

Sanskrit Glossary

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Abhava:	Nonexistence; absence; negation; nothing.
Abhaya(m):	“Without fear;” fearlessness; a state of steadfastness in which one is not swayed by fear of any kind.
Abheda:	Non-difference; non-duality.
Abhimana:	Egoism; conceit; attachment; I-sense; pride; the function of the ego; the delusion of “me” and “mine;” identification with the body.
Abhimata:	Desired; favorite; attractive; agreeable, appealing; object of choice.
Abhimukti:	Turned toward liberation; the stage in which liberation is assured.
Abhinivesha:	Will to live; strong desire; false identification of the Self with the body or mind; an instinctive clinging to life and a dread of death.
Abhisheka(m):	Bathing—the ritual pouring of various items over a sacred image or personage in homage and worship.
Abhyantara:	Internal; inward.
Abhyasa:	Sustained spiritual practice.
Abhyasayoga:	Yoga, or union with God, through sustained spiritual practice.
Achala:	Immovable; standing still; firm; steady; fixed unwavering; without change.
Achara:	1) Immobile. 2) Conduct; good behavior; custom; practice; teaching.
Acharya:	Teacher; preceptor.
Achetana:	Unconscious; non-conscious; inanimate; inert; matter.
Achintya:	Unthinkable; inconceivable; incomprehensible; inexplicable. A title of Brahman because the mind cannot conceive its nature.
Achintya shakti:	Inscrutable power ineffable force.
Achit:	Insentient; inert; unconscious; non-conscious; matter; inanimate phenomenal object.
Achyuta:	Imperishable one—a title of Krishna.
Adhara:	“To support or prop;” support; substratum; body apparatus. In yoga, it means various places of the body where the attention is focussed for control,

concentration, and meditation.

Adharma:	Unrighteousness; demerit, failure to perform one's proper duty; unrighteous action; lawlessness; absence of virtue; all that is contrary to righteousness (dharma).
Adhibhuta:	Primal Being; Primal Element; Primordial Matter. Also: Supreme Being and Supreme Element.
Adhidaiva:	Primal God; Supreme God.
Adhikara:	Authority; qualification; jurisdiction; prerogative; office; claim; privilege.
Adhikarin:	An eligible or qualified person; a worthy person. It implies both fitness and capability.
Adhishthana(m):	Seat; basis; substratum; ground; support; abode; the body as the abode of the subtle bodies and the Self; underlying truth or essence; background.
Adhiyajna:	Primal Sacrifice; Supreme Sacrifice.
Adhyatma:	The individual Self; the supreme Self; spirit.
Adhyatma vidya:	Study of the Self; metaphysics.
Adhyatmika (Adhyatmic):	Pertaining to the Self, individual and Supreme.
Adhyaya:	Chapter; section.
Adi:	First; origin; beginning; original.
Adi Purusha:	The First or Original Purusha. See Purusha.
Adishakti:	Primal Power.
Aditi:	Boundless; unbounded; "Infinite Mother"—the source of all the cosmic forms of consciousness from physical upwards; in Vedic cosmology: the mother of the gods.
Aditya:	The sun; the Sun god.
Adityas:	Solar deities, the greatest of which is Vishnu.
Adivasi:	Original inhabitants; name denoting the tribals in India.
Adrishta(m):	Unseen; invisible; unperceived. This is sometimes applied to God, fate, destiny, influence, or unseen potency or force.
Adrishya:	Invisible; that which cannot be perceived by the physical eye.

Advaita:	Non-dualism; nonduality; literally: “not two.”
Advaitic:	Non-dual; having to do with the philosophy of Advaita (Non-Dualism).
Advitya:	Without a second.
Adyasakti:	The Primal Energy.
Agama:	Scripture; particularly scriptures dealing with the four topics of temple construction and the making of images, philosophy, meditation practice, and methods of worship.
Agami karma:	The action that will be done by the individual in the future.
Agni:	Vedic god of fire.
Agnihotra:	“Fire offering;” a Vedic fire sacrifice.
Aham:	“I am;” “I;” “I” awareness; “I” consciousness; self-consciousness.
Aham Brahmasmi:	“I am Brahman.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
Ahamkara:	See Ahankara.
Ahankara:	Egoism or self-conceit; the false “I;” “I” am-ness. It is the self-arrogating principle “I” that is projected by the mind rather than the real Self. “Ego” (ahankara) is in manifestation whenever “I” is said or claimed by anything other than the spirit-self.
Ahimsa:	Non-injury in thought, word, and deed; non-violence; non-killing; harmlessness.
Airavata:	“Child of the Water,” the white elephant of Indra that was produced by the churning of the milk ocean.
Aishwarya:	Dominion; power; lordship; divine glory; majesty; splendor; an attribute of God (Ishwara).
Ajapa Gayatri:	So-ham.
Ajapa japa:	A yogic term that means the natural, spontaneous sound of the breath that goes on perpetually through the simple act of breathing. This sound is extremely subtle, and though non-verbal is the highest form of mantra.
Ajara:	Without old age; ageless.
Ajara Amara Avinashi Atma:	The ageless, immortal, imperishable Self.

Ajna chakra:	“Command Wheel.” Energy center located at the point between the eyebrows, the “third eye.” The medulla center opposite the point between the eyebrows.
Ajnana:	Ignorance; nescience.
Ajnana timira:	The “glaucoma” of ignorance.
Akala:	Without parts; an attribute of the Divine Being.
Akasha:	“Not visible;” ether; space; sky; the subtlest of the five elements; the substance that fills and pervades the universe; the particular vehicle of life and sound; the element from which the sense of sound (shabda)—both speech and hearing—arises.
Akula:	Without form; formless.
Akhanda:	Unbroken (literally: “not broken”); indivisible; undivided; whole.
Aklishta:	Unafflicted; nonafflicted; unmoved.
Akshara:	Imperishable; indestructible, immutable, undying; undecaying; unchanging—all in reference to the individual self and the Supreme Self, Brahman. It also means syllable and is used in reference to the ekakshara—the one syllable, the One Imperishable: Om.
Akshaya:	Undecaying; everlasting.
Alabdhabhumikatva:	Non-achievement of a stage; inability to find a footing.
Alankara:	Ornamentation; the putting of ornaments or decorations on a sacred image.
Alasya:	Laziness; idleness; apathy; sloth.
Alata chakra:	The illusory circle of fire produced by rapidly waving around a stick that is burning at one end; symbol of the illusory nature of relative existence—of Maya.
Alinga:	Without any attribute, characteristic or mark; Parabrahman; noumenal; undifferentiated prakriti.
Amala:	Without defect; pure; immaculate.
Amalam:	Free from the impurity of Maya.
Amara:	Immortal; deathless.
Amavasya:	New moon day.
Amba:	Mother; a title of Durga.
Ambika:	The Mother; a title of Parvati.

Amrita:	That which makes one immortal. The nectar of immortality that emerged from the ocean of milk when the gods churned it.
Anadi:	Beginningless; eternal.
Anahata:	“Unstruck;” “unbeaten.” Continuous bell-like inner resonance; the heart; the heart chakra; the inner divine melody (mystic sounds heard by the Yogis); Om.
Anahata chakra:	“Unstruck.” Energy center located in the spine at the point opposite the center of the chest (sternum bone). Seat of the Air element.
Ananda:	Bliss; happiness; joy; delight.
Anandamaya kosha:	“The sheath of bliss (ananda).” The causal body. The borderline of the Self (atman).
Ananta(m):	Infinite; without end; endless; a name of Shesha, the chief of the Nagas, whose coils encircle the earth and who symbolizes eternity, and upon whom Vishnu reclines.
Anatma(n):	Not-Self; insentient.
Anavashtitatvani:	Unsteadiness; instability of mind; inability to find a footing; mental unsteadiness.
Aneka:	Not one—i.e., many.
Anga:	Limb; individual part; accessory; member; technique.
Anima:	Little; minute; atomization; the capacity (siddhi) to become as small as one desires—even as small as an atom.
Anishta:	Undesirable; bad.
Anitya:	Impermanent; transient.
Anjali:	Two hands held with palms together in salutation; an offering of a handful of flowers.
Anna(m):	Food; matter.
Annamaya kosha:	“The sheath of food (anna).” The physical—or gross—body, made of food.
Annapurna:	“Full of Food.” A title of the Goddess (Shakti) depicted as the Goddess of Food and Abundance. The consort of Shiva.
Anta:	End; extremity.
Antahkarana:	Internal instrument; fourfold mind: mind, intellect, ego and subconscious mind.

Antahprajna:	Inner (subjective) consciousness; inwardly cognitive.
Antara:	Internal; interior; inside; middle.
Antaratman:	The indwelling (inner) Self; inner soul.
Antariksha:	Sky; firmament; atmosphere.
Antarmukha:	Literally “inner face”—inward vision or perception.
Antaryamana:	Dwelling, guiding, or ruling within.
Antaryamin:	Indweller; inner guide; inner ruler; the spark of divinity within; the “witness” who dwells within every living being. This applies to both the jivatma and the Paramatma. (Antar–within/inner; and yamin–guide.)
Anu:	Atom; atomic; elementary particle; minute; that which cannot further divided; an individual being.
Anubhava:	Perception; direct personal experience; spiritual experience; intuitive consciousness and knowledge.
Anukarah:	Following; imitating.
Anumana:	Inference.
Anumanika:	Inferential.
Anuswara:	Bindu.
Anusandhana:	Enquiry or investigation; in Vedanta, enquiry or investigation into the nature of Brahman.
Anushthana:	Observance; religious exercise; repetition of a mantra for a set number of times during a given period; systematic performance of religious practices, usually undertaken for some definite period of time.
Anuttara:	“Beyond which there is nothing;” the Highest, the Supreme; the Absolute.
Anvaya-vyatireka:	Positive and negative assertions; proof by assertion and negation. Just as several kinds of dal are mixed together, so also, the Atman is mixed with the five koshas. You will have to separate the Self from the five sheaths. You will have to separate name and form from Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Anvaya and vyatireka processes always go together. The Self exists in the five sheaths, yet it is not the sheaths. This is Vedantic sadhana. The aspirant rejects the names and forms and the five sheaths and realizes the one, all-pervading, indivisible, infinite, eternal, unchanging essence, viz., Brahman.

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Ap/Apah:	Water; one of the five elements, from which the sense of taste (rasa) arises.
Apashunam:	Absence of calumny; aversion to fault-finding.
Apana:	The prana that moves downward, producing the excretory functions in general.
Apara:	Lower; lower knowledge; other; relative; inferior.
Aparigraha:	Non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness.
Aparoksha:	Immediate; direct.
Aparoksha anubhuti:	The direct, immediate, intuitive experience or perception of the invisible—the realization of Brahman. The title of a treatise on Advaita Vedanta by Shankaracharya.
Apavarga:	Liberation; release; escape from pain; release from the bondage of embodiment.
Apta:	A trustworthy person.
Apunya:	Demerit; vice; non-meritorious acts; unvirtuous deeds; sinful. See Punya.
Aradhana:	Worship of the Divine; adoration; self-surrender.
Arambha:	Origin; cause; original; causal.
Arambha-vada:	“The theory of origination;” the Nyaya-Vaisheshika theory of causation which states that the effect is a new production from the cause. The cause is one thing, the effect is another. The effect is held to be nonexistent before its production by the cause. This theory is also called asatkarya-vada.
Arani:	Sacrificial wood stick for creating fire through friction.
Aranyaka:	“Forest book;” philosophical, symbolic, and spiritual interpretations of the Vedic hymns and rituals. Mainly meant for forest-dwelling ascetics (vanaprasthas).
Arati:	A ceremony of worship in which lights, incense, camphor, and other offerings representing the five elements and the five senses—the totality of the human being—are waved before an image or symbol of the Divine.
Aratrika:	See Arati.
Archa:	Worship; adoration.
Archanam:	Worship of a sacred image.

Ardhangini:	Partner in life (wife); especially Parvati, the wife of Lord Siva.
Arghya:	Offering made in ritualistic worship. Sometimes an offering of flowers, bel leaves, sandal paste, durva grass, and rice together.
Arjava:	Straightforwardness; honesty; rectitude (from the verb root rinj: "to make straight.")
Artha:	Wealth; object; thing. It is the secular value which is both desired and desirable. It satisfies the acquisitive tendency in individuals. It is the economic value.
Artharthi:	One who desires material gain (artha).
Arupa:	Formless.
Arya(n):	One who is an Arya—literally, "one who strives upward." Both Arya and Aryan are exclusively psychological terms having nothing whatsoever to do with birth, race, or nationality. In his teachings Buddha habitually referred to spiritually qualified people as "the Aryas." Although in English translations we find the expressions: "The Four Noble Truths," and "The Noble Eightfold Path," Buddha actually said: "The Four Aryan Truths," and "The Eightfold Aryan Path."
Aryaman:	Chief of the Pitris.
Asambhava:	Total inapplicability; impossibility.
Asamprajñata samadhi:	Highest superconscious state where the mind and the egosense are completely annihilated.
Asamprayoga:	Withdrawal of the senses from their objects; non-communication; noninterchange; withdrawal; disuniting; disconnecting.
Asana:	Posture; seat; Hatha Yoga posture.
Asanga:	Non-attachment; without attachment.
Asat:	Unreal[ity]; nonbeing; nonexistence; false; falsehood.
Asatya:	Unreal; untrue.
Ashanti:	Absence of peace of mind; restlessness; distraction.
Ashaucha:	Impurity; uncleanness.
Ashram(a):	A place for spiritual discipline and study, usually a monastic residence. Also a stage of life. In Hinduism life is divided ideally into four stages (ashramas): 1) the celibate student life (brahmacharya); 2) the married household life (grihastha); 3) the life of retirement (seclusion) and contemplation (vanaprastha); 4) the life of total renunciation (sannyasa).

