

Swami Vivekananda : Life and Teachings



Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as **Narendra Nath Datta**, was born in an affluent family in **Kolkata** on 12 January 1863. His father, **Vishwanath Datta**, was a successful attorney with interests in a wide range of subjects, and his mother, **Bhuvaneshwari Devi**, was endowed with deep devotion, strong character and other qualities. A precocious boy, Narendra excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. By the time he graduated from Calcutta University, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects, especially Western philosophy and history. Born with a yogic temperament, he used to practise meditation even from his boyhood, and was associated with Brahmo Movement for some time.

With Sri Ramakrishna

At the threshold of youth Narendra had to pass through a period of spiritual crisis when he was assailed by doubts about the existence of God. It was at that time he first heard about **Sri Ramakrishna** from one of his English professors at college. One day in November 1881,

Narendra went to meet Sri Ramakrishna who was staying at the Kali Temple in **Dakshineshwar**. He straightaway asked the Master a question which he had put to several others but had received no satisfactory answer: "Sir, have you seen God?" Without a moment's hesitation, Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Yes, I have. I see Him as clearly as I see you, only in a much intenser sense."

Apart from removing doubts from the mind of Narendra, Sri Ramakrishna won him over through his pure, unselfish love. Thus began a guru-disciple relationship which is quite unique in the history of spiritual masters. Narendra now became a frequent visitor to Dakshineshwar and, under the guidance of the Master, made rapid strides on the spiritual path. At Dakshineshwar, Narendra also met several young men who were devoted to Sri Ramakrishna, and they all became close friends.

Difficult Situations

After a few years two events took place which caused Narendra considerable distress. One was the sudden death of his father in 1884. This left the family penniless, and Narendra had to bear the burden of supporting his mother, brothers and sisters. The second event was the illness of Sri Ramakrishna which was diagnosed to be cancer of the throat. In September 1885 Sri Ramakrishna was moved to a house at **Shyampukur**, and a few months later to a rented villa at **Cossipore**. In these two places the young disciples nursed the Master with devoted care. In spite of poverty at home and inability to find a job for himself, Narendra joined the group as its leader.



Beginnings of a Monastic Brotherhood

Sri Ramakrishna instilled in these young men the spirit of renunciation and brotherly love for one another. One day he distributed ochre robes among them and sent them out to beg food. In this way he himself laid the foundation for a new monastic order. He gave specific instructions to Narendra about the formation of the new monastic Order. In the small hours of 16 August 1886 Sri Ramakrishna gave up his mortal body.

After the Master's passing, fifteen of his young disciples (one more joined them later) began to live together in a dilapidated building at **Baranagar** in North Kolkata. Under the leadership of Narendra, they formed a new monastic brotherhood, and in 1887 they took the formal vows of sannyasa, thereby assuming new names. Narendra now became Swami Vivekananda (although this name was actually assumed much later.)

Awareness of Life's Mission

After establishing the new monastic order, Vivekananda heard the inner call for a greater mission in his life. 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. As the prophet of the present age, what was Sri Ramakrishna's message to the modern world and to India in particular? This question and the awareness of his 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**, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, known to the world as Holy Mother, who was then staying in Kolkata, Swamiji left Baranagar Math and embarked on a long journey of exploration and discovery of India.



Discovery of Real India

During his travels all over India, Swami Vivekananda was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty and backwardness of the masses. He 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. The immediate need was to provide food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions. For this they should be taught improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. It was in this context that Vivekananda grasped the crux of the problem of poverty in India (which had escaped the attention of social reformers of his days): owing to centuries of oppression, the downtrodden masses had lost faith in their capacity to improve their lot. It was first of all necessary to infuse into their minds faith in themselves. For this they needed a life-giving, inspiring message. Swamiji found this message in the principle of the Atman, the doctrine of the potential divinity of the soul, taught in Vedanta, the ancient system of religious philosophy of India. He saw that, in spite of poverty, the masses clung to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles of Vedanta and how to apply them in practical life.



Thus 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. The next question was, how to spread these two kinds of knowledge among the masses? Through education – this was the answer that Swamiji found.

Need for an Organization

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 will 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** a few years later.

Decision to attend the Parliament of Religions

It was when these ideas were taking shape in his mind in the course of his wanderings that Swami Vivekananda heard about the World's Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893. His friends and admirers in India wanted him to attend the Parliament. He too felt that the Parliament would provide the right forum to present his Master's message to the world, and so he decided to go to America. Another reason which prompted Swamiji to go to America was to seek financial help for his project of uplifting the masses.

