

= Swami Vivekananda =

Swami Vivekananda (Bengali : শ্রী ব্রজেন চন্দ্র দত্ত) Bengali : [?ami bibekan?n?o] , Sh?mi Bibek?nondo ; 12 January 1863 ? 4 July 1902) , born Narendranath Datta (Bengali : নরেন্দ্র নাথ দত্ত) (Bengali : [n?rend ? ro nat ? ? d ? ?t ? t ? o]) , was an Indian Hindu monk , a chief disciple of the 19th @-@ century Indian mystic Ramakrishna . He was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world and is credited with raising interfaith awareness , bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century . He was a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India , and contributed to the concept of nationalism in colonial India . Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission . He is perhaps best known for his speech which began , " Sisters and brothers of America ... , " in which he introduced Hinduism at the Parliament of the World 's Religions in Chicago in 1893 .

Born into an aristocratic Bengali family of Calcutta , Vivekananda was inclined towards spirituality . He was influenced by his Guru , Ramakrishna Deva , 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 . 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 there as National Youth Day .

= = Early life (1863 ? 88) = =

= = = Birth and childhood = = =

Vivekananda was born Narendranath Datta (shortened to Narendra or Naren) at his ancestral home at 3 Gourmohan Mukherjee Street in Calcutta , the capital of British India , on 12 January 1863 during the Makar Sankranti festival . He belonged to a traditional Bengali Kayastha family and was one of nine siblings . His father , Vishwanath Datta , was an attorney at the Calcutta High Court . Durgacharan Datta , Narendra 's grandfather was a Sanskrit and Persian scholar who left his family and became a monk at age twenty @-@ five . His mother , Bhubaneswari Devi , was a devout housewife . The progressive , rational attitude of Narendra 's father and the religious temperament of his mother helped shape his thinking and personality .

Narendranath was interested spiritually from a young age , and used to meditate before the images of deities such as Shiva , Rama , Sita , and Mahavir Hanuman . He was fascinated by wandering ascetics and monks . Naren was naughty and restless as a child , and his parents often had difficulty controlling him . His mother said , " I prayed to Shiva for a son and he has sent me one of his ghosts " .

= = Education = =

In 1871 , at the age of eight , Narendranath enrolled at Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar 's Metropolitan Institution , where he went to school until his family moved to Raipur in 1877 . In 1879 , after his family 's return to Calcutta , he was the only student to receive first @-@ division marks in the Presidency College entrance examination . He was an avid reader in a wide range of subjects , including philosophy , religion , history , social science , art and literature . He was also interested in Hindu scriptures , including the Vedas , the Upanishads , the Bhagavad Gita , the Ramayana , the Mahabharata and the Puranas . Narendra was trained in Indian classical music , and regularly participated in physical exercise , sports and organised activities . Narendra studied Western logic , Western philosophy and European history at the General Assembly 's Institution (now known as the

Scottish Church College) . In 1881 he passed the Fine Arts examination , and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1884 . Narendra studied the works of David Hume , Immanuel Kant , Johann Gottlieb Fichte , Baruch Spinoza , Georg W. F. Hegel , Arthur Schopenhauer , Auguste Comte , John Stuart Mill and Charles Darwin . He became fascinated with the evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and corresponded with him , translating Spencer 's book Education (1861) into Bengali . While studying Western philosophers , he also learned Sanskrit scriptures and Bengali literature . William Hastie (principal of General Assembly 's Institution) wrote , " Narendra is really a genius . I have travelled far and wide but I have never come across a lad of his talents and possibilities , even in German universities , among philosophical students ' Some accounts have called Narendra a shrutidhara (a person with a prodigious memory) .

= = = Spiritual apprenticeship - influence of Brahmo Samaj = = =

In 1880 Narendra joined Keshab Chandra Sen 's Nava Vidhan , which was established by Sen after meeting Ramakrishna and reconverting from Christianity to Hinduism . Narendra became a member of a Freemasonry lodge " at some point before 1884 " and of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in his twenties , a breakaway faction of the Brahmo Samaj led by Keshab Chandra Sen and Debendranath Tagore . From 1881 to 1884 he was also active in Sen 's Band of Hope , which tried to discourage youths from smoking and drinking .