Ashramite:	Resident of an ashram.
Ashta:	Eight.
Ashtami:	“The eighth”—eighth day of the dark or light fortnights of the lunar cycle.
Ashtanga Yoga:	The “eight-limbed” Yoga of Patanjali consisting of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi. (See separate entries for each “limb.”)
Ashuddha:	Impure; incorrect.
Ashuddhi:	Impurity.
Ashwattha:	The pipal (sacred fig) tree, in the Bhagavad Gita, the eternal tree of life whose roots are in heaven. The “world tree” in the sense of the axis of the earth and even of the cosmos.
Ashwins:	Two Vedic deities, celestial horsemen of the sun, always together, who herald the dawn and are skilled in healing. They avert misfortune and sickness and bring treasures.
Ashubha:	Inauspicious unfortunate.
Ashuddha:	Impure; unpurified; incorrect.
Ashwattha:	The pipal (sacred fig) tree, the eternal tree of life whose roots are in heaven. The “world tree” in the sense of the axis of the earth and even of the cosmos.
Asmita:	I-ness; the sense of “I am;” “I exist;” sense of individuality.
Asteya:	Non-stealing; honesty; non-misappropriativeness.
Astikyam:	Piety; belief in God.
Astra(m):	Weapon.
Asura:	Demon; evil being (a-sura: without the light).
Asurim:	The state of an asura, one who dwells in darkness (a-sura—without the light). The condition of those negative souls who are turned away from divinity and moving further into degradation of consciousness and mode of life.
Aswara:	Without sound, accent, or tone.
Atma(n):	The individual spirit or self.
Atmabhava:	The nature of the Self; awareness of the self; feeling: “I am the Self.”
Atmadrishti:	The seeing or sight of the Self (atma); the vision of the Self; knowledge of the Self through direct vision or knowing.

Atmajnana:	Knowledge of the Self.
Atmanubhava:	Self-realization; perception/experience of the Self.
Atmarama:	Satisfied–delighted–in the Self.
Atmashakti:	Power of the Self; personal power or strength.
Atmavichara:	Enquiry into the Self.
Atmavidya:	Teaching about the Self and its reality; knowledge of the Self.
Atmic:	Having to do with the atma–spirit or self.
Aum:	Alternate spelling of Om.
Avadhuta:	“Cast off” (one who has cast off the world utterly). A supreme ascetic and jnani who has renounced all worldly attachments and connections and lives in a state beyond body consciousness, whose behavior is not bound by ordinary social conventions. Usually they wear no clothing. The highest state of asceticism or tapas.
Avarana:	Concealment; veil; screen; obstruction; the veiling power of ignorance.
Avatar(a):	A Divine Incarnation.
Avidya:	Ignorance; nescience; unknowing; literally: “to know not.”
Avidyamaya:	Maya, or illusion causing duality, has two aspects, namely, avidyamaya and vidyamaya. Avidyamaya, or the “maya of ignorance,” consisting of anger, passion, and so on, entangles one in worldliness. Vidyamaya, or the “maya of knowledge,” consisting of kindness, purity, unselfishness, and so on, leads one to liberation. Both belong to the relative world. See Maya.
Avidyasakti:	The power of ignorance (avidya).
Avinashi:	Indestructible; imperishable.
Avirati:	Hankering after objects; non-dispassion; sensual indulgence; lack of control; nonrestraint.
Avyakta(m):	Unmanifest; invisible; the undifferentiated; the state when the three gunas are in perfect equilibrium; in Sankhya philosophy a term for Prakriti.
Ayam Atma Brahma:	“This Self is Brahman.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Mandukya Upanishad).
Ayurveda:	“Life-knowledge.” The ancient system of Indian medicine formulated by the sage Dhanvantari and considered part of the Vedic revelation.

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Badarayana:	“Inhabitant of Badarika Ashrama” a title of the sage Vyasa.
Badrinath:	One of the major centers of Hindu pilgrimage, sacred to Vishnu, located in the heart of the Himalayas.
Bahya:	External; outward.
Bala brahmacharya:	Brahmacharya observed from childhood (bala).
Balarama:	Sri Krishna's elder brother, also called “Balai.”
Bandha:	“Lock;” bond; bondage; tie or knot.
Bel:	A tree whose leaves are sacred to Siva; also the fruit of the same tree.
Bhadra:	Blessing; happy; well.
Bhagavad Gita:	“The Song of God.” The sacred philosophical text often called “the Hindu Bible,” part of the epic Mahabharata by Vyasa; the most popular sacred text in Hinduism.
Bhagavan:	The Lord; the Personal God. From bhag—splendor and power—and van—Master or possessor (of splendor and power). Bhagavan possesses six divine attributes: knowledge (jnana), strength (bala), lordship (aishwarya), potency or power (shakti), creative power or might (virya), and splendor/radiance (tejas). See Ishwara.
Bhagavata:	A devotee of God (Bhagavan) or Vishnu.
Bhagavatam:	Srimad Bhagavatam. A major purana devoted to the glory and worship of Vishnu and his incarnation as Krishna. The major scripture of the Vaishnavas.
Bhagavati:	Goddess; the feminine form of Bhagavan.
Bhairavi:	A nun of the Tantric sect.
Bhajan(a):	Devotional singing; a devotional song; remembrance (of God).
Bhakta:	Devotee; votary; a follower of the path of bhakti, divine love; a worshipper of the Personal God.
Bhakti:	Devotion; dedication; love (of God).
Bhakti Marga:	The path of devotion leading to union with God.
Bhakti Yoga:	The yoga of attaining union with God through the prescribed spiritual discipline of the path of devotion.
Bhakti Yogi:	One who practices Bhakti Yoga. Bhaktivedanta (Swami): The founder of the Hari Krishna movement in America.

Bharat(a):	The proper Sanskrit name for India.
Bharati:	Indian
Bharat[a]varsha:	The land of India.
Bhasha:	Language; gentle and holy talk.
Bhashma:	Ash, usually from the sacred fire sacrifice.
Bhashya:	Commentary.
Bhava (1):	Becoming, from the verb “bhu” or “bhavh” which means to become or to exist.
Bhava (2):	Subjective state of being (existence); attitude of mind; mental attitude or feeling; state of realization in the heart or mind.
Bhava samadhi:	Superconscious state attained by bhaktas or devotees through intense divine emotion in which the devotee retains his ego and enjoys communion with the Personal God.
Bhavamukha:	An exalted state of spiritual experience, in which the aspirant keeps his mind on the borderline between the Absolute and the Relative. From this position he can contemplate the ineffable and attributeless Brahman and also participate in the activities of the relative world, seeing in it the manifestation of God alone.
Bhavanam:	Meditation. “Bhavanam is setting the heart on the Lord Who is designated by Om and brought into the mind by It.” (Shankara, Commentary on the Yoga Sutras)
Bhavani:	“Giver of Existence;” a title of the Divine Mother.
Bhavatarini:	“Saviour of the World (or Universe);” a title of the Divine Mother, especially Kali.
Bhaya:	Fear; terror.
Bheda:	Difference; distinction; disjunction.
Bhiksha:	Almsfood—food obtained by begging or that is offered to a monk.
Bhikshu:	One who lives on bhiksha (almsfood); a mendicant; a sannyasi; a Buddhist monk.
Bodha:	Consciousness; knowledge; “to be awake;” enlightenment.
Bhoga:	Enjoyment, pleasure; experience; perception; also food (usually what has been offered to a deity).
Bhogyā:	Object of experience or enjoyment.

Bhokta:	Enjoyer; experiencer; subject of experience or enjoyment.
Bhranti:	Delusion; wrong notion; false idea or impression.
Bhranti-darshana:	Delusion; erroneous view.
Bhrigu:	An ancient sage, so illustrious that he mediated quarrels among the gods.
Bhuh:	The earth; the material world/plane.
Bhukti:	Enjoyment; material enjoyment.
Bhuloka:	The material world/plane of atomic matter.
Bhuma:	The unconditioned Infinite; Brahman.
Bhumi:	The earth; realm.
Bhuta (1):	What has come into being; an entity as opposed to the unmanifested; any of the five elementary constituents of the universe; element.
Bhuta (2):	A spirit. Some bhutas are subhuman nature spirits or “elementals”, but some are earthbound human spirits–ghosts. Bhutas may be either positive or negative.
Bhutapanchaka:	The Five Elements: ether, air, fire, water, and earth.
Bhuvaloka:	The lesser astral world, similar to the material plane (Bhuloka).
Bhuvana:	The universe; the world.
Bodha:	Consciousness; knowledge; intelligence; spiritual wisdom; “to be awake;” enlightenment.
Bodhi:	Enlightenment; “to be awakened.”
Bija:	Seed; source.
Bija Mantra:	A “seed” mantra from which realization grows as a tree from a seed; usually a single-syllable mantra that is called “seed” because of its small size as a dot or point of sound.
Bindu:	Point; dot; seed; source; the point from which the subtle Omkara arises that is experienced in meditation.
Brahma:	The Creator (Prajapati) of the three worlds of men, angels, and archangels (Bhur, Bhuwah, and Swah); the first of the created beings; Hiranyagarbha or cosmic intelligence. Brahma satyam; jagan mithya; jivo brahmaiva naparah: “Brahman is real. The world is illusory. The jiva is nondifferent from Brahman.” This is Shankara’s renowned “Vedanta in half a verse.”

Brahma Sutras:	A treatise by Vyasa on Vedanta philosophy in the form of aphorisms. Also called the Vedanta Sutras or Vedanta Darshana.
Brahma-anubhava:	Direct personal experience of Brahman.
Brahmabhavanam:	Meditation on Brahman; feeling of identity with Brahman, as well as of everything as Brahman.
Brahmachari:	One who observes continence; a celibate student in the first stage of life (ashrama).
Brahmucharini:	Female "brahmachari."
Brahmacharya:	Continence; self-restraint on all levels; discipline; dwelling in Brahman.
Brahma-chintana:	Constant meditation on Brahman; constant thought of or awareness of God.
Brahmajnana:	Direct, transcendental knowledge of Brahman; Self-realization.
Brahmajnani:	One who possess Brahmajnana.
Brahmajyoti:	The Light of God.
Brahmaloka:	The world (loka) of Brahma, the Creator; the highest heaven; the world of supreme joy. Those who reach this plane of existence after death are beyond rebirth.
Brahmamaya:	Formed of Brahman; filled with Brahman.
Brahmamuhurta:	"The muhurta of Brahman." The period of one and a half hours before sunrise (sometime between 3: 0 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.), which is said to be the best time for meditation and worship.
Brahman:	The Absolute Reality; the Truth proclaimed in the Upanishads; the Supreme Reality that is one and indivisible, infinite, and eternal; all-pervading, changeless Existence; Existence-knowledge-bliss Absolute (Satchidananda); Absolute Consciousness; it is not only all-powerful but all-power itself; not only all-knowing and blissful but allknowledge and all-bliss itself.
Brahmana:	A knower of Brahman. A Brahmin. A Vedic liturgical text explaining the rituals found in the Vedic samhitas (collection of hymns). A guidebook for performing those rites.
Brahmananda:	The bliss of communion with Brahman.
Brahmanda:	"The egg of Brahma" or "the Brahmic egg." The cosmic "egg;" the universe; the cosmos; the macrocosm.
Brahmanishtha:	Remaining steadfast in the Absolute (Brahman). One who is firmly established in the Supreme being, in the direct knowledge of Brahman, the Absolute Reality.

Brahmarandhra:	“The hole of Brahman,” the subtle (astral) aperture in the crown of the head. Said to be the gateway to the Absolute (Brahman) in the thousand-petaled lotus (sahasrara) in the crown of the head. Liberated beings are said to exit the physical body through this aperture at death.
Brahma-sakshatkara:	Realization of Brahman; direct experience of the Absolute Being.
Brahmavadin:	Literally “one who walks the path of Brahman.” One who advocates that there is one existence alone—Parabrahman.
Brahmavichara:	Enquiry into the Absolute (Brahman).
Brahmavidya:	Science of Brahman; knowledge of Brahman; learning pertaining to Brahman or the Absolute Reality.
Brahmic:	Divine; pertaining to God (Brahman).
Brahmin (Brahmana):	A knower of Brahman; a member of the highest Hindu caste consisting of priests, pandits, philosophers, and religious leaders.
Brihaspati:	The guru—priest and teacher—of the gods.
Brihat:	The great; the large.
Buddha:	An awakened one (from the root verb budh: to enlighten, to know).
Buddhi:	Intellect; understanding; reason; the thinking mind; the higher mind, which is the seat of wisdom; the discriminating faculty.
Buddhi Yoga:	The Yoga of Intelligence spoken of in the Bhagavad Gita which later came to be called Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of Knowledge.

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Caste:	See Varna.
Chaitanya:	Consciousness; intelligence; awareness; the consciousness that knows itself and knows others; Pure Consciousness.
Chakra:	Wheel. Plexus; center of psychic energy in the human system, particularly in the spine or head.
Chakradhara:	“Holder/Wielder of the Chakras,” a yogic practice in which the mantra So’ham is mentally intoned at each of the nine chakras in turn.
Chakshuh:	Eye; the subtle organ of sight; visual sense.
Chamatkara:	Remarkable traits and abilities; cleverness; shining forth with divine glory.
Chanda:	Silver; the moon.

Chandala:	An untouchable, or outcaste; literally: “wild” or “bad.”
Chandra:	The moon; the presiding deity of the moon or the astral lunar world (loka).
Chandraloka:	The subtle world, “the world of the moon.”
Chandrayana Vrata:	An observance in which, beginning with fifteen morsels of food on a full-moon day, a person lessens them one by one daily, until he takes no food on the new moon day; and again increases them one by one till he reaches the same fifteen morsels on the next full-moon day.
Charana:	Foot.
Charu:	A preparation of boiled rice, milk, sugar and ghee, to be offered into the fire for gods; a sattvic dietary regimen usually taken by yoga-practitioners and celibates. Havishya.
Charvaka:	The Indian materialistic school, also known as Lokayata (“restricted to the world of common experience”). Its central teaching is that matter is the only reality, and sense perception is the only valid means of knowledge or proof. Therefore sense satisfaction is the only goal.
Charya:	Activity; mode of behavior; a way of life—as in brahmacharya.
Chela:	Disciple.
Chetana:	Consciousness. Whereas chaitanya is the principle of pure consciousness, chetana is consciousness occupied with an object. It is this “consciousness” that Buddha rejected as an obstacle.
Chidakasha:	“The Space (Ether) of Consciousness.” The infinite, all-pervading expanse of Consciousness from which all “things” proceed; the subtle space of Consciousness in the Sahasrara (Thousand-petalled Lotus). The true “heart” of all things.
Chinmaya:	Full of consciousness; formed of consciousness.
Chinta:	Enquiry; thought; discussion.
Chintana:	Thinking; reflecting.
Chit:	Consciousness (that is spirit or purusha); “to perceive, observe, think, be aware, know;” pure unitary Consciousness.
Chitraratha:	The chief of the gandharvas.
Chitshakti:	Power of consciousness or intelligence.
Chitta:	The subtle energy that is the substance of the mind, and therefore the mind itself; mind in all its aspects; field of the mind; field of consciousness; consciousness; mind-stuff.

