

## **GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS**



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*adhikāra* Inner authority and qualification.

*ajapa* A state in which *japa* goes, on continuously and effortlessly in rhythm with the movement of the breath.

*akṣara* 1. The Immutable.  
2. Sound unit of the alphabet.  
3. Monosyllable Aum.

*Akṣara Brahman* 1. The immutable Brahman.  
2. The sound or word expressing Brahman.

*aratī* 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.

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

*Avatāra Śabda* A mantra or name which is the sound form of an *Avatāra* (Divine Incarnation).

*bhakta* Devotee. One who advances by the path of *bhakti*.

*bhakti* Devotion and love for God.

*bīja mantra* Seed mantra.

*brahmacharya aśrama* The first of the four *aśrama* into which life is divided according to the Hindu system : the stage of the religious student, who devotes himself to spiritual practices and service, and observes strict celibacy.

*Chaitanya Mahāprabhu* The great apostle of Vaishnavism, born in 1485 A.D. in Bengal, who taught the path of divine love for the realization of God. He spent much of his life in a state of God-intoxication and, experienced many transcendental *bhāvas* (moods) that also caused certain transformations in the body.

*dharmasāla* Rest-house for pilgrims.

*dhobi* Washerman.

*dhyāna* Meditation. It is preceded by mental concentration (*dharana*) and followed by *samādhi*. When the stream of attention is constant it is called *dhyāna*.

*dīkṣā* Initiation into the spiritual life, effected through the grace of the Guru.

*gerua* The colour worn by *samnyāsīs* and *naistik* brahmacharis.

*ghī* Clarified butter.

*grihasthāśrama* 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 *grihasthāśrama* is the second stage, the *āśramas* of the married householder and housewife.

*gurdwāra* Sikh temple.

*haṭhayoga* Yogic practice through the medium of the body. *Haṭhayoga* is a stepping-stone to a higher yoga called *rājayoga*.

*japa* The practice of repeating a mantra or the Lord's name as a means to the continual recollection of His presence. *Japa* may be vocal, semi-vocal or mental. It may be done either without rhythm or rhythmically, following the natural flow of the breath.

*jñāni* One who has attained to Enlightenment.

*Kaliyuga* The present age, also called "Iron Age", the era of sin and degeneration.

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

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

*kirtana* 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.

*kriyā* Yogic or ritual action.

*kumbhaka* A conscious process that aims at either retaining the breath within the body or keeping it out of the body, during which the conflicting tendencies of the incoming and outgoing breath will be in abeyance.

*kushāsana* A small mat made of kushagrass which is supposed to be congenial to meditation.

*līlā* Play. Movement and activities of the Supreme Being, free by nature and not subject to laws. Vaiṣṇavas explain Creation as the lila of God.

*Manikarnikaghat* Cremation place on the bank of the Ganges in Varanasi.

*Mahāsamādhi* Final samādhi from which there is no return to the body.

*mantra* A series of sounds of great potency. It is the sound representation of the *Iṣṭa Devata*. A mantra is a word of power, divine power transmitted through a word.

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

*moha* Infatuation, attraction through delusion.

*mudra* Particular poses of the body, as a whole or of its parts, representing the expression of a particular *aeva śakti* (higher natural force).

*namaskār* Respectful salutation.

*Nārāyaṇa* A name of Viṣṇu, the Preserver and Sustainer of the universe.

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

*prasāda* Food offered to a deity or saint becomes *prasāda* when it has been accepted and thereby blessed. It is then partaken of by the devotees. Great importance is given to *prasāda* in the Sastras. It is no longer food but a direct medium of transference of power.

*prema* Love.

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

*raja-yoga* The method of union with the supreme *Ātma* through control of the mental processes.

*rajas* One of the three properties or aspects of Prakṛiti (primordial matter). The properties, called *guṇas*, are : *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. *Rajas* is motion and what produces motion.

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

*sādhaka* One who practises *sādhana*.

*sādhana* Spiritual practice for the purpose of preparing oneself for Self-realisation.

*sādhū* One who has dedicated his life to spiritual endeavour and is free from family and business entanglements.

*saṁnyāsa* According to the ancient Hindu system the last stage of human life, in which one has to renounce family, possessions, caste, social position, working for money, etc. and surrender oneself to the Divine.

*saṁnyāsi* One who has taken *saṁnyāsa* or become a *saṁnyāsi* spontaneously.

*sahadharmini* The wife who, according to Vedic tradition, shares the dharmic life of her husband.

*Saligram* A stone representing Visnu, the Preserver of the universe.

*Śankara* A name of *Śiva*, meaning auspicious.

*Śāstras* The sacred Hindu scriptures.

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

*sattva* The quality of harmony, lightness and luminosity.

*śavāsana* Dead pose. A yogic posture of complete relaxation.

*siddhāsana* A yogic posture used for meditation.

*Śiṣya* Disciple.

*śraddha* Obsequial rites.

*tamas* Inertia, heaviness, darkness.

*tapasya* Hardships undergone with the definite object of attaining to the Spiritual.

*vairagya* Detachment from the world. A state beyond attraction and repulsion.

*vanprastja a'sraa* The third of the four a'sramas into which life is divided according to the Hindu system from the viewpoint of the pilgrim on the spiritual path, namely the a'srama of the anchorite who has retired from family life.

*vibhūti* Outer expression of the inner Reality.

1. The one Supreme Form revealed in all objects of the senses.
2. Supernormal powers acquired in the course of *sadhana*.  
Fundamentally *vibhūtis* are mental powers.

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

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