening early in September, while Surendra Nath Mitra was meditating in his household shrine, Ramakrishna appeared to him and said: "What are you doing

here? My boys are roaming about, without a place to live. Attend to that, before anything else." The blessed Surendra ran immediately to Narendra and said, "Brother, find a place for the Master where monks like you can live together and devotees will go to get spiritual solace." The dream started to become reality.

However, the organization took birth on May 1st, 1897 at the house of Balaram Bose, 57 Ramakanta Bose Street, Baghbazar. Kolkata.

Swami Vivekananda founded twin institutions – Ramakrishna Math (only for monastics) and Ramakrishna Mission (for both, householder devotees and also monastics). But why? In the words of Swamiji, "We must die, that is certain; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions tend towards the sacrifice of our self."

Lord Ronaldshay correctly mentioned in his, *The Heart of Aryavarta*, "... these twin organizations standing for renunciation and service respectively."...

The Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are unique organizations because their process of sadhana (spiritual practices) established by Swami Vivekananda is unique – "Atmano mokshartham, jagat hitaya cha". Emancipation of the Self and the well-being of the world. The Ramakrishna Mission stands for the universal ideas of religion. Its numerous centers all over the world (mostly known as Vedanta Societies in the West) are trying to spread through the life and thought of their members a true knowledge of Religion in its all-embracing aspect and also to promote fellowship among the followers of the different religions of the world, which are in fact, revealed in the Veda and realized by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. As different forms, divergent paths of the One Eternal.



ROLE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN REDEFINING HINDUISM, AND ITS IMPACT **SWAMI YOGATMANANDA**

Minister, Vedanta Society of Providence
This lecture was delivered on Nov. 9th, 2013 at
“Chicago Calling”.

Revered, and dear Swamis, and Sannyasins, and all the devotees who are present. This is certainly an unprecedented occasion, when we all are assembled here at a very holy spot, and are united in our resolve to absorb and take forward the great message that was delivered here. As we all heard from the message sent by our most Revered President Maharaj, that point when Swami Vivekananda came to deliver his talk at the Parliament of Religions – that was a turning point, friends. Yes indeed it was a turning point in the religious history of mankind. The topic that was given to me is a part of that – how he revitalized and presented the sanatana dharma – the Hindu religion – in a new paradigm which is going to be, which already has been, beneficial for the whole world. Of course the topic is quite vast and we have been allocated a short time – fifteen minutes. And I will assure you all, that I will finish in fourteen or maybe fourteen and half minutes. You can take a look at your watch. If you find me overstepping – well, adjust your watches! This is the only joke that I will be telling today.

When Sister Nivedita wrote about Swami Vivekananda’s new presentation of Hinduism, she writes in the introduction to the Complete Works: “He provided Hindus the Charter of the Hindu faith. For years to come, the Hindu man who would verify, the Hindu mother who would teach her children, what was the faith of their ancestors will turn to these books for assurance and light. Long after the English language has disappeared from India, the gift that has here been made, through that language, to the world, will remain

and bear its fruit in East and West alike...He began to speak it as the religious ideas of the Hindus, but when he ended, Hinduism had been created.”

She mentions one very important fact in that introduction – that what Swami Vivekananda presented was not essentially original or new. There is a craze in people that when we present something new and original, as it were, that we become great. But this is a very beautiful statement, and when I first read it I was kind of stunned because we think that making something original is going to make us big and great. But she says, “The Swami Vivekananda would have been less than what he was had anything in this Evangel or Hinduism been his own.” He was just restating the sanatana dharma – eternal religion – in a new language. As he himself mentions, “I am presenting the ancient message in a new manner, a new language, that’s all.”

Let us see the various aspects of his new presentation of what is commonly and popularly called as Hinduism. He mentions quite clearly that the word Hindu has, basically, a geographical connotation rather than being connected with certain philosophical or religious ideas about the way of living. So, he says we should go to the origins, and our scriptures are the basis on which we all stand together. So what are these scriptures? The Vedas. And the essential aspect, the unchanging aspect, the more philosophical and all-comprehensive aspect of the teachings is contained in the Upanishads. So he has again, and again said that the Upanishads are our scriptures.

And he also said “I quote from nothing but the Upanishads.” So, he said the more proper name for our religion would be Vedantism – Vedanta or Vedantism. He presented this and at one stroke he made the universal aspect of it come to the fore. It is the universal aspect that when we talk about Hinduism we say that it is not founded by anybody. In the United States when I go to various interfaith meets, or to schools and universities, this question gets asked quite often – who founded Hinduism? The question is quite natural, because a great personage has founded most of the religions people are acquainted with here. Like Christianity won’t have any meaning without the personality of Jesus, and so forth.



