

Glossary

This glossary contains Sanskrit words, people, places, and literature that appear in *Upanishad Vahini*.

Some Sanskrit words have made their way into English and appear in English dictionaries. A few of them are used without definition in the text, but they are defined in this glossary. Among them are *Atma*, *dharmā*, *guru*, *karma*, *yogas*, and *yogi*.

The text uses standard spellings for Sanskrit, and this glossary provides the same spellings. But some of the Sanskrit compounds have been hyphenated between their constituent words to aid those who want to analyze the meanings of individual words. When compound words are broken, individual words are given.

Aagama. That which has come or originated. The primeval source of knowledge. A name for *Vedas*.

aapo-jyoti. Splendour of water.

abhasa. Appearance, superimposition of false over real.

a-bhaya. Fearlessness.

a-chetana. Non-intelligent, unconscious, inert, senseless.

a-dharma. Evil, injustice.

adhyasa. Superimposition.

adi-atma. Pertaining to the individual soul, spirit, or manifestation of supreme *Brahman*.

adi-atmic. Pertaining to *adi-atma*.

adi-bhauthika. Pertaining to the physical or material world; the fine spiritual aspect of material objects.

adi-daivika. Pertaining to divinity or fate, e.g. natural disasters.

aditya. Sun.

Aditya. Son of Aditi; there were twelve of them, one of them being Surya, the sun, so Surya is sometimes called Aditya.

a-dwaitha. Nondualism or monism, the *Vedantic* doctrine that everything is God.

a-dwaithic. Of or pertaining to *a-dwaitha*.

agni. Fire element.

Agni. God of fire.

Agni-Brahmana. Another word for the Section on horse sacrifice.

agnihotra. Ritual of offering oblations in the holy fireplace. Three kinds are: daily obligation, occasional obligation, and optional fire.

Aithareya Upanishad. One of the ten important *Upanishads*. It deals with the world and the human as the creation of *Atma*, the three-fold birth of *Atma*, and the nature of the *Atma*.

a-jnana. Ignorance, stupidity.

a-jnani. Ignorant person.

akasa. Sky, space, ether, the subtlest form of matter.

a-kshara. Imperishable, indestructible.

alatha-santhi. Extinction of the fire-brand circle; refers to analogy of the gleam of the world with circle made by the fast swinging of a fiery stick.

a-manaska. Blissful state of realization when seer realizes that entire creation is created by Self; mindless; free from all mental activity.

a-manobhava. Mindless state.

ananda. Supreme bliss, unending joy.

ananda-maya kosa. The sheath of bliss, the innermost sheath of the body.

an-antha. Endless, eternal, unending; infinity.

anga. Limb, part, fact, feature, “earth bit”.

Angiras. A sage-hermit born from the mind of Brahma. Indra gave him the name Atharvangiras when Angiras paid him homage by reciting the hymns of *Atharva-veda*.

angushtra-matra. Thumb-sized.

anna. Food.

anna-maya kosa. Food sheath, the material or gross outer layer of man.

antar-yamin. Inner ruler or Being that guides all creatures.

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

Anusasanaparva. Famous section of moral principles in the *Mahabharatha*.

anuvaka. Section.

anveshana. Seeking, enquiry.

apana. Downward breath expelled through the anus.

a-para. Immanent, materialised, lower, ordinary.

a-para-vidya. Secular science, western knowledge.

a-paricchinna. Without limit or break.

a-paroksha. Inner knowledge; direct spiritual knowledge.

a-prameya. Beyond all possibilities of being described by categories, immeasurable.

aranya. Forest, relating to forest.

aranyakas. Religious or philosophical texts closely connected with the *brahmins*, either composed in the forest or studied there.

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

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

a-samsari. Not bound by worldly illusion.

a-sat. Falsehood, unreal, non-existent, bad.

a-sathya. Falsehood.

a-subha. Inauspicious, maleficent.

