

Yoga Glossary

This glossary contains definitions for some common terms used in and around the Yoga. Terms that are prominent in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* are noted by section and sutra number.

Some key terms include the definitions from different philosophical schools. They are included to help explain differences in their use by various authors or scriptures; differences whose impact is usually on a philosophical rather than practical level.

In this glossary you will also find pertinent quotes sprinkled throughout that provide extra clarity and inspiration.

~Reverend Jaganath Carrera

A

abhyasa – Practice, continuous endeavor, vigilance, exercise, repetition, exertion; lit., to apply oneself toward. (See sutras 1.12-1.14.)

“Every aspiration may indeed be achieved if one remembers to keep the goal ever before the mind” (The Thirukkural).

advaita – Nondualism, monism. Advaita regards Reality as one and indivisible; beyond pairs of opposites, such as hot/cold, up/down, male/female, good/bad.

ahamkara – Egoism, ego feeling, the sense of self-identity; lit., the I-maker. (See sutra 2.6.)

ahimsa – Non-injury. One of the yamas. (See sutras 2.30 and 2.35.)

“The code of the pure in heart is not to return hurt for angry hurt” (The Thirukkural).

akasha – Ether, space; lit., the not visible. The subtlest of the five elements, it is the all-pervasive and dynamic ground of other elements.

anagata – That which is not yet come (referring to the silence beyond the OM vibration); belonging to the future.

anahata – The unstruck, the continuous inner humming vibration, the heart chakra.

ananda – Bliss.

“Happiness is the natural life of man” (Thomas Aquinas).

apana – Energy descending from the navel pit within the human body. Its sphere of influence is the abdominal region and it is responsible for the excretion of wastes. It is the downward-moving prana.

aparigraha – Non-greed, non-hoarding, non-acceptance of gifts. It is one of the yamas. (See sutra 2.39.) Aparigraha is also one of the five *mahavratam* (great vows) of the Jain religion; the other four are the same as the remaining four principles of yama.

“Of no avail is keenness of intellect or wide knowledge if greed seizes us and leads us to folly” (The Thirukkural).

asana – The third limb of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. A steady comfortable posture for meditation. Most of the thousands of different bending and stretching postures utilized in Hatha Yoga to enhance health and well-being are also referred to as asanas.

Ashtanga Yoga – Refers to the eight limbs of Raja Yoga: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi. (See sutra 2.29.)

atman – The Self or Brahman when regarded as abiding within the individual.

B

bhakti – Devotion; lit., to partake of, to turn to.

Bhakti Yoga – The Yoga of devotion to any name and form of the Divine.

“Bhakti is not mere emotionalism, but is the turning of the will as well as the intellect towards the Divine. It is supreme love of God. It leads to immortality or God-realization”
(Sri Swami Sivananda).

Bhagavad Gita – A Hindu scripture, a portion of the great epic the *Mahabharata* composed perhaps 2400 years ago, in which Lord Krishna instructs his disciple Arjuna in the various aspects of Yoga.

bijam – Seed, source.

Brahma – God as creator of the universe. One of the Hindu trinity, which also includes Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva.

brahmacharya – Continenence; lit. the path that leads to Brahman, or moving in Brahman. One of the yamas. (See *sutra 2.38*.) Also, a code of conduct referring to someone who studies the Vedas. It can also refer to the stage of life of a celibate student of religious studies. Practically speaking, it means to have moderation in all things.

brahmamuhurta – The two-hour period before sunrise (roughly between four and six a.m.) that is especially conducive to meditation.

Brahman– The unmanifest supreme consciousness or God; the Absolute; lit. greater than the greatest.) In Vedanta, it refers to the Absolute Reality and is regarded as that which is beyond differences. It is considered *nirguna*, beyond nature, that which cannot be conceptualized. Brahman is pure absolute existence, knowledge and bliss. It is considered as the only absolute reality, whereas the created universe is but an appearance.

buddhi– Intellect, discriminative faculty of the mind, understanding, reason. From the root *budh* to enlighten, to know. (See *mahat*.)

