

## INDIAN RENAISSANCE

Resurgence or Renaissance of modern Asia is one of the most significant phenomena of world history during the last two hundred years. Since the middle of the 19th century the mind and soul of Asia have definitely awakened. The intellectual renaissance of India has been a great casual factor in the rise of modern Indian nationalism. The awakening of the Indian spirit manifested its relativism first in the realms of philosophy, religion and culture and political self consciousness came as an inevitable consequence. The European Renaissance was mainly intellectual and aesthetic. But the renaissance in India was characterized primarily by moral and spiritual aspirations. Revivalism was far more dominant in the Indian Renaissance. Some of the leaders of the Indian Renaissance movement advocated a deliberate modeling and moulding of the present life on the basis of the past scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and Gita.

One of the greatest forces in the making of renaissance in India is the Brahma Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Brahma Samaj has done considerable cultural, humanitarian and social work in north India during the mid 19th century. The Brahma Samaj is based on a synthesis of stern monotheism, intellectual rationalism, the monism of the Upanishad and the religious principles of Christianity. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the earliest scholars of comparative religions. In his writings and deeds, Roy launched a vigorous attack on the archaic social principles and mores dividing Indian along caste and religious

cleavages. For him, the priority was to create a society free from decadent feudal values that stood in the way of attaining the goal of liberty, equality and fraternity. Arya Samaj, founded by Dayananda Saraswathi, has been another powerful religious and social movement successfully fought for Indian renaissance.

Arya Samaj has done a great service to Indian nationalism especially in Punjab. It created a new progressive and militant spirit among the Hindus. Another movement which has championed Hinduism in all its comprehensiveness was started by Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of Ramakrishna. Vivekananda was a great intellectual and orator and had a remarkable insight both in the Vedanta scriptures and European philosophy. His historic role at the Chicago parliament in 1893 prepared the ground for the propagation of Hinduism in America and Europe. The renaissance in Northern India and southern India was mainly spiritual and religious in character.

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