Aswa-Brahmana. *Brahmana* relating to horse sacrifice.

Aswalayana. *Vedic* school founded by Sounaka.

aswamedha yaga. Horse sacrifice to absolve a king of all sins. A horse is marked with a victory card and allowed to roam about freely. If anyone stops it, the king should go and defeat him in battle and bring it back.

a-thanu. Without a body.

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

Athri. A sage; father of Dattatreya. Also, one of 10 mental sons of *Hiranyagarbha*.

Atma. The real Self, one’s divinity, God, the substance of everything, the unseen basis, the God within. The *Atma* is unchanging and immortal; It does not die.

Atma-chaithanya. Consciousness.

Atma-jnana. Self-knowledge.

Atma-jnani. Self-knower.

Atma-sakshatkara. Direct vision of the *Atma*; Self-realisation.

Atma-shatka. The *Atmic* Six, referring to the six sections of the *Aithareya Upanishad*.

Atma-swarupa. Embodiment of the all-pervading divine Self.

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

Atma-vichara. Inquiry into the *Atma*.

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

Atmic. Of or pertaining to the *Atma*.

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

Avatar. Incarnation of God. Whenever there is a decline of *dharma*, God comes down to the world assuming bodily form to protect the good, punish the wicked and re-establish *dharma*. 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.

avayava. Limb, part, member.

a-vidya. Ignorance.

a-vyapadesa. Beyond denotation.

Ayodhya. City where Rama was born and ruled.

bala. Strength, vigour, power, force, validity.

bija. Seed, germ, primary cause; mystical letter or syllable that forms the essential part of a *mantra*.

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

bhakthi. Devotion to God.

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

Bhargava. Sage of the Bhrigu dynasty, author of *Vedic* hymns. Also called Vaidarbhi.

bhava. Being, becoming.

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

Bhishma. The guardian and patriarch of the Kauravas and Pandavas. Son of King Shantanu. Remarkable for his wisdom and unflinching devotion to God. Trapped by his fate to fight on side of evil Kauravas; bled to death on a bed of arrows while thinking of God. See *Mahabharatha*. He also vowed life-long celibacy to ensure that his offspring would not claim the throne.

Bhrigu (or Bhrugu). Great sage son of Brahma. Also, one of ten great sages created by the first Manu.

bhumi. Earth.

Brahma. The Creator in the trinity *Brahma*, Vishnu (the Preserver), and Siva (the Destroyer).

Brahma-ananda. Bliss of *Brahman*.

brahma-charya. Path to knowledge of *Brahman*; state of an unmarried religious student; first stage of life of a *brahmin*; spiritual studentship.

Brahma-jnana. Knowledge of *Brahman*.

Brahma-jnani. Knower of *Brahman*.

Brahma-loka. Region of *Brahma*, the Creator.

Brahman or Brahman. Impersonal Supreme Being, primal source and ultimate goal of all beings. Identical to *Atma*.

Brahmana. A section of each of the four *Vedas* dwelling on the meaning and use of *mantras* and hymns at various sacrifices.

Brahmanda-nirmana. Evolution of the universe.

brahmanic. Relating to *brahmins*.

Brahmanubhava Upanishad. One of the *Upanishads*.

Brahma Sutra. Spiritual text of *Vedantic* teachings attributed to Badharayana or Vyasa.

Brahma-thathwa. Formless God, *Brahman* principle.

Brahma-vid. Knower of *Brahman*.

Brahma-vidya. Spiritual attainment, knowledge of *Brahman*.

Brahmic. Related to *Brahman*.

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

Brighu. A son of *Brahma* and a great sage. He had two incarnations. The second was when he was reborn from fire at Varuna's sacrificial rite and was brought up by Varuna as his son. One of 10 great sages created by the first Manu.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. One of the ten important *Upanishads*; it sets forth teachings maintained by Yajnavalkya regarding *Brahman*.

brihaspathi. Teacher of the gods.

brihath. Big, enlarged, gross, high.

buddhi. Intellect.