C

chakra –One of the subtle nerve centers along the spine; lit., wheel.

chit – To perceive, observe; to know.

chitta – Mind-stuff. While in the *Yoga Sutras*, chitta refers to the mind-stuff, in the nondualistic school of Vedanta (Advaita Vedanta) it refers to the subconscious.

D

darshana – The insight, vision or experience of a divine or enlightened being; any philosophical school. Yoga is traditionally considered one of six orthodox darshanas (philosophies) in India.

deva – Celestial being, controller of an aspect of nature.

dharana – Concentration, the practice of continually refocusing the mind on the object of meditation. The sixth of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. (See *sutras 2.29 and 3.1*.)

“As you gain control of your mind with the help of your higher Self, then your mind and ego become your allies. But the uncontrolled mind behaves as an enemy” (Bhagavad Gita 6.6).

dharma – Duty, righteousness, religion, virtue, characteristics, law, justice, universal law; lit., that which holds together. It is the foundation of all order: religious, social and moral. Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj defines dharma as that which brings harmony. In general there are two classifications of dharma: that which is common to all, and that which is specific to a particular class or stage of life. It has been further broken down as follows:

- *varna ashrama dharma*: one’s specific duty according to class and stage of life
- *sanatana dharma*: the Eternal Truth (the more accurate name for what is now commonly called Hinduism)
- *swadharma*: one’s one duty as dictated by inborn talents, traits, etc. One’s purpose in this life
- *apad dharma*: duties prescribed in times of adversity
- *yuga dharma*: the laws and codes of conduct appropriate to one’s era in time
- *sadharana dharma*: the general obligations of common duties incumbent on everyone

In Buddhism, dharma is often used to refer to cosmic order, natural law, the teachings of Lord Buddha, codes of conduct, objects, facts, or ideas.

“Keep the mind free from non-virtuous thoughts. This is the whole of dharma. All else is only of the nature of sound and show” (The Thirukkural).

dhyana – Meditation, the steady focus of the mind’s attention on the object of meditation. The seventh of the eight limbs of the Raja Yoga.

“Little by little your mind becomes one-pointed and still and you can focus on the Self without thinking of anything else” (Bhagavad Gita, 6.25).

duhkha –Suffering, pain, sorrow, grief.

“You can advance farther in grace in one hour during this time of affliction than in many days during a time of consolation” (John Eudes).

“Suffering is a short pain and a long joy” (Blessed Henry Suso).

E

ekagrata – One-pointedness of mind. (See sutras 3.11 and 3.12.)

ekam – One; Reality. Ekam is the term used in the well-known phrase from the Upanishads, *“Ekam sat, vipraha bahudha vadanti,”* *“The Truth is one (ekam); seers express it in many ways.”* This principle is the basis of the nondualistic Advaita Vedanta philosophy, which proclaims that although we see many names and forms, they are all manifestations of the One Absolute Reality.

G

guna – Quality, attribute, characteristic; lit., strand or thread. One of the three qualities of nature: sattwa, rajas and tamas; or balance, activity and inertia. (See sutras 1.16, 2.15, 2.19, 4.13 and 4.34.)

guru – A spiritual guide or teacher; lit., the weighty or venerable one. The *Guru Gita* and the *Advaya-Taraka Upanishad* also state that the syllable, *gu* = darkness and *ru* = remover. The sage Shankaracharya described a guru as one whose mind is steadfast in the highest reality; who has a pure tranquil mind; and who has directly experienced identity with Brahman. Although it is understood that God is the true and only guru, the human guru acts as a conduit for the Divine teachings, grace and guidance.

guru-parampara – The lineage of teachers; the uninterrupted succession of teachers. In *The Yoga Sutras* (1.26), Ishwara is referred to as *“the teacher of even the most ancient teachers.”*

H

hatha – *Ha* = sun; *tha* = moon. Analogous the yang and yin, ha and tha are symbolic of the interplay of the polarities of masculine and feminine, activity and rest, hot and cold, and so on, that exist within each individual and in Nature.

