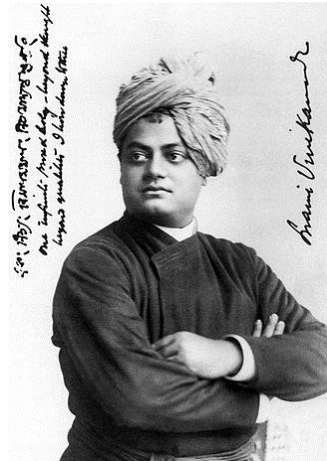




Swami Vivekananda

D.K.Hari & D.K.Hema Hari, Founders, Bharath Gyan

Swami Vivekananda, the patriotic saint of India was born on January 12th 1863 as Narendranath Datta in Calcutta, to Vishvanath Datta and Bhuvaneshvari Devi. From childhood, Narendra was inclined towards spirituality. He used to meditate in front of images of deities.



Gourmohan Mukherjee Street, the birth place of Swami Vivekananda now converted into a museum



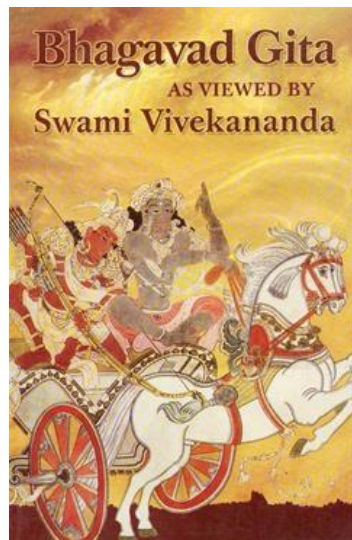
Bhuvaneshwari Devi, Mother of Swami Vivekananda

Education

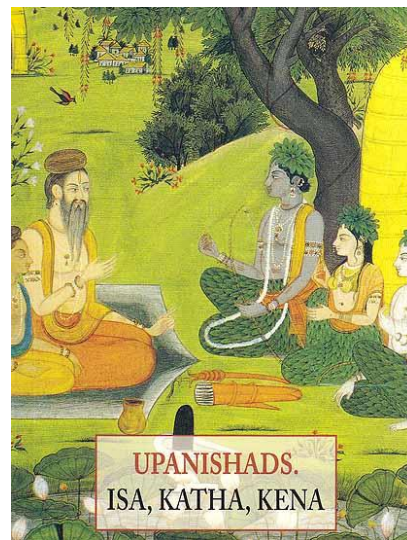
Narendra joined the Ishwara Chandra Vidya Sagar School in 1871 where he had his education until 1877, when his parents moved to Raipur. In 1879, his parents returned to Calcutta, where he joined the Presidency school and completed his matriculation. He studied Western Philosophy and European history for his graduation at the Scottish Church college and secured a Bachelor's degree in Arts, in 1881.

An Avid Reader

All through his teenage, Narendra was never disconnected from his spiritual interests. He was an avid reader who was interested in Indian scriptures. He was a keen reader of *Veda*, *Upanishad*, *Purana* and *Bhagavad Gita* and other scriptural texts.



Bhagavad Gita



Upanishad



The Veda

He was also interested in other subjects ranging from science, history art and politics to literature and social science.

Meeting Ramakrishna

Narendra was introduced to Sri Ramakrishna, in 1881. After having a profound spiritual experience with the master, Narendra accepted Ramakrishna as his Guru. He was greatly influenced by Ramakrishna's life, experiences and teachings.



Narendra surrendered to Ramakrishna after a spiritual experience

After Ramakrishna's Death

After Ramakrishna's death in 1886, the burden of carrying forward His mission fell upon Narendra.

His leadership was vital in guiding other disciples of his *Guru*, through the rough patch that they were facing after Ramakrishna's leaving the mortal coil.

Narendra converted a dilapidated house at Baranagar, Calcutta into a Math for him and other disciples of Ramakrishna to stay.