Swamiji, however, wanted to have an inner certitude and divine call regarding his mission. Both of these he got while he sat in deep meditation on the rock-island at Kanyakumari. With the funds partly collected by his Chennai disciples and partly provided by the Raja of Khetri, Swami Vivekananda left for America from Mumbai on 31 May 1893.



The Parliament of Religions and After

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.

Awakening His Countrymen

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.

Founding of Ramakrishna Mission

Soon after his return to Kolkata, Swami Vivekananda accomplished another important task of his mission on earth. He founded on **1 May 1897** a unique type of organization known as Ramakrishna Mission, in which monks and lay people would jointly undertake propagation of Practical Vedanta, and various forms of social service, such as running hospitals, schools, colleges, hostels, rural development centres etc, and conducting massive relief and rehabilitation work for victims of earthquakes, cyclones and other calamities, in different parts of India and other countries.

Belur Math

In early 1898 Swami Vivekananda acquired a big plot of land on the western bank of the Ganga at a place called Belur to have a permanent abode for the monastery and monastic Order originally started at Baranagar, and got it registered as Ramakrishna Math after a couple of years. Here Swamiji established a new, universal pattern of monastic life which adapts ancient monastic ideals to the conditions of modern life, which gives equal importance to personal illumination and social service, and which is open to all men without any distinction of religion, race or caste.

Disciples

It may be mentioned here that in the West many people were influenced by Swami Vivekananda's life and message. Some of them became his disciples or devoted friends. Among them the names of **Margaret Noble** (later known as **Sister Nivedita**), **Captain and Mrs Sevier**, **Josephine McLeod** and **Sara Ole Bull**, deserve special mention. Nivedita dedicated her life to educating girls in Kolkata. Swamiji had many Indian disciples also, some of whom joined Ramakrishna Math and became sannyasins.

Last Days

In June 1899 he went to the West on a second visit. This time he spent most of his time in the West coast of USA. After delivering many lectures there, he returned to Belur Math in December 1900. The rest of his life was spent in India, inspiring and guiding people, both monastic and lay. Incessant work, especially giving lectures and inspiring people, told upon Swamiji's health. His health deteriorated and the end came quietly on the night of **4 July 1902**. Before his Mahasamadhi he had written to a Western follower: "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the whole world shall know that it is one with God."



Chronology of Main Events related to Swami Vivekananda

1863	January 12	Birth in Kolkata
1879		Enters Presidency College
1880		Transfers to General Assembly Institution
1881	November	First meeting with Sri Ramakrishna
1882-1886		Association with Sri Ramakrishna
1884		Passes B. A. Examination
		Father passes away
1885		Sri Ramakrishna's last illness
1886	August 16	Sri Ramakrishna passes away
	Fall	Establishes Baranagar Math
	December 24	Informal vow of sannyasa at Antpur
1887	January	Formal vows of sannyasa at Baranagar Monastery
1890-1893		Travels all over India as itinerant monk
1892	December 24	At Kanyakumari, South India
1893	February 13	First public lecture, Secunderabad, South India
	May 31	Sails for America from Mumbai
	July 25	Lands at Vancouver, Canada
	July 30	Arrives in Chicago
	August	Meets Professor John Ft. Wright of Harvard University
	September 11	First address at Parliament of Religions, Chicago
	September 27	Final address at Parliament of Religions
	November 20	Begins mid-western lecture tour
1894	April 14	Begins lectures and classes on East Coast
	May 16	Speaks at Harvard University
	July-August	At Green Acre Religious Conference

	November	Founds Vedanta Society of New York
1895	January	Begins classes in New York
	June 4-18	At Camp Percy, New Hampshire
	June-August	At Thousand Island Park on St. Lawrence river, N.Y.
	August-September	In Paris
	October-November	Lectures in London
	December 6	Sails for New York
1896	March 22-25	Speaks at Harvard University, offered Eastern Philosophy chair
	April 15	Returns to London
	May-July	Gives classes in London
	May 28	Meets Max Muller in Oxford
	August-September	In the Europe for six weeks
	October-November	Gives classes in London
	December 30	Leaves Naples for India
1897	January 15	Arrives in Colombo, Sri Lanka
	February 6-15	In Chennai
	February 19	Arrives in Kolkata
	May 1	Establishes Ramakrishna Mission Association, Kolkata
	May-December	Tours northwest India
1898	January	Returns to Kolkata
	May	Begins North India pilgrimage with Western devotees
	August 2	At Amarnath, Kashmir
	December 9	Consecrates Belur Math
1899	March 19	Establishes Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati
	June 20	Leaves India for second visit to the West
	July 31	Arrives in London
	August 28	Arrives in New York City
	August-November	At Ridgely Manor, New York
	December 3	Arrives in Los Angeles
1900	February 22	Arrives in San Francisco
	April 14	Founds Vedanta Society in San Francisco
	June	Final classes in New York City
	July 26	Leaves for Europe
	August 3	Arrives in Paris for International Exposition
	September 7	Speaks at Congress of History of Religions at Exposition
	October 24	Begins tour of Vienna, Constantinople, Greece and Cairo
	November 26	Leaves for India
	December 9	Arrives at Belur Math
1901	January	Visits Mayavati
	March-May	Pilgrimage in East Bengal and Assam
1902	January-February	Visits Bodh Gaya and Varanasi
	March	Returns to Belur Math
	July 4	Mahasamadhi