Hatha Yoga – The physical branch of Yoga practice. It includes postures (*asanas*), breathing techniques (*pranayama*), seals (*mudras*), locks (*bandhas*) and cleansing practices (*kriyas*). Though known for its ability to bring health, flexibility and relaxation, its ultimate objectives are the purification of the *nadis* (subtle nerve pathways) and uniting of the outgoing and incoming (or upward and downward) flows of prana. When the flow of prana is balanced and harmonious, the mind becomes still and tranquil and

ready for the subtler practices of concentration, meditation and samadhi. Hatha Yoga helps return the body to its natural state of health and ease.

I

ida – The subtle *nadi* (nerve current) that flows through the left nostril. It has the effect of cooling the system as opposed to pingala, the heating nadi on the right.

indriya – Sense organ. It can refer to either the external physical organ or the inner organ of perception. (See sutras 2.18, 2.41, 2.43, 2.54, 2.55, 3.13 and 3.48.)

Integral Yoga – The principles and practices of the six major branches of Yoga: Hatha, Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, Japa, and Raja, as taught by Sri Swami Satchidananda. The mix and emphasis of the practices is dependent on the taste, natural inclinations and temperament of the individual.

“The goal of Integral Yoga is to have an easeful body, a peaceful mind and a useful life”
(Sri Swami Satchidananda).

ishtha devata – One’s chosen deity. There is only one absolute God with the various deities being manifestations or representing aspects of that one Reality. In Hinduism and Yoga, seekers are free to choose whichever form is most meaningful to them for veneration and worship.

Ishwara – Lord, God, the Divine with form, the Supreme Cosmic Soul; from the verb root *ish* = to rule, to own.

There are several meanings for this term:

- The Supreme ruler and Controller; both transcendent and immanent.
- According to Advaita Vedanta, Ishwara is the Absolute (Brahman) as seen from within ignorance or illusion.
- The material and efficient cause of the world.
- According to Sri Patanjali: the Supreme Purusha, unaffected by afflictions, karmas or desires, the omniscient teacher of all teachers, expressed by the mantra OM. (See sutras 1.24 – 1.27.)

Ishwara pranidhanam – Worship of God or self-surrender. One of the principles of Sri Patanjali’s kriya yoga and one of the principles of niyama. (See sutras 1.23, 2.1, 2.32 and 2.45.)

“And you shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6.5).

J

japa – Repetition or recitation, usually of a mantra or name of God.

Japa Yoga – Science of mantra repetition. The repetition could be out loud, with lip movement only or mentally; or as a writing meditation (*likhita japa*). (See sutras 1.27 – 1.29.)

“Japa purifies the heart. Japa steadies the mind. Japa makes one fearless. Japa removes delusion. Japa gives supreme peace. Japa gives health, wealth, strength and long life. Japa brings God-consciousness” (Sri Swami Sivananda).

jaya – Victory, mastery. (See sutras 2.41, 3.5, 3.40, 3.45, 3.48, 3.49.)

jiva(tman) – Individual soul. According to Sankhya philosophy, *jivas* (souls) are infinite in number, conscious and eternal. There is neither birth nor death for the jiva. According

to Advaita Vedanta, the jiva is a blending of the Self and not-Self due to an incorrect identification of the Self with the body-mind.

jivanmukta – Liberated living soul. Liberation results from the discrimination between the spirit and Nature and the ultimate dissolution of ignorance (*avidya*).

A jivanmukta, “*has double consciousness. He enjoys the bliss of Brahman. He also has the experience of this world*” (Sri Swami Sivananda).

jnanam – Wisdom of the Self; knowledge, idea. The word is often used to refer to insights gained from meditation and samadhi.

