

Ten Quotes by Swami Vivekananda

A spiritual genius of commanding intellect and power, Swami Vivekananda crammed immense labor and achievement into his short life (1863–1902). Born Narendranath Datta, Vivekananda in his youth was fascinated by the agnostic Western schools philosophy. At the same time, vehement in his desire to know the truth about God, he questioned people of holy reputation, asking them if they had seen God. He found such a person in Sri Ramakrishna, who became his master, allayed his doubts, guided him on the spiritual path, and transformed him into sage and prophet with authority to teach.

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing in 1886, Vivekananda renounced the world and crisscrossed India as a wandering monk. His mounting compassion for India's people drove him to seek material help from the West. Accepting an opportunity to represent Hinduism at Chicago's Parliament of Religions in 1893, Vivekananda won instant celebrity in America and a ready forum for his spiritual teaching.

For three years he spread the Vedanta philosophy and religion in America and England and then returned to India to found the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. He passed away on July 4, 1902, after a brief second visit to the West. His lectures and writings have been gathered into nine volumes of his Complete Works. Most of the Vedanta Societies which were founded in America and Europe up through the 1930s can trace their origins directly to Swami Vivekananda or the people who heard him speak from 1893 through 1900.

One of the greatest spiritual leaders of India, Swami Vivekananda is credited with bringing the glory of the Hindu philosophy to the global platform.

Born on January 12, 1863, as Narendra Nath Datta in Kolkata into an aristocratic Bengali Kayastha family, he became a disciple of the famed saint of Dakshineswar, Swami Ramkrishna Paramhansa. He renounced worldly pleasures and became a sanyasi, not to roam aimlessly, but for the service of humanity. Swami Vivekananda was a key figure for introducing the Indian Vedanta and philosophies of Yoga to the world which put India on the world's spiritual map. It was his famous speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893 that forever changed the way the world looked at India.

Founder of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda not only revived our ancient heritage, but also, enlightened and awakened people's religious consciousness and worked for uplifting the downtrodden. He is also credited for raising inter-faith awareness, reviving Hinduism and contributing to the idea of nationalism in India in the 19th century.

Ten Timeless Quotes by Vivekananda which are pertinent even today.

1. On being true to oneself - "The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves."
2. On life and death -
"Strength is Life, Weakness is Death.
Expansion is Life, Contraction is Death.
Love is Life, Hatred is Death."
3. On self reflection - "Talk to yourself once in a day, otherwise you may miss meeting an intelligent person in this world."
4. On choosing your words carefully - "Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true."
5. On true happiness - "The great secret of true success, of true happiness, is this: the man or woman who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish person, is the most successful."
6. On hurdles and progress - "In a day, when you don't come across any problems - you can be sure that you are travelling in a wrong path"
7. On following the heart - "In a conflict between the heart and the brain, follow your heart. "
8. On passionately chasing your dream - "Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life; dream of it; think of it; live on that idea. Let the brain, the body, 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, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced."
9. On the path to success - "Be the servant while leading. Be unselfish. Have infinite patience, and success is yours."
10. On spiritual growth - "You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual.