

**GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT
WORDS**

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- akṣara* (1) The Immutable, Indivisible.
(2) Sound-unit of the alphabet.
(3) Monosyllable Aum.
- Akṣara Brahman* (1) The immutable Brahman.
(2) The sound or word expressing Brahman.
- ānanda* Bliss, delight, joy. The bliss that is beyond happiness and sorrow and not affected by either.
- Ānanda Svarūpinī* One whose essential nature is bliss. (*Rūpini* is the feminine of *rūpa*.)
- Annapūrṇā* An aspect of the Divine Mother: Giver of food, physical and spiritual. Viśvanātha and Annapūrṇā are the presiding deities of Vārāṇasi.

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ārati A devotional ceremony in Hindu worship with the waving of lights, incense etc, before the object of adoration.

āsana Yogic posture or physical pose. Every posture corresponds to a particular state of mind. Yogic postures are helpful to concentration or are expressive of focussed energies. Certain yogic poses are also used for curative purposes.

āśrama The four *āśramas* (*brahmacārya*, *grihastha*, *vānaprastha*, *sainyāsa*) are the four successive stages of life from the viewpoint of a pilgrim on the spiritual path.

Ātmā or *Ātman* True Self. Supreme Existence or Being that is of the nature of Self-awareness and Self-delight and behind all manifestations in nature.

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Ātma darśana Vision of the true Self. The Self is Self-luminous and cannot be revealed through the instrumentality of anything else.

Bhagavad Gītā The Lord's Song. An episode from the Hindu epi: Mahābhārata in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the 8th Avatara of Viṣṇu, expounds the doctrine of selfless action, done as duty, not for profit or recognition but in a spirit of dedication to the One Supreme Being. The Gītā has been translated into most languages of the world.

Bhagavān Supreme Reality, endowed with infinite power, unbounded compassion and unlimited knowledge.

bhakta Devotee. One who advances by the path of devotion.

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- bhakti* Devotion and love for God.
- brahmacārī* A student who devotes himself to spiritual practices and to service, and observes strict celibacy.
- brahmacārya āśrama* The first of the four *āśramas* into which life is divided according to the Hindu system, the stage of the religious student. (See also *brahmacārī* and *āśrama*.)
- Brahman* The Supreme Reality conceived as one and undifferentiated, static as well as dynamic, yet above both.
- dal* Split peas, beans, lentils. Boiled dal together with rice or unleavened bread is the most common food in India.
- darśana* Sight, vision. One speaks of having *darśana* of a saint, sage or a deity, etc,

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- which means to be blessed by his sight or presence.
- dharma* The law of being. It signifies the inner principle of religion. Man's dharma is to realize his innate Divinity. The word "dharma" conveys in Sanskrit the idea of righteousness in thought, life and action and implies in addition a sense of inwardness in outlook, purity in aspiration and integrity in character, capable of reflecting the blissful wholeness of Eternal Truth.
- dharmaśālā* Resthouse for pilgrims.
- dhyāna* Meditation. It is preceded by mental concentration (*dhāraṇa*) and followed by *samādhi*. When the stream of attention is constant (like the flowing of oil) it is called *dhyāna*. The highest *dhyāna* is transcendent and discriminative in charac-

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ter, and can come about only when the ego-consciousness is dissolved.

dīkṣā Initiation into the spiritual life, effected through the grace of the Guru who represents the Divine. (See also Guru.)

Gāyatrī mantra A sacred mantra of the Rigveda, a hymn to the sun, which is a prayer for enlightenment, recited daily by Hindus of the three upper castes after they have been invested with the sacred thread.

Gopāla The child Kṛṣṇa.

grihasihāsrama According to the Hindu system, human life is divided into four successive stages or āśramas looked at from the viewpoint of the pilgrim on the spiritual path. The *grihasihāsrama* is the

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second stage, preceded by *brahmacārya*, the stage of the celibate student.

Guru Spiritual guide and teacher. According to Hindu tradition the candidate for admission into the spiritual life has to place himself under the guidance of a competent teacher who usually communicates to him during *dīkṣā* (initiation) a mantra or one of the potent names of God. This mantra or name has to be repeated by the disciple regularly and in a specific manner. It is the representative of the deity (*īṣṭa*) of the disciple.