So, I tell them that this [Hinduism] was not founded by any person at all. It is a genuine search after Truth, search after the meaning of life, and that is what has been the eternal aspiration of human beings, and that is what this religion is. And so Swami Vivekananda brings out this universal aspect of being a Hindu. And we can see in this modern age the significance of that. Those people who used to be called Hindus were mostly confined in India even when Swami Vivekananda was giving his speech. But now, they have spread all over. Yesterday, we were listening to the statistics Ishatmanandaji was giving about how many Hindus or Indians were there in America

when Vivekananda gave his speech here, and how many are here now – the number is huge. Not only that, those who have no ethnic connection with India at all, have been adopting these ideas. For example, there are many who are, traditionally and ethnically speaking, are Jewish, and they are taking up these ideas so they get called Hinjewes. How can this word come? Because of the universal aspect that Swami Vivekananda has brought about in connection with Hinduism. It is the teachings of Vedanta. You don’t have to change the label of your religion – just follow these great principles. He also brought out the common basis of Hinduism. Hinduism is scattered into many, many different types of worships, different types of philosophical ideas. He said that well, what is the common basis? And, I quote from him – “It is very hard therefore to find any common name for our religion, seeing that this religion is a collection, so to speak, of various religions, of various ideas, of various ceremonials and forms, all gathered together almost without a name, and without a church, and without an organization. The only point where, perhaps, all our sects agree is that we all believe in the scriptures – the Vedas.” This is how he brings about the common basis, the idea that we all come together as Hindus, having faith in the scriptures, the Vedas.



The next important point that he brings about, and one that had been alluded to in Chetananandaji's beautiful talk, is the separation between the authorities of different layers of scriptures. Hinduism, as Swami Vivekananda mentions, has three layers of scriptures: the Shruti where the principles have been presented without reference to any particular person, or particular community, or particular country or place. They are applicable to all people at all times because that is matter of principle. But then these principles are to be applied in life on a day-to-day basis. People generally don't like to go deep into philosophies – who has time, who has interest! People like to hear something – let me know what I have to do to be religious. So those scriptures about what my duties are, as a religious person how should I be living, are contained in what are called Smrtis. And the Smrtis – their authority is limited. Their authority works only so long as they do not contradict the Shrutis. They are applications of that very principle in different time and space. Sometimes I like to give an example of a car that was manufactured by Ford in 1902 or so, and a very modern car that is manufactured now, say a Lamborghini. The principles of heat engine did not undergo much of a change. The principles are more or less the same. But can you use the operating manual of that 1902 car for a modern car? The manual has to change. And that is what is Smrti, friends. And Swami Vivekananda brought out this idea, that the manuals must change, that the customs must change. [Those] customs were good at one point in time, they served some purpose, and that's about it. We respect them but that doesn't mean we follow them. We have to follow the customs that are good in modern times for our purpose.

Another thing that he said about Hinduism is the caste. Because there were many things that were derogatory and created problems, people started blaming caste. While Vivekananda was the

great reformer, he did not denounce caste. He said, and let me quote again, "Caste is good...wherever you go, there will be caste. But that does not mean that there should be these privileges. They should be knocked on the head." There should be no privileges; caste just provides a group for different types of temperaments.

And then another thing he mentions is that Hindus must learn from others. The Hindus kind of confined themselves and started calling others as mlechchhas – lower kind of people. But Swami Vivekananda in a very strong manner said, "The day we invented this word mlechchha, the degradation of our race began." It is a very powerful statement, and a very true statement, friends.

Another thing that he initiated was having an organization. Working in an organizational way is not in the Hindu or Indian blood. When he came here – and that probably happened right here [at this location] – that he came one day and said to the hostess, "I have fallen in love", and she thought that perhaps he had fallen in love with a lady and so asked who that fortunate lady was; and Swamiji said – Organization. We have to learn to work in an organized fashion. He had to work a lot to make this understood by his disciples and brother monks.

And the last point I would like to make here is the bringing forth the orientation to service. That was kind of lost – not that it was not in our scriptures, but was not brought forth that forcefully. Swami Vivekananda brought that message from the life of Sri Ramakrishna, to all of us and thereby he fulfilled his promise that "I will bring the Vedanta that has been confined in caves and forests, back to the households."

So friends, thank you to you all. Thank you to Ishatmanandaji, especially, for organizing this great program and I feel very thankful and privileged to be a part of it. Thank you, friends.