Bujiyu. Royal sage; son of Thugra.

chaithanya. Consciousness, intelligence, spirit.

chakshu. Eye.

Chandogya Upanishad. One of the ten important *Upanishads*; a great collection of theological-philosophical-allegorical utterances. Includes glorification of *Om*, *Gayatri*, *Brahman*, tale about Uddalaka instructing son Swethakethu, and Sanatkumara instructing Narada.

chandra. Moon.

chetana. Super-consciousness, consciousness.

chit. Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

chittha. Mind stuff, memory, subconscious mind.

chittha-spandana. Pulsating subconsciousness.

Dasaratha. Son of Aja and father of Rama; King of Ayodhya; the name means “ten chariot hero”.

deha. Body

deva. Deity, celestial being, God.

deva loka. World of the gods.

devatha-jnana. Knowledge of the gods.

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*.

dharma-karma. Act of duty, virtuous action.

Dharmaraja. Name for Yudhistira, eldest of the five Pandava brothers. Born to Kunthi by the grace of Yama Dharmaraaja, 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.

Durga. Goddess of the universe; mother Earth; daughter of Himaval and wife of *Siva*.

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

dwaitha. Dualism, the doctrine that the individual and the Supreme Soul are two different principles or entities.

dwesha. Hatred, anger.

dyu-loka. The heavenly world.

Gaargya. Souryayani —grandson of Surya; born in Garga’s family.

gandha. Smell, fragrance.

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

Garga. Elderly sage son of Bharadwaja.

Gargi. Celebrated female sage Vachaknavi, born in the family of Garga.

Gargi. Celebrated female sage, born in the family of Garga.

Garuda. Celestial bird, white-crested eagle, king of the feathered race, vehicle for Lord Vishnu.

Garuda Purana. Seventeenth *Purana*.

Gautama. Father of Nachiketas; also known as Yajnasravas.

Gayatri mantra. Ancient *Vedic* prayer to awaken the intelligence and lead to enlightenment. It is repeated piously at dawn, noon, and twilight devotions.

Gita. See *Bhagavad Gita*.

guha. Cave.

guna. Quality, characteristic. The qualities of *sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas* are general universal characteristics of all kinds of mental tendencies and actions/thoughts, which are prompted by specific kinds and mixtures of these three qualities. For example, *sathwic* food is health-giving, strength-giving and delightful; *rajasic* food is spicy, sour, or salty and brings on diseases; and *thamasic* food is impure, old, stale, tasteless, or rotten. See *thamas*, *rajas*, *sathwa*.

guru. Preceptor, teacher, guide to spiritual liberation.

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

hridayakasa. Firmament of the heart.

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

indriyas. Senses.

Indus. The river Sindhu; see Sindhu.

Isa. Supreme, Lord.

Isa Upanishad. See *Isavasya Upanishad*.

Isavasya Upanishad. One of the ten important *Upanishads*; it deals with supreme truth of liberation and its attainment.

ishta. Also *ishtam*. Beloved, cherished, desired

Iswara. Easwara. A name for *Siva*. 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.

ithihasa. Historical legend, traditional account of former events.

jada. Inert matter.

jagath. Cosmos, world of change, creation.

jala. Water.

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

emperor.

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

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.

jiva loka. World of the living.

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

jivan-mukthi. Liberation while alive.

jiva-rupa. Individual body.

jiva-atma. Soul or true Self, at the individual level.

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.

jnana-marga. Path of spiritual wisdom.

jnana-nishta. Intent on acquiring spiritual wisdom.

jnana-swarupa. The embodiment of spiritual wisdom.

jnanen-driyas. Five organs of perception: eye, ear, tongue, nose, and skin.

jnani. Wise person, realized soul.

jneya. That which is known, the object of knowledge.

kaanda. Section, chapter.