Guru grantha Grantha Book, especially scripture. Guru Dispeller of darkness. A collection of the Guru's teaching which unties the knots (*granthi*) of ignorance. (Popularly *guru grantha* refers to the col-

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lected writings of the Sikh Gurus that are worshipped in Sikh temples as the Deity Itself.)

Gurupūrṇimā Fullmoon day in July. It is the custom in India to worship the Guru on that day.

haṭhayoga Yogic practice through the medium of the body. It has different features, all intended to purify the body with respect to the three humours : *vayu*, *pitta*, *śleśma* (nervous energy, bile, phlegm.) When these are in harmony there is health. *Haṭhayoga* is a stepping-stone to a higher yoga called *rājayoga*.

Iṣṭa Literally "Beloved". The chosen deity one worships, the Object of one's supreme

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desire. It is the Supreme Reality in its aspect of *ānanda*. It appears as a form on the lower plane but in reality is nothing but the Self that is beyond form. *Iṣṭa* is the particular aspect of the Divine with which the disciple will have to be in perfect communion before the Supreme Divine Gnosis becomes possible.

jagat Literally 'that which is constantly going', i.e. the world which is always in a state of change and transition.

japa The practice of repeating a mantra or the Lord's name as a means to a continual recollection of His presence. The repetition may be for a fixed or an indefinite number of times. *Japa* may be vocal, semi-vocal or mental. The last is supposed to be the

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best. The sound should, as a rule, be inaudible to others. *Japa* may be done either without rhythm or rhythmically, following the natural flow of the breath. The counting during *japa* may be done either with the help of a rosary or with the help of one's fingers in the prescribed manner.

jīva Individual consciousness, monadic in character. It is conceived either as an eternal aspect of the Brahman or as an artificial manifestation of the Brahman under the influence of *māyā* or *avidyā* (ignorance of the true nature of Reality or Self), and ceases to exist when that influence subsides through the supervention of *Jñāna* (Knowledge of Reality).

karma Action, the result of action as well as

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the law of cause and effect by which actions inevitably bear their fruit. Karma originates from the individual self in its ignorance functioning as an active agent. When man realizes his own true Self, karma ceases for him.

Kāśi Vārāṇasi (Benares).

kheyāla A sudden and unexpected psychic emergence, be it desire, will, attention, memory or knowledge. When Mataji uses the word with reference to Her person, it must be understood to denote a spontaneous upsurge of Will, which is divine and therefore free.

kīrtana Chanting or singing of the names or glories of God, performed by one person or a group of people, usually to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums.

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kriyā Any kind of ritual or purificatory action or yogic meditative process such as control of energies in the spine.

Kṛṣṇa Attractive force. The 8th *Avatāra* (Incarnation) of Viṣṇu. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is considered to have been a *pūrṇa* (perfect, complete) *Avatāra*.

kumārī The eternal immaculate Virgin, divine in nature. *Kumārī* is the Mother of the entire creation.

kundalinī The Serpent Power that is said to lie coiled up slumbering at the base of the spine of the ordinary person. By yoga it can be roused and made to rise up through the spine. When it reaches the crown of the head there is enlightenment.

līlā Play. Movements and activities of the

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Supreme Being, free by nature and not subject to laws. *Vaiṣṇavas* explain creation as the *līlā* of God.

Mahāmāyā The Supreme Power of creation. A name of the Divine Mother.

Mahanta Head of a religious organization.

Mahātmā Great soul; a person who has destroyed his ego and realized himself as one with the All.

mahāyoga Supreme Union. Union of every individual with every other individual, of every object with every other object and of all individuals and objects with the universal One.

mantra A series of sounds of great potency. It is the sound representation of the *Iṣṭa Devatā*. Name and form are inseparable;

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if therefore the name is instinct with life, the form that it represents is bound to reveal itself, provided the practice is intensive enough.

mārga Path.

māyā The Supreme Divine Power by which the One conceals Itself and appears as the many.

mudrā Particular pose of the body as a whole or of its parts, representing the expression of a particular *deva śakti* (higher natural force). Without that pose that particular *śakti* cannot function. The performance of *mudrās* is necessary in order to produce necessary changes in the mind or character.