Chittashuddhi:	Purification of the mind; purity of conscience.
Chitta-vritti-nirodha:	Cessation of the modifications of the mind; control of thoughts; Patanjali's definition of Yoga.
Crore:	Ten million.

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Dacoit:	A violent thief who preys on travellers, sometimes killing them.
Daityas:	Demons who constantly war with the gods. Sometimes "races" or nationalities who acted contrary to dharma and fought against the "aryas" were also called demons (daityas or asuras).
Daivim:	The state of a deva or "shining one;" the quality of those positive souls who are progressing toward divinity.
Dakshina:	Gift; priestly gift; sacrificial fee.
Dakshinamurti:	A name for Lord Shiva as the silent teacher. Vedic Religion declares that in every cycle of creation God manifests as Dakshinamurti and becomes the guru of the first human beings—those who were most spiritually evolved in the previous creation—teaching them the path to liberation (moksha).
Dakshinayana:	"The southern way/path." The solar year is divided into two halves. The dakshinayana, beginning on the summer solstice (June 21), the first day of summer (also called dakshinayana) is when the sun appears to begin moving southward for the next six months. See Uttarayana.
Dama:	Self-control; control of the senses; restraint.
Damaru:	A small, hand held drum with two heads that is sounded by twisting the wrist and causing a ball tied to its middle to rhythmically strike the heads alternately.
Dana:	"Giving;" gift; charity; almsgiving; self-sacrifice; donation; generosity.
Danava:	A demon; an evil spirit.
Danda:	Stick; staff; rod; particularly the staff carried by a sannyasi; punishment; chastisement.
Darshan:	Literally "sight" or "seeing;" vision, literal and metaphysical; a system of philosophy (see Sad-darshanas). Darshan is the seeing of a holy being as well as the blessing received by seeing such a one.
Darshana:	"Seeing" in the sense of a viewpoint or system of thought. The Sad-darshanas are the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.

Dasah:	Servant; slave.
Dasanami:	“Ten named.” A term for members of the monastic order of Shankaracharya headquartered in the four quarters of India (Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badrinath and Jagannath Puri). After their proper monastic names they add one of ten titles (Saraswati, Bharati, Puri, Tirtha, Ashrama, Giri, Parvata, Sagara, Vanam, Aranya) according to their monastic succession.
Dasya:	The attitude of being a servant of God.
Dasyu:	Slave; a name for non-Aryans in the Rig Veda.
Dattatreya:	A famous sage, son of the Rishi Atri and Anasuya. His birth was a divine boon,
hence his name:	Datta—“given”—and atreya—“son of Atri.” Considered a divine incarnation and known as the Lord of Avadhutas, he is often revered as the embodiment of the Supreme Guru. He is credited with the authorship of the Avadhuta Gita, the Jivanmukti Gita, and the Tripura Rahashya.
Daya:	Mercy; compassion; grace; empathy.
Dehadhyasa:	False identification with the body.
Desha:	Place; locus; spot; space; country.
Deva:	“A shining one,” a god—greater or lesser in the evolutionary hierarchy; a semi-divine or celestial being with great powers, and therefore a “god.” Sometimes called a demi-god. Devas are the demigods presiding over various powers of material and psychic nature.
Devaloka:	“The world of shining beings;” the world of the gods; heaven; one of the higher subtler worlds.
Devanagari:	“Divine city;” the Sanskrit script.
Devata:	Godhead; god; divinity; celestial being. See Deva.
Devayana:	The way/path of the gods. Also called The Northern Way/Path—Uttarayana—when the sun seems to move northward. Those who follow this in its spiritual sense attain Brahmaloaka and usually do not return to earth. It is the way of faith and asceticism. At death, those who attain liberation by ascending in the Devayana never return to the cycle of birth and death.
Devi:	“Shining One;” Goddess; the Supreme Shakti (Divine Power) or Divine Mother, or a demigoddess.
Dhama:	Abode; dwelling; place of residence.
Dharana:	Concentration of mind; fixing the mind upon a single thing or point. “Dharana is the confining [fixing] of the mind within a point or area” (Yoga Sutras 3:).

Dharma (1):	The righteous way of living, as enjoined by the sacred scriptures and the spiritually illumined; characteristics; law; lawfulness; virtue; righteousness; norm.
Dharma (2):	Attributes; natures; essential/visible characteristics; characteristic form; properties; qualifications.
Dharma-megha samadhi:	The final state of one-pointedness, when an individual becomes disinterested even in omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. This state of superconsciousness or samadhi is called dharma-megha—cloud of virtue—inasmuch as it showers nectar drops of immortality through knowledge of Brahman, when all the hosts of vasanas are entirely destroyed.
Dharma shastras:	Scriptures which set forth the rules for society and individuals, including spiritual observances. Manu Smriti is the most authoritative—and the foundation—of all the dharmashastras of India.
Dharmashala:	A place for pilgrims to stay, either free of charge or at a minimal cost.
Dharmi:	One who follows dharma.
Dharmi (2):	The substratum in which attributes or characteristics are seen to manifest or inhere.
Dharmic:	Having to do with dharma; of the character of dharma.
Dhatri:	Giver; a name for God; creator; establisher.
Dhatu:	Element; original element; core; constituent; the vital force in the human being.
Dhira:	Steadfast; strong; bold; courageous. One who possesses these qualities.
Dhoti:	A long piece of material worn around the waist by traditionally-dressed men in India, rather like a long skirt.
Dhrita:	Steadfastness; constancy; sustained effort; firmness; patience; endurance.
Dhriti:	Steadfast; constant; attraction; sustaining effort; firmness; patience; endurance.
Dhuni:	A fire lighted by wandering monks, beside which they meditate and sleep.
Dhvani:	Tone: sound; word; the subtle aspect of the vital shakti or the jiva in the vibrations.
Dhyana(m):	Meditation; contemplation.
Dhyeya:	Object of meditation or worship; purpose behind action.
Diksha:	Initiation; dedication; consecration.

Dipa:	A wick lamp fed by oil or ghee; a flame in a lamp.
Dirgha:	Long; prolonged; protracted.
Divya:	Divine; celestial; divine nature; luminous; supernatural.
Divya chakshuh:	Divine eye; the heavenly eye; wisdom.
Divya shakti:	Divine energy or power.
Dosha:	Defect; imperfection; blemish; fault; shortcoming. In Yoga philosophy there are five doshas: lust (kama), anger (krodha), greed (lobha), delusion (moha), and envy (matsarya).
Dosha drishti:	Seeing the defects in samsara and samsaric life.
Drashta (1):	Seer; perceiver; a title of both the individual and the Supreme Selves or Purushas.
Drashta (2):	The visible; the seen; that which is perceived.
Drik:	See Drashta.
Drishta:	The visible; see; that which is perceived.
Drishti:	Seeing; sight; vision; view; inner sight; opinion; gaze; perception.
Drishya:	Visible; object seen; perceived; objects of consciousness; the world; that which can be seen by the physical sense.
Drishyam:	The seen; the object seen; the seeable; visible; perceptible; object of consciousness; nature.
Dukha(m):	Pain; suffering; misery; sorrow; grief; unhappiness; stress or distress; that which is unsatisfactory or produces dukha.
Durga:	“Incomprehensible One;” “Difficult to reach;” the Universal Mother; she rides a lion (or tiger) and carries a weapon in each of her eight arms symbolizing the powers of the Self against ignorance and evil. She is invoked against all forms of evil—physical and metaphysical. Considered the consort, the shakti, of Shiva.
Dwaita:	Dual; duality; dualism.
Dwandwa(s):	The pairs of opposites in nature (prakriti) such as pleasure and pain, hot and cold, light and darkness, gain and loss, victory and defeat, love and hatred.
Dwandwamoha:	The delusion of the pairs of opposites.
Dwapara Yuga:	The Bronze Age. See Yuga.

Dweshā:	Aversion/avoidance for something, implying a dislike for it. This can be emotional (instinctual) or intellectual. It may range from simple nonpreference to intense repulsion, antipathy and even hatred. See Raga.
Dwija:	“Twice born;” any member of the three upper castes that has received the sacred thread (yajnopavita).
Dwipa:	Island; continent.

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Eka:	One; unique; Reality.
Ekadashi:	“The eleventh.” The eleventh day of each half of the lunar month (that is, the eleventh day after the new and full moons) that is devoted to the worship of Vishnu and his avatars.
Ekadashi Vrata:	Observing ekadashi (the eleventh day after the new and full moons, sacred to Vishnu) by fasting—through abstinence from grains and other staples and eating much less than usual, oftentimes fasting from food (and sometimes water) until after sundown.
Ekagrata:	One-pointedness of the mind; concentration; close attention.
Ekakshara:	A common term for Om meaning “the Single Syllable” or “the Single Letter.”
Ekam-eva-advitīyam:	“One, only, without a second.” A description of Brahman.
Eva(m):	Only; in fact; thus; so; in this manner; without limitation.

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Gaja:	Elephant.
Gambhira:	Deep; magnanimous; dignified; grand; imperious; grave.
Gana:	One of a group of spirits that wander together—usually of various types. The term is also used as a kind of “miscellaneous” category for entities that have not otherwise been identified. A gana may be benevolent or malevolent, but is usually disorderly, chaotic, and wild in the sense of untamed or unruly, and potentially dangerous (hazardous). A gana’s appearance is usually deformed, repulsive, or frightening. Shiva is said to be always accompanied by a group of devoted ganas.
Ganapati:	“Lord of the Ganas” (the spirits that always accompany Shiva). See Ganesha.
Gandha:	Smell; fragrance.

Gandharva:	A demigod—a celestial musician and singer.
Ganesha:	The elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati; the remover of obstacles; lord (pati) of the ganas (spirits that always accompany Shiva); god of wisdom; god of beginnings; the granter of success in spiritual and material life; in ritual worship he is worshipped first, and is therefore known as Adi-deva, the First God.
Ganga:	See Ganges.
Ganges (Ganga):	The sacred river—believed to be of divine origin—that flows from high up in the Himalayas, through the plains of Northern India, and empties into the Bay of Bengal. Hindus consider that bathing in the Ganges profoundly purifies both body and mind.
Ganja:	Indian hemp; a form of marijuana found in India.
Garuda:	A great being who can assume bird form, and therefore considered the king of birds. Often depicted as an eagle, he is the vehicle of Vishnu.
Gatha:	Verse; stanza.
Gaudapada:	The guru of Shankara’s guru, Govindapada.
Gauh (Go):	Cow.
Gauri:	“The Golden One.” A title of the Divine Mother, consort of Shiva.
Gayatri Mantra:	A Rig Vedic mantra in the gayatri meter invoking the solar powers of evolution and enlightenment.
Gayatri Meter:	A meter found only in the Rig Veda, consisting of three lines of eight syllables each. It is considered especially appropriate for mantric invocation of deities before worship.
Gerua:	The brownish-orange mud used to dye the clothing of Hindu monastics; the color produced by dyeing with gerua is also called gerua.
Ghat:	A bathing-place: a stairway leading down to a river, pond, or water reservoir.
Ghatashuddi:	“Purifying the ‘pot.’” Purification of the physical body. An expression of Hatha Yoga, referring to the “earthen pot” of the body.
Ghee:	Clarified butter.
Giri:	Mountain; one of the ten branches of the Shankara Order.
Gita:	The Bhagavad Gita.
Gopa:	Cowherd boy; male counterpart of the gopis.

Gopas:	The cowherd boys of Vrindavan, playmates of Krishna.
Gopala:	“Cowherd;” a title of Krishna—both as baby and young boy.
Gopi:	Milkmaid; childhood companions and devotees of Krishna.
Gopis:	The milkmaids of Vrindavan, companions and devotees of Krishna.
Gopinath Kaviraj (Mahamahopadyaya Sri):	Gopinath Kaviraj was considered to be the greatest scholar of modern India, so much so that many Indian book catalogs devoted an entire section to his books alone.
Gopuram:	A towerlike structure over an entrance (gateway) to a temple or temple compound, shaped like a wedge standing on its wide end, consisting of many tiers that are highly decorated (sculpted), often with images of deities and figures from Hindu cosmology.
Gorakhnath/Gorakshanath:	A master yogi of the Nath Yogi (Siddha Yogi) tradition. His dates are not known, really, but he seems to have lived for many centuries and travelled throughout all of India, Bhutan, Tibet, and Ladakh teaching philosophy and yoga.
Goshala:	Cow shed.
Gotra:	Clan; family; lineage.
Govinda:	“Cowherd”—a title of Krishna.
Griha:	Home; house; temple.
Grihasta:	A married “householder;” the second stage (ashrama) in life.
Grihya sutras:	Scriptures (dharmashastras) setting down the way of life to be observed by Grihastas.
Guha:	Cave; the heart (hridaya guha).
Guhya:	Secret; secret place.
Guna:	Quality, attribute, or characteristic arising from nature (Prakriti) itself; a mode of energy behavior. As a rule, when “guna” is used it is in reference to the three qualities of Prakriti, the three modes of energy behavior that are the basic qualities of nature, and which determine the inherent characteristics of all created things. They are: 1) sattwa—purity, light, harmony; 2) rajas—activity, passion; and 3) tamas—dullness, inertia, and ignorance.
Gunatita:	Beyond the gunas; the state of transcendence of the gunas—freedom from their conditionings.
Guru Nanak:	Founder of the Sikh religion.