Jnana Yoga – Yoga of Self-inquiry, knowledge and study. It is characterized by contemplation on the true nature of the Self, the constant effort to discriminate between what is real (permanent and unchanging) and what is unreal (that which changes).

jyoti – Illumination, effulgence, light.

K

kaivalya – Absolute freedom, independence, isolation, liberation. (*See sutras 2.25, 3.51, 3.56, 4.26 and 4.34.*)

karma – The universal law of action and reaction; cause and effect. It is of four classes (*see sutra 4.7.*) according to the effects the actions produce.

- white = happiness
- black = unhappiness
- black & white (mixed) = a mix of happiness and sorrow
- neither black nor white = actions – like those of the yogi – which transcend karma, leaving the individual free

Karma can also be classified as follows:

- *Sanjita* – all the accumulated actions from previous births awaiting another lifetime to bear fruit
- *Prarabdha* – karmas manifesting in the present birth
- *Agami* – karmas currently being created

(*See sutras 1.24, 2.12, 2.13, 3.23, 4.7 and 4.30.*)

Karma Yoga – Performing actions as selfless service without attachment to the results, performance of one’s duties without selfish expectation, actions performed for the joy of serving.

“*Live for the sake of others. Spend a little time every day for your own health and peace and then share it with everyone*” (Sri Swami Satchidananda).

karuna – Mercy, compassion.

“*Diverse are the teachings of the religions of the world, but in all will be found that compassion is that which confers spiritual deliverance. Hold on to it*” (The Thirukkural).

klesa – Misery, root obstruction. (*See sutra 2.3.*) In Indian scriptural literature, klesas are also referred to as *viparyaya* or error (*see sutra 1.8*).

kriya – Action, practices. According to Sri Patanjali, it comprises the three preliminary steps in Yoga (tapas, svadhyaya, and Ishwara pranidhanam, or austerity, study and self-surrender). (*See sutra 2.1.*) The word also is used to refer to the cleansing practices of Hatha Yoga.

kumbhaka – Breath retention. It could be voluntary as part of the practice of pranayama (as in the breathing practices of Hatha Yoga) or occurring naturally in deep meditative states (in which case it is referred to as *kevala kumbhaka*).

kundalini – The primordial energy, lit., the coiled energy, stored at the base of the spine in the *muladhara chakra* of every individual. When awakened naturally through the one-pointed attentiveness and purification of selfishness, it begins to move upward within the subtle central channel (*sushumna*) of the spine, piercing and enlivening the chakras and initiating a total rejuvenation and spiritual evolution of the entire being. Because a forced, premature awakening of this energy can result in undesirable consequences, it is compared to a cobra that must be handled with great care.

M

Mahat – Great (in space, time, quality or degree). Also a synonym for *buddhi*, the discriminative faculty of the mind. According to Sankhya philosophy, it is the cosmic aspect of the intellect and the first expression of Prakriti. From, mahat, the ego evolves. Mahat is also used as a term of respect and reverence for evolved spiritual individuals.

maharishi – Great sage. It is from *maha* = great + *drsh* = to see. Therefore, maharishi literally means, *great seer*; the one who has seen (experienced) spiritual truths.

maitri – Friendliness. A virtue to be cultivated in Yoga, it is also one of the fundamental principles cherished by all Buddhas and *Bodhisattvas* (awakened ones). (See sutras 1.33 and 3.24.)

“The triple service of friendship is to take the friend out of the wrong path, to lead him into the right path and to share in his misfortune” (The Thirukkural).

manas –Mind, from the root *man*, to think. This important term has several variations in meaning according to different schools of traditional thought. It emerges from the pure (*sattwic*) aspect of ego (*ahamkara*) and is regarded as the inner organ (*antahkarana*). As such, it receives and arranges input from the senses and conveys it to the buddhi.

mantra –A sound formula used for meditation, a sacred word or phrase of great spiritual significance and power, scriptural hymns; lit., a thought that protects. (See sutra 1.27.)