Kabandi Kathyayana. Descendent of the great sage Kathya and disciple of Pippalada.

kaivalya. Absolute oneness, final beatitude.

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

kala. Time, death (*yama*).

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

kalpa. Age; a day of *Brahma*, a period of 4,320,000,000 years.

kamya. Desirable.

kanda. Section, chapter.

karana. Causal or cause.

karika. Verse.

karya. Effect, product.

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.

Karma-kanda. The section of the *Vedas* dwelling mainly on rituals; the *samhithas* and the *Brahmana* of the *Vedas*.

karma-mukthi. Progressive liberation.

karma-nishta. Dedicated action.

karmen-driyas. Organs of action: larynx, hands, feet, anus, sex organs.

Kasyapa-prajapathi. Chief of the progenitors; son of *Brahma*. All living beings took their origin from Kasyapa.

Katha Saakha. A branch of the *Black Yajur-veda*.

Kathopanishad. Also *Katha Upanishad*. One of most popular *Upanishads* because of its clarity and brevity in expressing mystic truths; contains famous dialogue between Nachikethas and Yama, God of death..

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

Kausalya. Daughter of the King of Kosala, first wife of Dasaratha, and mother of Rama. Also: A sage, son of Ashvala, from the Ashvalayana school.

Kena Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*; it is divided into two parts: the first expounds the unknowability of the *Brahman* without attributes, the second the relation of *Brahman* to the *Vedic* gods.

khila. Appendix.

Khila Kanda. Third section of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

kosa. Sheath.

krishna. Black.

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

Krishna. A holy river.

Krishna Yajur-veda. “Black” *Yajur-veda* —a recension of the *Yajur-veda*, promoted by Veda Vyasa.

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

kriya. Action, activity, will.

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.

Kuru. Famous King born in the Puru dynasty. Kurukshetra became holy and sanctified because of Kuru’s penances.

Kuru-Panchala. Combined name for Panchala, Punjab.

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

loka. Region, world. Usually refers to the three worlds of earth, atmosphere, and sky, but it can mean 7 or even 14 worlds (7 above and 7 lower).

loka-palaka. World protector.

loukika. Connected with this world.

Madhu Kanda. First two sections of *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

madhura. Sweet, attractive.

Madhu-vidya. Special ritual worship of the Sun.

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.

Maitreyi. Female consort of Yajnavalkya; one of greatest sage-philosophers in the *Upanishads*. Maitreyi was known for her wisdom. See the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

manana. Reflection, meditation, understanding.

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.

manasa-putra. Mental son.

Mandukya Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*; it sets forth the doctrine that the whole world is present in the syllable *Om*.

manomaya-kosa. Mental sheath of the body.

mantra. A sacred formula, mystic syllable or word symbol uttered during the performance of the rituals or meditation. They represent the spiritual truths directly revealed to the *rishis* (seers). The section of the *Veda* that contains these hymns (*mantras*) is called the *Samhitha*.

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.

manushya. Human being.

marga. Path.

Marichi. Mental son of *Hiranyagarbha*; one of the ten sages. Dasaratha’s ancestral line goes back to Marichi.

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.

Mitra. God always mentioned together with Varuna as rain god(s).

moksha. 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*).

mukhya. Chief, foremost, first.

mukthi. Liberation; final release of emancipation from the cycle of birth and death.

munda. Head.

mundaka. Shaven.

Mundaka Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*, of *Artharva-veda*; it presents the *Vedantic* doctrine of knowledge of *Brahman*.

Muni Kanda. The second set of two sections of *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

naadi. Nerve.

nama. name.

Nachiketa Agni. Name given to a ritual by Yama because Nachiketas grasped its details so quickly.

Nachiketas. Son of sage Vajasravas; given to Yama, the Lord of death, for questioning his father's mean gift of old and useless cows to pious people.

naimittika. Associational or occasional.

nakshatra. Constellation.

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

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*.