VIVEKANANDA'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITY

SWAMI SHANTARUPANANDA

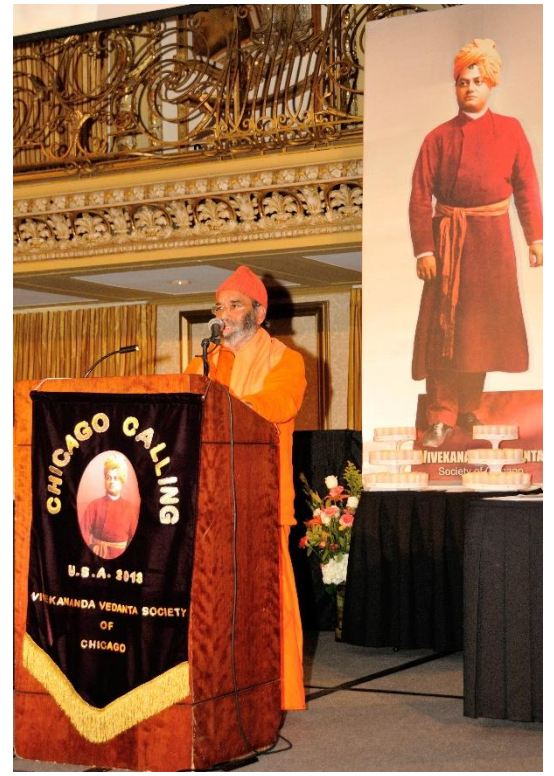
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This lecture was delivered on Nov. 9th, 2013 at
“Chicago Calling”

Revered Swami Suhitanandaji and revered Swami Chetananandaji, my dear brother Ishatmanandaji, and all my dear monastic brothers, sisters, and myself in all of you.

It is a great opportunity today because we are celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. This was a very unique personality that the world received. It takes centuries to produce a personality like Vivekananda. It is very unique, in this sense, that we are remembering him as the unique personality and extraordinary person he was, Swami Vivekananda. Then there is another reason, for which today is very unique, and that is because we are in Chicago. As Buddha selected Sarnath to preach his message, as Jesus Christ selected a mountain to give his sermon, Vivekananda selected Chicago – the very place where we are in – to preach his message.

Now what is his message? He himself said “ I have a message, and I will give it in my own fashion. I will neither Hinduise my message, nor Christianise it, nor make it any “ise” in the world. I will only my-ise it and that is all.” And what did he mean? Freedom. Freedom is my religion, he preached. Have you ever heard of a religious person like Swami Vivekananda saying that we worship that God who by the ignorant is called man? We’ve never heard of it. We know a monk talks about God, but here is a deeply spiritual person who is saying that by ignorance we call man and I worship that God.

This is the subject for me today, as it was just announced, ‘Vivekananda’s Contribution to Humanity’. We are all human, so it is more unique to see somebody who talks about us. We are all



human. Vivekananda is a man of God, who comes to us, who talks to us in our own way, in our language. That’s why this celebration is very unique – because of our Swamiji, because of our Chicago and because we are all human. If a kitten wants a God, then it naturally wants God to be like a kitten. A dog would want a God to be like a dog, so they can relate. Here we see a one unique personality who can relate to us and we can relate to him.

We’ve never heard a saying like Vivekananda used to say in Bengali: “জীবে প্রেম করে যে জন, সেই জন সেবিছে ঈশ্বর” (Jeebe prem kore je jan, sai jan sevice ishwar); “Who loves all beings without distinction, He indeed is worshipping best his God”. Have we ever heard of it? We serve ঈশ্বর (Ishwar), God, in temples, in churches, in mosques, in the Himalayas, and in the caves in secluded places. But here he says, “জীবে প্রেম করে যে জন” (Jeebe prem kore je jan), meaning that the person who loves human beings is the person who serves God. We’ve never heard of it. That is Vivekananda. It is almost impossible to understand who he was. As he himself said, “If there were another Vivekananda, then he would have understood what this Vivekananda has done”.

We are not all Vivekananda, so we can not understand who he was. But we can understand this much – that we are human and he was very much human. Can you imagine that when Vivekananda came here, he was unknown? Nowadays everybody knows this gerua cloth. In fact, two days ago, we were celebrating Halloween and can you believe that I had to keep candies for 326 kids? One of our neighbors came with children and I greeted them. Then he said, “I like your Halloween dress.” Imagine before, nobody knew who Vivekananda was, no dress, nothing. Now, everywhere you go, everywhere you drive, you see “yoga parlor” or “yoga studio.” Sometimes people say, “Swami I am going to yoga.” Swami Vivekananda brought many of these things to America, and for this, we are indebted to him. America is the place, where we get, in my opinion, the maximum amount of freedom.