It was in this cultic milieu that Narendra became acquainted with western esotericism . His initial beliefs were shaped by Brahmo concepts , which included belief in a formless God and the deprecation of idolatry , and a " streamlined , rationalized , monotheistic theology strongly coloured by a selective and modernistic reading of the Upanisads and of the Vedanta . " Rammohan Roy , the founder of the Brahmo Samaj who was strongly influenced by unitarianism , strived toward an universalistic interpretation of Hinduism . His ideas were " altered [...] considerably " by Debendranath Tagore , who had a romantic approach to the development of these new doctrines , and questioned central Hindu beliefs like reincarnation and karma , and rejected the authority of the Vedas . Tagore also brought this " neo @-@ Hinduism " closer in line with western esotericism , a development which was furthered by Keshubchandra Sen. Sen was influenced by transcendentalism , an American philosophical @-@ religious movement strongly connected with unitarianism , which emphasised personal religious experience over mere reasoning and theology . Sen strived to " an accessible , non @-@ renunciatory , everyman type of spirituality " , introducing " lay systems of spiritual practice " which can be regarded as prototypes of the kind of Yoga @-@ exercises which Vivekananda popularised in the west .

The same search for direct intuition and understanding can be seen with Vivekananda . Not satisfied with his knowledge of philosophy , Narendra came to " the question which marked the real beginning of his intellectual quest for God . " He asked several prominent Calcutta residents if they had come " face to face with God " , but none of their answers satisfied him . At this time , Narendra met Debendranath Tagore (the leader of Brahmo Samaj) and asked if he had seen God . Instead of answering his question , Tagore said " My boy , you have the Yogi 's eyes . " According to Banhatti , it was Ramakrishna who really answered Narendra 's question , by saying " Yes , I see Him as I see you , only in an infinitely intenser sense . " Nevertheless , Vivekananda was more influenced by the Brahmo Samaj 's and its new ideas , than by Ramakrishna . It was Sen 's influence who brought Vivekananda fully into contact with western esotericism , and it was also via Sen that he met Ramakrishna .

= = = With Ramakrishna = = =

In 1881 Narendra first met Ramakrishna , who became his spiritual focus after his own father had died in 1884 .

Narendra 's first introduction to Ramakrishna occurred in a literature class at General Assembly 's Institution when he heard Professor William Hastie lecturing on William Wordsworth 's poem , The Excursion . While explaining the word " trance " in the poem , Hastie suggested that his students

visit Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar to understand the true meaning of trance . This prompted some of his students (including Narendra) to visit Ramakrishna .

They probably first met personally in November 1881 , though Narendra did not consider this their first meeting , and neither man mentioned this meeting later . At this time Narendra was preparing for his upcoming F. A. examination , when Ram Chandra Datta accompanied him to Surendra Nath Mitra 's , house where Ramakrishna was invited to deliver a lecture . According to Paranjape , at this meeting Ramakrishna asked young Narendra to sing . Impressed by his singing talent , he asked Narendra to come to Dakshineswar .

In late 1881 or early 1882 , Narendra went to Dakshineswar with two friends and met Ramakrishna . This meeting proved to be a turning point in his life . Although he did not initially accept Ramakrishna as his teacher and rebelled against his ideas , he was attracted by his personality and began to frequently visit him at Dakshineswar . He initially saw Ramakrishna 's ecstasies and visions as " mere figments of imagination " and " hallucinations " . As a member of Brahmo Samaj , he opposed idol worship , polytheism and Ramakrishna 's worship of Kali . He even rejected the Advaita Vedanta of " identity with the absolute " as blasphemy and madness , and often ridiculed the idea . Narendra tested Ramakrishna , who faced his arguments patiently : " Try to see the truth from all angles " , he replied .

Narendra 's father 's sudden death in 1884 left the family bankrupt ; creditors began demanding the repayment of loans , and relatives threatened to evict the family from their ancestral home . Narendra , once a son of a well @-@ to @-@ do family , became one of the poorest students in his college . He unsuccessfully tried to find work and questioned God 's existence , but found solace in Ramakrishna and his visits to Dakshineswar increased .

One day Narendra requested Ramakrishna to pray to goddess Kali for their family 's financial welfare . Ramakrishna suggested him to go to the temple himself and pray . Following Ramakrishna 's suggestion , he went to the temple thrice , but failed to pray for any kind of worldly necessities and ultimately prayed for true knowledge and devotion from the goddess . Narendra gradually grew ready to renounce everything for the sake of realising God , and accepted Ramakrishna as his Guru .

