

Glossary

This glossary contains many Sanskrit words, people, places, and literature that Sathya Sai Baba uses in His discourses, especially discourses 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 or Kindle), 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 the text.

abhisheka. Ablution, bathing.

adwaita. Nondualism or monism, the *Vedantic* doctrine that everything is God, the philosophy of absolute oneness of God, soul, and universe.

Agastya. Sage and author of several *Vedic* hymns. Also the Indian astronomical name of the star of Canopus, since its rising coincides with the calming of the waters of the Indian Ocean.

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. The knower, the “I”.

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

ahamkara. Ego, self-love, selfish individuality.

ahimsa. Nonviolence.

ajnana. Ignorance, stupidity, that which prevents perception of Reality.

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

Ambarisha. Pious king of the Ikshvaku dynasty. Son of Prasusruka and father of Nahusha.

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.

Anjaneya. A name for Hanuman.

annamaya kosa. Sheath of the body composed of food; the physical sheath.

antaryamin. Inner ruler or Being that guides all creatures.

aradhana. Divine service; propitiation.

archana. Worship, adoration.

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

asanthi. Lack of peace; agitated mind; restlessness. Opposite of *santhi*.

asthika. Believer; theist; God-revering person.

Aswathama. Son of Drona.

Atma. Self; Soul. Self, with limitations, is the individual soul. Self, with no limitations, is Brahman, the Su-

preme Reality.

Atma-jnana. Knowledge of Self-realization; awareness of *Atma*.

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

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

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.

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.

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.

Bhagavath-thathwa. True or essential nature of the Lord. Wisdom of the divine.

bhajana, 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.

Balarama. Elder brother of Krishna, noted for his strength.

Bharatha. Son of Dasaratha and Kaika; brother of Rama. “Bharatha” means “he who rules”.

bhavasagara. Ocean of worldly existence. The ocean that a person has to cross to reach the other side for liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

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.

bhur. The physical world.

bhuvah. The mental world.

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

brahma-chari. Student, celibate, first stage of life of a *brahmin* in the *brahmin* caste; one who dwells in God consciousness.

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.

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

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

Brihaspathi. Teacher of the gods for their battle against the demons. Son of the sage Angiras, who was a son of Brahma.

Buddha. Prince Gautama, circa 556–480 BC. Founder of Buddhism after attaining enlightenment.

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).

chaithanya. Consciousness, intelligence, spirit.

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

chit. Consciousness, knowledge, awareness.

dama. Control of the outer senses. Self-control. Restraint of the sense organs, which run after sense objects seeking pleasure.

darshan. Sight of a holy person.

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

Dasarathi. Son of Dasaratha, or Rama.

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. Name for Yudhistira, eldest of the five Pandava brothers; also, a name for Yama, God of death.

Dhritharashtra. Father of Kauravas; holder of ruling power.

dhyana. Meditation.

Dronacharya. Drona, the teacher of archery and war tactics for the Pandavas and Kauravas.

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.

Durga. Goddess of the universe; mother earth; daughter of Himaval 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.

dwaitha. Dualism; separation of God and the created universe; the doctrine that the individual and Supreme Soul are two distinct principles.

Gajendra. Elephant. In one discourse, Sai Baba mentions that the Gajendra or elephant (man) who was caught by the alligator (egotism) while frolicking in the lake (the objective world) was saved by the Lord (spiritual practices)..

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

Gauri. Siva's consort Parvathi; means "fair-complexioned".

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

Gopala. Cowherd boy. A name for Lord Krishna.

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.

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

Harischandra. King of the solar dynasty; very renowned for his unique truthfulness and integrity. Sold himself and family for the sake of truth.

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.

Hiranyaksha. Wicked brother of Hiranyakasipu; killed by the wild boar *Avatar* of Vishnu.

hridayakasa. Firmanent of the heart. Space in the (spiritual) heart in which the Self is imagined in prayer and meditation.

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

Isa. Supreme, Lord.

Iswara. 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.

Janaki. Janaka's daughter Sita.

japa. Soft prayer or repetition of the name of God or a sacred mantra.

jiva. Individual soul with ego, in a state of non-realisation of its identity with Brahman.

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

jnani. A person possessing *jnana*.