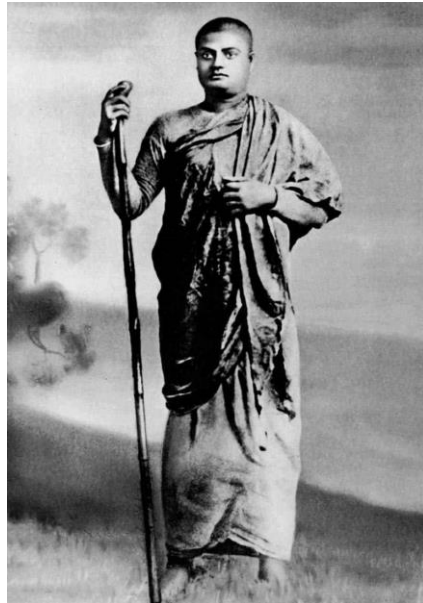


Baranagar Math

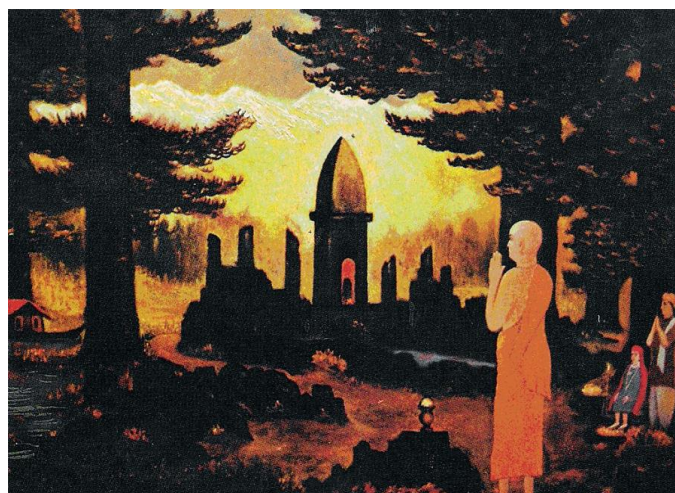
From 1888 to 1893, he travelled across the country, to realize his dream of reviving the glory of India.

Journey from Kashmir to Kanyakumari

In 1890, he began a 'Bharat' *yatra* from Kashmir to Kanyakumari on foot. He was given the tag of 'Wandering Monk' for his constant travels for restoring India's spiritual heritage. He travelled to Rishikesh, Haridwar, Dehradun, Srinagar, Nainital among other places in the Himalayas.



Swami Vivekananda, the wandering monk

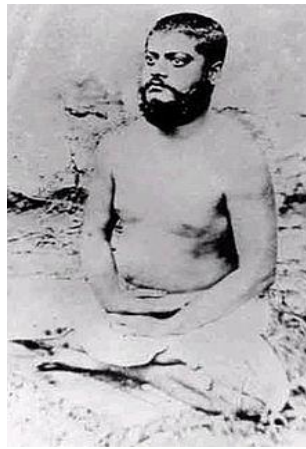


Swami Vivekananda at Kshir Bhavani, Kashmir

In 1891, Narendra traversed through the western landscape of the country. He visited Ahmedabad, Girnar, Kutch, Dwaraka, Indore, Pune and a list of other places, furthering his cause of restoring the lost heritage of this land.

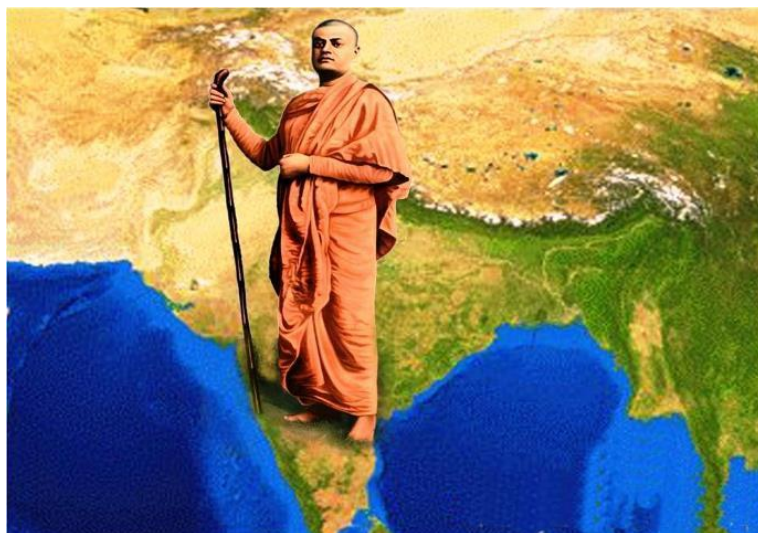
All through his travels, he spread awareness on the richness of Indian culture and spirituality among the masses who had lost their self-esteem during the colonial rule.

He gave a series of discourses at different places and conducted meditation and scriptural study for the people.



Swami Vivekananda in meditation pose

In 1892, Narendra visited South India, covering many places like Bangalore, Trissur, Ernakulam and Trivandrum.



Swami Vivekananda's journey towards South India

In Kanyakumari

He finally arrived in Kanyakumari on foot, where he meditated at the rock, which is now called the Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial. It is here that he penned his vision of One India, known as his 'Kanyakumari Resolve'.

“At Cape Camorin sitting in Mother Kumari’s temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock, I hit upon a plan. We are so many sanyasis wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Guru say, ‘An empty stomach is no good for religion?’ We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to raise the masses.”



Swami Vivekananda meditating at Kanyakumari



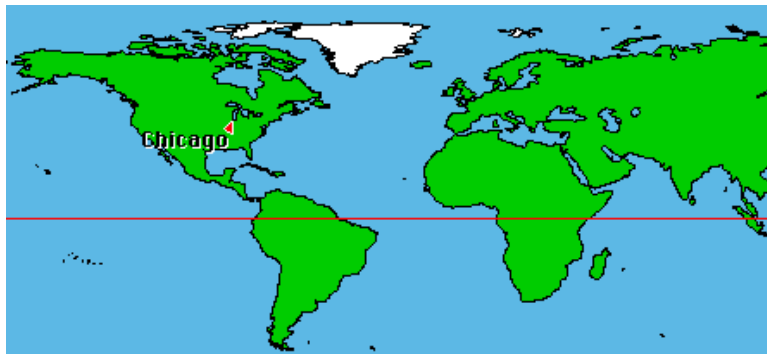
Vivekananda Rock memorial, Kanyakumari



Vivekananda Statue at the Memorial

1893 Chicago Visit

Narendra's visit to Chicago in 1893 and his speech there was an important landmark in raising the masses of his own country. His speech at Chicago conference on September 11th, in 1893 was only for 6 minutes consisting of 887 words, but what he stirred up with that has been echoing across continents for 120 years and will continue to echo for centuries to come.