In 1885 , Ramakrishna developed throat cancer , and was transferred to Calcutta and (later) to a garden house in Cossipore . Narendra and Ramakrishna 's other disciples took care of him during his last days , and Narendra 's spiritual education continued . At Cossipore , he experienced Nirvikalpa samadhi . Narendra and several other disciples received ochre robes from Ramakrishna , forming his first monastic order . He was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God . Ramakrishna asked him to care for the other monastic disciples , and in turn asked them to see Narendra as their leader . Ramakrishna died in the early @-@ morning hours of 16 August 1886 in Cossipore .

= = = Founding of first Ramakrishna Math at Baranagar = = =

After Ramakrishna 's death , his devotees and admirers stopped supporting his disciples . Unpaid rent accumulated , and Narendra and the other disciples had to find a new place to live . Many returned home , adopting a Grihastha (family @-@ oriented) way of life . Narendra decided to convert a dilapidated house at Baranagar into a new math (monastery) for the remaining disciples . Rent for the Baranagar Math was low , raised by " holy begging " (m?dhukar?) . The math became the first building of the Ramakrishna Math : the monastery of the monastic order of Ramakrishna . Narendra and other disciples used to spend many hours in practising meditation and religious austerities every day . Narendra later reminisced about the early days of the monastery :

We underwent a lot of religious practice at the Baranagar Math . We used to get up at 3 : 00 am and become absorbed in japa and meditation . What a strong spirit of detachment we had in those days ! We had no thought even as to whether the world existed or not .

In 1887 , Narendra compiled a Bengali song anthology named Sangeet Kalpataru with Vaishnav Charan Basak . Narendra collected and arranged most of the songs of this compilation , but could not finish the work of the book for unfavourable circumstances .

= = = Monastic vows = = =

In December 1886 , the mother of Baburam invited Narendra and his other brother monks to Antpur village . Narendra and the other aspiring monks accepted the invitation and went to Antpur to spend few days . In Antpur , in the Christmas Eve of 1886 , Narendra and eight other disciples took formal monastic vows . They decided to live their lives as their master lived . Narendranath took the name " Swami Vivekananda " .

= = Travels in India (1888 ? 93) = =

In 1888 , Narendra left the monastery as a Parivrâjaka ? the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk , " without fixed abode , without ties , independent and strangers wherever they go " . His sole possessions were a kamandalu (water pot) , staff and his two favourite books : the Bhagavad Gita and The Imitation of Christ . Narendra travelled extensively in India for five years , visiting centres of learning and acquainting himself with diverse religious traditions and social patterns . He developed sympathy for the suffering and poverty of the people , and resolved to uplift the nation . Living primarily on bhiksha (alms) , Narendra travelled on foot and by railway (with tickets bought by admirers) . During his travels he met , and stayed with Indians from all religions and walks of life : scholars , dewans , rajas , Hindus , Muslims , Christians , paraiyars (low @-@ caste workers) and government officials . Narendra left Bombay for Chicago on 31 May 1893 with the name " Vivekananda " , as suggested by Ajit Singh of Khetri , which means " the bliss of discerning wisdom " .

= = First visit to the West (1893 ? 97) = =

Vivekananda started his journey to the West on 31 May 1893 and visited several cities in Japan (including Nagasaki , Kobe , Yokohama , Osaka , Kyoto and Tokyo) , China and Canada en route to the United States , reaching Chicago on 30 July 1893 , where the " Parliament of Religions " took place in September 1893 . The Congress was an initiative of the Swedenborgian layman , and judge of the Illinois Supreme Court , Charles C. Bonney , to gather all the religions of the world , and show " the substantial unity of many religions in the good deeds of the religious life . " It was one of the more than 200 adjunct gatherings and congresses of the Chicago 's World 's Fair , and was " an avant @-@ garde intellectual manifestation of [...] cultic milieus , East and West , " with the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society being invited as being representative of Hinduism .