I’ve had the opportunity to go to Germany, France, and other places in Europe. One devotee in France asked me, “Swami, do you like here or America?” I said, “I like America because there I get maximum freedom.” Nowhere else can you get this. That’s why I think Vivekananda selected this place – to preach his message of freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from everything - the concept of religion, the concept of sociology, the concept of casteism, and the concept of anything beyond here.

When Vivekananda came here, what did he preach? Did he preach for us to be only human? Did he come to preach to us to continue to live as we are? Not at all. He didn’t preach our own way of living because we already know how we live.

Rather, he came to teach us to find ourselves and the freedom within ourselves. We have our human qualities and are entitled all of those qualities, but they are a covering over our true nature.

Robert Ingersoll was agnostic and didn’t care for God. He met Swami Vivekananda. In Swamiji’s biography, we read that, “One day, in the course of a discussion, Ingersoll said to the Swami, ‘I believe in making the most of this world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all we are sure of.’ He would have nothing to do with God, soul, or hereafter, which he considered as meaningless jargon. ‘I know a better way to squeeze the orange of this world than you do,’ the Swami replied, ‘and I get more out of it. I know I cannot die, so I am not in a hurry. I know that there is no fear, so I enjoy the squeezing. I have no duty, no bondage of wife and children and property, so I can love all men and women. Everyone is God to me. Think of the joy of loving man as God! Squeeze your orange my way, and you will get every single drop!’”

And you know that Vivekananda takes care of us. We are in him and he is in us. That is Vivekananda. He came to teach us not just humanity, to be human. He wanted to raise us up to his level of realization. I don’t remember his exact words, but in California, he said something like, “Buddha and Jesus Christ are but waves on the Infinite Ocean that I am.” This doesn’t apply just to him, but to us all. We are all the same One that Jesus, Buddha, Rama, Sri Ramakrishna, and Vivekananda are, but we are sleeping. We are sleeping.



Vivekananda came here to awaken the spirit that was awoken in him by his teacher Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna did not come here physically, but he did come to America. In India (mostly Southern India) we have one image installed in the temple and another image, called "Utsab Bigraha," that is used in processions and celebrations. Vivekananda was the Utsab Bigraha of Sri Ramakrishna. So he did come and Vivekananda never did anything without the vision or permission of Sri Ramakrishna. We are indebted to Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda was His messenger to humanity.

Can you imagine a Harvard University professor (John Wright) mentioned that his (Swamiji's) intellect was greater than all the intellect of all their University professors put together? The professors at Harvard University hadn't ever visited India or had a student from there. They had no idea, but still they could see the extraordinary personality in Vivekananda.

And aside from his intellect, Vivekananda had great heart. He had trouble sleeping when he was in America. Why? Because he could see his brothers and sisters in India without the comforts, amusements, and facilities of life that we get here. That is Vivekananda. He was the man of God, but he did not forget us. He remembers us and he

gives us a lift, as it were, to where we are.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Who is a man, 'যার মান হুস' (jar man hoos) হুস (hoos) means awareness, and মান (man) means who you are. So the person who is aware who he is, he is really human. When Vivekananda came in and through America, he gave that unique message of humanity, raised us up, and asked us to follow the call of Divinity.

Before I finish, I must give you a little idea of how a great writer describes Vivekananda. Romain Rolland, the French writer mentioned about Vivekananda: "He was the personification of the harmony of all human Energy." So Vivekananda did not come only to elevate us to one particular aspect of our human life but in all directions – education, sociology, divinity, in all respects of human life. He taught us to see through our small "I" and surrender into our greater, shared "I." So that is Swami Vivekananda. We can never fathom the depth of Swami Vivekananda.

I am glad that I had this opportunity to be here to pay my homage to Swami Vivekananda and I hope I inspire you all to read Swamiji's teachings to follow that call and know thyself.

Thank you.



ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT



Misfortune dogged Subhashini Mistry from the moment of her birth. She was born during the Bengal famine that drove impoverished farmers to starvation and death across the countryside. At 12, she was married off to Chandra, an agricultural worker. She struggled to make ends meet, cooking and cleaning all day long for her husband and four children.

In 1971 her husband began writhing in pain and the anxiety over her husband's deteriorating condition gave way to horror as she realized that the doctors and nurses refused to pay any attention to him because he was penniless. When her husband died, she vowed she would do what it takes to spare people of this nightmare. She would build a hospital for the poor.

