

# ONENESS: VOICE WITHOUT FORM

## GLOSSARY OF CHARACTERS AND TERMS

### 1898 plague in Kolkata:

From April to July of 1898, hundreds had died due to the plague, and the people of Kolkata were in panic: it was rumoured that a British Viceroy had made a pact with a yogi in the Himalayas to sacrifice 200,000 lives to the goddess Kali in order to save the British government. The public feared the plague was a manifestation of this pact and distrusted the plague officers.



**Alwar, Rajputana:** In Rajasthan, Northwest India.

### Amarnath:

A cave in the glacial valley of the western Himalayas where there is a naturally formed ice statue worshipped as the symbol of Siva. Devotees come from all over the world to offer prayers to Siva, the Lord of Immortality.

### Are you prepared to take up the begging bowl?:

A vow of renunciation and asceticism of a wandering monk. It is an honour for villagers to serve these Sannyasins, some of whom are highly educated before they renounce the world.

### Arise Vivekananda:

The name "Vivekananda" was actually given to Naren by the Raja of Khetri.

### Babu:

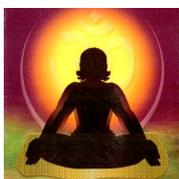
A Hindi title of respect to an older man, though in England it became a derogatory term.

### Balaram Bose:

A wealthy "house holder" disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

### Ball of light:

A spiritual experience of transcending the sense of the self. A sage-like, mystical experience accompanied by a feeling of indescribable peace.



### Be what thou prayest to be made:

Hymn by Scottish clergyman and poet, Horatio Bonar:

Be what thou seemest; live thy creed;  
Hold up to earth the torch divine;  
Be what thou prayest to be made;  
Let the great Master's step be thine.

### Belur Math:

The headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in Kolkata. An ashram of the monastic order, a place for contemplation and meditation.



### Bhuvanewari:

Naren's mother, often described as queenly and royal, she was very cultured and had a great memory. She was Naren's primary educator and influence.

### Brahmo Samaj:

A reform movement which challenged the caste system and was inspired by Christianity. Many young men of the day attended the services due to the charismatic leader, Keshab Chandra Sen.

**Brahman:** The Ultimate. The supreme reality.

**Breezy Meadows:** Kate Sanborn's farmhouse in Boston.

### Buddha under the Bo tree:

Buddha sat under a Bo tree until he attained enlightenment.

### Cape Comorin/ Kanyakumari:

At the southern tip of India. Site of an ancient Goddess Temple.

### Columbian World Exposition:

The World Exposition was held in Chicago in 1893 to celebrate 400 years since the arrival of Columbus in America. The next Parliament of Religions was in 1993, and is subsequently held every 4 years. Swami Vivekananda also spoke in the science section of the fair, which featured the first display of the electric light bulb!



### Congress of the History of Religions:

Held in the Paris Exposition in 1899, it was a gathering of historians, theologians, philologists, sociologists and folklorists.

### Cossipore:

A garden house near the Ganges where Ramakrishna passed away.

### Dakshineswar:

The site of Kali's temple, a significant landmark in Kolkata, where Sri Ramakrishna lived and worked as a priest. This is where many young monks-to-be met Sri Ramakrishna and planted the seed which would blossom into the Ramakrishna Order.



### Dancing Girl:

Traditionally dancers were supported by Kings and temples. However, under British rule they were often suspected of leading immoral lives.

### Darsanas:

The six systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy.

### Devendranath Tagore:

The father of Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his book of poems *The Gitanjali*. The Tagore's were a very wealthy and grand family of Kolkata. Devendranath was a great social reformer, a philosopher and mystic whom Naren asked, "Have you seen God?"



### Distractions observed in students of his age:

Some young men indulged in tobacco, opium, hemp, and women.