Vivekananda wanted to join , but was disappointed to learn that no one without credentials from a bona fide organisation would be accepted as a delegate . Vivekananda contacted Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard University , who invited him to speak at Harvard . Vivekananda wrote of the professor , " He urged upon me the necessity of going to the Parliament of Religions , which he thought would give an introduction to the nation " . Vivekananda submitted an application , " introducing himself as a monk ' of the oldest order of sanny?sis ... founded by Sankara , ' " supported by the Brahmo Samaj representative Protapchandra Mozoombar , who was also a member of the Parliament 's selection committee , " classifying the Swami as a representative of the Hindu monastic order . "

= = = Parliament of the World 's Religions = = =

The Parliament of the World 's Religions opened on 11 September 1893 at the Art Institute of Chicago as part of the World 's Columbian Exposition . On this day , Vivekananda gave a brief speech representing India and Hinduism . He was initially nervous , bowed to Saraswati (the Hindu goddess of learning) and began his speech with " Sisters and brothers of America ! " . At these words , Vivekananda received a two @-@ minute standing ovation from the crowd of seven thousand . According to Sailendra Nath Dhar , when silence was restored he began his address ,

greeting the youngest of the nations on behalf of " the most ancient order of monks in the world , the Vedic order of sannyasins , a religion which has taught the world both tolerance , of and universal acceptance " . Vivekananda quoted two illustrative passages from the " Shiva mahima stotam " : " As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea , so , O Lord , the different paths which men take , through different tendencies , various though they appear , crooked or straight , all lead to Thee ! " and " Whosoever comes to Me , through whatsoever form , I reach him ; all men are struggling through paths that in the end lead to Me . " According to Sailendra Nath Dhar , " [i] t was only a short speech , but it voiced the spirit of the Parliament . "

Parliament President John Henry Barrows said , " India , the Mother of religions was represented by Swami Vivekananda , the Orange @-@ monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his auditors " . Vivekananda attracted widespread attention in the press , which called him the " cyclonic monk from India " . The New York Critique wrote , " He is an orator by divine right , and his strong , intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than those earnest words , and the rich , rhythmical utterance he gave them " . The New York Herald noted , " Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions . After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation " . American newspapers reported Vivekananda as " the greatest figure in the parliament of religions " and " the most popular and influential man in the parliament " . The Boston Evening Transcript reported that Vivekananda was " a great favourite at the parliament ... if he merely crosses the platform , he is applauded " . He spoke several more times " at receptions , the scientific section , and private homes " on topics related to Hinduism , Buddhism and harmony among religions until the parliament ended on 27 September 1893 . Vivekananda 's speeches at the Parliament had the common theme of universality , emphasising religious tolerance . He soon became known as a " handsome oriental " and made a huge impression as an orator .

= = = Lecture tours in the UK and US = = =

After the Parliament of Religions , he toured many parts of the US as a guest . His popularity opened up new views for expanding on " life and religion to thousands " . During a question @-@ answer session at Brooklyn Ethical Society , he remarked , " I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East . "

Vivekananda spent nearly two years lecturing in the eastern and central United States , primarily in Chicago , Detroit , Boston , and New York . He founded the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894 . By spring 1895 his busy , tiring schedule had affected his health . He ended his lecture tours and began giving free , private classes in Vedanta and yoga . Beginning in June 1895 , Vivekananda gave private lectures to a dozen of his disciples at Thousand Island Park in New York for two months .

During his first visit to the West he travelled to the UK twice , in 1895 and 1896 , lecturing successfully there . In November 1895 he met Margaret Elizabeth Noble an Irish woman who would become Sister Nivedita . During his second visit to the UK in May 1896 Vivekananda met Max Müller , a noted Indologist from Oxford University who wrote Ramakrishna 's first biography in the West . From the UK , Vivekananda visited other European countries . In Germany he met Paul Deussen , another Indologist . Vivekananda was offered academic positions in two American universities (one the chair in Eastern Philosophy at Harvard University and a similar position at Columbia University) ; he declined both , since his duties would conflict with his commitment as a monk .

His success led to a change in mission , namely the establishment of Vedanta centres in the West . Vivekananda adapted traditional Hindu ideas and religiosity to suit the needs and understandings of his western audiences , who were especially attracted by and familiar with western esoteric traditions and movements like Transcendentalism and New thought . An important element in his adaptation of Hindu religiosity was the introduction of his " four yogas " model , which includes Raja yoga , his interpretation of Patanjali 's Yoga sutras , which offered a practical means to realise the

divine force within which is central to modern western esotericism . In 1896 his book Raja Yoga was published , which became an instant success and was highly influential in the western understanding of Yoga .

