

Glossary

This glossary contains many Sanskrit words, people, places, and literature that Sathya Sai Baba uses in His *Vahinis*, especially those appearing in this volume. The glossary attempts to provide comprehensive meanings and detailed explanations of the more important Sanskrit words, for the benefit of lay readers who are interested in Hindu religion and philosophy.

In an electronic version of this volume (e.g. an e-book for the ipad, kindle, nook, or other tablet), you can click on most names, places, people, and Sanskrit words within the text in order to immediately access the word in this glossary. Your device will also have an arrow or other link to press to get back to where you were reading.

adi-murthi. Primordial force.

aham. The knower, the “I”.

Aham Brahmasmi. “I am Brahman.” One of the great *Vedic* aphorisms (*mahavakyas*).

ahamkara. Ego, self-love, selfish individuality.

ahimsa. Nonviolence.

a-jnana. Ignorance, stupidity.

a-jnani. Ignorant person.

amritha. Divine nectar (literally, no death or immortal).

ananda. Divine bliss. The Self is unalloyed, eternal bliss. Pleasures are but its faint and impermanent shadows.

Anasuya. Wife of sage Athri and mother of Dattatreya; an incarnation of the Trinity.

antar vimarsha. Inner quest.

anthah-karana. Inner psycho-somatic fourfold instruments of mind, intellect, memory, and ego.

apana. The downward air, which goes out through the anus.

apsaras. Wives of the *Gandharvas*, celestial nymphs.

artha. Wealth, prosperity, material object, thing, aim, purpose, desire.

Arjuna. Krishna’s disciple, in the *Bhagavad Gita*; third of five Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

asana. *Yoga* posture or sitting posture.

a-sura. Demon; term arose when Diti’s sons refused to drink the divine liquor (*suraa*) offered by Varuni, the daughter of Varuna.

Atharva-veda. The fourth *Veda*. *Atharva* means “fourth”. Steady, unmoved person, of stable nature.

Athri. A sage; father of Dattatreya.

Atma. Self; Soul. Self, with limitations, is the individual soul. Self, with no limitations, is Brahman, the Supreme Reality.

Atma-ananda. *Atmic* bliss, bliss of Self-realization.

Atma-anubhava. *Atmic* experience.

Atma-sakshatkara. Direct vision of *Atma*.

Atma-thathwa. True nature of *Atma*, the *Atmic* Principle.

Atma-vidya. Knowledge of supreme reality or *Atma*.

Atmic. Of or relating to the *Atma*.

Aum. Om; Designation of the Universal Brahman; sacred, primordial sound of the universe.

avadhana. Concentration.

Avatar. Incarnation of God. Whenever there is a decline of *dharmā*, God comes down to the world assuming bodily form to protect the good, punish the wicked and re-establish *dharmā*. An *Avatar* is born and lives free and is ever conscious of His mission. By His precept and example, He opens up new paths in spirituality, shedding His grace on all.

a-vidya. Ignorance.

Bali. Emperor of demons; grandson of Prahlada and son of the demon Virochana. Humiliated by dwarf Vamana, who was an incarnation of Vishnu.

Bhagavad Gita. Literally, Song of God. Portion of the *Mahabharatha* that is a dialogue between Arjuna, one of the Pandava brothers, and Krishna.

bhajans. Congregational chant group worship by devotees with devotional music in which repetition of holy names predominates.

bhaktha. Devotee of the Lord.

bhakthi. Devotion to God.

Bharadwaja. Celebrated sage who taught the science of medicine; seer of *Vedic* hymns.

bhava-nasana. The end of ideation.

bhava-roga. Disease of worldliness.

Bhava-roga-vaidya. The Lord; the curer of worldly ills.

Bhima. Second of five Pandava brothers; named for his size and strength. See *Mahabharatha*.

bikshu. Religious mendicant, who lives on alms.

Brahma. The Creator, the First of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Brahmaikyatha. The Godhead.

Brahma-jnana. Knowledge of Brahman.

Brahma-muhurtha. Sacred period during early morning, when spiritual practices such as meditation are recommended. Approximately 96 minutes hours before sunrise for 48 minutes, but one can also find it defined as 04:08–04:56. A *muhurtha* is approximately 48 minutes.

