

# Swami Vivekananda

**Swami Vivekananda** was born on **12th January 1863** in Kolkata to **Bhuvaneshwari and Vishwanath Datta**. Bhuvaneshwari had many daughters and longed for a son. And it is said that a son was born after long worship of Lord Shiva. Bhuvaneshwari believed that her son was gift from Vireshwar Shiva and so named him **Bireshwar**. As the name was too long, everyone began calling **Biley**.

As a child, Vivekananda was **strong-willed but restless**. Vivekananda was always fascinated by the sanyasis (monks) in their saffron dress. He would give anything to them which was handy. He would love to play with his friends "king and court" where he would always become king. Sometimes they would play the game of meditation. Whenever he used to do this, he used to forget everything and would only think of God.

Vivekananda was a sharp boy and before he was six, he knew all the stories of **Ramayana and Mahabharata** by heart. Vivekananda used to remember everything that he heard once. This was because he used to give complete concentration to it. Vivekananda always told the truth and always wanted to test the truth of what he was told. In times of danger, Vivekananda always kept a cool head and did his duty.

Swami Vivekananda became one of India's leading **social reformers** of the modern era and was a **champion of humanitarianism** and service to God through service to others. He is revered both in the East and West as a rejuvenator of mankind through the eternal truths of Hinduism. He spoke widely on Hinduism and its true meaning as written in the vedas and founded the Ramkrishna Mission, one of India's leading charitable institutions.

In America Vivekananda's mission was the **interpretation of India's spiritual culture**, especially in its Vedantic setting. He also tried to enrich the religious consciousness of the Americans through the rational and humanistic teachings of the Vedanta philosophy. In America he became India's **spiritual ambassador** and pleaded eloquently for better understanding between India and the New World in order to create a healthy synthesis of East and West, of religion and science.

In the course of a **short life of thirty-nine years (1863-1902)**, of which only ten were devoted to public activities-and those, too, in the midst of acute physical suffering-he left for posterity his four classics: **Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, and Raja-Yoga**, all of which are outstanding treatises on Hindu philosophy. In addition, he delivered innumerable lectures, wrote inspired letters in his own hand to his many friends and disciples, composed numerous poems, and acted as spiritual guide to the many seekers, who came to him for instruction. He also organized the Ramakrishna Order of monks, which is the most outstanding religious organization of modern India. It is devoted to the propagation of the Hindu spiritual culture not only in the Swami's native land, but also in America and in other parts of the world.