Vivekananda attracted followers and admirers in the US and Europe , including Josephine MacLeod , William James , Josiah Royce , Robert G. Ingersoll , Nikola Tesla , Lord Kelvin , Harriet Monroe , Ella Wheeler Wilcox , Sarah Bernhardt , Emma Calvé and Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz . He initiated several followers : Marie Louise (a French woman) became Swami Abhayananda , and Leon Landsberg became Swami Kripananda , so that they could continue the work of the mission of the Vedanta Society . This society still is filled with foreign nationals and is also located in Los Angeles . During his stay in America , Vivekananda was given land in the mountains to the southeast of San Jose , California to establish an retreat for Vedanta students . He called it " Peace retreat " , or , Shanti Asrama . The largest American centre is the Vedanta Society of Southern California in Hollywood , (one of the twelve main centres) . There is also a Vedanta Press in Hollywood which publishes books about Vedanta and English translations of Hindu scriptures and texts . Christina Greenstidel of Detroit was also initiated by Vivekananda with a mantra and she became Sister Christine , and they established a close father ? daughter relationship .

From the West , Vivekananda revived his work in India . He regularly corresponded with his followers and brother monks , offering advice and financial support . His letters from this period reflect his campaign of social service , and were strongly worded . He wrote to Akhandananda , " Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of the town of Khetri and teach them religion . Also , let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects . No good will come of sitting idle and having princely dishes , and saying " Ramakrishna , O Lord ! " ? unless you can do some good to the poor " . In 1895 , Vivekananda founded the periodical Brahnavadin to teach the Vedanta . Later , Vivekananda 's translation of the first six chapters of The Imitation of Christ was published in Brahnavadin in 1889 . Vivekananda left for India on 16 December 1896 from England with his disciples Captain and Mrs. Sevier and J.J. Goodwin . On the way they visited France and Italy , and set sail for India from Naples on 30 December 1896 . He was later followed to India by Sister Nivedita , who devoted the rest of her life to the education of Indian women and India 's independence .

= = Back in India (1897 ? 99) = =

The ship from Europe arrived in Colombo , British Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on 15 January 1897 , and Vivekananda received a warm welcome . In Colombo he gave his first public speech in the East , India , the Holy Land . From there on , his journey to Calcutta was triumphant . Vivekananda travelled from Colombo to Pamban , Rameswaram , Ramnad , Madurai , Kumbakonam and Madras , delivering lectures . Common people and rajas gave him an enthusiastic reception . During his train travels , people often sat on the rails to force the train to stop so they could hear him . From Madras , he continued his journey to Calcutta and Almora . While in the West , Vivekananda spoke about India 's great spiritual heritage ; in India , he repeatedly addressed social issues : uplifting the people , eliminating the caste system , promoting science and industrialisation , addressing widespread poverty and ending colonial rule . These lectures , published as Lectures from Colombo to Almora , demonstrate his nationalistic fervour and spiritual ideology .

On 1 May 1897 in Calcutta , Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission for social service . Its ideals are based on Karma Yoga , and its governing body consists of the trustees of the Ramakrishna Math (which conducts religious work) . Both Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission have their headquarters at Belur Math . Vivekananda founded two other monasteries : one in Mayavati in the Himalayas (near Almora) , the Advaita Ashrama and another in Madras . Two journals were founded : Prabuddha Bharata in English and Udbhodan in Bengali . That year , famine @-@ relief work was begun by Swami Akhandananda in the Murshidabad district .

Vivekananda earlier inspired Jamshedji Tata to set up a research and educational institution when they travelled together from Yokohama to Chicago on Vivekananda 's first visit to the West in 1893 .

Tata now asked him to head his Research Institute of Science ; Vivekananda declined the offer , citing a conflict with his " spiritual interests " . He visited Punjab , attempting to mediate an ideological conflict between Arya Samaj (a reformist Hindu movement) and sanatan (orthodox Hindus) . After brief visits to Lahore , Delhi and Khetri , Vivekananda returned to Calcutta in January 1898 . He consolidated the work of the math and trained disciples for several months . Vivekananda composed " Khandana Bhava ? Bandhana " , a prayer song dedicated to Ramakrishna , in 1898 .

