



# Indian Thinker: Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902)

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### 1. About Swami Vivekananda

- Born as Narendra Nath Datta on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1863.
- Raised interfaith awareness & brought Hinduism to the world stage during the late 19th century.
- Introduced Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world.
- Established Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.
- A monk and chief disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa.
- Represented India in the first Parliament of Religion in Chicago (U.S.) in 1893.

### 2. Core Values of Swami Vivekanand's Philosophy

#### Ethics

- Vivekananda's theory of ethics and principle of morality was based on the intrinsic purity & oneness of the Atman.
- Ethics was nothing but a code of conduct that helps a man to be a good citizen.
- We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine Self or Atman.
- We should love & serve our neighbours because we are all one in the Supreme Spirit (Paramatma).

#### Religion

- Interpreted religion as a universal experience of transcendent Reality, common to all humanity.
- Freed religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priest craft and intolerance.
- Every religion offered a pathway to the eternal supreme - freedom, knowledge & happiness.

#### Education

- Laid greatest emphasis on education for the regeneration of motherland.
- A nation is advanced in proportion as education is spread among the masses.
- Education should help students to manifest their innate knowledge & power.
- Advocated a man-making character-building education.
- Education must make the students self-reliant & help them face the challenges of life.

#### Rationality

- He was in complete agreement with the methods & results of modern science.
- He did not discard reason in favor of faith.
- Recognized intuition as a higher faculty than reason.
- But truth derived from intuition had to be explained & systematized by reason.

#### Nationalism

- Swami Vivekananda's nationalism is deeply rooted in Indian spirituality & morality.
- His nationalism is based on Humanism and Universalism.
- His nationalism is based on religion which is life blood of the Indian people.
- The basis of his nationalism are:
  1. Deep concern for masses, freedom and equality.
  2. "Karmyoga"

#### Youth

- If youth is determined, there can be nothing impossible for them to achieve.
- Youth should have dedication to the cause to attain success.
- Called upon the youth to not only build up their mental energies, but their physical ones as well.
- He wanted 'muscles of iron' as well as 'nerves of steel'.
- His birthday on January 12 is celebrated as National Youth Day.
- Week commencing from that day is known as the National Youth Week.
- During the National Youth Week celebrations, the National Youth Festival is held every year.

### 3. Conclusion

Swami Vivekananda belonged to the 19th century, yet his message and his life are more relevant today than in the past and perhaps, will be more relevant in future.



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