Kaikeyi. Also **Kaika**. A princess of Kekaya (Kashmir), third wife of Dasaratha, and mother of Bharatha.

Kailas. Siva's mountain abode; Bhagiratha performed penance here to bring down the river Ganga.

Kali. Mother goddess associated with death.

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) *prarabdha*, which is being exhausted in the present life; (ii) *agami*, 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 Kaanda. The section of the *Vedas* dwelling mainly on rituals; the *samhithas* and the *Brahmana* of the *Vedas*.

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*.

Kausalya. Daughter of the King of Kosala, first wife of Dasaratha, and mother of Rama.

kosa. Sheath. The five sheaths enclosing the soul are the sheaths of bliss, intelligence, mind, vital energy, and physical matter.

Krishna. The *Avatar* of Vishnu in the *Dwapara Yuga* (era), prior to the present *Kali Yuga*.

kshatriya. Protector, warrior; see Caste.

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

kshetra-jna. Knower of the truth of life; the Spirit; the individual, knowing Self.

Kuchela. A poor *brahmin* classmate of Krishna.

Kumbhakarna. Younger brother of Ravana, who slept for six months at a time.

Kunthi. Also **Kunthi Devi.** Mother of Pandavas, wife of King Pandu (the younger brother of emperor Dhritrashtra), 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.

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).

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.

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.

manomaya-kosa. Mental sheath of the body, consisting of the mind and the five subtle sensory organs.

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*.

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.

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.

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 Rajastan 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.

Nanak. 15th century founder of Sikh religion.

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.

Parasurama. An incarnation of Vishnu as man, born to destroy the arrogance of the wicked *kshatriya* kings.

Parvathi. Siva's consort.

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.

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.

pranamaya 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.

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.

puja. Worship.

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.

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

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

rajas/rajo guna. One of the three *gunas* (qualities or dispositions) of *maya* or *prakriti*. *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 *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).

Rudra. Vedic God of dissolution of the cosmos; named Siva in his auspicious or benevolent form; one of the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Rudra/Siva.

sadhaka. Spiritual aspirant.

sadhana. Spiritual discipline or exercise; self effort.

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 communioned 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. Sanjaya had the gift granted by sage Vyasa of seeing events at a distance, and he tells Dhritharashtra what is happening in the battle. See *Mahabharatha*.

Sankara. Another name for Siva (means beneficent, conferring happiness).

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

santham. Equanimity, serenity, tranquility.

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 *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.

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.

Shirdi. Town in which Shirdi Sai Baba had his ashram, about 250 km ENE of Mumbai, India.

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.

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).

Sivarathri. The fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, when the moon is waning. Mahasivarathri is the Sivarathri when the sun is in the sign of Aquarius, generally February or March. *Siva-rathri* means "Auspicious darkness". In His discourse of 7 March 1978, Sai Baba explained, "The waned moon may be taken to stand for the mind with all its wild fancies and waywardness reduced after it has been conquered by spiritual discipline. On this night, there is just a minute part more to be conquered, and that can be done by keeping vigil and dwelling on the glory of God." That is the reason for night-long devotional singing on Mahasivarathri.

soham. I am God.

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.

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

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

Suka. Divine son of author of the *Mahabharatha*, Vyasa. Visited King Janaka, who instructed him in the path to liberation. Also, a messenger of Ravana was named Suka.

sukshma. Subtle; small; that which expands.

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

Surdas. A great blind devotee of Krishna.

surya. The sun.

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

suvah. The celestial, spiritual world.

swadharma. One's own *dharma* or duty.

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

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.

Thath. That, the Godhead.

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

thwam. Thou, You, This, the individual.

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*.

upasana. Worship, devotion, meditation practice, acquisition of the presence of the Lord..

Upasana Kaanda. The portion of the *Vedas* that deals with worship.

Vaikunta. Vishnu's heaven.

vairagya. Detachment, renunciation.

vaisya. Business person, trader, merchant. See Caste

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

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

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) *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.

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

Vasishta. One of the greatest 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.

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.vijnanamaya kosa*. Body sheath of intellect, intuition.

Vibhishana. Brother of Ravana; Demon chief who represented pure mindedness and sided with Rama.

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.

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*.

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

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*.