“A mantra is divinity encased within a sound-structure. It is divine power or Daivi Shakti manifesting in a sound-body” (Sri Swami Sivananda).

The Bible also teaches the significance and power of sound: *“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God”* (John 1.1).

maya – Illusion, the principle of appearance, the mysterious power of creation. It has several shades of meaning:

- The force or quality that persuades us to misperceive the unreal as real, the temporary as permanent, the painful as pleasurable, the non-Self as the Self and the unconditioned Absolute as having attributes. (See sutra 2.5, which though not using the word *maya*, presents ignorance as having the same power. In fact, the sage Shankaracharya used the terms *maya* and *avidya* interchangeably.)
- According to Advaita Vedanta, it is the beginningless cause which brings about the illusory manifestation of the universe. It is not ultimately real and cannot function without Brahman. Maya is how the one reality can appear as many. Because it is illusory, it has significance only on the relative level.

mudra – Sign, seal or symbol. In Hatha Yoga, it is a posture, or a gesture or movement of the hands, which holds or directs the prana within. Many deities and saints are depicted performing mudras which grant benediction.

N

nada – Sound, the sound heard in deep meditation. The first vibration out of which all creation manifests. Sound is the first manifestation of the Absolute Brahman and is represented by the crescent shape in the Sanskrit script for OM.

nadi – Subtle channels of energy flow in the body. There are 72,000 such conduits of vital energy in the body. The most important are *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna*. *Ida* functions as the cooling, receptive parasympathetic nervous system-like activities and is associated with the left nostril. *Pingala*'s activities bring more movement, heat and sympathetic nervous system-like functions and are associated with the right nostril. The *sushumna* is associated with the hollow in the center of the spinal cord and is the channel through which the awakened kundalini energy moves in its journey from chakra to chakra until it reaches the crown of the head (*sahasrara*). The *Yoga Sutras* only mention *kurma nadi* (tortoise-shaped nadi) whose primary function is to bring stability to the body and mind. (See *sutra* 3.32.)

nirodha – To still or restrain; cessation. From the verb root *rudh* = to obstruct, restrict, arrest, avert + *ni* = down or into, it refers to both the process and attainment of stilling all activities of the mind (which obscures the experience of the Purusha). Traditionally, it is said to be applied on four levels: *vritti*, *pratyaya*, *samskara* and *sarva*. These four levels describe increasingly more complete and deeper attainments of nirodha.

- *Vrittis* – modifications of the mind-stuff; movements or currents of thought; thought processes.
- *Pratyaya* – notions, beliefs; the thoughts that immediately arise in the mind when it is stimulated by an object.
- *Samskara* – subconscious impressions.
- *Sarva* – a complete cessation of all mental activity.

(See *sutras* 1.2, 1.12, 1.51 [in which *nirodha* is translated as “wiped out”] and 3.9.)

Sri Swami Vivekananda says the following regarding nirodha: “*The chitta is always trying to get back to its natural pure state, but the organs draw it out. To restrain it, to check this outward tendency, and to start it on the return journey to the Essence of Intelligence is the first step in yoga, because only in this way can the chitta get into its proper state.*”

nirvana – To extinguish, blow out. In Buddhist teachings, it refers to the state of liberation. It has also been referred to as unborn, unconditional, unchanging, indescribable, a state of nonattachment to either being or non-being; the state of absolute freedom.

nirvikalpa – A term used in Vedanta for the samadhi that is without thought or imagination. It is analogous to asamprajnata samadhi in the *Yoga Sutras*.

niyama – Observance (the second of the eight limbs of Yoga). (See *sutras* 2.32 and 2.40-45.)