Brahman or **Brahmam.** The Supreme Being, the Absolute Reality, Impersonal God with no form or attributes. Identical to *Atma*. The uncaused cause of the Universe, Existence, Consciousness-Bliss Absolute (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*); The Eternal Changeless Reality — not conditioned by time, space, and causation.

Brahma Sutra. Spiritual text of *Vedantic* teachings in short maxims, attributed to Badharayana or Vyasa

Brahma-vidya. Spiritual attainment, knowledge of Brahman.

brahmin. First of four castes of social order, the priestly or teacher caste; a person belonging to this caste.

buddhi. Intellect, intelligence, faculty of discrimination.

caste. The four castes of social order are: *brahmin* (priestly or teacher), *kshatriya* (warrior, protector), *vaisya* (trader, merchant, agriculturist), and *sudra* (worker, helper). See *varna dharma*.

chaitanya. Consciousness, intelligence, spirit.

Chaithanya. Fifteenth century Vaishnavite mendicant reformer; taught the path of love and devotion to the *Avatar* of Sri Krishna.

chit. Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

chittha. Mind stuff, memory, subconscious mind.

Daivam. Godhead.

Dattatreya. Sage son of Athri and Anasuya.

deva. Deity, celestial being, God.

dharana. Concentration, fixed attention, one of 8 steps in Patanjali's *yoga* discipline.

dharma. Righteousness, religion, code of conduct, duty, essential nature of a being or thing. It holds together the entire Universe. Man is exhorted to practise *dharma* to achieve material and spiritual welfare. The *Vedas* contain the roots of *dharma*. God is naturally interested in the reign of *dharma*.

Dharmaraja. Name for Yudhistira, eldest of the five Pandava brothers. Born to Kunthi by the grace of Yama Dharmaraja, Lord of Death. Named for adherence to *dharma*. See *Mahabharatha*.

Dharma Sastras. Codes of law and ethics concerning virtuous living.

dharmic. According to *dharma*, righteous.

Dhritharashtra. Father of Kauravas; holder of ruling power.

dhyana. Meditation.

dhyana-marga. Path of meditation.

dhyani. Meditator.

Druva. Grandson of Brahma and son of Uttanapadha; as a child, he performed severe penance and attained self-renunciation.

Durga. Goddess of the universe; mother earth; daughter of Himavali and wife of Siva.

Durvasa. Son of Athri and Anasuya; known for quick temper and severe curses with an eventually constructive effect of driving home hard lessons of discipline and virtuousness. He granted boons to Kunthi, which resulted in the births of Karna and the Pandavas.

dussanga. Company of the wicked.

Dwapara-yuga. Third in the cycle of four ages. See *yuga*.

Easwara (Iswara). The Supreme Lord. Easwara is the Lord of every creature in the universe. Hence, the entire cosmos is reflected as an image in the Lord. Siva is often called Easwara.

Easwaramma. Sathya Sai Baba's mother; means *the mother of Easwara (God)*. She passed away on 6 May 6 1998.

ekagratha. One-pointedness of mind.

Gandharvas. Celestial musicians, a class of demigods; born to the sage Kasyapa and wife Arishta.

Ganga. The 1560-mile-long Ganges river; starts in the Himalayas and flows generally east into the Bay of Ben-

gal; the most sacred river of India.

Gauranga. Name for Chaithanya, a great saint.

Gayatri mantra. A very sacred *Vedic* prayer for self-enlightenment; it is repeated piously at dawn, noon, and twilight devotions.

Gita. See *Bhagavad Gita*.

grihastha. Householder, one of the four stages of life.

guna. Quality, property, trait; one of the three constituents of nature (*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*). They bind the soul to the body. Man's supreme goal in life is to transcend the *gunas* and attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

guru. Spiritual guide; a knower of Brahman, who is calm, desireless, merciful, and ever ready to help and guide spiritual aspirants who approach him.

halahala. A deadly poison, produced by gods and demons at the churning of the ocean.

Hari. God; destroyer of sins; name for Vishnu.

Hiranyagarbha. Cosmic divine mind; cosmic womb; golden egg first created by Brahman from which all creation issued.