Gurukula: “Teacher’s school” or “teacher’s abode.” A gurukula is the residence of a spiritual teacher where young students (brahmacharis) came to live and learn.

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Hamsah: “I am He;” swan.

Hanuman: A powerful monkey chief of extraordinary strength and prowess, whose exploits are celebrated in the epic Ramayana, the life of Rama. He was an ideal devotee (bhakta) and servant of Lord Rama.

Hara: “One who takes away;” a title of Shiva; the destroyer; the remover.

Hari: Vishnu.

Harikatha: Literally “Hari [Vishnu] Story,” a hari katha is a narration of the life and deeds of a deity or saint, interspersed with songs relevant to the events being spoken about or actual poetic reflections on those events and their significance. Kirtan is often a part, as well. This is the most popular and widespread traditional form of spiritual “entertainment.”

Harsha: Joy; exhilaration; excitement.

Hatha yoga: A system of Yoga consisting of physical exercises, postures, and breathing exercises for gaining control over the physical body and prana.

Havishya: Sacrificial food. See Charu.

Havan: Fire sacrifice.

Havan kunda: Pit or receptacle for the fire sacrifice.

Himsa: Injury, violence; killing.

Hiranyagarbha: “Golden egg;” cosmic womb; cosmic intelligence; the Supreme Lord of the universe; also called Brahman. It can also refer to Brahma the creator of the three lower worlds.

Homa: Vedic fire ritual/sacrifice.

Hridaya: Heart; center or core of something; essence; the space (akasha) where the inbreath and outbreath merge—this is the true heart.

Hridayaguha: “The Cave of the Heart,” the core of our being wherein the Self dwells.

Hrishiksha: The bristling (or bushy) haired one. A title of Krishna.

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Ichha (Ichchha):	Desire; will; wish; divine will; free will. From the verb root icch: “to wish,” “to will.”
Ichha shakti:	The power of desire; the power of the will; Shakti in the aspect of omnipotent Divine Will.
Ida:	The subtle channel that extends from the base of the spine to the medulla on the left side of the spine.
Indra:	King of the lesser “gods” (demigods).
Indriya:	Organ. The five organs of perception (jnanendriyas) are the ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose. The five organs of action (karmendriyas) are the voice, hand, foot, organ of excretion, and the organ of generation.
Isha:	Lord; master; ruler; Ishwara.
Ishana:	The all-enjoyer; Lord of everything; Lord of space.
Ishta-devata:	Beloved deity. The deity preferred above all others by an individual. “Chosen ideal” is the usual English translation.
Ishta mantra:	The mantra of the divine form specially beloved by an individual (ishta devata).
Ishwara:	“God” or “Lord” in the sense of the Supreme Power, Ruler, Master, or Controller of the cosmos. “Ishwara” implies the powers of omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. See Bhagavan.
Ishwarapranidhana:	Offering of one’s life to God (Ishwara).
Ishwari:	The Divine Cosmic Mother; the feminine form of Ishwara.
Itihasa:	“Thus spoken”—history; technical term for the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

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Jada:	Inert; unconscious; matter.
Jagadguru:	“World guru;” world teacher.
Jagat:	World; cosmos.
Jagrat:	The waking state.
Jala:	Water.

Janaka:	The most renowned philosopher-king of ancient India, ruler of Mithila and father of Sita, the wife of Rama. Mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, he is considered the prime example of one who has attained total fulfillment in both material and spiritual life simultaneously without slighting either.
Janaloka:	The world that embraces both the highest astral levels and the lower causal levels.
Janardana:	Agitator of men (properly an epithet of Vishnu)—a title of Krishna.
Janma:	Birth.
Janmotsava:	Birthday celebration.
Japa:	Repetition of a mantra.
Jata:	Long matted hair.
Jati:	Birth; class; class notions; family; species.
Jaya:	Victory; victorious; mastery; hail; salutations.
Jayanti:	Birth day; victorious; conquering.
Jitendriya:	One who has controlled the indriyas—the senses.
Jiva:	Individual spirit; embodied spirit; living entity; life..
Jivanmukta:	One who is liberated in this present life.
Jivanmukti:	Liberation in this life.
Jivatma(n):	Individual spirit. See Jiva.
Jnana:	Knowledge; knowledge of Reality—of Brahman, the Absolute; also denotes the process of reasoning by which the Ultimate Truth is attained. The word is generally used to denote the knowledge by which one is aware of one's identity with Brahman.
Jnana Marga:	The path of discriminative knowledge leading to union with God.
Jnana Yoga:	The path of knowledge; meditation through wisdom; constantly and seriously thinking on the true nature of the Self as taught by the upanishads.
Jnanamaya kosha:	“The sheath of intellect (buddhi).” The level of intelligent thought and conceptualization. Sometimes called the Vijnanamaya kosha. The astral-causal body.
Jnanata:	Consciousness.
Jnanendriya:	The five organs of perception: ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose.

Jnani:	A follower of the path of knowledge (jnana); one who has realized—who knows—the Truth (Brahman).
Jnanopadesha:	Instruction in wisdom (jnana).
Jyoti(h):	Light; flame; illumination; luminosity; effulgence.
Jyotisha:	Astronomy; astrology.
Jyotishmati:	Effulgence; full of light.

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Kabir:	An Indian mystic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
Kailash(a):	“Crystalline;” the name of the mountain home of Siva—a mountain peak in the Himalayas (in present-day Tibet) revered as the abode of Shiva, that is a famous place of pilgrimage.
Kaivalya:	Transcendental state of Absolute Independence; Moksha; isolation; final beatitude; emancipation.
Kaivalya-mukti:	Liberation.
Kala:	Time; a unit of time; part; aspect; bit; death (or Yama); fate; black.
Kali:	“The Black One;” the black-skinned goddess who emerged from the body of Goddess Durga to defeat the demons that were attacking her. She wears a garland of skulls (or severed heads) around her neck and a skirt of severed arms—both symbolizing the sense of egotism. In one hand she wields the sword of spiritual wisdom (prajna) and in the other carries a severed head (ego). Despite her fearsome appearance, her two other hands are held in the gestures (mudras) that indicate: “Fear not” and “Draw near.”
Kali Yuga:	The Iron Age. See Yuga.
Kalki:	The future—tenth—incarnation (avatar) of Vishnu.
Kalpa:	A Day of Brahma—4,320,000,000 years. It alternates with a Night of Brahma of the same length. In the Day of Brahma creation is manifest and in the Night of Brahma is it resolved into its causal state.
Kalpana:	Imagination of the mind; the association of name and permanence to objects; presumptive knowledge; assumption; creation.
Kalpitaru:	“The wish-fulfilling tree.” The celestial tree of Hindu mythology, which grants all that a person standing or sitting under it desires.
Kalpita:	Imaginary; created (artificial, unreal); dreamt.

Kalpita bheda:	Imaginary difference.
Kalyana:	Excellence; auspicious; blessed.
Kama:	Desire; passion; lust. Its intensity may range from tepid to raging intensity.
Kamadeva:	God of beauty and love; the Vedic Cupid who shoots a bow with flowers instead of arrows.
Kamadhenu:	Wish-fulfilling cow produced at the churning of the milk ocean.
Kamadhuk:	See Kamadhenu.
Kamala:	Lotus; rose colored.
Kamandalu:	A water vessel carried by a travelling sannyasi; usually made of a gourd or coconut shell, it may also be earthenware. The kamandalu and staff (danda) are considered the insignia of the sannyasi along with gerua clothing.
Kanda:	Section; part; chapter.
Kandarpa:	See Kamadeva.
Kapila:	The great sage who formulated the Sankhya philosophy which is endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. (See the entry under Sankhya.)
Karana:	Instrument; cause; the efficient or instrumental cause of something; means of accomplishing something.
Karana sharira:	The causal body (where the individual rests during sound, deep, dreamless sleep, the intellect, mind and senses being reduced to an unmanifested potential condition), also known as the anandamaya kosha, the "sheath of bliss."
Karatalabhiksha:	Using hands (palms) as the begging bowl.
Karika:	Commentary; treatise.
Karma:	Karma, derived from the Sanskrit root kri, which means to act, do, or make, means any kind of action, including thought and feeling. It also means the effects of action. Karma is both action and reaction, the metaphysical equivalent of the principle: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:). It is karma operating through the law of cause and effect that binds the jiva or the individual soul to the wheel of birth and death. There are three forms of karma: sanchita, agami, and prarabdha. Sanchita karma is the vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped. Agami karma is the action that will be done by the individual in the future. Prarabdha karma is the action that has begun to fructify, the fruit of which is being reaped in this life.

Karma Yoga:	The Yoga of selfless (unattached) action; performance of one's own duty; service of humanity.
Karma Yogi:	One who practices karma yoga.
Karma-bandhanam:	Karmic bondage; karmic tie.
Karma-kanda:	The ritual portion of the Veda. The philosophy that Vedic ritual is the only path to perfection.
Karma-kandi:	One who follows the Karma-kanda as philosophy and practice.
Karmaphala:	The fruit of actions; the consequence of a deed.
Karma Marga:	The path of selfless knowledge leading to union with God.
Karmashaya:	The receptacle or mass of karmas; aggregate of works done; latent impression of action which will eventually fructify.
Karmendriya:	The five organs of action: voice, hand, foot, organ of excretion, and the organ of generation.
Karta:	The doer, the agent—specifically, of action.
Karttikeya:	See Subramanya.
Karuna:	Mercy; compassion; kindness.
Karyam:	"To-be-done;" to be performed; a duty.
Kashi:	Varanasi (Benares).
Kaupina:	A small strip of cloth used to cover one's private parts. Also called a langoti
Kaviraj:	Ayurvedic physician..
Khechari Mudra:	"Sky-walking" mudra. The turning up of the eyes in meditation. In Hatha Yoga, the insertion of the tongue upward and behind the palate, blocking the nasal passages.
Kedarnath (Kedar Nath):	One of the chief places of pilgrimage in India: a temple on a mountaintop in the Himalayas, dedicated to the worship of Shiva in the form of a linga installed there by Adi Shankaracharya.
Keshava:	Beautiful-haired one—a title of Krishna.
Kevala:	Oneness; absolute; alone; single; independent; perfect; uncompounded.
Kevala-advaita:	Absolute Non-dualism culminating in liberation.
Kevala Advaitin:	A nondualist intent on the attainment of the state of Kaivalya—liberation.

Khol:	See Mridangam.
Khyati:	Apprehension; discernment; knowledge; vision.
Kirtan:	Singing the names and praises of God; devotional chanting.
Klesha:	Literally, taints or afflictions. The kleshas are: ignorance, egotism, attractions and repulsions towards objects, and desperate clinging to physical life from the fear of death. (See Yoga Sutras 2: -9.)
Klishta:	Afflicted, painful or pain-bearing.
Kosha:	Sheath; bag; scabbard; a sheath enclosing the soul; body. There are five such concentric sheaths or bodies: the sheaths of bliss, intellect, mind, life-force and the physical body—the anandamaya, jnanamaya, manomaya, pranamaya and annamaya bodies respectively.
Krama:	Order; sequence; sequential order or progression; stage; underlying process; natural law—all these are inherent in their substratum or dharmi.
Krama-mukti:	Attainment of liberation in stages; gradual liberation; passing from this world to a higher world beyond rebirth and from there attaining liberation.
Kripa:	Grace; mercy; compassion; blessing. There are three kinds of kripa: 1) sadhana kripa, the grace of self-effort; 2) guru kripa, the grace of a teacher, and 3) divya kripa, divine grace.
Krishna (1):	Black; dark-colored.
Krishna (2):	“The dark blue one.” A Divine Incarnation born in India about three thousand years ago, Whose teachings to His disciple Arjuna on the eve of the Great India (Mahabharata) War comprise the Bhagavad Gita.
Krishna Dwaipayana:	“The island-born dark one.” Vyasa.
Krita Yuga:	Satya Yuga, the Golden Age. See Yuga.
Kriya:	Purificatory action, practice, exercise, or rite; action; activity; movement; function; skill. Kriyas purify the body and nervous system as well as the subtle bodies to enable the yogi to reach and hold on to higher levels of consciousness and being.
Kriya Shakti:	Power or faculty of action (kriya.)
Kriya Yoga:	The Yoga of Purification: “Austerity (tapasya), self-study (swadhyaya), and offering of the life to God (Ishwara pranidhaha) are Kriya Yoga.” (Yoga Sutras 2:)
Krodha:	Anger, wrath; fury.
Kshama:	Forgiveness; patience, forbearance.

Kshatriya:	A member of the ruler/warrior caste.
Kshetra:	Field; property; place of pilgrimage; sacred place; the physical body.
Kshetrajna:	Knower of the field; the individual Self (Atman); the Supreme Self (Paramatman). See the thirteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.
Kshobha:	Shaking; agitated; disturbed; emotion.
Kubera:	The god of wealth.
Kula:	Possessing a form.
Kumaras (Four):	Those advanced souls—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata—who at the beginning of this creation cycle refused to engage in worldly life despite the command of Brahma. They were then taught by Lord Shiva, in the form of Dakshinamurti, the mysteries of Brahmajnana and attained liberation.
Kumari:	Virgin; a formal title of address for an unmarried woman.
Kumari Puja:	The worship of a virgin (usually a prepubescent girl) as an embodiment of the Divine Mother.
Kumbha:	Pot; water vessel.
Kumbhaka:	Retention of breath; suspension of breath.
Kumkum:	“Red-red.” Red-colored powder used for making a ritual mark between the eyebrows.
Kund:	A pond; a small natural bathing place.
Kundalini:	The primordial cosmic energy located in the individual; it is usually thought of as lying coiled up like a serpent at the base of the spine.
Kurukshetra:	The battlefield in Northern India where the Mahabharata (Great Indian) War took place, and where the Bhagavad Gita was spoken.
Kusha:	One of the varieties of sacred grass (darbha) used in many religious rites. Because of its insulating qualities, both physical and metaphysical, it is recommended as a seat (asana) for meditation, and as mats for sleeping (it keeps the sleeper warm).
Kutastha:	Immutable; absolutely changeless; not subject to change; “summit abiding;” “on the summit.”
Kutashtha:	Changeless; immutable; dweller in the height (summit); a name of Brahman.
Kutira:	Hut; cottage; house; building; hermitage.