Narayana. The Primal Person, the Lord, Vishnu.

nethi. Not this.

nidi-dhyasana. Inner concentration, profound meditation.

nimitta-karana. Instrumental cause.

nir-vikalpa-samadhi. Undifferentiated deep communion, transcendental absorption.

nishta. State, condition, steadiness, regulated behaviour, excellence.

nithya. Eternal, permanent.

nithya-swayam-prakasa. Eternally self-effulgent.

nivritti. Withdrawal, detachment, renunciation..

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

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

pada. Verse, word, speech, sign, cause.

pancha. Five.

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

panditya. Scholarship.

papa. Evil deeds, demerit, sin.

para. Higher, beyond, transcendent, supreme, best.

Para-brahman. Universal Absolute *Brahman*.

Param-ananda. Highest bliss.

Parama-purusha. The supreme Spirit.

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

Param-atma-thathwa. Supreme *Atmic* principle.

para-vidya. Knowledge of the transcendent supreme Principle.

paripurna. Full, complete, entire.

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

Pippalada. Ancient sage and preceptor of spiritual knowledge.

pitri. Ancestor, father.

pitru-loka. World of the fathers.

praja-kama. Desiring progeny.

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

prajna. Deep sleep state.

prakriti. Nature, the Divine Power of Becoming. Also known as *maya*, *avidya*, 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).

prana-maya kosa. The second, subtle sheath of man, consisting of the vital airs and the nervous system.

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..

pranava-swarupa. Embodiment of *Om*.

prasanthi. Supreme peace, equanimity.

prasna. Question.

Prasna Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*; it deals with six questions concerning *Brahman* by spiritual seekers to the sage Pippalada.

prathibha. Intuition, thought.

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

preyas. Pleasing, pleasurable sensation, worldly joy.

pundit. Learned scholar, wise man.

punya. Virtuous deeds, good works, meritorious actions.

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*.

purtha. Act of charity.

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

purusha-arthas. Goals of human life.

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.

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*.

rajya. Kingdom.

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 *dharmā* in the world. The *Ramayana* has played an important role in influencing and shaping the Hindu ethos over the centuries.

rasa. Taste, sweetness, essence of enjoyment.

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

rekha. Geometry, line.

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*.

rik. Hymn or sacred verse, from the *Rig-veda*.

rishi. Sage, wise man.

rithwik. Sacrificial priest.

rupa. Form, figure, appearance.

saama, saamana. Particular kind of sacred hymn; song from *Sama-veda*; chanting.

sabdha. Sound.

sadhaka. Spiritual aspirant.

sadhana. Spiritual discipline or exercise; self effort.

sa-guna. With qualities, with form, materialized.

sa-gunopasana. Worship of the qualified divinity.

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

Saibya. Also named Sathyakama.

Sakalya-brahmana. Part of collection systematized by sage Sakalya.

saksat-kara. Divine spiritual experience, vision.

Sama, Sama-veda. Collection of certain verses of the *Rig-veda* arranged for liturgical purposes.

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.

samhitha. Collection of methodically arranged verses or text; continuous text of the *Vedas* as formed out of the separate words by proper phonetic changes.

samithpaani. Holding the sacrificial fire.

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

samsara-vriksha. Tree of worldly illusion.

Samvarga-vidya. Science of absorption.

samvathsara. Year.

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.

Sandilya-vidya. Science of devotion given by the great sage Sandilya.

sankalpa. Will, resolve.

Sankara. Also **Sankaracharya.** Celebrated philosopher, preceptor of non-dualistic *Vedanta*. Defeated all religious opponents in debates throughout India.

sankhya. Measurement, calculation, number.

santham. Equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

santhi. Peace, equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

sanyasa. Renunciation-detachment, mendicancy.

sanyasi. Also *sanyasin*. Renunciant, mendicant.

sarira. Body.

sarva-antharya-mithwa. All-pervasiveness.

sarva-jna. Omniscient.

sarva-karma-sanyas. Withdrawal from all activity.

sarva-kriya-parithyaga. Renunciation of all action.