Hiranyakasipu. A demonic person who forbade mention of Vishnu's name, wicked father of Prahlada, who was a great devotee of the Lord; killed by the man-lion Narashimha, an *Avatar* of Vishnu.

iccha-sakthi. Will power.

Ikshvaku. Son of Manu and father of Kukshi; first king of Ayodhya and ancestor of Rama's dynasty.

Indra. Lord of the *devas* (celestials). Indra is one of the chief deities in the *Rig veda*.

indriyas. Senses.

Iswara (Easwara). The Supreme Ruler, the Personal God. He is Brahman associated with illusion (*maya*) but has it under His control, unlike the individual soul, who is illusion's slave. He has a lovely form, auspicious attributes, and infinite power to create, sustain, and destroy. He dwells in the heart of every being, controlling it from within. He responds positively to true devotion and sincere prayer.

iswarya. Fullest splendour of power.

ithihasa. Historical legend, traditional account of former events.

jada. Inert matter.

jagath. Cosmos, world of change, creation.

Janaka. A self-realized king; Sita's father and Rama's father-in-law. His ancestor was Nimi, a great emperor.

japa. Soft prayer or repetition of the name of God.

Jayadeva. Sanskrit poet; wrote the *Gita Govinda*, which describes the early life of Krishna.

jiva. Individual or soul, in a state of non-realisation of its identity with Brahman. It is unaware of its own nature and is subjected to sensations of pain and pleasure, birth and death, etc.

jivan-muktha. One who is liberated in this life.

jivi. Individual or soul.

jnana. Sacred knowledge; knowledge of the spirit, pursued as a means to Self-realisation. It is direct experience of God, as the Soul of the souls. *Jnana* makes a man omniscient, free, fearless, and immortal.

Jnana-kanda. Portion of the *Vedas* that deals with knowledge of Brahman through the path of spiritual wisdom or discriminative knowledge.

jnanen-driyas. Five organs of perception: eye, ear, tongue, nose, and skin. Associated with five senses of perception: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.

jnani. Wise man, realized soul.

Kali-yuga. Fourth in a cycle of four ages; the evil age; the one we are now in. See *yuga*.

Kalpataru. Heavenly wish-fulfilling tree in Indra's paradise.

kama. Desire, lust, worldly fulfillment; one of four goals of humans.

Kamadhenu. Divine cow granting all wishes.

karma. Action, deed, work, religious rite, the totality of innate tendencies formed as a consequence of acts done in previous lives. Every *karma* produces a lasting impression on the mind of the doer, apart from affecting others. Repetition of a particular *karma* produces a tendency (*vasanas*) in the mind. *Karma* is of three kinds: (i) *praarabdha*, which is being exhausted in the present life; (ii) *aagami*, which is being accumulated in the present life, and (iii) *samchitha*, which is being accumulated or stored to be experienced in future lives. *Akarma* is action that is done without any intention to gain the consequences; *vikarma* is action that is intentionally done.

Karna. Half-brother of the Pandavas. Valiant but unfortunate eldest son of Kunthi by the Sun deity. Ally of the Kauravas in the war with Pandavas.

Kasyapa. Father of all living creatures; son of Marichi and grandson of Brahma.

Kauravas. Family that fought Pandavas. See *Mahabharatha*.

Krishna. The *Avatar* of Vishnu in the *Dwapara yuga*, prior to the present *Kali yuga*.

kritha-yuga. First age of man, Golden age of truth. See *yuga*.

kshatriya. Protector, warrior; see caste.

Kunthi. Also **Kunthi Devi.** Mother of Pandavas, wife of King Pandu (the younger brother of emperor Dhritharashtra), and sister of Krishna's father (Vasudeva).

Lakshmi. Consort of Vishnu, goddess of wealth.

laya. Merging, dissolution, absorption.

lingam. Also *Sivalingam*. Egg-shaped stone; symbol of Siva; the form of the formless; symbolizes merger of the form with the formless.

lobha. Greed.

Madhava. God (name for Krishna); Master of illusion (*maya*), Lord of Lakshmi.