**Dualism:** To think you and God are separate entities.

**Ekadashi:** 11th day of the moon, orthodox Hindu elders fast on this day.

### Elizabeth Dutcher:

A devout Christian Presbyterian artist, she was very inspired by Swamiji, but was sometimes so intimidated by his teachings that she'd leave the room and spend some hours alone in order to digest them. A wealthy woman, she added an external room and private stairway to her property so that Swamiji could come and go in privacy.

### Emma Calve:

A famous French opera singer who had a rather sad disposition and a divine voice. She and Swami became close friends.

### I shall prepare the most delicious dish for you with the flesh of my heart:

A line from a Persian poem (quoted by Sadananda)- to which Swamiji replied, "My beloved must come to me with ashes on his moonface."

## GLOSSARY OF CHARACTERS AND TERMS

### Indian Civil Service:

Kolkata was the capital of India and the "2nd most important city in the British empire," at that time. The English went to Kolkata to make their wealth. It was a city of contrast- luxury and poverty together. The Indian Civil Service was created by the British to make educated Indians into "little brown Englishmen."



### Jain:

Closely linked to Buddhism, Jains are very austere individuals; so as not to kill insects, they sweep before they walk and cover their mouths.

**Jamuna:** A holy river in India.

### Jesus washed the feet of his disciples:

Just before he knew he would be betrayed by Judas, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples so that they would go on to wash each other's feet-- knowing that there is no difference between master and disciples.

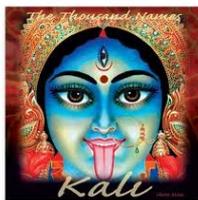
### John D. Rockefeller:

A legendary industrialist who was, for a time, the world's richest man. Though he had heard much of the Swami, Rockefeller had no intention of meeting him. However, when he heard that Swami was staying with a friend of his, he barged into their house and the encounter inspired JD Rockefeller to become a philanthropist.



### Kali:

Kali is a form of God particularly dear to the Bengali people. She is described variously as terrible, motherly, and shy. She is depicted with a protruding tongue like a shy village maiden. But she is also the destroyer of evil demons and ego. Kali's name comes from the word "Kala" which means black, time, and death. She is the consort of Siva, associated with empowerment, or Shakti.



### Kali! Kali! Kali:

It is said to be very auspicious to hear the name of God while passing away. Ramakrishna returned to Kali.

### Kamalakanta:

A mystic poet known for his devotional poems to the goddess.

### Kate Sanborn:

A well-known writer and speaker, Kate Sanborn was very wry and intelligent, and loved conversing with other intellectuals.



### Kshir Bhavani:

Kali's temple in Kashmir, destroyed by Muslim invaders, rebuilt in 1969.

### Leela:

Literally means play. Since life is a divine play, we must be detached and not get too caught up in our role.

### Madras:

The old name for the current city of Chennai in India

### Maharaja Mangal Singh:

The Maharaja of Rajputana, Rajasthan. There was one Maharaja per province in India, and each was served by a Prime Minister. Even a Maharaja would bow down and show respect to a monk.

### Mahasamadhi:

Passing into a higher level of consciousness. To die with awareness and intention, passing beyond the need for rebirth.

### Makara Sankranti:

An auspicious Hindu harvest festival to mark the first day of spring in India, often celebrated by kite flying. The day Naren was born.

### Margaret E. Noble aka

### Sister Nivedita:

A social-service minded Irish educationist who first heard Swami Vivekananda speak in London. She went on to follow him to India where she opened a school. This ultimately led to the establishment of Sri Sarada Math.



### Mrs. Hale:

The matriarch of a well-to-do Chicago family. Swami Vivekananda stayed in touch with the family for many years to come.

### Mrs. Johnson:

A lady superintendent of a women's prison in Boston, her husband was a pastor.

### Mrs. Ole Bull:

Wife of the famous Norwegian violinist, Sara Bull was a close friend of Sister Nivedita and one of the greatest supporters of Swami Vivekananda.