Vivekananda's contributions to World Culture

Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda's contributions to world culture, the eminent British historian **A L Basham** stated that "in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world..." Some of the main contributions that Swamiji made to the modern world are mentioned below:

1. ***New Understanding of Religion:*** 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.

This universal conception frees religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priestcraft and intolerance, and makes religion the highest and noblest pursuit – the pursuit of supreme Freedom, supreme Knowledge, supreme Happiness.

2. ***New View of Man:*** Vivekananda's concept of 'potential divinity of the soul' gives a new, ennobling concept of man. The present age is the age of humanism which holds that man should be the chief concern and centre of all activities and thinking. 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. Swamiji has laid the foundation for 'spiritual humanism', which is manifesting itself through several neo-humanistic movements and the current interest in meditation, Zen etc all over the world.

3. ***New Principle of Morality and Ethics:*** The prevalent morality, in both individual life and social life, is mostly based on fear – fear of the police, fear of public ridicule, fear of God's punishment, fear of Karma, and so on. The current theories of ethics also do not explain *why* a person should be moral and be good to others. Vivekananda has given a new theory of ethics and new principle of morality based on the intrinsic purity and oneness of the Atman. We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine Self or Atman. Similarly, we should love and serve our neighbours because we are all one in the Supreme Spirit known as Paramatman or Brahman.

4. ***Bridge between the East and the West:*** 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. He showed that, in spite of her poverty and backwardness, India had a great contribution to make to world culture. In this way he was instrumental in ending India's cultural isolation from the rest of the world. He was India's first great cultural ambassador to the West.

On the other hand, Swamiji's interpretation of ancient Hindu scriptures, philosophy, institutions, etc prepared the mind of Indians to accept and apply in practical life two best elements of Western culture, namely science and technology and humanism. Swamiji has taught Indians how to master Western science and technology and at the same time develop spiritually. Swamiji has also taught Indians how to adapt Western humanism (especially the ideas of individual freedom, social equality and justice and respect for women) to Indian ethos.



Swamiji's Contributions to India

In spite of her innumerable linguistic, ethnic, historical and regional diversities, India has had from time

immemorial a strong sense of cultural unity. It was, however, Swami Vivekananda who revealed the true foundations of this culture and thus clearly defined and strengthened the sense of unity as a nation. Swamiji gave Indians proper understanding of their country's great spiritual heritage and thus gave them pride in their past.

Furthermore, he pointed out to Indians the drawbacks of Western culture and the need for India's contribution to overcome these drawbacks. In this way Swamiji made India a nation with a global mission.

Sense of unity, pride in the past, sense of mission – these were the factors which gave real strength and purpose to India's nationalist movement. Several eminent leaders of India's freedom movement have acknowledged their indebtedness to Swamiji. Free India's first Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** wrote: "Rooted in the past, full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present ... he came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past." **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose** wrote: "Swamiji harmonized the East and the West, religion and science, past and present. And that is why he is great. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented self-respect, self-reliance and self-assertion from his teachings."

Swamiji's most unique contribution to the creation of new India was to open the minds of Indians to their duty to the downtrodden masses. Long before the ideas of Karl Marx were known in India, Swamiji spoke about the role of the labouring classes in the production of the country's wealth. Swamiji was the first religious leader in India to speak for the masses, formulate a definite philosophy of service, and organize large-scale social service.



Swamiji's Contributions to Hinduism

1. **Identity:** It was Swami Vivekananda who gave to Hinduism as a whole a clear-cut identity, a distinct profile. Before Swamiji came Hinduism was a loose confederation of many different sects. Swamiji was the first religious leader to speak about the common bases of Hinduism and the common ground of all sects. He was the first person, as guided by his Master Sri Ramakrishna, to accept all Hindu doctrines and the views of all Hindu philosophers and sects as different aspects of one total view of Reality and way of life known as Hinduism. Speaking about Swamiji's role in giving Hinduism its distinct identity, **Sister Nivedita** wrote: "... it may be said that when he began to speak it was of 'the religious ideas of the Hindus', but when he ended, Hinduism had been created."