= = Second visit to the West and final years (1899 ? 1902) = =

Despite declining health , Vivekananda left for the West for a second time in June 1899 accompanied by Sister Nivedita and Swami Turiyananda . Following a brief stay in England , he went to the United States . During this visit , Vivekananda established Vedanta Societies in San Francisco and New York and founded a shanti ashrama (peace retreat) in California . He then went to Paris for the Congress of Religions in 1900 . His lectures in Paris concerned the worship of the lingam and the authenticity of the Bhagavad Gita . Vivekananda then visited Brittany , Vienna , Istanbul , Athens and Egypt . The French philosopher Jules Bois was his host for most of this period , until he returned to Calcutta on 9 December 1900 .

After a brief visit to the Advaita Ashrama in Mayavati Vivekananda settled at Belur Math , where he continued co - @ - @ ordinating the works of Ramakrishna Mission , the math and the work in England and the US He had many visitors , including royalty and politicians . Although Vivekananda was unable to attend the Congress of Religions in 1901 in Japan due to deteriorating health , he made pilgrimages to Bodhgaya and Varanasi . Declining health (including asthma , diabetes and chronic insomnia) restricted his activity .

= = Death = =

On 4 July 1902 (the day of his death) Vivekananda awoke early , went to the chapel at Belur Math and meditated for three hours . He taught Shukla @ - @ Yajur @ - @ Veda , Sanskrit grammar and the philosophy of yoga to pupils , later discussing with colleagues a planned Vedic college in the Ramakrishna Math . At 7 : 00 p.m. Vivekananda went to his room , asking not to be disturbed ; he died at 9 : 10 p.m. while meditating . According to his disciples , Vivekananda attained mahasam?dhi ; the rupture of a blood vessel in his brain was reported as a possible cause of death . His disciples believed that the rupture was due to his brahmarandhra (an opening in the crown of his head) being pierced when he attained mahasam?dhi . Vivekananda fulfilled his prophecy that he would not live forty years . He was cremated on a sandalwood funeral pyre on the bank of the Ganga in Belur , opposite where Ramakrishna was cremated sixteen years earlier .

= = Teachings and philosophy = =

Vivekananda propagated that the essence of Hinduism was best expressed in Adi Shankara 's Advaita Vedanta philosophy . Nevertheless , following Ramakrishna , and in contrast to Advaita Vedanta , Vivekananda believed that the Absolute is both immanent and transcendent . According to Anil Sooklal , Vivekananda 's neo @ - @ Advaita " reconciles Dvaita or dualism and Advaita or non @ - @ dualism " . Vivekananda summarised the Vedanta as follows , giving it a modern and Universalistic interpretation :

Each soul is potentially divine . The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature , external and internal . Do this either by work , or worship , or mental discipline , or philosophy ? by one , or more , or all of these ? and be free . This is the whole of religion . Doctrines , or dogmas , or rituals , or books , or temples , or forms , are but secondary details .

Nationalism was a prominent theme in Vivekananda 's thought . He believed that a country 's future depends on its people , and his teachings focused on human development . He wanted " to set in motion a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest " .

Vivekananda linked morality with control of the mind , seeing truth , purity and unselfishness as traits which strengthened it . He advised his followers to be holy , unselfish and to have 'raddh' (faith) . Vivekananda supported brahmacharya (celibacy) , believing it the source of his physical and mental stamina and eloquence . He emphasised that success was an outcome of focused thought and action ; in his lectures on Raja Yoga he said , " 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 the way great spiritual giants are produced " .

= = Influence and legacy = =

Vivekananda was one of the main representatives of Neo Vedanta , a modern interpretation of selected aspects of Hinduism in line with western esoteric traditions , especially Transcendentalism , New Thought and Theosophy . His reinterpretation was , and is , very successful , creating a new understanding and appreciation of Hinduism within and outside India , and was the principal reason for the enthusiastic reception of yoga , transcendental meditation and other forms of Indian spiritual self improvement in the West . Agha Khan explained , " ... modern Hindus derive their knowledge of Hinduism from Vivekananda , directly or indirectly " . Vivekananda espoused the idea that all sects within Hinduism (and all religions) are different paths to the same goal . However , this view has been criticised as an oversimplification of Hinduism .

