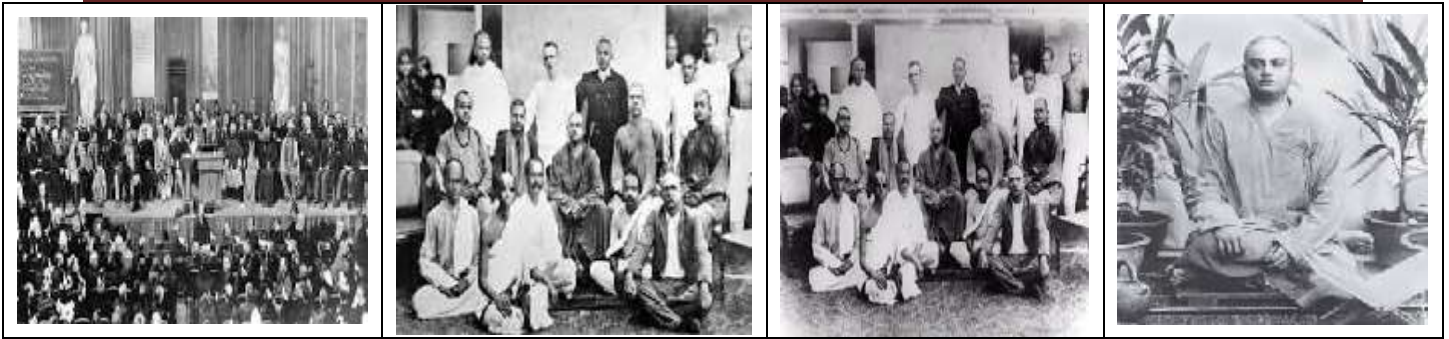


## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S inspiring personality was well known both in India and in America during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. The unknown monk of India suddenly leapt into fame at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, at which he represented Hinduism. His vast knowledge of Eastern and Western culture as well as his deep spiritual insight, fervid eloquence, brilliant conversation, broad human sympathy, colourful personality, and handsome figure made an irresistible appeal to the many people who came in contact with him. By the time he passed on at the Belur Mutt, on July 4, 1902, he had launched a revolution that still resonates around the world today. As a vehicle for his Guru's message, he has been an inspiration for youth around the world for over a century.



## **Where & When born**

Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as **Narendranath Datta**, was born in an affluent family in **Kolkata** on 12 January 1863 to his parents Vishwanath Datta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi.

## **Brief history of the person -personal**

Born into an aristocratic [Bengali](#) family of [Calcutta](#), Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as **Narendranath Datta** or **shortly Narendra** who was inclined towards spirituality. He was influenced by his [Guru](#) Ramakrishna Paramahansa, from whom he learnt that all living beings were an embodiment of the divine self; therefore, service to God could be rendered by service to mankind. Ramakrishna had a very different kind of attachment towards Vivekananda because he saw him as a means to take his message to the world. Vivekananda was equally mad about Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He did not look for any employment, he did not do anything that people of his age were normally supposed to do. He just followed Ramakrishna all the time. After Ramakrishna's death, Vivekananda toured the [Indian subcontinent](#) extensively and acquired first-hand knowledge of the conditions prevailing in [British India](#). He later travelled to the United States, representing India at the 1893 Parliament of the World Religions. Vivekananda conducted hundreds of public and private lectures and classes, disseminating tenets of [Hindu philosophy](#) in the United States, England and Europe. In India, Vivekananda is regarded as a [patriotic Saint](#) and his birthday is celebrated as [National Youth Day](#).

## **Principles & Practices in Spiritual Life**

Swami Vivekananda was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God. Sri Ramakrishna instilled in the young devotees of him with the spirit of renunciation and brotherly love for one another. After Ramakrishna's death Narendra started a new math (monastery) at [Baranagar](#) and along with other disciples used to spend many hours in practicing meditation and religious austerities every day. In 1887 they took the formal vows of Sannyasa, thereby assuming new names. Narendra then became Swami Vivekananda. While most of the followers of Sri Ramakrishna thought of him in relation to their own personal lives, Vivekananda thought of the Master in relation to India and the rest of the world.

## **Spiritual Works**

The question and the awareness of Swami Vivekananda's own inherent powers urged Swamiji to go out alone into the wide world. So in the middle of 1890, after receiving the blessings of Sri Sarada Devi, Swamiji left Baranagar Math and embarked on a long journey of exploration and discovery of India. He understood that the masses needed two kinds of knowledge: secular knowledge to improve their economic condition and spiritual knowledge to infuse in them faith in themselves and strengthen their moral sense. One thing



became clear to Swamiji: to carry out his plans for the spread of education and for the uplift of the poor masses, and also of women, an efficient organization of dedicated people was needed. As he said later on, he wanted “to set in motion a machinery which would bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.” It was to serve as this ‘machinery’ that Swamiji founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.

### **Critical moments while taking Hinduism to world.**

One of the most significant contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent Reality, common to all humanity. Swamiji met the challenge of modern science by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself; religion is the ‘Science of Consciousness’. As such, religion and science are not contradictory to each other but are complementary. Through science and technology man has attained great prosperity and power, and modern methods of communication and travel have converted human society into a ‘global village’. But the degradation of man has also been going on apace, as witnessed by the enormous increase in broken homes, immorality, violence, crime, etc. in modern society. Vivekananda’s concept of potential divinity of the soul prevents this degradation, divinizes human relationships, and makes life meaningful and worth living. Another great contribution of Swami Vivekananda was to build a bridge between Indian culture and Western culture. He did it by interpreting Hindu scriptures and philosophy and the Hindu way of life and institutions to the Western people in an idiom which they could understand. He made the Western people realize that they had to learn much from Indian spirituality for their own well-being.

### **Philanthropic Works**

Swami Vivekananda was the first religious leader in India to understand and openly declare that the real cause of India’s downfall was the neglect of the masses. His speeches at the World’s Parliament of Religions held in September 1893 made him famous as an ‘Orator by Divine Right’ and as a ‘Messenger of Indian wisdom to the Western world’. After the Parliament, Swamiji spent nearly three and a half years spreading Vedanta as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna, mostly in the eastern parts of USA and also in London

- He returned to India in January 1897. In response to the enthusiastic welcome that he received everywhere, he delivered a series of lectures in different parts of India, which created a great stir all over the country. Through these inspiring and profoundly significant lectures Swamiji attempted to do the following:
  - To rouse the religious consciousness of the people and create in them pride in their cultural heritage;
  - To bring about unification of Hinduism by pointing out the common bases of its sects;
  - To focus the attention of educated people on the plight of the downtrodden masses, and
  - To expound his plan for their uplift by the application of the principles of Practical Vedanta.

### **Writings / Celebrated books**

Following literary works on [Raja Yoga](#), [Karma Yoga](#), Bhakti Yoga and [Jnana Yoga](#) became famous throughout the world.

### **Location**

Swami Vivekananda founded the following [Ramakrishna Mission](#) & [Ramakrishna Math](#) located at the below address P.O. Belur Math-711202, Dist Howrah, West Bengal.



### **Sources**

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