She only knew housework, so she started working as a maid servant in five houses nearby. She recalls: "There is no work my hands have not done. I have cooked, mopped floors, washed utensils, cleaned gardens, polished shoes, concreted roofs." She sent her son Ajoy to an orphanage in Kolkata so he could get a decent education and her other three children helped with housework.

Soon she discovered she could earn more picking and selling vegetables. For 20 years, she scrimped and saved. She spent nothing on herself and little on her children, except for Ajoy's education. She saved, little by little, for a purpose. She was determined to build that hospital.

She gathered the villagers and told them of her plan. She would donate her one acre land for the hospital, but the villagers would have to donate money to build a thatched shed that could serve as a dispensary for the poor.

The public donation totaled Rs.926. Some villagers contributed in kind and the poorest offered their labor. Thus, a 20 feet by 20 feet temporary shed was constructed in 1993. The villagers pleaded with doctors to offer their free service at the newly opened shed at least once a week for the poor and needy.

Simultaneously, they went from door to door urging residents to donate their surplus medicines

The first doctor to respond to the call was Dr. Raghupathy Chatterjee. Five others followed in rapid succession. On the very first day, 252 patients were treated. Humanity Hospital, as the little shed was named, never looked back.

Ajoy knocked on the door of the local Member of Parliament. Bit by bit, the doors opened and finally after the hospital was constructed, the governor of West Bengal inaugurated it. The governor's presence and the media coverage and had a healthy fall out – a trickle, though not a torrent, of donations, followed.

In the meantime, Ajoy got admitted into the prestigious Kolkaka Medical College and after graduation, attended to the day to day running of the hospital. Through all this growth, Subhashini was clear about her goal. This was a hospital for the poor. This was not a business. Yet, she knew that the hospital had to be self sufficient. It cannot survive forever on donations. So while the poor got free treatment, those who lived above poverty line had to pay Rs.10 for consultation.

How did she achieve all this? She says: "Inner Strength." She adds with rustic wisdom: "God in his infinite grace gave me a vision at the darkest moment in my life. From then on, my life had a purpose. I used whatever strength God gave me to make sure other poor people did not lose their loved ones for lack of medical attention." Her youngest daughter has become a nurse and works in the hospital.

If she had kept all her savings to herself, Subhashini might have lived in a better house and had more possessions. But she says: "What's the use of material things like bangles and saris. We can't take them with us when we die. But the happy faces of the cured poor people have given me such joy and meaning in this life."

Three years ago, Ajoy persuaded her to stop selling vegetables. She was getting old; her knees were giving her trouble. She now tends the sick in the hospital. Says she: "This hospital means everything to me. It is my wealth, my knowledge, my happiness." But her mission is not yet over. Says she: "Only when this hospital becomes a full-fledged 24-hour hospital can I die happy."

Courtesy:

<http://www.theweekendleader.com/Heroism/897/a-dream-hospital.html#sthash.kfLZE6h.dpuf>

BETTER HEALTH THROUGH YOGA

Benefits from Yoga in Multiple Sclerosis

Swagata Saha

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease that affects an individual's central nervous system. In a normal healthy person the nerves are covered by a protective sheath called myelin. When the myelin is destroyed as seen in patients with MS, the nerve fibers are exposed and the unprotected nerve endings don't work as well as the protected nerves. This condition affects a person's vision, movements, general alignment, and cognitive function. Due to muscle stiffness and immobility, the patient struggles to walk and may end up walking with an unnatural gait which leads to poor posture. Poor posture creates pressure on the back and causes excruciating back pain in MS patients. Slow and gentle stretching movements of Yoga have been shown to reduce a considerable amount of pain in many people suffering from MS.

The common symptoms in MS are numbness and tingling sensation in the arms and legs, muscle spasms, muscle rigidity and stiffness, heat intolerance, difficulties in paying attention when learning, loss of memory, bladder and bowel problems, fatigue, stress, depression and quick mood swings. Yoga is an ideal form of exercise for patients with MS, as it relieves many symptoms of the disease by improving the general balance and muscle flexibility of the body. Yoga postures change the breathing pattern, adjusting the body's chemical balance, and improving delivery of fresh blood and nutrients to the brain and other vital organs. Moreover, physical and emotional stress is one of the persistent disturbing effects in MS patients which can be effectively managed with Yoga. Having a chronic illness like MS makes a person experience emotional upheavals, and the ongoing and inevitable changes in life may lead to strong emotional reactions in an MS patient. Also,

progression of the disease and worsening symptoms can lead to significant disease-related stress, and MS patients often go through periods of moodiness, unpredictable changes in emotions, and can suffer from depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and psychosis. Yoga can elevate the mood of the patient by encouraging people to think beyond the limitations of the body caused by the disease, and improve a person's outlook about oneself and the world around them.