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Lakh:	One hundred thousand.
Lakshana:	Definition; characteristic; condition; attribute; sign; mark.
Lakshmi:	The consort of Vishnu; the goddess of wealth and prosperity; good fortune; auspiciousness; abundance.
Lakshya:	Target; point of concentration; perceivable object; vision.
Langoti:	See kaupina.
Laya:	Dissolution; merging.
Laya Yoga:	Process of absorption of the individual soul into the Supreme Soul; concentration of the mind with a view to dissolve it; that kind of yogic meditation where the mind is carried on progressively from grosser to subtler ideas until it is dissolved in the Unmanifested or Para Brahman; the yoga sometimes known as Omkaralayacintana—the merging of the consciousness into Om.
Lila:	Play; sport; divine play; the cosmic play. The concept that creation is a play of the divine, existing for no other reason than for the mere joy of it. The life of an avatar is often spoken of as lila.
Linga:	Mark; characteristic; gender; sign; symbol; distinctive sign through which it is possible to recognize the nature of something. Usually a reference to a column-like or eggshaped symbol of Shiva.
Linga sharira:	Subtle body; astral body (also called sukshma-sharira).
Lobha:	Greed; covetousness.
Loka:	World or realm; sphere, level, or plane of existence, whether physical, astral, or causal. There are seven lokas: Bhuloka: The material plane of atomic matter. Bhuvaloka: The lesser astral world, similar to the material plane (Bhuloka). Swa(r)loka: The median astral world. Mahaloka: The higher astral world. Those who attain this world need never be reborn in the three lower worlds of Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swah. Janaloka: The world that embraces both the highest astral levels and the lower causal levels. Tapoloka: The median causal world exclusively inhabited by advanced spirits who perpetually engage in meditation—tapasya. Satyaloka: The highest causal world inhabited by those who have attained liberation (moksha).
Lokaishana:	Desire for fame.
Lokasangraha:	Solidarity of the world; uplift of the world.

Lota: A metal water vessel used for drinking, carrying, or pouring water.

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Mada: Pride; conceit; intoxication; exhilaration; dementia.

Madhava: Descendant of Madhu (a Yadava or Madhava patriarch). A title of Krishna.

Madhura: Sweet; honeylike.

Madhura bhava: The devotional relationship of love toward God; looking upon God as the Beloved.

Madhusudana: Destroyer of the Demon Madhu (properly an epithet of Vishnu)—a title of Krishna.

Madhvacharya: The founder and exponent of Dvaita (Dualistic) Vedanta (1199-1278), who taught devotion to Vishnu.

Madhya: Center; middle; central.

Madhyama: The middle stage of sound as it develops from silent to fully audible or spoken. Sound in its subtle form as it exists in the mind/psyche before its gross manifestation.

Maha: Great; mighty; powerful; lofty; noble. Usually a prefix or suffix.

Mahabharata: The world's longest epic poem (110,000 verses) about the Mahabharata (Great Indian) War that took place about three thousand years ago. The Mahabharata also includes the Bhagavad Gita, the most popular sacred text of Hinduism.

Mahabhuta: Great elements; primordial elements. The five great elements: ether (akasha), air (vayu), fire (tejas), water (ap), and earth (prithvi).

Mahadeva: "The Great God;" a title of Shiva.

Mahaloka: The higher astral world. Those who attain this world need never be reborn in the three lower worlds of Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swah.

Mahamantra: "The Great Mantra," popularly known in the United States and Europe as "the Hare Krishna Mantra"—Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare; Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare.

Mahamaya: "Great illusion;" divine Power operating as identified with the Supreme Lord. A title of Shakti, the Goddess.

Mahamrityunjaya: "The Great Conqueror of Death." A title and four-armed form of Shiva.

Mahamrityunjaya mantra: "The Great Conqueror of Death Mantra." A Vedic verse addressed to Shiva that is recited for protection, recovery from disease, and extension of life.

Mahan:	The Great One; The Supreme One; title of the Supreme Being. That One which is impossible to adequately praise. That alone which is truly Great.
Mahapralaya:	The final cosmic dissolution; the dissolution of all the worlds of relativity (Bhuloka, Bhuvaloka, Swaloka, Mahaloka, Janaloka, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka), until nothing but the Absolute remains. There are lesser dissolutions, known simply as pralayas, when only the first five worlds (lokas) are dissolved.
Mahaprana:	The undifferentiated, intelligent cosmic life-force that becomes the five pranas; all things contain the mahaprana and are manifestations of the mahaprana; the dynamic aspect of universal Consciousness; the superconscious Divine Life in all things.
Maharatha:	“A great-warrior,” a commander of eleven thousand bowmen as he rode in his chariot.
Mahar(i)shi:	Great sage (rishi).
Mahapurusha:	A great person; a great soul; a sage; the Supreme Lord.
Mahasamadhi:	Literally “the great union [samadhi],” this refers to a realized yogi’s conscious departure from the physical body at death.
Mahashakti:	The Great Power; the divine creative energy.
Mahashivaratri:	“The Great Night of Shiva.” The major, night-long festival of the worship of Shiva that occurs on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the lunar month known as Phalgun (usually in February, but every third year when an extra month is added to the lunar calendar, it may occur in March).
Mahashunya(ta):	The Great Void; the Great Emptiness. The state of the Formless Absolute, which is empty in the sense that it is without manifest creation. It is not a state of nonexistence, because it has the nature of Being, Consciousness, and Bliss (Satchidananda).
Mahat:	See Mahat Tattwa.
Mahat Tattwa:	The Great Principle; the first evolute from Prakriti; intellect. The principle of Cosmic Intelligence or Buddhi; universal Christ Consciousness, the “Son of God,” the “Only Begotten of the Father,” “the firstborn of every creature.”
Mahatma:	Literally: “a great soul [atma].” Usually a designation for a sannyasi or a saint.
Mahavakya:	Literally: “Great Saying.” The highest Vedantic truth, found in the Upanishads, there are four Mahavakyas: 1) Prajñanam Brahma—“Consciousness is Brahman” (Aitareya Upanishad); 2) Ayam Atma Brahma—“This Self is Brahman” (Mandukya Upanishad); 3) Tat Twam Asi—“Thou art That” (Chandogya Upanishad); 4) Aham Brahmasmi—“I am Brahman” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad).

Mahavrata:	The Great Vow/Rule of Conduct. The Yoga Sutras (2:31) of Patanjali state that ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, and aparigraha “not conditioned by class, place, time or occasion, and extending to all stages, constitute the Great Vow.” (See separate entries for each component.)
Mahayoga:	Great yoga.
Mahayogi:	Great yogi.
Maheshwara:	The Great Ishwara; Shiva.
Mahima (1):	Greatness; glory; magnification; extensive magnitude; miracle.
Mahima (2):	The psychic power (siddhi) to become as large as desired.
Mahout:	Trainer-handler of an elephant.
Maithuna(m):	Sexual intercourse.
Maitri:	Friendliness; friendship; love.
Mala (1):	Taint; impurity; defilement; defect; ignorance, limitation of consciousness.
Mala (2):	Garland; flower garland; rosary; chain. A string of beads (usually 108) used to count off repetitions of a mantra or a yogic process.
Malina:	Impure; defective.
Manah:	The sensory mind; the perceiving faculty that receives the messages of the senses.
Manana:	Thinking, pondering, reflecting, considering.
Manas(a):	See Manah.
Manasika:	Pertaining to the mind; mental; mental action.
Mandala:	Circle; magical circle or diagram; the special domain of a deity; a section of the Rig Veda; an association.
Mandapa(m):	An open, covered hall or pavilion consisting of a roof and supports (usually pillars, but it can be walls with very large openings); a tent.
Mandir(a):	Temple; abode.
Mangala:	Auspicious.
Mani:	Jewel.
Manipura chakra:	Energy center located in the spine at the point opposite the navel. Seat of the Fire element.

Manohara:	“Enchanter/Ravisher/Stealer of the Mind;” one who captivates one’s mind. A title of Vishnu, but usually applied to Krishna as the flute player.
Manolaya:	Involution and dissolution of the mind into its cause.
Manomaya kosha:	“The sheath of the mind (manas–mental substance).” The level (kosha) of the sensory mind. The astral body.
Manonasa:	Destruction of the mind.
Manonirodha:	Control or annihilation of the mind.
Mantra(m):	Sacred syllable or word or set of words through the repetition and reflection of which one attains perfection or realization of the Self. Literally, “a transforming thought” (manat trayate). A mantra, then is a sound formula that transforms the consciousness.
Mantra Yoga:	The Yoga of the Divine Word; the science of sound; the path to divine union through repetition of a mantra.
Mantric:	Having to do with mantra(s)—their sound or their power.
Manu:	The ancient lawgiver, whose code, The Laws of Manu (Manu Smriti) is the foundation of Hindu religious and social conduct.
Manus:	Progenitors of the human race who were also its lawgivers and teachers.
Manushya:	Human being.
Manvantara:	An age of the rulership of a Manu. Within a cosmic age (kalpa) there are fourteen manvantaras.
Mara:	The embodiment of the power of cosmic evil, illusion, and delusion.
Marga:	Way; path; street; approach to God-realization (bhakti marga, jnana marga, karma marga, yoga marga, etc.).
Margashirsha:	A lunar month, roughly the latter half of November and the first half of December. This is the time of ideal weather in India.
Marichi:	The chief of the Maruts.
Maruts:	The presiding deities of winds and storms.
Mata:	Mother.
Math(a):	A monastery.
Mati:	Thought; view; opinion; faith; religion; doctrine; tradition; conviction; mind rightly directed towards knowledge revealed and practice enjoined by the shastras.

Matra:	Letters of the alphabet or their sounds; mode; measure; prosodial instant—the length of time required for pronouncing a short vowel.
Matrika:	Letter or sound syllable which is the basis of all words and hence of all knowledge; “little mothers.”
Mauna(m):	Silence—not speaking.
Maya:	The illusive power of Brahman; the veiling and the projecting power of the universe, the power of Cosmic Illusion. “The Measurer”—a reference to the two delusive “measures”: Time and Space.
Mayic:	Having to do with Maya.

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Medha:	Power of retaining the import of studies; intelligence or intellect; power of understanding.
Mela:	Fair; large religious gathering.
Meru:	The mountain, of supreme height, on which the gods dwell, or the mountain on which Shiva is ever seated in meditation, said to be the center of the world, supporting heaven itself—obviously a yogic symbol of the spinal column or merudanda. The name of the central bead on a japa mala (rosary).
Merudanda:	The spinal column in yogic symbolism; see Meru.
Mimamsa:	An enquiry into the nature of a thing; the science of philosophical logic enquiring into Vedic knowledge. Usually a reference to Purva-Mimamsa, one of the six schools of orthodox Indian philosophy. It focuses on the Vedas and the Vedic rites to establish their supreme spiritual value and authority.
Mimamsaka:	A follower of the Purva Mimamsa school of philosophy.
Mitahara:	Moderate diet.
Mithya:	Not real; neither real nor unreal; illusory; false; untrue; incorrect.
Mitra:	Friend; companion; associate. The Vedic god of harmony.
Mleccha:	Foreigner; an alien; barbarian; someone who does not belong to Hindu culture.
Moha:	Delusion—in relation to something, usually producing delusive attachment, infatuation, or obsession based on a completely false perception and evaluation of the object.
Moksha:	Release; liberation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death; Absolute Experience.

Mridanga(m):	A drum used exclusively in devotional music, also known as a khol.
Mrita(m):	Dead.
Mrityu:	Death; of death; a title of Yama, the Lord of Death.
Mrityuh:	Death.
Mudita:	Joy; happiness.
Mudra:	Gesture; hand position; seal; stamp.
Muhurta:	A unit of time—a thirtieth part of a day, forty-five to forty-eight minutes in length.
Mukta:	One who is liberated—freed—usually in the sense of one who has attained moksha or spiritual liberation.
Muktajiva:	A liberated individual spirit.
Mukti:	Moksha; liberation; release.
Mula:	Origin(al); primary; root; base.
Muladhara chakra:	“Seat of the root.” Energy center located at the base of the spine. Seat of the Earth element.
Mulaprakriti:	The Root [Basic] Energy from which all things are formed. The Divine Prakriti or Energy of God.
Mumukshu:	A seeker after liberation (moksha).
Mumukshutwa:	Intense desire or yearning for liberation (moksha).
Muni:	“Silent one” (one observing the vow of silence (mauna); sage; ascetic.
Murti:	Image; statue; idol; figure; embodiment.

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Nada:	Sound; the resonance of sound; mystic inner sound; the primal sound or first vibration from which all creation has emanated; the first manifestation of the unmanifested Absolute; Omkara or Shabda Brahman. The inner sound of Om experienced in meditation.
Nadi:	A channel in the subtle (astral) body through which subtle prana (psychic energy) flows; a physical nerve.
Naga:	Snake; a kind of astral being; naked.
Nagar(a):	City; town.

