



**"Knowledge leads to unity. Ignorance, to disunity" –
Ramakrishna Paramahansa**

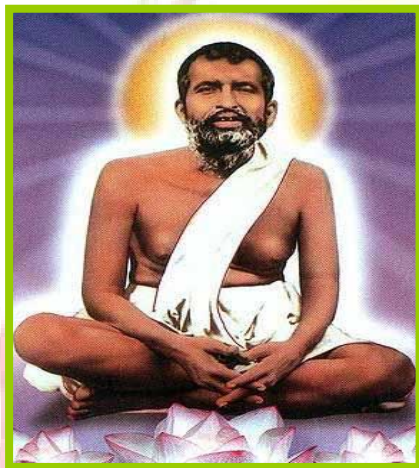
Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was born on the 2nd day of **Phalgun Shukla Paksh** in the year 1836. Everyday his birthday is celebrated with great ecstasy in India at all the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission. This incomparable spiritual saint was in a poor Brahmin **Vaishnava** family in the village of Kamarpukur, in the Hooghly District of West Bengal. His father was Khudiram Chattopadhyaya and mother was Chandramani Devi. His life history says, Ramakrishna's parents experienced supernatural incidents, visions before his birth. His father Khudiram dreamed of Lord **Gadadhara** (a form of god **Vishnu**) saying, he would be born as his son. Chandramani Devi also felt of light entering her womb from Shiva's temple before Ramakrishna's birth. From his childhood, he was well-versed in the **Puranas**, the **Ramayana**, the **Mahabharata**, and the **Bhagavata Purana**. He used to spend lot of his time in household activities and daily worship of the household deities and became more involved in meditative activities such as reading the sacred epics. He was proficient in Bengali. He was a great worshipper of **Dakshineswar Kali**. After his elder brother's death in 1856 who was the head priest of **Dakshineswar** Temple at Calcutta (Present Kolkata), Ramakrishna took the charge of being the priest of that temple. The name Ramakrishna was given to him there by Mathur Babu, son-in law of Queen Rashmoni who built **Dakshineswar** Temple.



He got married at the age of 23 to Saradamani Mukhopadhyaya (Sarada Devi) while she was of 5 years. Later, Ramakrishna became a very influential man in Sarada Devi's life and she became a strong follower of his ideal teachings. We can say their marriage was the most spiritual and perfect unions between a man and a woman.

RAMAKRISHNA'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Ramakrishna's religious views were completely based on traditional Hindu thought and practice. Ramakrishna focused on living a traditional life, with Hindu gods at the center. It was very much a philosophy of **godly worship and dependence**. To him, God was the determinant factor for caste, wealth, family, and personal achievement. He did not have any kind of religious bias for other religions. He believed that every religion was welcome, and that



worshipping a god in any way was better than not worshipping one at all. He was also in belief that tolerance is the root factor for every success. For this saintly nature he was famous among many other religious people. These religious views on tolerance were also passed on through the Ramakrishna Mission and his followers. He was also believed in

Vaishnav Bhakti which talks of five different moods to worship God. Ramakrishna practiced **Dasya Bhava**; attitude of a servant. **Yogic** technique and the **tantra** played an important part at the initial phase of his spiritual development. In 1864, Ramakrishna practiced **vatsalya bhava**, the attitude of a mother toward her child under a **Vaishnava** guru Jatadhari. During this period, he worshipped a metal image of **Ramlala (Rama** as a child) in the attitude of a mother. According to him, towards the end of this **sadhana** (meditation), he attained **savikalpa samadhi**—vision and union with Krishna.

He also spent some of his days at Tota Puri and became trained in **Advaita Vedanta**, the Hindu philosophy emphasizing non-

Published on State Portal of Orissa (<http://orissa.gov.in>)

Content contributed by Luminous Infoways Pvt. Ltd., CSP to State and National Portal

dualism. As a cosmopolitan saint he also believed in Islamism and Christianity and also felt Allah and Jesus Christ emerging in his body.

TEACHINGS

Maximum of Ramakrishna's teachings were in Bengali based on number of stories and parables. His teachings were mainly based on spiritualism. His belief of Hindu tradition as ***nirvikalpa samadhi*** (literally, "constant meditation", thought to be absorption in the all-encompassing Consciousness), led him to believe that the gods of the various religions are merely so many interpretations of the Absolute, and that the Ultimate Reality could never be expressed in human terms.



His realization of ***nirvikalpa samadhi*** also led him to an understanding of the two sides of ***maya*** (illusion), to which he referred as ***avidyamaya*** and ***vidyamaya***. The four key concepts in Ramakrishna's teachings were the following:

- **the oneness of existence**
- **the divinity of human beings**
- **the unity of God**
- **the harmony of religions**



During his last days, he was survived by his monastic disciples and Sarada Devi. He left this World in 1886, August 16th. According to his disciples, this was '***mahasamadhi***'. After the death of their master, the monastic disciples lead by

Vivekananda the first Math. Even after his death Ramakrishna Mission founded by his great disciples still preaching the essence of his thought of spiritualism all over the world.