Mahabharatha. The Hindu epic composed by Sage Vyasa, which deals with the deeds and fortunes of the cousins (the Kauravas and Pandavas) of the Lunar race, with Lord Krishna playing a significant and decisive role in shaping the events. The *Bhagavad Gita* and *Vishnu Sahasranama* occur in this great epic. It is considered to be the Fifth *Veda* by devout Hindus. Of this great epic, it is claimed that "what is not in it is nowhere.

Mahasamadhi. The conscious departure from the physical body of a realized soul; the shrine where the physical body is buried. Sathya Sai Baba's *Mahasamadhi* was on 24 April 2011, and His *Mahasamadhi* is in Sai Kulwant Hall in Prasanthi Nilayam.

mahatma. Great soul.

mahavakya. Great aphorism.

malina. Impure.

manas. Mind, the inner organ, which has four aspects: (i) mind (*manas*), which deliberates, desires, and feels; (ii) intellect (*buddhi*), which understands, reasons, and decides; (iii) the 'I' sense, and (iv) memory (*chitha*). The mind, with all its desires and their broods, conceals the Divinity within man. Purification of the mind is essential for realisation of the Self.

mangala. Auspicious, fortunate.

Manu. The first father of mankind; author of the codes of righteous conduct (*Dharma Sastras*); son of Surya (the sun) and father of Vaivaswatha Manu, the present progenitor of mankind.

Manu-smrithi. Laws of Manu.

marga. Path.

Markandeya. As a boy, he knew all the *Vedas* and *Sastras*; at 16, he started meditating on Siva so steadfastly that the day of his death passed him by, and he remained 16 for the next 10 million years.

markata. Monkey.

maya. Delusion. The mysterious, creative, and delusive power of Brahman through which God projects the appearance of the Universe. *Maya* is the material cause and Brahman is the efficient cause of the Universe. Brahman and *maya* are inextricably associated with each other like fire and its power to heat. *Maya* deludes the individual souls in egoism, making them forget their true spiritual nature.

Meera. Princess of Rajasthan and queen of Chittor; devoted to Krishna; took poison from her husband without any effect; composed devotional songs of exceptional quality.

moksha, mukthi. Liberation from all kinds of bondage, especially the one to the cycle of birth and death. It is a state of absolute freedom, peace, and bliss, attained through Self-realisation. This is the supreme goal of human endeavour, the other three being, righteousness (*dharma*), wealth and power (*artha*), and sense-pleasure (*kama*).

Nakula. One of the Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

nama. Name.

nama-sadhana. The practice of repeating God's name.

namasmarana. Remembrance of God through His Name — one of the important steps of spiritual discipline to obtain God's grace and to make progress in the spiritual journey.

Narada. Sage-bard; traveled the world chanting *Narayana*. Famous for creating disputes, resulting in solutions for the spiritual advancement or victory of the virtuous. Expert in law and author of texts on *dharma*.

Narasimha. Man-lion. One of the ten *Avatars* of Vishnu.

Narayana. The Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

nir-vichara. Not amenable to intellectual analysis.

nir-vitharka. Not amenable to arguments or logic; transcends such logics.

nish-kama-karma. Renunciation of the fruit of action.

niyama. Control of the outer senses.

Om. Designation of the Universal Brahman; sacred, primordial sound of the Universe.

Omkara. The form of *AUM*, or *Om*.

padmasana. Lotus-like posture.

Pandavas. Sons of Pandu; family of 5 brothers that fought the Kauravas: Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. See *Mahabharatha*.

Param-atma. Supreme Self, Supreme *Atma*.

Param-jyothi. Highest revelation, supreme light, divine intelligence.

Patanjali. Author of the *Yoga Sutras*, which form the foundation of the *yoga* system of Indian philosophy. See *raja-yoga*.

Pedda Venkama Raju. Sathya Sai Baba's father.

Prahlada. Son of the demon king Hiranyakasipu. As a boy, he was beaten, trampled, and cast into fire and water. But he saw only God everywhere, and repetition of the Name of God saved him. Once, Prahlada asserted that God was everywhere, and Narayana appeared in his man-lion form from within a pillar to destroy the king.