The forms of Hatha Yoga and Iyengar Yoga lay emphasis on stretching and breathing, which increases muscle flexibility by lengthening the muscle and by improving blood circulation in the muscle tissue. Yoga also increases body awareness by differentiating between the muscular and nervous systems of the body, and increases the fluid movement within the body thereby providing relief from muscle tension in MS patients.

Certain standing and seated postures like Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose), Virabhadrasana (Warrior 2 pose), Marichiyasana (Torso and leg stretch), Bhadravajrasana (Torso Stretch), Parsva Virasana (Side twist in a hero pose) increase the range of motion in joints which prevents joints from becoming stiff. These postures address and effectively reduce the muscle tension and help protect muscles from further weakening in MS.

The Ujjayi breathing technique and some of the yoga postures that have the potential to help with the symptoms of the disease are discussed below:

Ujjayi Pranayama (Ujjayi comes from the root word in Sanskrit which is "Ujji". It means "acquire by conquest").

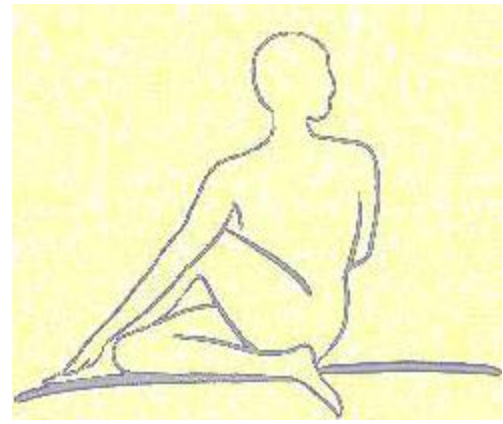


1. Sit in a comfortable meditative posture or lie in savasana.
2. Closing the mouth inhale in a controlled manner and let the air pass through both ida and pingala (left and right nostrils).
3. Slightly contract the region at the back of your throat.
4. This partial contraction of the glottis would produce an ocean wave like low buzzing sound.
5. The sound should come from the throat not forcefully from the nose.
6. Make deep long controlled inhalation and exhalation for the equal amount of time.
7. Concentrate upon the ocean wave like sound.
8. Practice for five minutes maintaining complete awareness.

Ujjayi pranayama can be practiced along with the mantra Soham or Hamso or your japa mantra given by your Guru.

Marichiyasana (Torso and Leg Stretch)

1. Sit in Dandasana on a folded blanket. Bend your right leg at the knee keeping your left leg straight.
2. Bring the right foot close to the right inner groin.
3. Bend your right elbow and place your upper right arm against your inner right leg.
4. Place your left hand behind your left seat bone keeping your hand straight.
5. Press your right arm and right knee against each other with equal pressure.



6. Lift your torso, exhale and turn your head over your left shoulder.
7. Hold the posture for thirty seconds to one minute and then repeat the other side.

Bhradvajasana (Torso Stretch)

1. Sit in dandasana on a folded blanket.
2. Bend your knees and bring your feet next to your left buttock.
3. Place your left ankle on the arch of your right foot.
4. Press your knees together.
5. Place one hand behind your right buttock and the other beside your right knee.
6. Exhale and turn to your right.
7. Move your right shoulder back.
8. Press both the palms down on the floor.
9. Raise your spine and chest.
10. Maintain your normal inhalation and exhalation. Do not hold your breath.
11. Hold the posture from thirty seconds to one minute and then repeat the other side.

An ideal Yoga routine for an MS patient would be practice of yoga postures for fifteen minutes, followed by at least five minutes of breathing practice like Ujjayi Pranayama, followed by fifteen to twenty minutes of dhyana or meditation. Hot yoga is not recommended as heat flares up the symptoms of MS.

HOW TO BE A BETTER STUDENT

Welcome to the Youth Corner. This column will feature inspirational messages for the youth, addressing issues such as success in studies, development of will-power and memory, concentration, competition, and other challenges that are faced inside and outside the classroom. You are invited to write in to ezine@chicagovedanta.org with questions that we will attempt to address.

Q Does each individual course have specific learning objectives, or does the entire four-year curriculum of a college education have broader objectives?