### Nahabat:

Tiny 2 storey building opposite Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar Temple where Sarada Devi stayed. Usually serves as a music tower for performers.

### Nara, incarnation of Narayana:

A Vedic supreme God related to Vishnu. He is described as having a universal form which is beyond the limits of human perception or imagination.

### Nirvikalpa Samadhi:

The highest level of the deepest meditative state where a person can lose all sense of ego and self.



### Non dualism:

Oneness. Idea that everything - animate and inanimate in the world - is the conscious, supreme Reality, God or Brahman.



### Prakriti: Nature

### Pranam:

Bow the head at the feet of a holy person, prostration to show respect

### Professor Hastie:

Principal of the prestigious Presidency College in Kolkata which Naren attended.

### Professor Wright:

The professor of Greek Classics at Harvard University. He recommended Swamiji to the Parliament of Religions as a Hindu delegate.

**Purda:** Literally means curtain. System used to protect women from public gaze.

**Purusha:** Soul, Self

### Raja Ajit Singh of Khetri:

A Maharaja who funded Swami Vivekananda's trip to America.

### Ramakrishna:

Swami Vivekananda's guru. Ramakrishna worshipped Kali, calling her Mother. He explored the spirituality of all major world religions and realized they all led to the same goal - God. Ramakrishna is the spiritual husband of Holy Mother Sarada Devi. He recognized the great potential in Naren who became his foremost disciple.



### Ramakrishna Mission:

The service oriented organisation of the Ramakrishna Order, dedicated to serving humanity through medical, educational and relief activities.

# GLOSSARY OF CHARACTERS AND TERMS

**Relics:** Ashes.

**Roller Skates (Did you bring your roller skates?):**

The Swami enjoyed practising to roller skate while on a summer break at Ridgely Manor, the upstate New York country home of an admirer.

**Same-sightedness:**

The underlying oneness permeating all existence. On a deeper level, we are all linked, and it is not until we start creating distinction do we perceive separation and duality through the senses.

**Sarada Devi:**

Also known as the Holy Mother, Sarada Devi is Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual wife, betrothed to him when she was 5 years old. She lived in a neighbouring village and joined him at Dakshineswar in her late teens. Very austere and sequestered; Sarada Devi was a shy village woman, but with a razor-sharp intellect that could provide a clear and simple solution to any problem. Born into the Brahmin caste, she was conservative yet progressive. Once Ramakrishna passed, she emerged as a motherly, guiding spiritual being in her own right.



**Sharat Chandra Gupta:**

Swami Vivekananda's first disciple whom he named Sadananda.

**Sing Ye His Glory:**

A Christian hymn sang by Naren while attending Presidency College, an elite English college in Kolkata.

**Sister Christine:**

A Protestant Christian educationalist of German heritage who lived in Detroit, where she first heard Swami's lectures. Sister Christine began to write him letters, and eventually took charge of Sister Nivedita's school in Kolkata. A friend of Mary Funke, they travelled hundreds of miles to see Swami Vivekananda in Thousand Island Park.

**Smoke away all caste distinctions:**

It is forbidden for a Brahmin to touch things belonging to a member of lower caste, as caste systems were very regimented. Brahmins are scholars, Kshatriyas are warriors and rulers, Vaishyas are traders, and Shudras are labourers. But Naren's time was that of challenge and social reform.

**Sot:** Drunkard.

**Srinagar:**

The capital of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, about 141km away from the Amarnath cave.

**Surendranath Mitra:**

A wealthy follower of Ramakrishna, very dear to the monks. He bore the entire expenditure of the Cossipore house for them.



**Tantras:**

A system of religious philosophy in which the Divine Mother is the Ultimate Reality.

**Song Translations:**

**Aham brahmasmi sarvam khalvidam brahma:** "I am Brahman, all of this is Brahman (God/ Creator)"

**Ajnana-timir andhasya, jnan anjana-salakaya chakshur unmilitam yena, tasmai Sri Gurave namah:** "I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him."

