

# Swami Vivekananda

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## Manifest pedagogy

Vivekananda as a personality is not just important as part of history his ideas and thoughts vary from religion to ethics. Keeping in mind the recent pattern of questions where there has been dominant emphasis on Indian culture specifically religion as a topic. This issue has been selected for the article. His ideas on Ethics is a tangential dimension and is not easily available as part of your readings. Something which is not easily available can be expected as a question.

## **In news**

*125 years of swami Vivekananda's speech at world parliament of religions*

## **Placing it in syllabus**

1. Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues
2. The Freedom Struggle – its various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.

## **Dimensions**

1. His religious philosophy influence of Sri Ramakrishna.
2. His social reform measures.
3. Universalism.
4. Contribution to rise of nationalism.
5. His speech at world parliament of religions in Chicago.

# Content

## Ramakrishna

Ramakrishna Paramahansa is a priest at the **Kali Temple in Dakshineswar** in whose teachings the troubled Bengali mind found a solace from the overarching influence of western materialism. His philosophy of religion is based on

1. **Sakta Tantra.**
2. **Vaishnava Bhakti.**
3. **Advaita Vedanta.**
4. Complete rejection of **western value system.**
5. Solutions to life problems presented in **terms of simple Bhakti** and the traditional Hindu way of life.
6. According to him as **all religions emanated from God** and had God as the common subject, differences between them were only apparent and superficial. **Universalism** a belief in the unity of godhead and an emphasis on religions being essentially the same.
7. For Ramakrishna, **God-realization** was the end of human life and knowing the Creator alone amounted to knowing His creation.
8. His path is one of **Bhakti Marga.**
9. He also instilled in his disciples the conception of **Daridra-Narayana** from which emerged the conception of service to man is service to god.

## Swami Vivekananda

1. He is initially a western educated **Brahmo Samajist** in his young age. But the Brahmo movement failed to provide solutions to his spiritual quests.
2. He became the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna whose Bhakti appealed to him more than the high intellectualism of Brahmos.
3. He is a proponent of **Practical Vedanta** which he considered as a religion most suited to the needs of

modern man. He believed in the **essential unity** of man and **god (Advaita)**.

4. He believed that it was only in **selflessness** and in consciously trying to serve the larger humanity that one truly gained a perspective on religion and God. This thought laid emphasis on the **Karma Marga of Bhagavad-Gita**.
5. He reoriented the traditional Advaita of **world renunciation** to a new **world affirmation ideal**. He searched for **salvation in selflessness**.
6. Many rivers flow by many ways but they fall into the same sea. This is the basis of **Swamiji's religious universalism and eclecticism**.

### **Social reformer**

1. In the first place he did not think man's thought **could truly turn to God unless his basic social needs had been reasonably met**. He also considered it a sin to teach spirituality to a starving man.
2. God is everywhere but he is most **manifest in man**. So serve man as God. That is as good as worshipping God. He joined together the ideals of **one's own salvation and welfare of the world**.
3. There is infinite moral and spiritual potential in man. To develop that potential is man's foremost duty in life. He declared education to be the manifestation of divinity inherent to man.
4. The members of the Math, while striving to advance their own spiritual lives, also nursed **cholera-stricken patients** and labored to provide some relief to **victims of floods and famines**.
5. Arch critic of: **Idolatry Polytheism Religious superstitions, Exploitation by priests** in the religious sphere.
6. He envisaged an **equal role to women in society and promoted women emancipation** and empowerment.

7. He wanted a new man to emerge from the confluence of the **spiritualism of the east and materialism of west.**

### **Contribution to nationalism**

1. Swami Vivekananda contributed enormously to the strengthening of **Hindu self-pride and cultural nationalism.**
2. Vedanta was all about man-making. **Manliness and activism** are the gospels of swamiji for the resurgence of India.
3. Young men and women, in his vision, were to be the building blocks of a resurgent, **Vedantic India.**
4. He gave the call of **self-sufficiency and self-help** which he considered necessary for national regeneration.
5. He inspired a whole **generation of patriots and revolutionaries.** He is considered a patron prophet by the revolutionaries of Bengal.
6. He declared the spiritual superiority of the east at **world parliament of religions** regaining the spiritual essences and self-confidence of Indians.
7. He declared that India needs **muscles of iron and nerves of steel** to retain its lost glory and pride.
8. Subhash Chandra Bose once commented that without swami Vivekananda there is no scope for the emergence of nationalism in Bengal as he is the one who **shook the indolent Hindu in to action and self-sacrifice.**

### **Test yourself: Mould your thoughts**

Swami Vivekananda's approach to the problems of India are a unique admixture of spiritualism, Social reform and national regeneration. Comment.