Prajapathi. Creator of this world; God presiding over creation. Also called Manu, Surya's son.

prakriti. Nature, the Divine Power of Becoming. Also known as *maya*, *a-vidya*, and *sakthi*; the world of matter and mind as opposed to the spirit. *Prakriti* has three dispositions or *gunas* (*sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas*), which go into the make-up of all living and non-living beings in the Universe, in varying proportions leading to the appearance of infinite multiplicity in form, nature, and behaviour.

prana. Life-breath, life force, vital energy, the five vital airs of the body. English doesn't seem to have names for these vital airs, so we list them with their Sanskrit names: *prana* (located in lungs), *apana* (flatus, which moves downward through the rectum), *vyana* (diffused throughout the whole body), *samana* (navel; essential to digestion), and *udana* (rises through throat to head).

pranayama. Breath control.

Pranava. *Om*; the sacred seed-sound and symbol of Brahman. "The most exalted syllable in *Vedas*". It is used in meditation on God. It is uttered first before a *Vedic mantra* is chanted.

prathyahara. Control of mind; withdrawing senses from the external world and turning them toward a higher consciousness.

prema. Ecstatic love of God; divine love of the most intense kind.

puja. Worship.

Puranas. Any of a number of collections of ancient legends and lore embodying the principles of the universal, eternal religion and ethics. There are 18 *Puranas*, the most famous being the *Mahabhagavatham* and the *Devi Bhagavatham*.

Puranic. Relating to *Purana*.

Purusha. Primeval Person, Supreme Spirit, Lord, God.

Radha. Cowherd maid, a chief devotee of Krishna; one of Lakshmi's forms.

raga. Sense of attachment, passion, affection.

rajas. One of the three *gunas* (qualities or dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. Passion, restlessness, aggressiveness, emotions such as anger, greed, grief. Associated with colour red. See *guna*.

rajasic. Adjective form of *rajas*, passionate, emotional.

rajasika-marga. Path of passionate action.

raja-yoga. Royal *yoga* of meditation, detachment, and desirelessness. Eight-fold path of *yoga* developed by Patanjali, which includes control of the mind and withdrawal of the senses from the external world.

rajoguna. Quality of passion, restlessness, aggressiveness. Associated with colour red. See *guna*.

Rama. *Avatar* of the *Thretha yuga*. Hero of the *Ramayana*; killed the wicked Ravana to rescue his wife Sita, who had been kidnapped. “Rama” means “he who pleases”.

Ramayana. This sacred epic, composed by Sage Valmiki, deals with the incarnation of Vishnu as Sri Rama, who strove all his life to reestablish the reign of *dharm*a in the world. The *Ramayana* has played an important role in influencing and shaping the Hindu ethos over the centuries.

Ravana. Lord of demons and king of Lanka, who abducted Sita (Rama’s wife).

Rig-veda. First *Veda* composed by the sages, consisting of 1028 hymns. Oldest religious text in world.

Rig-vedic. Of or relating to the *Rig-veda*.

rishi. Sage, wise man.

rupa. Form, figure, appearance.

sadguna. Good character, virtue.

sadhaka. Spiritual aspirant.

sadhana. Spiritual discipline or exercise; self effort.

sadhu. Virtuous, wise aspirant; pious or righteous person.

Sahadeva. One of the Pandava brothers. See *Mahabharatha*.

sahasra-nama. 1000 names of Siva or Vishnu.

sakshatkara. Divine spiritual experience or vision; direct experience of the Lord.

sakthi. Great universal power, divine energy, strength. *Maha* means *Great*, so *Mahasakthi* is great *sakthi*.

samadhi. Literally, total absorption. The state of super consciousness resulting in union with or absorption in the ultimate reality, the *Atma*; perfect equanimity. The state that transcends the body, mind, and intellect. In that state of consciousness, the objective world and the ego vanish and Reality is perceived or communed with, in utter peace and bliss. When people realise in this state their oneness with God, it is called *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

samana. Digestive air; even breath.

samatha. Equal-mindedness, harmony, agreement.

samsara. Worldly life; life of the individual soul through repeated births and deaths. Liberation means getting freed from this cycle.