Sarvatma-swarupa. Total being or nature, universal soul.

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. Existence-knowledge-bliss, or being-awareness-bliss.

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.

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

sathya. Truth.

sathya-jnana. Wisdom concerning the Reality, Truth.

sathya-kama. Desirous of Truth.

Sathyakama. Also named Saibya; noble hermit son of Sibi and disciple of Pippalada.

sathya-sankalpa. True Resolve.

sathya-swarupa. Nature of truth.

Sibi. Emperor of India, noted for generosity; offered pound of own flesh to save Agni in the form of a dove from Indra in the form of a hawk.

siksha. Instruction, learning, knowledge, phonetics instruction, teaching.

Sindhu. *Indus* river; one of two main Indian river systems. Persians called the whole country Hindu from this river name. Originates in Kasmir and joins Arabian Sea in Karachi.

siras. Head.

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. Also *sivam*. Temple, the divine; refers to Siva. Also, grace, auspiciousness, goodness.

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

Siva Purana. One of the *Puranas*.

Skanda Purana. One of the eighteen *Puranas*, the epic story of Skanda.

sloka. Verse.

smarana. Remembering the name of the Lord.

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

Sounaka. Renowned sage; teacher of Aswalayana and author of *Brihad Devatha* and *Rig-veda Pratishakhya*.

Souryayani. Grandson of Surya, born in the family of Garga (and hence called Gargya).

sparsha. Also *sparshana*. Touch, contact.

sraddha. Faith.

sravana. Listening to discourses on the scriptures.

sreyas. Blessedness, ultimate good.

srishti. Creation.

sruthi. Sacred revelations orally transmitted by *brahmins* from generation to generation, differing from traditional law codes (*smrithi*). Divinely sourced scripture; *Veda*; divine words known by revelation; that which was heard or listened to.

sthula. Gross, material, superficial.

subha. Good, beautiful, auspicious.

Sukesa. A sage, the son of Bharadwaja.

sukla. White.

Sukla Yajur Veda. One part of the *Yajur-veda*, the White *Yajur-veda*, promoted by Yajnavalkya.

sukshma. Subtle.

surya. The sun.

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

Surya-deva. Sun-god; same as Surya.

surya-loka. Region of the solar principle.

sushumna. Nerve current passing through the spinal column from the basal plexus (*muladhara*) to the crown of the head (*sahasrara*).

swa-bhava. Essential nature, essence, reality, truth.

swa-rajya. Self-rule.

swarga. Heaven.

swa-rupa. Form, essential nature, true nature of Being, embodiment.

swa-swarupa. One's true nature.

swayam-prakasa. Self-illuminating.

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

taijasa. Entity associated with dream state composed of mind, intellect, five vital airs, five senses of perception, and the five elements; the experiencer of the dream or subconscious state, "light" of the subconscious.

Taithiriya Upanishad. One of the ten most important *Upanishads*; it is the philosophical portion of the *Black Yajur-veda*; the other part is called the *White Yajur-veda*.

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

tarka. Philosophical system based on reasoning or logic.

tejas. Spiritual power, splendour.

thaapathraya. Threefold afflictions.

Thalavakara. A branch of the *Sama-veda*.

Thalavakaropanishad. Name for *Kena Upanishad*.

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.

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

Thath. That, the Godhead.

Thath-swarupa. The form of *Brahman*.

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

Thath twam asi. You are That. One of four great *Vedantic* statements expressing the non-difference of individual soul and *Brahman*, the supreme absolute Self.

thithi. A lunar day; the moon increases for 15 *thithis* and decreases for 15.

thithiri. Partridge.

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

thriputa. Three-fold.

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

udana. Breath that moves upward from the throat.