Nagar(san)kirtan:	Kirtan done in procession through the streets or sometimes within or around an ashram or other property.
Nagas:	Astral beings that often interact with human beings, usually taking the form of snakes. (In Sanskrit naga is the word for snake.)
Nahabat:	A temple music tower. Musicians sit on the upper story and play during festivals and sometimes at the time of daily worship. Holy Mother Sarada Devi lived in the northern nahabat of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple.
Naishtika brahmachari(n):	One irrevocably vowed to life-long celibacy; a permanent brahmachari.
Naivedya:	Food offered in worship.
Nakshatra:	Star; heavenly body; asterism or constellation.
Nama:	Name. The Divine Name.
Nama-rupa:	Name and form.
Namaskara:	“I bow to you;” a respectful greeting; salutation; obeisance.
Namasmarana:	Remembrance (repetition) of the Name of God. Remembrance of the Lord through repetition of His name.
Namaste(bhyam):	“I bow to you.” “I salute you.”
Nanak (Guru):	Founder of the Sikh religion in the fifteenth century.
Nara:	Man; human.
Narada:	A primeval sage to whom some of the verses of the Rig Veda are attributed.
Naraka:	Hell.
Naraki:	One who is in hell.
Narayana:	A proper name of God—specifically of Vishnu. The term by etymology means a Being that supports all things, that is reached by them and that helps them to do so; also one who pervades all things. He Who dwells in man. Literally: “God in humanity.” Sadhus often address one another as Narayana and greet one another: “Namo Narayanaya”—I salute Narayana [in you].
Narayana shila:	See Shalagrama.
Nasika:	Nose.
Nasikagra:	Tip of the nose.
Nasikagradrishti:	Gaze directed toward the tip of the nose.

Nastika:	Unbeliever; atheist.
Nataraja:	“King of the Dance,” a title of Shiva the Cosmic Dancer. The whole creation is the dance of Shiva. He holds a drum (damaru) in his upper right hand representing the sound (shabda) of Om by which the universe is created. In his upper left hand he holds a flame which symbolizes the dissolution of the universe in fire—but which also represents the tapasya by which the yogi dissolves the bonds of this world. His lower hand is in abhaya mudra, the gesture meaning “fear not,” bestowing peace and protection. His lower left hand points toward his upraised foot indicating that the “feet” of the yogi must be lifted up toward Spirit. It also symbolizes liberation.
Natha:	Lord; ruler; protector.
Nath Yogis:	An ancient order of yogis, sometimes called Siddha Yogis, claiming Patanjali and Jesus (Isha Nath) among their master teachers.
Navadhvara kuti:	The nine-gated house—the body.
Navadhvara puri:	The nine-gated city—the body.
Neem Karoli Baba:	One of India’s most amazing and mysterious spiritual figures. The life of this great miracle-worker and master spanned from two to four centuries (at the least), including most of the twentieth century.
Neti-neti:	“Not this; not this.” The analytical process of progressively negating all names and forms in order to arrive at the eternal underlying Truth. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad both Brahman and the Self are described as “not this; not this,” meaning that when we negate every name, form, or quality, Being Itself will remain.
Nididhyasana:	Meditation; contemplation; profound and continuous meditation. It is a continuous, unbroken stream of ideas of the same kind as those of the Absolute. It removes the contrariwise tendencies of the mind.
Nidra:	Sleep; either dreaming or deep sleep state.
Nija:	Perception without sense organs.
Nijananda:	The bliss beyond sense perception.
Nimitta:	Cause; instrument; effect; sign; substance.
Nirakara:	Without form.
Niranjana:	Without blemish; spotless.
Nirbija:	“Without seed;” without attributes; without the production of samskaras or subtle karmas.

Nirbija samadhi:	Nirvikalpa samadhi wherein the seeds of samskaras or karmas are destroyed (“fried” or “roasted”) by Jnana, and which produces no samskaras or karmas.
Nirguna:	Without attributes or qualities (gunas).
Nirguna Brahman:	The impersonal, attributeless Absolute beyond all description or designation.
Nirodha:	Restraint; restriction; suppression; dissolving/dissolution; cessation; disappearance; control inhibition; annihilation; process of ending.
Nirmala:	Without impurity; pure; without defect or blemish.
Nirvana:	Liberation; final emancipation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death that comes from knowing Brahman; Absolute Experience. See Moksha.
Nirvana chakra:	Energy center located beneath the crown of the head and opposite the middle of the forehead—in the midst of the brain.
Nirvedam:	Indifference; non-reaction; non-susceptibility; the state of being unmoved or not influenced by something.
Nirvedya:	Unknowable.
Nirvichara samadhi:	A stage in samadhi wherein the mind (chitta) no longer identified with a subtle object or assumes its form, simply resting in perception without analytical awareness of its nature by means of the buddhi, whose operation has become completely suspended so that only pure awareness remains; without deliberation and reasoning or inquiry.
Nirvikalpa:	Indeterminate; non-conceptual; without the modifications of the mind; beyond all duality.
Nirvikalpa Samadhi:	Samadhi in which there is no objective experience or experience of “qualities” whatsoever, and in which the triad of knower, knowledge and known does not exist; purely subjective experience of the formless and qualityless and unconditioned Absolute. The highest state of samadhi, beyond all thought, attribute, and description.
Nirvikara:	Without transformation, modifications, or change; changeless.
Nishkama karma:	Desireless action; disinterested action; action dedicated to God without personal desire for the fruits of the action; selfless action.
Nitya:	Eternal; permanent; unchanging; the ultimate Reality; the eternal Absolute.
Secondarily:	daily or obligatory (nitya karma—that which must be done every day).
Nitya-Shuddha:	Eternally pure.

Nivritti:	Negation; the path of turning away from activity; withdrawal. Literally, “to turn back.” The path of renunciation.
Nivritti Marga:	The path of renunciation, of withdrawal from the world.
Niyama:	Observance; the five Do’s of Yoga: 1) shaucha–purity, cleanliness; 2) santosha–contentment, peacefulness; 3) tapas–austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; 4) swadhyaya–self-study, spiritual study; 5) Ishwarapranidhana–offering of one’s life to God.

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Ojah:	See Ojas.
Ojas:	Vitality; vigor; luster; splendor; energy; spiritual energy. The highest form of energy in the human body. In the spiritual aspirant who constantly practices continence and purity, other forms of energy are transmuted into ojas and stored in the brain, manifesting as spiritual and intellectual power.
Om:	The Pranava or the sacred syllable symbolizing and embodying Brahman.
Oshadhi:	Medicinal plant.

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Pada (1):	Part; chapter; one-fourth portion.
Padma:	Lotus.
Padmasana:	Lotus posture; considered the best posture for meditation.
Paduka:	Sandals.
Panchagni:	“Five fires.” A discipline in which four fires are kindled in the four cardinal directions and meditation is done from dawn till dusk seated in their midst, the sun being the fifth “fire.” Also called Panchatapa.
Panchanga:	Traditional Indian calendar.
Panchatapa:	See Panchagni.
Pandal:	A flat-roofed tent whose sides and top are detached from one another, the root usually being higher than the sides to provide air circulation.
Pandavas:	The five sons of King Pandu: Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Their lives are described in the Mahabharata.
Pandita:	Scholar; pundit; learned individual.

Papa:	Sin; demerit; evil; sinful deeds; evil deeds.
Para(m):	Highest; universal; transcendent; supreme.
Parabhakti:	Supreme devotion to God. This leads to jnana.
Parabrahman:	Supreme Brahman.
Parama:	Highest; supreme.
Param[a]guru:	The guru's guru.
Paramananda:	Supreme (param) bliss (ananda).
Param[a]purusha:	See Purusha.
Paramartha:	The highest attainment, purpose, or goal; absolute truth; Reality.
Paramatma(n):	The Supreme Self, God.
Parameshwara:	The Supreme Lord.
Paramhansa:	Literally: Supreme Swan, a person of the highest spiritual realization, from the fact that a swan can separate milk from water and is therefore an apt symbol for one who has discarded the unreal for the Real, the darkness for the Light, and mortality for the Immortal, having separated himself fully from all that is not God and joined himself totally to the Divine, becoming a veritable embodiment of Divinity manifested in humanity.
Paramapada:	The highest abode; the supreme abode (Vaikuntha) of Lord Vishnu.
Parampara:	Tradition; one following another; lineage; succession; uninterrupted succession.
Parampurusha:	The Supreme Spirit; Supreme Person.
Paranirvana:	The Supreme, Final Nirvana, when the perfectly enlightened individual is released from physical embodiment, never to return to birth in any world, high or low.
Parasamvit:	Supreme knowledge; supreme consciousness; the supreme experiencing principle; absolute experience; self-luminous knowledge; pure consciousness; Shiva; Supreme Reality.
Para-shakti:	Supreme Power.
Paridrishtah:	Regulated; measured; observed or viewed with the intent to regulate.
Parikrama:	Circumambulation; "to traverse around." It is the custom in India to circumambulate sacred objects and places, always moving clockwise so the sacred thing or place is to the right of the devotee.

Parinama:	Change; modification; transformation; evolution; development; effect; result; ripening; altering/changing.
Parinama-vada:	The theory that the cause is continually transforming itself into its effects. The belief that Brahman transforms a portion of His Being into the universe. The belief that Prakriti is transformed into the world.
Paripurna:	All-full; self-contained.
Parivrajaka:	“One who wanders;” a roaming ascetic; one who has renounced the world; a sannyasin.
Parvati:	“Daughter of the Mountain;” the daughter of King Himalaya; the consort of Shiva; an incarnation of the Divine Mother.
Pashyanti:	The first prearticulated aspect of sound; sound in a subtle form as it starts to manifest before reaching the mind; the first perceptible form of sound.
Patala:	Hell; nether world.
Patanjali:	A yogi of ancient India, the author of the Yoga Sutras.
Pati:	“Lord;” God; Master; Shiva.
Pativrata dharma:	The rules of life of a chaste woman devoted to her husband.
Paurusha:	Manhood, manliness, virility, potency, courage, effort.
Pauresheya:	Personal; pertaining to or what originates from a person (purusha).
Pavaka:	Agni.
Pavitra:	Holy; pure; purified; can also mean purifier or sanctifier.
Payasa:	A sweet rice pudding made from rice, milk, ghee, sugar, and spices.
Phala:	Fruit; result or effect.
Pinda (1):	Part of the whole; individual; the body—either of the individual jiva or the cosmic body of Ishwara. It can also mean an organized whole or a unity of diversities.
Pinda (2):	Small ball of rice offered to one’s ancestors as an oblation. Sometimes in the sannyas ritual the prospective sannyasi performs his own funeral obsequies (shraddha ceremony), including making offerings of rice balls to/for himself.
Pindotpatti:	The origin of the bodies, cosmic as well as individual.
Pingala:	The subtle channel that extends from the base of the spine to the medulla on the right side of the spine.

Pishacha:	Vampire; flesh-or-blood-craving demon.
Pitamaha:	Grandfather; Great Father; titles of Brahma, the Creator.
Pitha:	Seat; throne; chair. It also indicates a place where something is centered or established. For example, a place of power may be referred to as a “shakti pitha” or a place favorable to meditation as a “yoga pitha.” A shrine to a deity may also be called a pitha, such as “Sarada pitha,” etc., meaning that the deity resides or is established there.
Pitri:	A departed ancestor, a forefather.

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Prabhu:	Lord; excelling; mighty; powerful; master. From the root bhu–“to become, hence to rule”–and pra–“forth.”
Prarabdha karma:	“Ripened” actions (pra=before; rabh=begin); the portion of accumulated karma, the fruits of which determines one’s present life, which are being experienced now and which cannot be erased; karma in action; remainder; karma that is working itself out during the present life. That part of the accumulated effect of past deeds which has begun to take effect with the creation of the present physical body and which is responsible for the continuance of the body even after release is attained. It is destroyed only when its force is spent. It cannot be averted, avoided, or changed–though either by knowledge or by grace its impact can be minimized or rendered nil to the perceiver.
Pradakshina:	Circumambulation of a sacred object or place, walking around it clockwise so it is always on your right side.
Pradhana:	Prakriti; causal matter.
Prahlada:	A daitya prince who rejected his daitya heritage and became a devotee of Vishnu. His father, the evil Hiranyakashipu, tortured him and attempted his life because of his devotion and his speaking to others of divine matters, yet he remained steadfast.
Prajapati:	Progenitor; the Creator; a title of Brahma the Creator.
Prajna:	Consciousness; awareness; wisdom; intelligence.
Prajñanam Brahma:	“Consciousness is Brahman.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Aitareya Upanishad.
Prakash(a):	Shining; luminous; effulgence; illumination; luminosity; light; brightness. Pure Consciousness, from the root kash (to shine) and pra (forth); cognition.

Prakriti:	Causal matter; the fundamental power (shakti) of God from which the entire cosmos is formed; the root base of all elements; undifferentiated matter; the material cause of the world. Also known as Pradhana.
Prakritilaya:	Absorbed or merged in Prakriti; the state of yogis who have so identified with the cosmic energy that they are trapped in it as though in a net and cannot separate themselves from it and evolve onwards until the cosmic dissolution (pralaya) occurs in which the lower worlds of men, angels, and archangels (bhur, bhuwah and swar lokas) are dissolved.
Pralaya:	Dissolution. See Mahapralaya.
Prama:	Valid knowledge; true knowledge; knowledge of the real; knowledge free from error and above doubt.
Pramana:	Means of valid knowledge; logical proof; authority (of knowledge); means of cognition (from the verb root ma—to measure and pra—before or forward).
Pramanya(m):	Truth; validity; proof.
Pramada:	Carelessness; fault; guilt
Prameya:	Object of cognition; object of (right) knowledge; object of proof; subject of inquiry.
Prana:	Vital energy; life-breath; life-force. In the human body the prana is divided into five forms: 1) Prana, the prana that moves upward; 2) Apana: The prana that moves downward, producing the excretory functions in general. 3) Vyana: The prana that holds prana and apana together and produces circulation in the body. 4) Samana: The prana that carries the grosser material of food to the apana and brings the subtler material to each limb; the general force of digestion. 5) Udana: The prana which brings up or carries down what has been drunk or eaten; the general force of assimilation.
Pranam:	“To bow;” to greet with respect. A respectful or reverential gesture made by putting the hands together palm-to-palm in front of the chest. A prostration before a deity or revered person.
Pranamaya kosha:	“The sheath of vital air (prana).” The sheath consisting of vital forces and the (psychic) nervous system.
Pranapratishtha:	“Installation of life;” a ritual which is done to an image when it is set on the altar of a temple at its consecration. This ritual makes the image alive in a subtle—but no less real—sense.
Pranava:	A title of Om, meaning “Life-ness” or “Life-Giver.” Om is the expression or controller of prana—the life force within the individual being and the cosmos.