O

OM – The cosmic sound vibration which is the source of, and includes, all other sounds and vibrations. OM is the absolute Brahman as sound and the foundation of all mantras. It is composed of the letters *A*, *U*, and *M*, which respectively represent creation, evolution and dissolution, or the waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep states. Beyond these states

is a fourth, the *anahata* or unrepeatd. (See *sutra 1.27*, in which the word “*pranava*”, or humming, is equivalent to OM.)

ojas – A subtle energy that enlivens the body and mind. It is accumulated in many ways but is particularly associated with the preservation of sexual energy. Poor diet, overwork, anger, stress and worry deplete ojas, while the opposite conditions increase it. When ojas becomes chronically low, it leads to degenerative disease and premature aging. Although ojas is present throughout the body, it is especially associated with the heart.

P

param – Highest, supreme

Patanjali – The sage who compiled the *Yoga Sutras*. He is often referred to as the “Father of Yoga.” Some identify him as also the author of the *Mahabhashya*, an important Sanskrit grammatical text, which dates to the second century B.C. E. There are also other works attributed to an author(s) named Patanjali, including texts on medicine.

In popular tradition, Sri Patanjali is considered an incarnation of the mythical serpent *Ananta* (or *Sesha*), on whom Lord Vishnu rests before the beginning of a new cycle of creation. Symbolically, snakes were said to be the guardians of esoteric teachings and *Ananta*, as Lord of the snakes, presided over them all. *Ananta* took on human form as Patanjali for the benefit of humanity.

In another version, Patanjali is said to have fallen from the sky as a newborn serpent into the hands of his mother as she was offering water in worship of the sun. She called him Patanjali from *pata* (meaning both serpent and fallen) and *anjali* (referring to hands cupped in worship).

pingala – A subtle nerve current that flows to the right nostril and is heating in its effect.

Prakriti – Primordial Nature. In Sankhya philosophy it is one of the two fundamental categories of existence, the other being Purusha. Although Prakriti is active, consciousness is not intrinsic to its nature. In Advaita Vedanta, Prakriti is a principle of illusion (*maya*) and is therefore not real.

prana – The vital energy, life breath, life force. Though one, prana is divided into five major categories according to its functions:

- *prana*: rising upwards
- *apana*: moving downwards. Governs the abdomen and excretory functions
- *vyana*: governs circulation of blood
- *samana*: the force that equalizes; also responsible for the digestive process. (See *sutra 3.41*.)
- *udana*: directs vital currents upwards (See *sutra 3.40*.)

pranava – OM, the basic hum of the vibration of the universe. (See “OM” and *sutra 1.27*.)

pranayama – The practice of controlling the vital force, usually through control of the breath. The fourth of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. (See *sutras 2.49 - 2.53*.)

pranidhanam – Total dedication, self-surrender. (See *sutras 1.23, 2.1, 2.32 and 2.45*.) In Buddhism, pranidhanam is taken to mean a vow and usually refers to the Bodhisattva’s vow of helping all beings attain liberation.

prasadam – Consecrated food offering, grace, tranquility.

pratipaksha bhavanam – Practice of substituting positive thought forms for disturbing, negative ones. (See *sutras 2.33 and 2.34*.)

pratyahara – Sense control, withdrawal of the senses from their objects (the fifth of the eight limbs of the *Yoga Sutras*). (See sutras 2.54 and 2.55.)

puja – Worship service.

Purusha – The divine Self which abides in all beings; individual soul. Depending on the context, texts might use “Purusha” to refer to the individual soul or to the Absolute God. In Sankhya philosophy, Purusha along with Prakriti constitute the two basic categories of creation. It is pure consciousness which is unchanging, eternal and pure. The *Yoga Sutras* also use the word “Seer” (see sutras 2.17, 2.20, 2.21, and 2.25) and “Owner” (see sutra 2.23), to refer to the same reality. According to Advaita Vedanta, Purusha is One and is the eternal witness of all there is. (See sutras 1.16, 1.24; 3.36, 3.50, 3.56; 4.18 and 4.34.)

R

raga – Attachment, liking, desire. (See sutras 1.37, 2.3 and 2.7.)

raja – King.