In the background of emerging nationalism in British ruled India , Vivekananda crystallised the nationalistic ideal . In the words of social reformer Charles Freer Andrews , " The Swami 's intrepid patriotism gave a new colour to the national movement throughout India . More than any other single individual of that period Vivekananda had made his contribution to the new awakening of India " . Vivekananda drew attention to the extent of poverty in the country , and maintained that addressing such poverty was a prerequisite for national awakening . His nationalistic ideas influenced many Indian thinkers and leaders . Sri Aurobindo regarded Vivekananda as the one who awakened India spiritually . Mahatma Gandhi counted him among the few Hindu reformers " who have maintained this Hindu religion in a state of splendor by cutting down the dead wood of tradition " .

The first governor general of independent India , Chakravarti Rajagopalachari , said " Vivekananda saved Hinduism , saved India " . According to Subhas Chandra Bose , a proponent of armed struggle for Indian independence , Vivekananda was " the maker of modern India " ; for Gandhi , Vivekananda 's influence increased Gandhi 's " love for his country a thousandfold " . Vivekananda influenced India 's independence movement ; his writings inspired independence activists such as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose , Aurobindo Ghose , Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bagha Jatin and intellectuals such as Aldous Huxley , Christopher Isherwood , Romain Rolland . Many years after Vivekananda 's death Rabindranath Tagore told French Nobel laureate Romain Rolland , " If you want to know India , study Vivekananda . In him everything is positive and nothing negative " . Rolland wrote , " His words are great music , phrases in the style of Beethoven , stirring rhythms like the march of Händel choruses . I cannot touch these sayings of his , scattered as they are through the pages of books , at thirty years ' distance , without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock . And what shocks , what transports , must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero ! " .

Jamshedji Tata was inspired by Vivekananda to establish the Indian Institute of Science , one of India 's best known research universities . Abroad , Vivekananda communicated with orientalist Max Müller , and scientist Nikola Tesla was one of those influenced by his Vedic teachings . While National Youth Day in India is observed on his birthday , 12 January , the day he delivered his masterful speech at the Parliament of Religions , 11 September 1893 is " World Brotherhood Day " . In September 2010 , India 's Finance Ministry highlighted the relevance of Vivekananda 's teachings and values to the modern economic environment . The then Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee , the current President of India , approved in principle the Swami Vivekananda Values Education Project at a cost of ? 1 billion (US \$ 15 million) , with

objectives including involving youth with competitions , essays , discussions and study circles and publishing Vivekananda 's works in a number of languages . In 2011 , the West Bengal Police Training College was renamed the Swami Vivekananda State Police Academy , West Bengal . The state technical university in Chhattisgarh has been named the Chhattisgarh Swami Vivekananda Technical University . In 2012 , the Raipur airport was renamed Swami Vivekananda Airport .

The 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in India and abroad . The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in India officially observed 2013 as the occasion in a declaration . Year @-@ long events and programs were organised by branches of the Ramakrishna Math , the Ramakrishna Mission , the central and state governments in India , educational institutions and youth groups . Bengali film director Tutu (Utpal) Sinha made a film , The Light : Swami Vivekananda as a tribute for his 150th birth anniversary .

= = Works = =

= = = Lectures = = =

Although Vivekananda was a powerful orator and writer in English and Bengali , he was not a thorough scholar , and most of his published works were compiled from lectures given around the world which were " mainly delivered [...] impromptu and with little preparation " . His main work , Raja Yoga , consists of talks he delivered in New York .

= = = Literary works = = =

According to Banhatti , " [a] singer , a painter , a wonderful master of language and a poet , Vivekananda was a complete artist " , composing many songs and poems , including his favourite , " Kali the Mother " . Vivekananda blended humour with his teachings , and his language was lucid . His Bengali writings testify to his belief that words (spoken or written) should clarify ideas , rather than demonstrating the speaker (or writer 's) knowledge .

Bartaman Bharat meaning " Present Day India " is an erudite Bengali language essay written by him , which was first published in the March 1899 issue of Udbodhan , the only Bengali language magazine of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission . The essay was reprinted as a book in 1905 and later compiled into the fourth volume of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda . In this essay his refrain to the readers was to honour and treat every Indian as a brother irrespective of whether he was born poor or in lower caste .

= = = Publications = = =

= = = Printed sources = = =

= = = Web @-@ sources = = =