Chicago in World Map



Swami Vivekananda on the dais at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago



Swami Vivekananda Speech on
September 11th, 1893

World Religions Conference
Chicago

Sisters and Brothers of America

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects. My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to the southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings:

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.

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world, of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.

Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

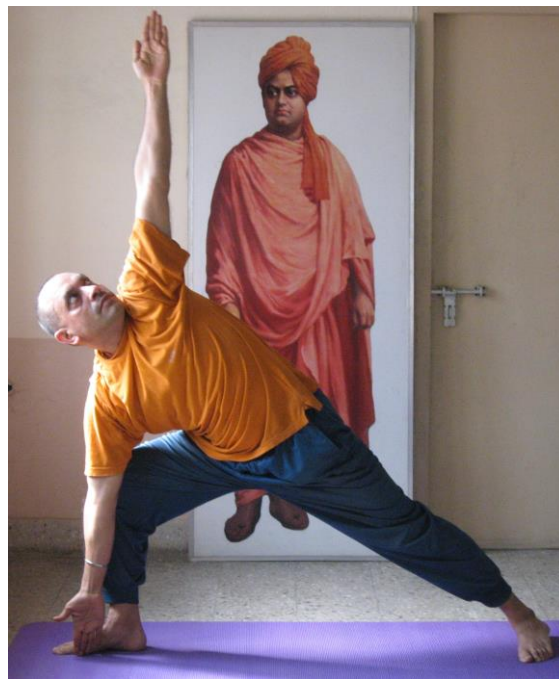
Swami Vivekananda's Speech, Chicago

Arousing interest on India

This short speech recreated an interest about India in the west, in the 20th century. It also helped Indians discover Swami Vivekananda and through him discover themselves, the strength of their tradition, culture and the respect for their own spirituality. The awakening of Indians among the American intelligentsia had resonance back in his homeland in India.

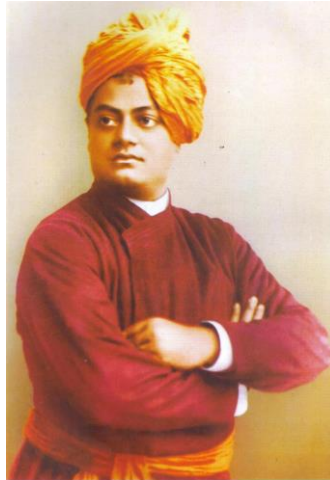
This strength later paved the way for the Indian independence movement which was fulfilled in 1947.

This speech also gave impetus to Indian yoga and spirituality. Today, yoga is a thriving industry in the west but its seeds were laid by Swami Vivekananda in the west.



Vivekananda, the harbinger of yoga in west

This momentous speech catapulted an unknown swami of the orient to become one of the most powerful thought providers.



Swami Vivekananda became a powerful thought leader

After this speech, Swami Vivekananda was invited to give a speech at different places abroad. He used these opportunities to create interfaith awareness about India's spiritual heritage.

Establishment of Ramakrishna Mission

Returning to India in 1897, Swami Vivekananda went about his task of establishing the Ramakrishna Mission, a volunteer based philanthropic organization, with full vigour. The Mission was inaugurated on May 1, 1897.



He established many Ramakrishna maths through the country. The seed that was sown by Vivekananda has now grown into a huge tree with innumerable branches of Ramakrishna Mission in every nook and corner of India and also the world, spreading the light of spiritual knowledge.

The magnanimity and devotion of Narendra can be seen from the fact that he refused to use his name for the Mission, but instead chose to spread his *Guru's* name. He followed this as a principle through his life.



Ramakrishna Mission, Chennai



Ramakrishna Mission, Pune



Ramakrishna Mission, Hyderabad



Ramakrishna Mission, Bangalore



Ramakrishna Mission, Agartala



Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi



Ramakrishna Mission, Lucknow



Ramakrishna Mission, Mumbai

Adi Shankara & Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda passed away on 4th July 1902 at Belur, Calcutta.

Like Adi Shankaracharya who lived for 32 years, Vivekananda in a short span of just 39 years revived the spiritual and cultural heritage of this land. It could be safely said that, it was through

Swami Vivekananda that, Indians were inspired to rediscover themselves, their culture and traditions.



Adi Shankaracharya



Swami Vivekananda



Swami Vivekananda, 3rd from left with his followers

National Youth Day

Swami Vivekananda inspired many youth through his life and continues to be an inspiration for the youth of this country, to this day. His birthday is rightly observed as 'National Youth Day' every year.



Email bharathgyan@gmail.com
Website www.bharathgyan.com
Blog <http://bharathgyanblog.wordpress.com>
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