Uddalaka. Sage father of Shwethakethu.

upaasya. Thing worshipped or contemplated.

upadana. Proximate or material basis.

upadesa. Teaching; advice; initiation; communication of an initiatory *mantra* or formula.

upanayana. Sacred thread ceremony in which a boy is initiated with a sacred thread and is then qualified to learn *Vedas*.

Upanishadic. Relating to the *Upanishads*.

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*. Principle message is nondualism: unity of *Brahman* and *Atma*.

upasaka. Worshiper.

upasana. Worship, devotion, meditation practice, acquisition of the presence of the Lord, a method for approaching or getting close to a deity or God, the act of being near or at hand.

uthama-purusha. Noblest of men.

uthpatthi. Creation or cause of creation.

uttara-marga. Northward path of the sun.

vaak. Vocal organs, word, word of mouth.

vahini. Stream or flow.

Vaidarbhi. A disciple of Pippalada, born in the line of Bhrigu. Also named Bhargava.

vairagya. Detachment, renunciation.

Vaiswanara. Omnipresent, Supreme Self. Name for Sun; means “sum total of created beings”.

vaithathya. Falsehood.

Vajasaneyi. Section of the *Vedas* taught by the Sun in the form of a horse (*vaji*).

vaji. Horse.

valli. Section, chapter; literally, creeper.

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

Vamadeva. Ancient hermit. Friend of Vasishta and a priest of Dasaratha; he composed *Rig-vedic* hymns.

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

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

Varuni Vidya. Knowledge of the sage Bhrigu.

vasantha. Spring season.

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.

vasthu. Thing, object.

Vasudeva. Father of Krishna.

vayu. Wind, air.

Vayu. God of wind.

Vedangas. Subsidiary treatises of the *Vedas*: Six sciences of proper pronunciation, grammar, metre, etymology, astronomy, ritual.

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*.

Vedārtha. Meaning or goal of the *Vedas*.

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*.

Veda Vyasa. Another name for Vyasa.

Vedic. Of your relating to the *Vedas*.

vesma. House.

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

Vidarbha. An ancient country in India.

Videha. Royal dynasty of Janaka; the kingdom of Mithila, native country of Sita.

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

vi-jnana. Highest wisdom; discriminating faculty of the intellect; spiritual wisdom beyond the material plane.

vi-jnana-maya kosa. Body sheath of intellect, intuition.

vi-kara. Modification, adaptation, change.

Viraat-purusha. First incarnation of *Brahma*; Cosmic Divinity; Lord in His form as the physical manifested cosmos.

vishaya. Object and perception.

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

Siva (the Destroyer).

visishtha. Supreme, distinguished.

visishtha-adwaitha. Qualified nondualism. The doctrine that a person's spirit has a qualified or partial identity with God.

viswa. Waking state, gross body.

Viswa-kartha. Creator of the world.

Viswa-rupa. Cosmic form, form of creation, name for the sun.

viveka. Discrimination.

vriksha. Tree.

vritti. Occupation, activity.

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*.

vyavahara. Change, worldly activity.

yaga. Oblation, sacrifice, ceremony in which oblations are presented.

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

Yajnasravas. Father of Nachiketas; a name for Gautama.

Yajnavalkya. Great *Upanishadic* person. Priest and *guru* of King Janaka. Taught monistic (*adwaithic*) doctrine of identity of *Atma* and *Brahman* in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Yajnavalkya Kanda. Third and fourth sections of the *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, which deals with the spiritual teaching of Yajnavalkya to Janaka.

Yajur-veda. Second *Veda*, consisting of a collection of sacred texts in prose relating to sacrifices.

yajus. Sacrificial prayer.

Yama. God of Death; death personified.

yantra. Mechanics; instrument.

yoga. (a) Union of individual self or *Atma* with 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. Patanjali's *Yoga-sutras* define *yoga* as a series of 8 steps leading to union with God.

Yoga-sastra. Scripture or science that deals with *yoga*, esp. by Patanjali.

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

yogi. One who practices *yoga*.

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*. The present age is the *Kali yuga*.