The answers are “yes” to both questions. Each individual semester-long course deals with a particular subject. At the end of the course, there is specific subject material that you are expected to have learnt. Above and beyond this subject material, there are certain meta-level student outcomes that you are expected to have accomplished. Then, the four-year curriculum in each specific program itself has some program educational objectives that represent meta-meta-level outcomes of the educational process. By understanding the student outcomes and the program educational objectives, a student can make a better-informed decision of which program to select, and what would be expected of him at the completion of the program. To make these ideas concrete, we will consider the example of the four-year curriculum of the popular computer science program.

Program educational objectives are broad statements that describe what graduates are expected to attain within a few years of graduation. Program educational objectives are based on the needs of the program’s constituencies. For a program in Computer Science, a set of program educational objectives is as follows.

1. Depth. Through professional practice or through advanced study of computer science, graduates will apply the foundational concepts of the discipline including design, implementation,

and analysis of computing systems.

2. Breadth. Graduates will demonstrate an awareness of broad societal and ethical issues in computing as they engage in productive public or private sector careers or graduate study.

3. Professionalism. As participants in complex modern work environments, graduates will demonstrate clear communication skills, engage in responsible teamwork practices, and exhibit ethical and professional attitudes.

4. Learning. Graduates will pursue lifelong learning that builds on the foundational knowledge and skills of computer science acquired in their undergraduate program in pursuit of their goals.

As you can see, the four program educational objectives nowhere refer to the specific technical content taught in the individual courses of the computer science program. These broad program educational objectives are supported by student outcomes, which are specific capabilities that educators want students to have attained upon graduation. A set of student outcomes that support the program educational objectives of the four-year program in computer science is as follows.

a) An ability to apply knowledge of computing and mathematics appropriate to the discipline. (Depth; Learning)

b) An ability to analyze a problem, and identify and define the computing requirements appropriate to its solution. (Depth; Breadth)

c) An ability to design, implement, and evaluate a computer-based system, process, component, or program to meet desired needs. (Depth)

- d) An ability to function effectively on teams to accomplish a common goal. (Breadth; Professionalism)
- e) An understanding of professional, ethical, legal, security, and social issues and responsibilities. (Breadth; Professionalism)
- f) An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences. (Professionalism)
- g) An ability to analyze the local and global impact of computing on individuals, organizations, and society. (Breadth)
- h) Recognition of the need for and an ability to engage in continuing professional development. (Learning)
- i) An ability to use current techniques, skills, and tools necessary for computing practice. (Depth)
- j) An ability to apply mathematical foundations, algorithmic principles, and computer science theory in the modeling and design of computer-based systems in a way that demonstrates comprehension of the trade-offs involved in the design choices. (Depth; Learning)
- k) An ability to apply design and development principles in the construction of software systems of varying complexity. (Depth)

As you can observe, each of the eleven student outcomes maps to some subset of the four program educational objectives. This can be visualized by a 11-by-4 matrix. Now, each individual semester-long computer science course in the program is mapped to some subset of these student outcomes. This can be visualized by a

matrix having as many rows as the number of courses, and 11 columns. The eleven possible meta-level outcomes of each course, as well as the four meta-meta-level outcomes of the educational process, beyond the specific subject material that you learn in the course, are thus enunciated.

By understanding the student outcomes and the program educational objectives of each course, you gain an added insight on what you should be focusing on while studying, besides becoming a subject matter expert in the field. When students know what they should be able to do by the end of a course, it becomes less of a challenge to meet the goals.

Clearly defined student outcomes contribute to a structure that surrounds a course and can aid teachers in selecting appropriate assessments, selecting relevant content for a course, and enhancing the assessment or grading practices. The meta-level information in the student outcomes provides a map or signposts that tell the students what to expect of the course. Knowing student outcomes adds to the student's sense of ownership in the learning process, helping him to feel that he is on the inside logic of the course.

References:

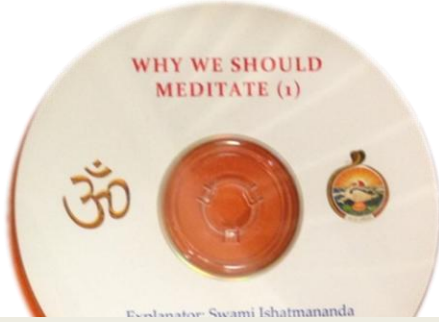
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No negative, all positive, affirmative. I am, God is, everything is in me. I will manifest health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want.