Pranayama:	Control of the subtle life forces, often by means of special modes of breathing. Therefore breath control or breathing exercises are usually mistaken for pranayama.
Prapancha:	The world; appearance of the world.
Prarabdha:	Karma that has become activated and begun to manifest and bear fruit; karmic “seeds” that have begun to “sprout.”
Prarabdha karma:	The action that has begun to fructify, the fruit of which is being reaped in this life.
Prasada(m):	Food or any gift that has been first offered in worship or to a saint; that which is given by a saint; literally: “grace.”
Pratibha:	Special mental power; imaginative insight; intelligence; splendor of knowledge; intuition; ever-creative activity or consciousness; the spontaneous supreme “I”- consciousness; Parashakti.
Pratima:	Image; symbol; reflection; idol; figure; creator.
Pratipaksha bhavana:	The method of substituting the opposite through imagination; thus, fear is overcome by dwelling strongly upon its opposite, viz., courage. Reflecting on and cultivating those traits which are opposed to spiritual obstructions.
Pratyagatman:	The Self whose existence is understood only by turning one’s vision inward; the indwelling Self; kutashtha; Brahman.
Pratyahara:	Abstraction or withdrawal of the senses from their objects, the fifth limb of Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga.
Pratyaksha:	Perception; direct perception; intuition.
Pratyayau:	Content of the mind-field; presented idea; cognition principle; cognition; causal/awareness principle; awareness perceiving [through the mind]; buddhi; discriminatory intelligence; immediate arising thought directed to an object; cause; mental effort; imagination; idea of distinction.
Pravrajin:	A wandering sannyasi.
Pravritti:	Action; endeavor. Literally: “to turn forth.”
Pravritti Marga:	The path of active involvement in the world.
Prayag:	Rudraprayag, the modern-day Allahabad, site of the Triveni—the confluence of the three sacred rivers: Ganges, Jumna (Yamuna), and Saraswati.
Prayaschitta:	Atonement (through various prescribed acts); expiation; mortification.
Prayatna:	Effort; attempt; conscious activity.

Prema:	Love, both human and divine; in the latter sense an ecstatic experience, interior disposition or movement which brings the lover into oneness with the Beloved.
Prema-bhakti:	Intense love of God.
Preta:	Ghost; spirit of the dead.
Preyo marga:	The path of the pleasing, the pleasant, the pleasurable, or of worldly gain, as opposed to the path of the good or truly beneficial.
Prithvi:	The planet earth; the earth element, from which the sense of smell (gandha) arises
Priya(m):	Dear; beloved; pleasing. It can also mean the happiness or joy felt when seeing a beloved object.
Puja:	Worship; ceremonial (ritual) worship; adoration; honor. Usually involving the image of a deity.
Pujari:	One who performs ritualistic worship (puja).
Punarjanma:	“Birth again;” rebirth/reincarnation.
Pundit:	Scholar; pandita; learned individual.
Punya:	Merit; virtue; meritorious acts; virtuous deeds.
Puraka:	Inhalation.
Purana:	Literally “The Ancient.” The Puranas are a number of scriptures attributed to the sage Vyasa that teach spiritual principles and practices through stories about sacred historical personages which often include their teachings given in conversations.
Purana Purusha:	The Ancient Person; God.
Purascharana:	An observance consisting of the repetition of a mantra—as many hundred thousand times as there are syllables (letters) in it. This is done with rigid rules regarding diet, number of japa to be done per day, seat, etc.
Purna:	Full; complete.
Purnima:	Full moon day.
Purohita:	Priest; class of Vedic priests.
Purusha:	“Person” in the sense of a conscious spirit. Both God and the individual spirits are purushas, but God is the Adi (Original, Archetypal) Purusha, Parama (Highest) Purusha, and the Purushottama (Highest or Best of the Purushas).

Purushartha:	The four goals of human life: wealth (artha), desire (kama), righteousness (dharma), and liberation (moksha). The first is the economic value, the second is the psychological value, the third is the moral value, and the fourth is the spiritual value. Human effort; individual exertion; right exertion.
Purushottama:	The Supreme Person; Supreme Purusha. (See Purusha.)
Purva samskaras:	Previous samskaras; that is, samskaras brought over from previous lives.
Purvashram:	Previous stage of life.
Pusan:	Surya, the Sun-god.
Pushpa:	Flower.
Pushpanjali:	Flower offering.
Putra:	Son.
Putraishana:	Desire for progeny.

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Radha:	The most celebrated of the Gopis, the dearest to Sri Krishna.
Raga:	Attachment/affinity for something, implying a desire for it. This can be emotional (instinctual) or intellectual. It may range from simple liking or preference to intense desire and attraction. Greed; passion. See Dwesha.
Raga-bhakti:	Supreme love, making one attached only to God.
Raga-dwesha:	The continual cycle of desire/aversion, like/dislike.
Raja:	King; royal.
Rajarshi:	“Royal sage;” a king who knows Brahman; an epithet of King Janaka.
Raja Yoga:	See Ashtanga Yoga.
Rajas:	Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal. One of the three gunas.
Rajasic:	Possessed of the qualities of the raja guna (rajas). Passionate; active; restless.
Rajoguna:	Activity, passion, desire for an object or goal.
Raki:	A (usually) red string tied around the right wrist—usually by a priest in a temple or holy place—as mantras are recited for blessing and protection.

Rakshasa:	There are two kinds of rakshasas: 1) semidivine, benevolent beings, or 2) cannibal demons or goblins, enemies of the gods. Meat-eating human beings are sometimes classed as rakshasas.
Rama:	An incarnation of God—the king of ancient Ayodhya in north-central India. His life is recorded in the ancient epic Ramayana.
Ramana:	Enjoyer; one who enjoys or delights in something
Ramayana:	The great Sanskrit epic poem by the sage Valmiki describing the life of Rama, the king of ancient Ayodhya in north-central India, who is regarded as an incarnation of God. The renowned Hindi devotional poem by the saint Tulsidas, also on the life of Rama.
Ramdas (Swami):	One of the best-known and most influential spiritual figures of twentieth-century India, founder of Anandashram in South India and author of the spiritual classic <i>In the Vision of God</i> as well as many other inspirational books.
Ramnam:	“The Name of Rama.” Japa or kirtan of the Name, titles, or mantra(s) of Rama.
Rani:	Queen.
Rasa:	Taste; essence; savor; juice; nectar of delight.
Rati:	Pleasure.
Ratna:	Jewel; pearl; gem; the best.
Ratri:	Night.
Rechaka:	Exhalation of breath.
Retas:	Semen; virile seed
Riddhi:	Highest experiential delight; nine varieties of extraordinary exaltation and grandeur that come to a yogi as he advances and progresses in Yoga, like the supernatural powers or siddhis. Increase; growth; prosperity; success; wealth.
Rishabhadeva:	An ancient ascetic who wandered freely through the forests, possessing nothing—not even wearing clothes—virtually unaware of his body.
Rishi:	Sage; seer of the Truth.
Rita(m):	Truth; Law; Right; Order. The natural order of things, or Cosmic Order/Law. Its root is ri, which means “to rise, to tend upward.” It is said to be the basis for the Law of Karma.
Rudra:	Shiva. Derived from rud—he who drives away sin or suffering.
Rudras:	Vedic deities of destruction for renewal, the chief of which is Shiva.

Rudraksha: “The Eye of Shiva;” a tree seed considered sacred to Shiva and worn by worshippers of Shiva, Shakti, and Ganesha, and by yogis, usually in a strand of 108 seeds. Also used as a rosary to count the number of mantras repeated in japa.

Rupa: Form; body.

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Sabha: Assembly; congregation; public audience.

Sabija: “With seed;” with attributes; producing samskaras or subtle karmas.

Sabija samadhi: Savikalpa samadhi wherein the seeds of samskaras or karmas are not destroyed, and which produces the highest and subtlest of samskaras or karmas.

Sadachara: Morality; right behavior.

Sadashiva: Eternally auspicious; eternally happy; eternally prosperous. A title of Shiva, the eternally auspicious One.

Sad-darshanas: The six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.

Sadguru: True guru, or the guru who reveals the Real (Sat–God).

Sadhaka: One who practices spiritual discipline–sadhana–particularly meditation.

Sadhana: Spiritual practice.

Sadhana-chatushtaya: The fourfold aids to spiritual practice: 1) the ability to discriminate between the transient and the eternal (nitya-anity-astu-viveka); 2) the absence of desire for securing pleasure or pain either here or elsewhere (iha-anutra-atha-phala-vairagya); 3) the attainment of calmness, temperance, spirit of renunciation, fortitude, power of concentration of mind, and faith (shama-damadi-sadhana-smaptti); 4) an intense desire for liberation (mumukshutwa).

Sadhu: Seeker for truth (sat); and person who is practicing spiritual disciplines. Usually this term is applied only to monastics.

Sadhvi: A female “sadhu.”

Sadhyas: A group of celestial beings with exquisitely refined natures thought to inhabit the ether.

Sagar[a]: Sea; ocean.

Saguna: Possessing attributes or qualities (gunas).

Saguna Brahman:	Brahman with attributes, such as mercy, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.; the Absolute conceived as the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe; also the Personal God according to the Vedanta.
Sahaja:	Natural; innate; spontaneous; inborn.
Sahasrara chakra:	The “thousand-petalled lotus” of the brain. The highest center of consciousness, the point at which the spirits (atma) and the bodies (koshas) are integrated and from which they are disengaged.
Sahitya:	Association; connection; society; combination; harmony.
Sakara:	With form.
Sakhyam:	Friendship; companionship.
Sakshatakara:	Self-realization; direct experience; experience of Absoluteness; Brahmajnana.
Sakshi(n):	The witness self; the kutashtha which passively observes the actions of the body and the senses; seer; the intuitive faculty.
Sakshichaitanya:	The witness consciousness or intelligence.
Samadarshana:	Equal vision; seeing all things equally; equal-sightedness; equanimity.
Samadhi:	The state of superconsciousness where Absoluteness is experienced attended with all-knowledge and joy; Oneness; where the mind becomes identified with the object of meditation; the meditator and the meditated, thinker and thought become one in perfect absorption of the mind. See Samprajñata Samadhi, Asamprajñata Samadhi, Savikalpa Samadhi, and Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
Samadrishti:	See Samadarshana.
Samana:	The prana that carries the grosser material of food to the apana and brings the subtler material to each limb; the general force of digestion.
Samarasa:	Homogeneity; even essence; equilibrium; the process of bringing the body into a harmonious resonance with the Divine.
Samarasya:	Homogeneity; oneness—especially of essence—which results from the elimination of all differences; equilibrium; the process of bringing the body into a harmonious resonance with the Divine.
Samasti:	Cosmic; collective; an integrated whole of the same class of entity.
Samata (samatwa):	Equality; impartiality; equanimity; equalness; equanimity of outlook in the sense of making no distinction between friend and foe, pleasure and pain, etc.
Sambandha:	Relationship; connection.
Samhara:	Destruction; dissolution.

Samhita:	Collection; a division of the Vedas; Vedic hymns.
Sampradaya:	Tradition; school; doctrine; handed-down instruction.
Samprajñata samadhi:	State of superconsciousness, with the triad of meditator, meditation and the meditated; lesser samadhi; cognitive samadhi; samadhi of wisdom; meditation with limited external awareness. Savikalpa samadhi.
Samprayoga:	Contact of the senses with their objects; communication; interchange; uniting; connecting.
Samsara:	Life through repeated births and deaths; the wheel of birth and death; the process of earthly life.
Samsaric:	Having to do with samsara; involved with samsara; partaking of the traits or qualities of samsara.
Samsarin:	One who is subject to samsara—repeated births and deaths—and who is deluded by its appearances, immersed in ignorance.
Samshaya:	Doubt; suspicion.
Samskara (1):	Impression in the mind, either conscious or subconscious, produced by previous action or experience in this or previous lives; propensities of the mental residue of impressions; subliminal activators; prenatal tendency. See Vasana.
Samskara (2):	A ritual that makes an impression or change in the individual for whom it is done. There are sixteen samskaras prescribed by the dharma shastras, beginning with conception (garbhadan) and concluding with the rite for the departed soul (antyshti). The major ones besides these two are the birth rite (jatakarma), naming ceremony (namakaranam), the first eating of solid food (annaprasannam), the first cutting of the hair (chudakaramam), bestowal of the sacred thread and instruction in the Gayatri mantra (upanayanam), marriage (vivahanam), taking up of the retired life (vanaprastha), and taking up the monastic life (sannyasa). They are all done at points in the person's life when significant changes in the subtle energy bodies are going to take place. Thus the samskara protects and strengthens the individual at those times and also prepares him for those changes, making actual alterations in his subtle bodies. Although they are often made social occasions, they are very real instruments of change to facilitate and further the person's personal evolution. They are the linchpins of dharmic life, and essentially spiritual events.
Samvega:	Intense ardor derived from long practice.
Samvit:	Knowledge; consciousness; awareness; intelligence; supreme consciousness.

Samyama:	Self-control; perfect restraint; an all-complete condition of balance and repose. The combined practice of the last three steps in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga: concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana), and union (samadhi). See the Vibhuti Pada of the Yoga Sutras
Samyoga:	Conjunction; contact..
Sanaka:	One of the Four Kumaras (see Kumaras).
Sanatana:	Eternal; everlasting; ancient; primeval.
Sanatana Dharma:	"The Eternal Religion," also known as "Arya Dharma," "the religion of those who strive upward [Aryas]." Hinduism.
Sanatkumaras:	The Four Kumaras (see Kumaras).
Sanchita karma:	The vast store of accumulated actions done in the past, the fruits of which have not yet been reaped.
Sandhya:	A ritual done at the "junctions" (sandhyas) of the day—dawn, noon, and sunset— during which the Savitri Gayatri is repeated.
Sangha:	Attachment; company; association; collection; community.
Sankalpa:	Wish; desire; volition; resolution; will; determination; intention.
Sankhya:	One of the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy whose originator was the sage Kapila, Sankhya is the original Vedic philosophy, endorsed by Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (Gita 2: 9; 3:3,5; 18:13,19), the second chapter of which is entitled "Sankhya Yoga." The Ramakrishna-Vedanta Wordbook says: "Sankhya postulates two ultimate realities, Purusha and Prakriti. Declaring that the cause of suffering is man's identification of Purusha with Prakriti and its products, Sankhya teaches that liberation and true knowledge are attained in the supreme consciousness, where such identification ceases and Purusha is realized as existing independently in its transcendental nature." Not surprisingly, then, Yoga is based on the Sankhya philosophy.
Sankhyabhih:	Numbers.
Sannyasa:	Renunciation; monastic life.
Sannyasi(n):	A renunciate; a monk.
Sannyasini:	A female renunciate; a nun.
Sanskrit(am):	The language of the ancient sages of India and therefore of the Indian scriptures and yoga treatises.
Santosha:	Contentment; peacefulness.