Raja Yoga – Royal Yoga; another name by which the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* are known. Sri Swami Satchidananda writes in the preface to his commentary on the *Yoga Sutras*: “It is a practical handbook. Every time you pick it up you can absorb more for your growth. Let us slowly try to understand more; and, what little we understand, let us try to practice. Practice is the most important factor in Yoga.”

rajas – Activity, restlessness (one of the three gunas).

S

sabda – Sound, word or name.

sadhana – Spiritual practices, usually formal, but also refers to the cultivation of mindfulness and proper attitudes in life.

“You must have interest and liking in your sadhana. You must understand well the technique and benefits of sadhana” (Sri Swami Sivananda).

sahasrara chakra – The thousand-petaled lotus; the subtle center of consciousness at the crown of the head, where the awareness and energy go in the higher samadhis.

shakti, Shakti – Energy, power, capacity, the kundalini force; the divine cosmic energy which creates, evolves and dissolves the universe. As a proper name, *Shakti* is used to designate the consort of Lord Siva or the Divine Mother in general.

samadhi – Contemplation, superconscious state, absorption (the eighth and final limb of the eight limbs listed in the *Yoga Sutras*); lit., to hold together completely. Samadhi can refer to any of several states in which the mind is (to a greater or lesser degree) absorbed in a state of union with the object of meditation. It is beyond all thought, untouched by speech or words. It is the experience of unwavering stillness and awareness and leads to intuitive wisdom. (See sutras 1.17, 1.18; 1.41-1.51, 2.29, 3.3, 3.11 and 4.29.)

samapatti – Coming together, meeting. A synonym for samadhi.

samsara – The continuing rounds of birth, death and rebirth.

samskara – Latent, subconscious impression; innate tendency due to past actions. (See sutras 1.18, 1.50, 2.15, 3.9, 3.18, 4.9 and 4.27.)

samyama – The combined practice of dharana, dhyana and samadhi upon one object. (See sutras 3.4, 3.16 – 3.33, 3.35, 3.36, 3.42 – 3.45, 3.48 and 3.53.)

santosh – Contentment (one of the principles of niyama). (See sutras 2.32 & 2.42.)

sat – Existence or Truth

Satchidananda, Swami (1914 - 2002) world-renowned Yoga Master and founder-spiritual head of the Integral Yoga Institutes and Satchidananda Ashrams.

He is the inspiration behind the building of the LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine). Located at Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville in Buckingham, Virginia, the LOTUS is a sanctuary dedicated to the One Truth that illumines all faiths.

sattwa – Purity, balanced state (one of the three gunas). (See sutras 2.41, 3.50 and 3.56.)

satya – Truth, truthfulness (one of the principles of yama). (See sutras 2.30 and 2.36.)

“Truthfulness is attained if one’s speech is such that it harms no being in the world”
(The Thirukkural).

saucha – Purity (one of the principles of niyama). (See sutras 2.40 and 2.41.)

siddha – An accomplished one, a term often associated with one who has attained supernatural powers.

siddhi – Accomplishment, the term used to refer to the extraordinary powers listed in Pada Three of the *Yoga Sutras*. (See sutras 2.43, 3.38 and 4.1.)

shanti – Peace.

Sivananda, Swami (1887-1963) – The great sage of the Himalayas, founder of the Divine Life Society; author of over 300 books on Yoga and spiritual life, Guru of Sri Swami Satchidananda and many other respected Yoga teachers.

shraddha – Faith. (See sutra 1.20.)

“For if you had faith even as small as a tiny mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, ‘Move!’ and it would go far away. Nothing would be impossible” (Matthew 17.20).

Sri – Eminent or illustrious. A prefix placed before names of scriptures and great women and men to show respect or reverence; a name of the Goddess of Divine Wealth.

Sukha – Happy, pleasant, agreeable. (See sutras 1.33, 2.5, 2.7, 2.42 and 2.46.)

sutra – Aphorism; lit., thread.