**Aleluia asana Om Shanti Om Lailaha illa Allah Shmah Yisrael Adonai elohainu Adonai ehad:**

Hallelujah (Christianity), seat of divine peace (Hinduism), There is no God but God (Islam). Here, O-Israel, The Lord Our God, The Lord is One (Judaism).

**Asato ma sadgamaya, Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, Mrtyorma amrtam gamaya:**

"Lead me from darkness to light., Lead me from the unreal to the real, Lead me from death to Immortality."

**Dagenati nakedina:** Lyrics imitating the rhythm and bole of the tabla.

**Jaya Vireswara, Viveka Bhaskara, Jaya jaya, Sri Vivekananda, Indu Nibhanana:**

"Victory to Siva, the God of the brave, the cosmic sun of Viveka - discrimination between the real and the unreal, victory, victory, to Sri Vivekananda."

**Om Namah Sivaya:** Adoration to Shiva.

**Ramakrishner beditale mora miliyachhi ek pran:** "We have all gathered together at Ramakrishna's feet!"

**Shyama ma ki amar kalo:** "Is Kali, my Mother, really black? The Naked One, though black She seems, Lights the Lotus of the heart. Men call Her black, but yet my mind, Will not believe that She is so: Now She is white, now red, now blue; Now She appears as yellow, too. I hardly know who Mother is, Though I have pondered all my life: Now Purusha, now Prakriti, And now the Void, She seems to be. To meditate on all these things, Confounds poor Kamalakanta's wits."

**Tujhse hamne dilko lagaya:** "I have bonded with you."

**The world forgetting by the world forgot:**

From a poem by Alexander Pope entitled *Eloisa to Abelard*:  
How happy is the blameless vestal's lot! / The world forgetting  
by the world forgot. / Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind! /  
Each pray'r accepted, and each wish resign'd.

**This realization is like a jewel:**

Ramakrishna wanted Naren to spread the message of Vedanta, and not give up the body in Samadhi. He told Naren he can always return to the "jewel" when he has completed his work and fulfilled his mission. Ramakrishna transfers his powers to Naren in order that he may do great things

**Thousand Island Park:**

Just south of Canada, Thousand Island Park was a beautiful island known to be inhabited by religious and devout people-- no alcohol was allowed there. The lectures of Swami's retreat there were recorded in a book titled "Inspired Talks".

**Throw their babies to the crocodiles:**

A lie spread by Christian Evangelists in the United States to collect more money to fund their Christian Missions in India.

**Turiyananda:**

A brother monk of Swami Vivekananda and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Turiyananda helped to establish Vedanta on the West Coast of the United States, and led a retreat at Shanti Ashrama near San Francisco.

**Unmentionable crimes:**

Such as drinking and womanizing... Unfounded rumours that Naren had come undone since his father's death. His relatives had drained the family finances and he became disillusioned with life and religion.

**Vedas:**

Sacred Indian texts that pre-date Hinduism. The Vedas are comprised of the Upanishads-- the philosophical texts. They also contain poetry, hymns, rituals, and stories. The Vedas depict a worship of the fundamental Supreme Reality underlying nature and man.



**Vireswara Siva:**

Means the "Universal Siva." Benevolent and fearsome, all that others discard, Siva collects. He likes to be in the cremation grounds, friends with the ghosts, snakes, and outcasts-- he accepts what society rejects.

**Viswanath:**

Naren's father was a wealthy lawyer who was notorious for giving things away. He always invited his son to keep company with older men, introducing him to a world of debates and philosophical discussions. Vishwanath was an agnostic, his own father was a Sannyasin.

**Worshipping Images:**

By worshipping a personal God we imbibe his/ her positive, powerful qualities and as a path to merging with the Divine.

**Yogananda:**

A brother monk of Swami Vivekananda and fellow disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

