

# Glossary

**M**eanings of Sanskrit words used in discussing religious and philosophical topics, more particularly used in the discourses by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, reproduced in this volume, are given in this glossary. While the English equivalents for the Sanskrit words have been given in the text with reference to the context, this 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.

**Ahalya.** Princess of the Puru dynasty, who was turned into a stone by the curse of her husband, Gautama, for suspected adultery. She regained her form when Rama touched the stone with his divine feet.

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

**ahimsa.** Nonviolence.

**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.

**Anjaneya.** A name for Hanuman.

**aradhana.** Divine service; propitiation.

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

**a-santhi.** Lack of peace; agitated mind; restlessness. Opposite of *santhi*.

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

**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.

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

**Bhagavan.** Divinity; term of reverential address; Sathya Sai Baba is called Bhagavan by his devotees.

**Bhagavatham.** A sacred book composed by Sage Vyasa dealing with Vishnu and His incarnations, especially Sri Krishna.

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

**Bhasmasura.** Sage who reduced himself to ashes through misuse of boons from Siva.

**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.

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

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

**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.

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

**chit.** Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

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

**dasendriyas.** The ten organs (of action and perception).

**Devaki.** Mother of Krishna.

**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.** Eldest Pandava brother; also called Yudhistira.

**Dhritharashtra.** Father of Kauravas; holder of ruling power.

**Droupadi.** Wife of Pandavas. See *Mahabharatha*.

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

**Duryodhana.** Chief (and eldest) of the evil-minded sons of Dhritharashtra.

**Dussasana.** Infamous second son of Dhritharashtra and younger brother of Duryodhana.

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

**Gouranga.** Name for Chaithanya, a great saint.

**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.

**Hanuman.** Son of the Wind God and a great “devotee servant” of Rama. He was part man, part monkey.

**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.

**Isvara.** 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.

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

**Jatayu.** A famous eagle, whose wings were scorched when he flew too close to the sun. He tried to rescue Sita, and he played a role in Rama's fight against the demons.

**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.

**jnani.** A person possessing *jnana*.

**Kalidasa.** Sanskrit dramatist and poet ca 5th century A.D.

**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 (*vasana*) 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.

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

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

**kshetra.** Field, the body in which the individual soul reaps the harvest of their *karma*.

**Kuchela.** A poor *brahmin* classmate of Krishna.

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

**Lakshmana.** Brother of Rama and son of Sumitra; represents intellect.

**Lakshmi.** Consort of Vishnu, goddess of wealth.

**leela.** Sport, play. The Universe is viewed as divine sport or play.

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

**Madhava.** God (name for Krishna); Master of illusion (*maya*), see *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."

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**Mahasivarathri.** *Sivarathri* means "night of Siva". It is the night when the moon is at its smallest. *Mahasivarathri* is the great *Sivarathri*, taking place generally in February or March.

**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.

**manava.** Man, descendent of Manu, the law-giver.

**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 (*mantraa*) is called the *Samhitha*.

**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.

**maya-sakthi.** Power of illusion, the veiling and projecting power of God.

**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.

**mithya.** Mixture of truth and falsehood; neither true nor untrue, but something in between. The world is not untrue (*a-sat*) but *mithya*.

**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*.

**namasmarana.** Remembering 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.

**nara.** Man; divine man; primeval man, human being.

**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.

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

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

**Paramatma.** Supreme Self, Supreme *Atma*.

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

**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.

**prakrithi.** Nature, the Divine Power of Becoming. Also known as *maya*, *avidya*, and *sakthi*; the world of matter and mind as opposed to the spirit. *Prakrithi* 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.

**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.

**prasadha.** Consecrated food. Anything, usually edible, given by a saint or the *Avatar* to their followers or that is

first offered to a deity, saint, or the *Avatar* and then distributed in Their name.

**prasanthi.** Supreme peace, equanimity.

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

**Puranas.** The Hindu scriptures in which *Vedic* truths are illustrated through tales of divine incarnations and heroes. Sage Vyasa is believed to have written them. Of the 18 *Puranas*, *Srimad Bhagavatha* is the best known.

**rajas/rajo guna.** One of the three *gunas* (qualities or dispositions) of *maya* or *prakrithi*. *Rajas* is the quality of passion, energy, restlessness, attachment, and extroversion. It results in pain.

**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”.

**Ramakrishna Paramahansa** (1836 to 1886). Celebrated mystic; mastered all types of yoga and also Christian and Islamic practices. Swami Vivekananda took his message of universal religion to the West. Married to Saradadevi.

**Ramayana.** This sacred Hindu epic, composed by Sage Valmiki, deals with the incarnation of Vishnu as Sri Rama, who strove all his life to reestablish the reign of *dharma* 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).

**Sabari.** A woman ascetic living in the hermitage of her teacher, Sage Mathanga; Rama gave her salvation.

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

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

**samadhi.** The super-conscious state transcending the body, mind, and intellect, attained through rigorous and protracted spiritual practices. 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, in this state, the aspirant realises his oneness with God, it is called *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

**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.

**Sanjaya.** An advisor to the blind King Dhritharashtra.

**santhi.** Peace, equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

**Saraswathi.** Goddess of learning and eloquence, a daughter of Brahma.

**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 *prakrithi*. 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.

**sathya.** Truth.

**Satrughna.** Sumitra’s son, twin of Lakshmana and brother of Rama. The name means “slayer of enemies”.

**Shantanu.** A Kuru king, descendant of the Bharata race, of the lunar dynasty and the ancestor of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Bhishma was his son.

**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).

**Sugriva.** Monkey-king, brother of Vali; with his army of monkeys headed by Hanuman, assisted Rama in defeating Ravana.

**sukshma.** Subtle; small; that which expands.

**Sumitra.** Second wife of Dasaratha and mother of Lakshmana and Satrugna.

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

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

**Thyagaraja.** 18th and 19th century mystic singer/ composer. Leader in Karnatak tradition of classical Indian music. Born in Thanjavur District of south India.

**Uddhava.** Friend and messenger of Krishna.

**Upanishad.** The very sacred portions of the *Vedas* that deal with God, man, and universe, their nature and inter-relationships. Spiritual knowledge (*jnana*) is their content, so they form the *Jnana-kaanda* of the *Vedas*.

**Vaikunta.** Vishnu's heaven.

**vairagya.** Detachment, renunciation.

**Vali.** A great monkey-king; brother and enemy of Sugriva.

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

**varna dharma.** The Hindu community is divided into four social groups, or castes (*varnas*), based on *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) *vaishya*, 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.

**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.

**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*.

**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.

**Vidura.** Brother and chief minister of King Dhritrashtra, the father of the Kauravas. See *Mahabharata*.

**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.

**Vivekananda.** Disciple of Ramakrishna; one of the founders of the Ramakrishna order. He taught *Vedantic* philosophy in Europe, America, and India.

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

**Yama.** God of Death; death personified.

**Yasoda.** Adoptive mother of Krishna.

**yoga.** Union with God. Also the path by which this union of the soul with God is achieved. The four important paths of *yoga* are knowledge, action, meditation, and devotion.

**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 *Kali-yuga*.