Sanathana Dharma. Eternal religion. A descriptive term for what has come to be called Hinduism. It has no single founder or text of its own. It is more a commonwealth of religious faiths and a way of life.

sanmarga Good conduct.

santham. Equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

santhi. Peace, equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

santhosha. Peace, contentment, happiness.

sanyasin. Renunciant, mendicant.

Sastras. The Hindu scriptures containing the teachings of the sages. The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *ithihasas* (epics), the *Puranas*, the *Smrithis* (codes of conduct), etc., form the *Sastras* of the Hindus. They teach us how to live wisely and well with all the tenderness and concern of the Mother.

sat. Existence, being, good, real.

sat-chit-ananda or **satchidananda.** Existence-knowledge-bliss, or being-awareness-bliss.

sath-sang. Good company.

sathwa. One of the three *gunas* (qualities and dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. It is the quality of purity, brightness, peace, and harmony. It leads to knowledge. Man is exhorted to overcome *thamas* by *rajas* and *rajas* by *sathwa* and finally to go beyond *sathwa* itself to attain liberation.

sathwa-guna. Quality of purity, calmness, serenity, joy, strength, goodness. Associated with colour white. See *guna*.

sathwic. Adjective form of *sathwa*; serene, pure, good, balanced.

sathwic marga. Path of serenity, purity, balance, goodness.

sathya. Truth.

Sathyanarayana. Sathya Sai Baba, as an incarnation of Narayana, the Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

sa-vichara. With deliberation and reasoning or enquiry.

sa-vikalpa-samadhi. Subject-object type of superconscious state.

sa-vitharka. With logical argumentation.

Savithri. Brought husband back to life by outwitting Yama, the Lord of Death, by her power of purity and chastity.

seva. Selfless service; service to others while trying to serve the God within them.

Shirdi Sai Baba. First of the triple incarnation consisting of Shirdi Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Baba, and Prema Sai Baba. He passed away in 1918.

siddhantha. Authoritative texts; established tenet or doctrine.

siddhi. Perfection; yogic power.

Sita. Wife of Rama; brought up by King Janaka who found her in a box in the earth. Also, a tributary of the Ganga, flowing westward.

Siva. The Destroyer, the Third of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Sivoham. I am Siva, or divine.

smarana. Remembering the name of the Lord.

smrithi. Code of law; traditional law delivered by human authors.

soham. I am God.

sreyo-karma. Actions that liberate.

Sri. Honorific prefix to the name of deities; respectful title of venerated persons and celebrated works.

subha Good, auspicious.

sudra. Labourer, the fourth caste of workers. See *caste*.

su-jnana. Good knowledge, ability to distinguish right from wrong.

Surya. The sun god, the father of time. A name for the sun. Also, son of Kasyapa and father of Manu.

sushupti. Deep sleep state.

sutra. Concise rule or aphorism; that which, through a few words only, reveals vast meanings; text consisting of aphorisms or maxims; a thread; something, like a thread, that runs through and holds everything together.

swarupa. Form, essential nature, true nature of Being, embodiment.

swayam-jyothi. Self-illuminating.

Swethakethu. A great sage; the first person to argue against the evils of drinking and adultery by the *brahmins*; son of Uddalaka.

tapas. Concentrated spiritual exercises to attain God, penance, severe austerities.

thamas. One of the *gunas* (qualities and dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. It is the quality of dullness, inertia, darkness and tendency to evil. It results in ignorance.

thamasic. Adjective form of *thamas*, dull, ignorant, passive.

thamasika-marga. Path of ignorance and passivity.

thamoguna. Quality of dullness, ignorance, delusion, inactivity, inertia, sloth. Associated with colour black. See *guna*.

Thath. That, the Godhead.

Thathwa. Principle, truth, essence. That-this entity. *Thathwa* is regarded as made up of That (*Thath*) and you (*thwam*).

Thretha-yuga. The second in the cycle of four eras. See *yuga*.

thrupthi. Contentment.

thuriya. “Beyond” stage in *samadhi*; fourth stage beyond waking, dream, and deep sleep. Superconscious state.

thwam. Thou, You, This, the individual.

udana. Breath that moves upward from the throat.

Uddalaka. Hermit-sage father of Swethakethu.

