

Teachings of Swami Vivekananda

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Swami Vivekananda, absolutely the gem among Indian scholars, was born in an affluent family in Kolkata on 12 January 1863. In his pre-monastic life as Narendranath Datta, a precocious boy, excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was a successful lawyer with interests in a wide range of subjects, and his mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was endowed with deep devotion, and strong character. Narendranath Datta graduated from Calcutta University, with a vast knowledge of Western philosophy and history.

Before entering the monastic life Swami Vivekananda explored India. During his travels all over India, he was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty and backwardness of the masses. He was the first religious leader in India to understand and openly declare that the real cause of India's downfall was the neglect of the masses. Without providing adequate food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions, neither India can become a power in international arena nor its spiritual superiority can be restored. Unfortunately, the contemporary social reformers could not visualize the poverty as the mother of all socio-economic problems. For this they should be taught improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. It was in this context that Vivekananda grasped the crux of the problem of poverty in India. Owing to centuries of op-