“A sutra is an aphorism with minimum words and maximum sense” (Sri Swami Sivananda).

svadhyaya – Study, scriptural study, study of the self and the Self. One of the niyamas. (See sutras 2.1, 2.32 and 2.44.)

“Books are infinite in number, and time is short; therefore the secret of knowledge is to take only what is essential. Take what is essential and try to live up to it” (Sri Swami Vivekananda).

swami – In the Hindu tradition, a renunciate or monk; a member of the Holy Order of Sannyas.

T

tamas – Inertia, dullness (one of the three gunas).

tanmatra – Subtle essence, energy or potential that gives rise to material elements. According to Sankhya philosophy, they evolve from the tamasic aspect of the ego principle. The five elements derived from the tanmatras are as follows:

- sound – ether
- touch – air
- sight – fire
- taste – water

- smell – earth

Tantra Yoga – Practices that use rituals, yantras and mantras to experience the union of Siva and Shakti (the masculine and feminine, or positive and negative forces) within the individual. The practices offer detailed explanations of the knowledge of mantras and the essence of things (see *tatwa*). From *tan* = do in detail + *tra* = to protect, tantric practices are believed to have protective powers for its practitioners.

tapas – Lit., to burn. Spiritual austerity; purificatory action, accepting but not causing pain (one of the *niyamas*). (See *sutras* 2.1, 2.32, and 2.43.)

tatwa – From *tat* = that + *tvam* = ness, or “*thatness*,” *tatwa* is the essence of anything; its essential being. The word also refers to the fundamentals of a philosophical system.

tejas – Illumination, fire, splendor (especially spiritual), brilliance.

tyaga – The renunciation of the selfish ego or the dedication of the fruits of actions to God or humanity. (See *sutra* 2.35, in which *tyaga* is translated as “*cease*.”)

“*Tyagat shantir anantaram; The dedicated ever enjoy Supreme Peace*”

(Bhagavad Gita, 12.12).

U

Upanishads – Lit., to devotedly sit close. The final portion of each of the Vedas which teaches the principles of the nondualistic Advaita Vedanta philosophy. The essential teaching of the Upanishads is that the Self of an individual is the same as Brahman, the Absolute. Therefore, the goal of spiritual life is presented as the realization of Brahman as one’s True Identity or Self. There are ten principle Upanishads: *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Prasna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Chandogya*, and *Brihadaranyaka*.

V

vairagya - Dispassion, nonattachment. (See *sutras* 1.12, 1.15, 1.16 and 3.51.)

vasana – A subset of *samskaras* (subconscious impressions) that link together to form habit patterns or personality traits. They are regarded as the immediate cause of rebirth and in some philosophical schools, associated with subtle desires.

Vedanta – The culmination or end objective of knowledge; the final experience resulting from the study of the Vedas. There are two subdivisions of this philosophical school: complete, and qualified nondualism.

Vedas –The primary revealed wisdom scriptures of Hinduism (*Rig*, *Sama*, *Yajur*, and *Atharva*).

vidya – Knowledge, learning.

viveka – Discriminative discernment; discrimination between the Real and the unreal, the permanent and impermanent and the Self and the non-Self. A state of continuous discrimination between that which changes and that which does not. (See *sutras* 2.26, 2.28, 3.53, 3.55, 4.26, and 4.29.)

“*A discriminating mind is the greatest of possessions. Without it, all other possessions will come to nothing*” (The Thirukkural).

vrittis – Modification or fluctuation of the mind-stuff in which the mind seeks to find meaning by linking together related pieces of information. According to Advaita Vedanta, *vritti* activity serves as the connecting link between knower (subject) and known (object) and is what makes knowledge of things within creation possible.

Y

yama – Abstinence (the first of the eight limbs of Raja Yoga). (*See sutra 2.30.*)

Yoga – Union of the individual with the Absolute; any course that makes for such union; a tranquil and clear state of mind under all conditions.