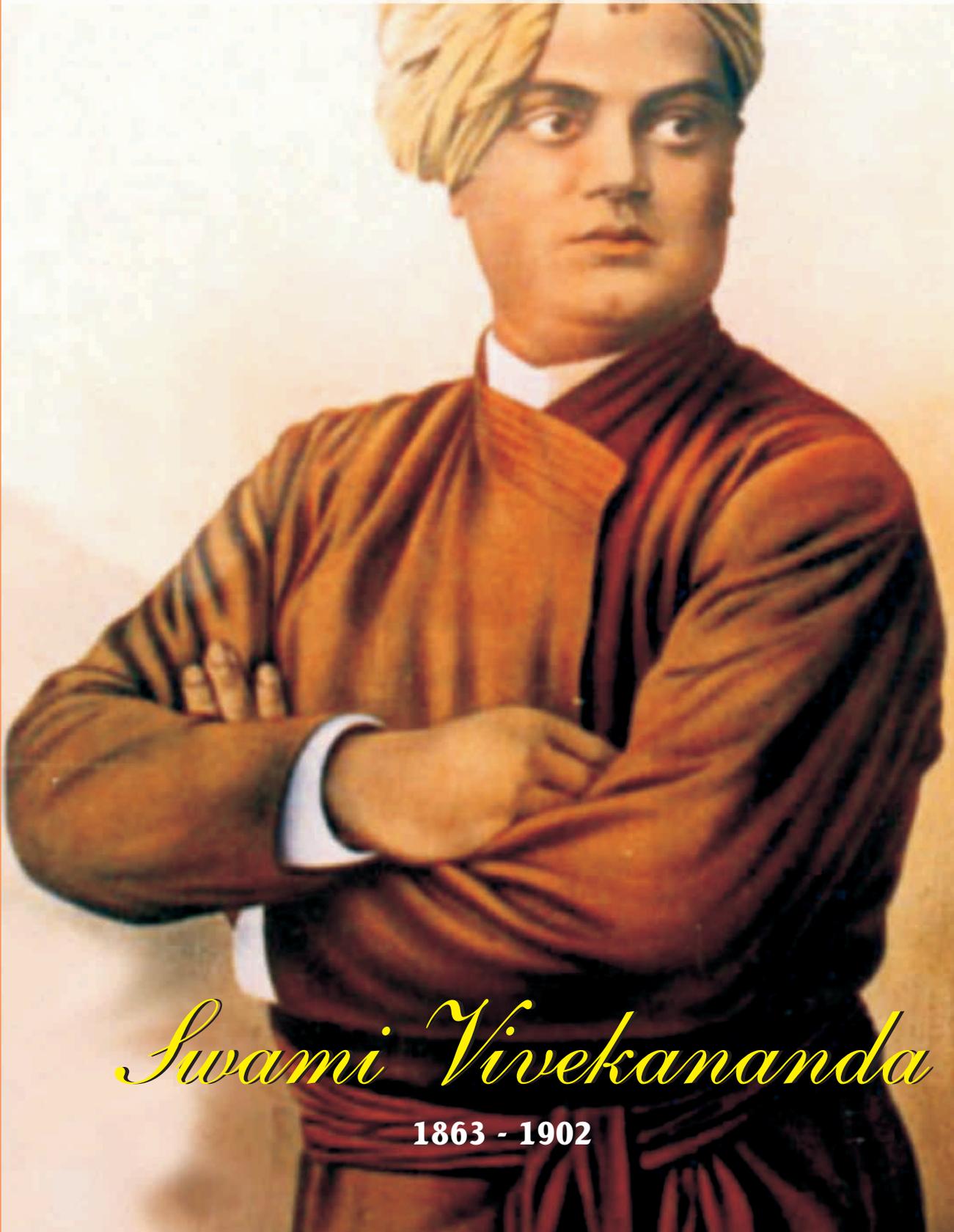


# LARGER THAN LIFE

A CELEBRATION OF GREATNESS



*Swami Vivekananda*

1863 - 1902

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## Introduction

Swami Vivekananda, whose pre-monastic name was Narendranath Dutta was one of the **most famous and influential spiritual leaders of the philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga**. He was the **disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa**. He was the **living embodiment of sacrifice and dedicated his life to the country and yearned for the progress of the poor, the helpless and the downtrodden**. He was the great thinker and mighty man of action whose ringing words galvanized the slumbering Indians.

## Birth And Early Life

Narendranath Dutta was **born in Shimla Pally, Kolkata, West Bengal, India on January 12, 1863 as the son of Viswanath Dutta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi**. He practiced meditation from a very early age. While at school, he was good at studies, as well as games of various kinds. Even when he was young he questioned the validity of superstitious customs and discrimination based on caste and religion.

In 1879, Narendra passed matriculation and entered Presidency College, Kolkata. After one year, he joined the Scottish Church College, Kolkata and studied philosophy. He studied western logic, western philosophy and history of European nations. **As he advanced in his studies, his thinking faculty developed. The doubts regarding existence of God started to arise in his mind**. This made him associate with the Brahmo Samaj, an important religious movement of the time.

## Meeting With Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

During this time Narendra came to know of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of Dakshineswar. He went to Dakshineswar with his friends to see him. He was **satisfied by the answers given by Sri Ramakrishna and accepted Sri Ramakrishna as his guru. He took training under him for five years** in the Advaita Vedanta, the philosophy of non-dualism. **Sri Ramakrishna passed away in 1886 and nominated Narendra as his successor**. After his death Narendra and a core group of Ramakrishna's disciples took vows to become monks and renounce everything, and started living in a supposedly haunted house in Baranagore.

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## Narendra Became Swami Vivekananda

In 1890, Narendra set out on a long journey in India. He **acquired the name of Swami Vivekananda during the journey.** It is said that he was given the name **Vivekananda by Maharaja of Khetri** for his discrimination of things, good and bad. During his journey, **he observed the imbalance in society and tyranny in the name of caste. He realised the need for a national rejuvenation if India was to survive at all.** Swami Vivekananda reached Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent in 1892. He swam across the sea and started meditating on a lone rock. He meditated for three days and said later that he meditated about the past, present and future of India. The rock is presently popular as '**Vivekananda Memorial**'.

## In The West

In 1893, Swami Vivekananda **went to America** to attend the Conference of World Religions in Chicago. He earned wild applause for beginning his address with the famous words, "**Sisters and brothers of America.**" He mesmerized everyone in America with his masterful oratory. **Wherever he went, he dwelt at length on the greatness of Indian Culture.** He spoke with spontaneous ease on every topic, be it History, Sociology, Philosophy or Literature. Swami Vivekananda also went to England. **Many people became his disciples.**

## Later Years

Swami Vivekananda **returned to India in 1897.** He started disseminating the message of spiritual development among Indians. He realized that social service was possible only through the concerted efforts on an organized mission. To achieve this objective, he started '**Sri Ramakrishna Mission**' in 1897 and formulated its ideology and goal. During the next two years he bought a site at Belur on the banks of the Ganga, constructed the buildings and **established the 'Ramakrishna Math**'. On 4th July, 1902, **Vivekananda passed away in Mahasamadhi after a session of prayer at Belur Math.**

# Quotes

**“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.”**



**“We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.”**



**“The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves!”**