Swami Vivekananda (CW 6, Epistles, 2nd Series/XLVII Brother disciples)

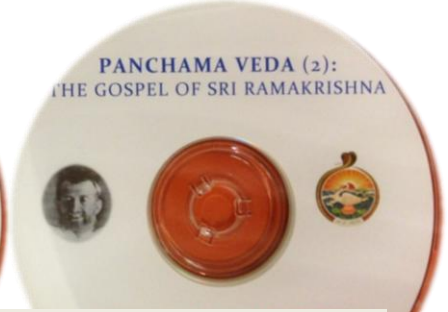
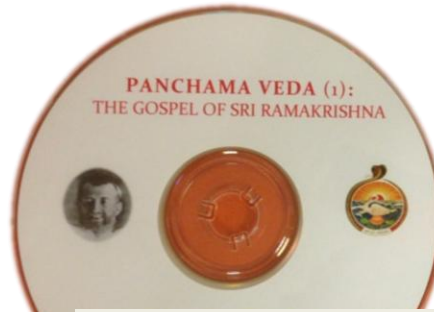
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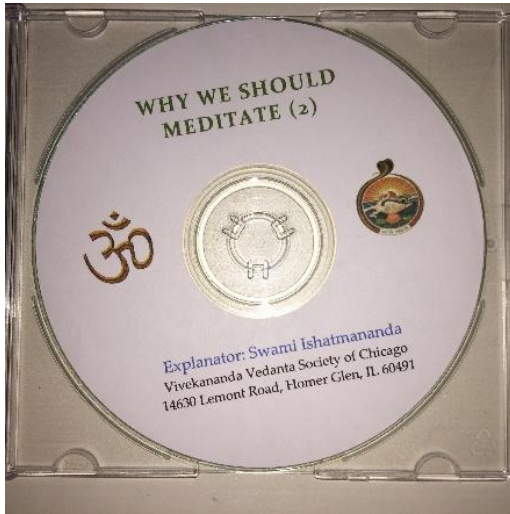
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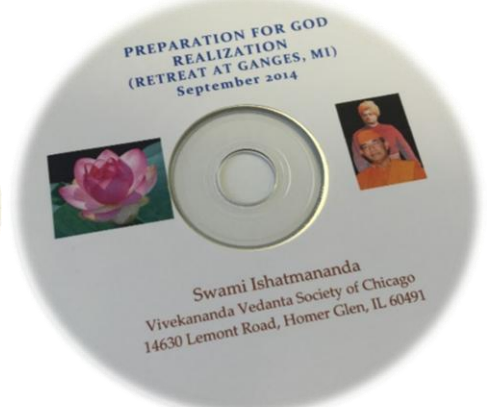
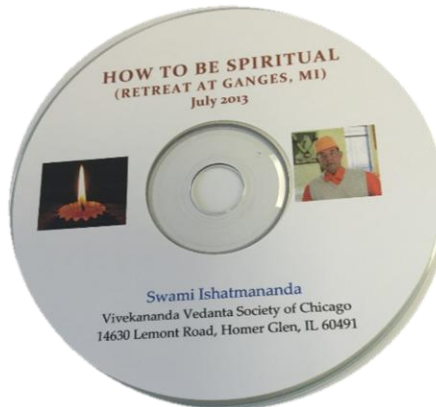


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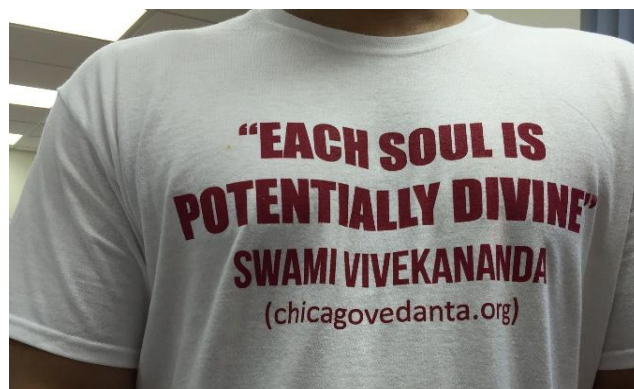
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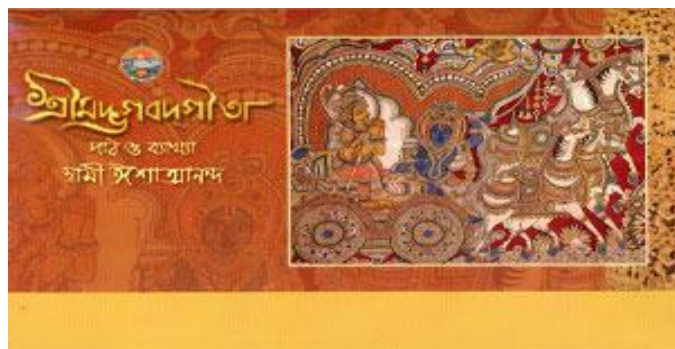
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