Upanishads. The very sacred portions of the *Vedas* that deal with God, humanity, and universe, their nature and interrelationships. Spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) is their content, so they form the *Jnana-kanda* of the *Vedas*.

vairagya. Detachment, renunciation.

Vaishnavite. A person belonging to *Vaishnavism*, one of the major branches of Hinduism. It focuses on worshipping Vishnu and his ten incarnations.

vaisya. Business person, trader, merchant. See caste.

Vaivaswatha Manu. Head (Indra) of the present age of Manu (*Manvanthara*); Prajaprathi. Son of Manu and father of Ikshvaku.

Valmiki. The saint-poet who wrote the *Ramayana*.

Vamana. Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, who asked for three feet of land from Emperor Bali and humbled Bali’s pride.

varna. Caste.

varna dharma. The Hindu community is divided into four social groups, or castes (*varnas*), based on qualities (*gunas*) and vocations: (1) *Brahmana* (the *brahmins*), the custodian of spiritual and moral role), (2) *kshatriya*,

the warrior group, which rules and defends the land), (3) *vaisya*, the group dealing with commerce, business, and trade, and (4) *sudra*, the group devoted to labour and service to the community. Each *varna* has its own *dharmic* restrictions and regulations that strive to canalise impulses and instinct into fields that are special to their place in society, controls pertaining to the duties of the caste.

Varuna. Chief *Rig-vedic* god associated with Mitra; god of rain, water, the ocean, night; a great sage.

vasana. Inclination, impression of anything remaining in the subconscious mind from past action.

Vasishta. One of the greatest *rishis* (sages) of ancient times; priest of the solar race of kings; revealer of several *Vedic* hymns. Had sacred, wishfulfilling cow called Nandini.

Vasudeva. Father of Krishna.

Veda. Knowledge, wisdom. This knowledge is generally viewed as being given in the *Vedas*.

Vedanta. Means “the end of the *Vedas*”. It is the essence of the *Vedas* enshrined in the *Upanishads*. The philosophy of non-dualism, or qualified non-dualism, or dualism based on the *Upanishadic* teachings, is denoted by this term.

Vedantic. Of or pertaining to *Vedanta*.

Vedas. The oldest and the holiest of the Hindu scriptures, the primary source of authority in Hindu religion and philosophy. They are four in number: the *Rig-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, and *Atharva-Veda*.

Vedic. Of your relating to the *Vedas*.

vichara. Inquiry, analysis and reflection of the nature of the Self or truth.

vicharana. Enquiry, analysis.

vidya. Spiritual education, spiritual knowledge, learning, that which illumines, that which gives light, supreme teaching.

visha. Poison.

vishaya. Object of perception.

vishaya-karma. Acts that bind, sensory acts.

Vishnu. The Preserver, the Second of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Viswamitra. Sage; known for his efforts to equal Vasishta. Born as warrior Kausika who by the power of the *Gayatri* transformed himself spiritually. Early counselor of the young Rama.

viveka. Discrimination.

vyana. One of five vital airs; that which is diffused throughout the whole body.

Vyasa. Compiler of *Vedas* and author of the *Mahabharatha*, *Mahabhagavatham*, and *Brahma Sutra*.

yajna. Holy ritual, sacrifice, or rite. Also, personification of rite (when capitalized).

yama. Control of inner senses.

Yama. God of Death; death personified.

yoga. (a) Union of individual self or *Atma* with the Supreme Being or Universal Self; act of yoking. (b) Spiritual discipline or exercise aimed at control of the senses. (c) Science of divine communion. (d) self control. No single definition of *yoga* suffices. Patanjali’s *Yoga-sutras* define *yoga* as a series of eight spiritual steps leading to union with God.

Yoga Sutras. An aphoristic treatise on *yoga* by Patanjali.

yogi. One who practices *yoga*.

yogic. Of or pertaining to *yoga*.

yogini. Female ascetic or *yogi*.

Yudhistira. Eldest Pandava brother; also called Dharmaraja.

yuga. Era or age. There is a cycle of four *yugas*: the *Kritha yuga*, *Thretha yuga*, *Dwapara yuga*, and *Kali yuga*. Present age is the *Kali yuga*.