2. **Unification:** Before Swamiji came, there was a lot of quarrel and competition among the various sects of Hinduism. Similarly, the protagonists of different systems and schools of philosophy were claiming their views to be the only true and valid ones. By applying Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine of Harmony (*Samanvaya*) Swamiji brought about an overall unification of Hinduism on the basis of the principle of unity in diversity. Speaking about Swamiji's role in this field **K M Pannikar**, the eminent historian and diplomat, wrote: "This new Shankaracharya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology."

3. **Defence:** Another important service rendered by Swamiji was to raise his voice in defence of Hinduism. In fact, this was one of the main types of work he did in the West. Christian missionary propaganda had given a wrong understanding of Hinduism and India in Western minds. Swamiji had to face a lot of opposition in his attempts to defend Hinduism.

4. **Meeting the Challenges:** At the end of the 19th century, India in general, and Hinduism in particular, faced grave challenges from Western materialistic life, the ideas of Western free society, and the proselytizing activities of Christians. Vivekananda met these challenges by integrating the best elements of Western culture in Hindu culture.

5. **New Ideal of Monasticism:** A major contribution of Vivekananda to Hinduism is the rejuvenation and modernization of monasticism. In this new monastic ideal, followed in the Ramakrishna Order, the ancient principles of renunciation and God realization are combined with service to God in man (*Shiva jnane jiva seva*). Vivekananda elevated social service to the status of divine service.

6. **Refurbishing of Hindu Philosophy and Religious Doctrines:** Vivekananda did not merely interpret ancient Hindu scriptures and philosophical ideas in terms of modern thought. He also added

several illuminating original concepts based on his own transcendental experiences and vision of the future. This, however, needs a detailed study of Hindu philosophy which cannot be attempted here.

[↑ TOP](#)

Selected Teachings of Swami Vivekananda

✚ My ideal, indeed, can be put into a few words, and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

✚ Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

✚ We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

✚ So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.

✚ Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.

✚ If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, ... and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need.

✚ Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery.

✚ The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new Gospel.

✚ Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success, and above all, love.

✚ Religion is realization; not talk, not doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.

✚ Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

✚ Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.

✚ They alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.

✚ This is the gist of all worship – to be pure and to do good to others.

✚ It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe.



Swami Vivekananda quotes

- Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, that is way great spiritual giants are produced.”
- We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.”
- Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin ? to say that you are weak, or others are weak.”
- You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.”
- “The goal of mankind is knowledge ... Now this knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside: it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'; what man 'learns' is really what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.”
- We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.”
- Where can we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts and in every living being
- You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.”
- The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong
- In one word, this ideal is that you are divine
- The Vedanta recognizes no sin it only recognizes error. And the greatest error, says the Vedanta is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power and you cannot do this and that.”
- The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them
- All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.”
- GOD of truth, be Thou alone my guide
- If you think about disaster, you will get it. Brood about death and you hasten your demise. Think positively and masterfully, with confidence and faith, and life becomes more secure, more fraught with action, richer in achievement and experience
- The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves!”
- YOU know, I may have to be born again, you see, I have fallen in love with mankind
- BY the study of different RELIGIONS we find that in essence they are one.
- Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.

- "If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished
- MY nature is love Him. And therefore I love. I do not pray for any-thing. I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I can not trade in love."
- To devote your life to the good of all and to the happiness of all is religion. Whatever you do for your own sake is not religion
- Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true."
- The will is not free - it is a phenomenon bound by cause and effect - but there is something behind the will which is free."
- As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in the sea, so different tendencies various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to God."
- When an idea exclusively occupies the mind, it is transformed into an actual physical or mental state."
- All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything
- Infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon itself makes of man a GOD. First, let us be Gods, and then help other to be GODs. "Be and Make." Let this be our motto."
- Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man
- IT is good to love God for hope of reward, but it is better to love God for love's sake; and the prayer goes: O Lord, I do not want wealth nor children nor learning. If it be Thy will, I shall go from birth to birth. But grant me this, that I may love thee without the hope of reward - 'love' unselfishly for love's sake
- TO worship God even for the sake of salvation or any other reward is equally degenerate. Love knows no reward. Give your love unto to God, but do not ask anything in return even from Him through pray
- That man has reached immortality who is disturbed by nothing material."
- External nature is only internal nature writ large
- Do not stand on a high pedestal and take 5 cents in your hand and say, "here, my poor man", but be grateful that the poor man is there, so by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect
- GOD is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and next life."
- If money help a man to do good to others, it is of some value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got rid of, the better."
- Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way
- is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thought make things beautiful, our thoughts make things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see things in the proper light. First, believe in this world, that"

- The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him - that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free."