

# Glossary

Meanings 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.

**aham.** The knower, the “I”.

**ahamkara.** Ego, self-love, selfish individuality.

**ahimsa.** Nonviolence.

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

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

**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*.

**Aswathama.** Son of Drona.

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

**Atmarama.** Eternal bliss; Rama in the heart.

**Atmaswarupa.** Embodiment of the all-pervading divine Self.

**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.

**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.

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

**Bhagiratha.** King of Solar Dynasty, son of Amsuman. Gave up his kingdom for enlightenment, but eventually returned as king.

**Bhagirati.** Name for the Ganga river, because Bhagiratha brought the river to earth.

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

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

**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).

**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.

**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*.

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

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

**darshan.** Sight of a holy person.

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

**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.

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

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

**Drupada.** King of Panchala (Punjab) and father of Droupadi.

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

**Easwara (Isvara)** 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

**Gauri.** Siva’s consort Parvathi.

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

**Govinda.** Govinda and Gopala are names of Krishna, referring to his occupation as a young boy as a cowherd.

**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.

**Hara.** God; name for Siva.

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

**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.

**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.

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

**jathi.** Race, birth, humanity.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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

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

**Kausika.** Name for Viswamitra, since he was Kusa’s son.

**Kesava.** “Slayer of the demon Kesi”; a name for Krishna.

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

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

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

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

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

**leela.** 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*), 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.

**Maheswara.** Name for Siva; the great Lord.

**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.

**Mandodari.** Ravana’s wife, queen of Lanka.

**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*.

**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.

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

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

**Panduranga.** A name for Krishna, which means: the pure Lord and leader of the Pandavas.

**Parabrahman.** Universal Absolute Brahman.

**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. Also known as Gauri (fair complexioned) and by other names.

**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.

**prana.** Life-breath, life force, vital energy, the five vital airs.

**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.

**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.

**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".

**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).

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

**Sakkubai.** A famous Krishna devotee.

**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.** 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.

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

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

**Sankranthi.** *Sankranthi*, meaning “sacred change”, occurs every month as the sun moves from one house of the Zodiac to another. But special sacredness is attached to the movement of the sun to Capricorn (*Makara*), so this day is known as *Makara Sankranthi*. This day is related to the beginning of the apparent northward movement of the sun. This auspicious day heralds the conferment of many worldly and spiritual blessings on man. It is a witness to the prospective successes of humanity in many fields. (From Sai Baba’s discourses of 14 Jan 1997 and 14 Jan 1998).

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

**saranagathi.** Absolute self-surrender.

**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.

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

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

**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.

**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).

**soham.** I am God.

**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 *prakriti*. It is the quality of dullness, inertia, darkness and tendency to evil. It results in ignorance.

**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*.

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

**upadhi.** Container, disguise, encasement, limitation.

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

**Vaikunta.** Vishnu's heaven.

**vairagya.** Detachment, renunciation.

**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 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.

**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.

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

**Vinayaka.** Vinayaka is another name for Ganesha, the elephant-headed Deity who is known as the remover of obstacles. Ganesh is often honoured at the beginning of rituals and ceremonies; for example, the first *bhajan* in a devotional song session may be a Ganesh *bhajan*.

**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.

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

**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*