Omkāra The syllable "Om".

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Parābrahman Supreme Reality.

Paramārtha The supreme Object of human life. Inner treasure, highest meaning.

Paramātmā Supreme *Ātmā* of the entire universe, of the individual as well as of the cosmos.

prakṛti Nature or Primordial Matter, consisting of the three *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

praṇāma Obeisance. A posture of surrender, indicating one's own smallness in the presence of the Divine.

prārabdha karma The portion of one's past actions which is bound to fructify in the present life and cannot be averted.

pūjā Ceremonial worship of the Hindus. Offering of various articles representing all aspects of oneself to the object of adoration.

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Rṣi Seer. *Rṣis* are said to be that class of beings, distinct from gods, men, demons, etc. to whom mantras are revealed.

roṭi Unleavened bread. This or rice are the most common food in India.

śabda Sound, word.

Śabda Brahman The eternal Sound-power or vibration that is the first manifestation of the Supreme Reality and lies at the root of all subsequent creation.

Saccidānanda The Supreme Reality as self-existent Being — Consciousness — Bliss (*Sat — Cit — Ānanda*).

Sadguru The perfect Guru who shows the way to the realization of What IS.

sādhaka One who practises *sādhana*.

sādhana Spiritual practice for the purpose

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of preparing oneself for Self-realization.

sādhikā Female *sādhaka*.

sādhu One who lives free from family and business entanglements in order to dedicate all his time and energy to spiritual endeavour.

Śakti Power that is eternal and supreme and of the nature of consciousness. In Hindu mythology *Śakti* is often symbolized by a divine woman.

saṁsāra Cycle of the life in the world through a series of births and deaths. It is consequent on ignorance of the true nature of the Self and of karma.

saṁskāra Impressions, inclinations, psychic traces left in the mind after any experience, often brought over from former births.

saṁnyāsa Renunciation. According to the ancient Hindu system, the last stage of human life in which a man has to renounce family, possessions, caste, social position, etc — in fact everything to which he is attached — and surrender himself to the Divine.

saṁnyāsa mantra Mantra communicated during *saṁnyāsa* initiation for the specific purpose of bringing about complete renunciation.

saṁnyāsī One who has taken *saṁnyāsa* or been seized with *saṁnyāsa*.

sanātana dharma Eternal dharma. The universal teaching based on ancient revealed scriptures plus the experience of countless saints and sages throughout the centuries.

sandhyā Specific spiritual practice performed daily as a duty at sunrise and sunset.

śāstras The sacred Hindu scriptures.

satsang The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, either the physical company or the mental company by reading holy scriptures or the lives and teachings of saints. Also, a religious meeting. In its widest sense the practice of the presence of God.

svarūpa The Thing Itself. The true nature of anything.

Tantra A class of Hindu *Śāstras* which are said to constitute the Scripture of the *Kaliyuga*; a code of religious ceremonies, in particular for the worship of Śiva and Durgā. The *Tantra Śāstra* is a development of the *Karmakāṇḍa*, the portion of the Vedas which relates to ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites.

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tapasyā Hardships undergone with the definite object of attaining to the Spiritual.

vairāgya Total disinterest in the things of the world. A state beyond attraction and repulsion.

vairāgya mārga The path leading to *vairāgya*, detachment or dispassion.

vānī Word, speech, message. A name of Saraswati, the goddess of speech, learning, music and *brahmavidyā*.

vibhūti Outer expressions of the inner Reality.

(1) The one Supreme Form revealed in all objects of the senses.

(2) Supernormal powers acquired by a yogi in the course of his journey to perfection. These powers are realized through the purification of the mind. Fundamentally all *vibhūtis* are mental powers.

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vigraha Concrete External Presence as Form. An image consecrated through mantras or through the devotion and adoration of the worshipper becomes the Deity Itself.

viraha Separation from one's object of adoration and love.

viraha rasa Acute pangs and yearning felt at the separation from one's object of adoration and love.

Viśvanātha The Lord of the universe. An epithet of Śiva, *Viśvanātha* is the presiding deity of Varanasi.

yoga Literally "union". Various methods of achieving the union of the individual *Ātmā* with the universal *Ātmā*.

yogī One who practises yoga or has mastered it.