Sapta Rishis:	“Seven Sages.” Great Beings who exist at the top of creation and supervise it.
Saraswati:	The goddess of speech, wisdom, learning and the arts—particularly music.
Sarva:	All; everything; complete.
Sarvajna:	Knowing everything; omniscience.
Sarvajnatva:	Omniscience.
Sashtitantra:	A name for the Sankhya philosophy.
Sat:	Existence; reality; truth; being; a title of Brahman, the Absolute or Pure Being.
Satchidananda:	Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; Brahman.
Satkarya-Vada:	The doctrine which holds that the effect is inherent in the cause and that the effect is only a change of the cause—that the effect exists prior to its manifestation in a latent state in the cause. This is a tenet of both Sankhya and Shaiva Siddhanta.
Satsanga:	Literally: “company with Truth.” Association with godly-minded persons. The company of saints and devotees.
Sattwa:	Light; purity; reality. One of the three gunas.
Sattwa Guna:	Quality of light, purity, harmony, and goodness.
Sattwic:	Partaking of the quality of Sattwa.
Satya(m):	Truth; the Real; Brahman, or the Absolute; truthfulness; honesty.
Satyaloka:	True World,” “World of the True [Sat]”, or “World of Truth [Satya].” This highest realm of relative existence where liberated beings live who have not entered back into the Transcendent Absolute where there are no “worlds” (lokas). From that world they can descend and return to other worlds for the spiritual welfare of others, as can those that have chosen to return to the Transcendent.
Satya Yuga:	The Golden Age. See Yuga.
Savichara samadhi:	A stage in samadhi wherein the mind (chittta) is identified with some subtle object and assumes its form, being aware of what it is and capable of analyzing it by means of the purified buddhi; with deliberation and reasoning or inquiry.
Savikalpa Samadhi:	Samadhi in which there is objective experience or experience of “qualities” and with the triad of knower, knowledge and known; lesser samadhi; cognitive samadhi; samadhi of wisdom; meditation with limited external awareness. Samprajñata samadhi.
Savitri Gayatri:	A mantra of the Rig Veda which is recited for unfoldment of the intellectual

powers leading to enlightenment.

Sayujya: Becoming one with God; united with God; union/merging.

Seva: Service; selfless service.

Sevak: Servant.

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Shabda: Sound; word.

Shabda Brahman: Sound-God; Brahman in the Form of Sound; Omkara; the Vedas.

Shabdakshara: “Sound-syllable;” Om.

Shaiva/Shaivite: A worshipper of Shiva; pertaining to Shiva.

Shakta: A worshipper of Shakti, the Divine Feminine.

Shakti: Power; energy; force; the Divine Power of becoming; the apparent dynamic aspect of Eternal Being; the Absolute Power or Cosmic Energy; the Divine Feminine.

Shama: Calmness; tranquility; control of the internal sense organs; same; equal.

Shambho: The beneficent; auspicious; origin of bliss; bestower of happiness. A title of Shiva.

Shankha: Conch.

Shankara (1): “The Auspicious One.” A title of Shiva.

Shankara (2): Shankaracharya; Adi (the first) Shankaracharya: The great reformer and reestablisher of Vedic Religion in India around 300 B.C. He is the unparalleled exponent of Advaita (Non-Dual) Vedanta. He also reformed the mode of monastic life and founded (or regenerated) the ancient Swami Order.

Shalagrama: A flat-round or disk-like stone with rounded edges, found only in the Mandakini River in the region of Tibet, considered to be a manifestation of Vishnu and His

Shanta: One who possesses shanti; peaceful; calm; peace; contentment.

Shanti: Peace; calm; tranquility; contentment.

Sharanam: Refuge; protection, shelter.

Sharanagati: Taking refuge or shelter, seeking protection. One who has taken refuge or shelter, or sought protection.

Sharira:	Body; sheath; literally: “that which perishes,” from the root shri which means “to waste away.”
Shastra:	Scripture; spiritual treatise.
Shastri:	One who is a scholar and teacher of the scriptures (shastras).
Shaucha:	Purity; cleanliness.
Shesha:	The endless; the infinite; The name of the snake (naga) upon which Vishnu reclines.
Shesha Narayan:	The form of Vishnu reclining upon Shesha, the infinite (endless) snake (naga).
Shikha:	A tuft of hair on the crown of the head, usually worn only by Brahmins or brahmacharis, but in the villages of Northern India many men of other castes wear the shikha as a sign that they are Hindus.
Shiksha:	Teaching; instruction.
Shila (1):	Conduct; good behavior; right discipline; morality; quality or property.
Shila (2):	Stone; rock.
Shishya:	Disciple; student.
Shiva:	A name of God meaning “One Who is all Bliss and the giver of happiness to all.” Although classically applied to the Absolute Brahman, Shiva can also refer to God (Ishwara) in His aspect of Dissolver and Liberator (often mistakenly thought of as “destroyer”).
Shiva Linga(m):	A column-like or egg-shaped symbol of Shiva, usually made of stone. The column-like linga represents the central axis of creation which was seen by Brahma and Vishnu as a column of Light that had no top or bottom, but out of which Shiva emerged and explained that he was the source—indeed the totality—of creation. To yogis it represents the sushumna nadi which embodies the Consciousness that is Shiva. The eggshaped (garbha) linga represents Shiva as the germ or seed of the universe out of whom all things have come to be as his manifestation. It is often considered to represent the universe itself which is identical with Shiva.
Shraddha (1):	Faith; confidence or assurance that arises from personal experience.
Shraddha (2):	Rituals for the welfare of the dead, done in the days after the death and then usually done on the anniversary of the death.
Shravana:	Hearing; study; listening to reading of the scriptures or instruction in spiritual life.
Shri (1):	The goddess Lakshmi; prosperity; glory; success.

Shri (2):	Excellent, venerated. A term of respect. Often used as a prefix to the name of deities and holy personages to indicate “holiness.”
Shrotra:	Ear; the sense or faculty of hearing.
Shruti:	That which is heard; revealed scripture in the sense of divine communication. Usually applied to the Vedas, Shankara also spoke of the Upanishads as Shruti.
Shubha:	Auspicious; fortunate.
Shuddha:	Pure; clear; clean; untainted.
Shuddhasattwa:	According to Vishishtadvaita philosophy, shuddhasattwa is a selfluminous, immaterial, spiritual substance which is unconnected with the three gunas. It is infinite in the higher regions and finite in the lower regions. It is the “matter” out of which the bodies of gods, avatars, eternals, and liberated beings are made.
Shudra:	A member of the laborer, servant caste.
Shukla:	White; bright.
Shukla sannyasa:	“White sannyasa.” The adoption of monastic life spontaneously, solely from a profound urge from within, without any formal external ritual or conferring of sannyasa by another person.
Shukta:	Vedic hymn.
Shyama:	“Dark one;” a name of Krishna because of his dark blue complexion, and also of Kali because of her dark or black complexion..
Shyamasundara:	“The beautiful dark one”–Krishna.
Siddha:	A perfected–liberated–being, an adept, a seer, a perfect yogi.
Siddhaloka:	The highest realm of existence in which the fully liberated (siddhas) live. (However, wherever a siddha is, that place is siddhaloka.)
Siddhi:	Spiritual perfection; psychic power; power; modes of success; attainment; accomplishment; achievement; mastery; supernatural power attained through mantra, meditation, or other yogic practices. From the verb root sidh–to attain.
Sita:	The consort of Rama and daughter of King Janaka.

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Skanda:	See Subramunya.
Skandha:	Group; aggregate.

Sloka:	A Sanskrit verse. Usually it consists of two lines of sixteen syllables each, or four lines of eight syllables each.
Smarana(m):	Remembrance (of God).
Smriti:	Memory; recollection; “that which is remembered.” In this latter sense, Smriti is used to designate all scriptures except the Vedas and Upanishads (which are considered of greater authority).
Snana:	Ritual bath in a sacred river, pond, lake, or ocean.
So’ham:	“That am I,” the Ajapa Gayatri formula of meditation in which “So” is repeated mentally during natural inhalation and “Ham” is repeated mentally during natural exhalation.
Soma:	A milkweed, <i>Asclepias acida</i> , whose juice in Vedic times was made into a beverage and offered in sacrifices; the nectar of immortality; a name of Chandra, the presiding deity of the moon.
Spanda:	Vibration; expanding vibration; flutter; throb; movement; creative shakti; pulsation; creative pulsation; apparent motion in the motionless Shiva which brings about the manifestation, maintenance, and withdrawal of the universe; the principle of apparent movement from the state of absolute unity to the plurality of the world.
Sparsha:	Touch; sense contact.
Sphatika:	Clear quartz crystal.
Sphota:	The Sanskrit original of our English word “spot;” manifest; the idea which bursts or flashes—including the Pranava which burst or flashes forth from the Absolute and becomes transformed into the Relative.
Sphurana:	Vibration.
Sreyo marga:	The path of the good or truly beneficial, as opposed to the path of the merely appealing, pleasant, pleasurable, or that which leads to worldly gain.
Sri:	Holy; sacred; excellent; venerated (venerable); revered; a term of respect similar to “Reverend.” Also: prosperity, glory, and success—and therefore an epithet for Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and abundance, the consort of Vishnu. It is often used as an honorific prefix to the name of deities and holy persons to indicate holiness (Sri Krishna, Sri Swami N., etc.). Also used as the equivalent of the English “Mr.” (Srimati would be the equivalent of “Mrs.”)
Sri Yantra:	The mystical diagram showing the movement of the spiritual energies inherent in and produced by the supreme mantra: Om. The Sri Yantra has also come to be identified with the energy-power of the Divine Mother, and is often worshipped by her devotees.
Sri Vaishnava:	A worshipper of Vishnu according to the philosophical school of Sri Ramanuja known as Vishishtadvaita Vedanta (Qualified Non-Dualism).

Srimad Bhagavatam:	One of the eighteen scriptures known as Puranas which are attributed to Vyasa. See Bhagavatam.
Srishti:	Creation; projection or gradual unfoldment of what exists potentially in the cause; evolution of the universe from its seed state.
Sruti:	Sacred scripture. The Vedas and Upanishads.
Stambha:	Suspended; retention; stationary; fixed; to fix firmly; support; sustain; prop; pillar.
Steya:	Stealing.
Sthala:	Abode; place; hall.
Sthana:	Position; abode; residence.
Sthira:	Fixed; firm; still; steady; stable; enduring.
Sthirata (Sthirattwa):	Steadiness or firmness of body or mind; the steady tranquillity born of meditation.
Sthitaprajna:	Establishment in Divine Consciousness; one who is so established.
Sthiti:	Steadiness; condition or state; existence; being; subsistence; preservation.
Sthula:	Gross material; physical entity; atomic matter.
Sthula-sharira:	Gross body; physical body; body of atomic matter.
Styana:	Dullness; languor, debility; drooping state.
Stotra(m):	Hymn in praise of God.
Subramanya:	The god of war and son of Shiva and Parvati.
Sukha:	Happiness; ease; joy; happy; pleasant; agreeable.
Sukshma:	Subtle; fine.
Sukshma:	Subtle sense organ; sometimes applied to the mind itself.
Sukshma-sharira:	Subtle body; astral body (also called linga sharira).
Sundara:	Beautiful.
Sureshwaracharya:	Sureshwaracharya was a renowned disciple of Shankara.
Surya:	The sun; the presiding deity of the sun, sometimes identified with Vishnu (Surya- Narayana) or the Absolute Brahman.

Surya-mandala:	The circle (orbit) of the sun.
Suryanarayana:	God (Narayana) in the form of the Sun (Surya).
Sushumna:	A subtle passage in the midst of the spinal column, corresponding to the spinal cord, that extends from the base of the spine to the medulla oblongata in the head.
Sushupti:	The dreamless sleep state.
Sutra:	Literally: a thread. An aphorism with minimum words and maximum sense; a terse sentence.
Swa(r)loka:	The median astral world.
Swara:	Sound; accent; tone.
Swabhava:	One's own inherent disposition, nature, or potentiality; inherent state of mind; state of inner being.
Swadharma:	One's own natural (innate) duty (dharma), based on their karma and samskara. One's own prescribed duty in life according to the eternal law.
Swadhishthana chakra:	Energy center located in the spine a little less than midway between the base of the spine and the area opposite the navel. Seat of the Water element.
Swadhyaya:	Introspective self-study or self-analysis leading to self-understanding. Study of spiritual texts regarding the Self.
Swaha:	"It is offered." Invocation at offerings to the gods. A mantra used when offering oblations to the sacrificial fire.
Swaloka:	The median astral world. See Swarloka.
Swami(n):	Literally, "I am mine"—in the sense of absolute self-mastership. It could be legitimately translated: "He who is one with his Self [Swa]." It is often used in the sense of "lord" or owner as well as a spiritual guide or authority. God Himself is the ultimate Swami. As a matter of respect it is always used in reference to sannyasis, since they have vowed themselves to pursue the knowledge of the Self, or those considered to be of spiritual advancement.
Swapna:	The dream state; a dream.
Swaprakasha:	Self-luminous; self-illuminated; self-revealing.
Swarga/Swargaloka:	Heaven; the celestial region; a place of light and happiness.
Swarloka:	The highest of the three lower worlds—Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swah.

Swarupa:	“Form of the Self.” Natural–true–form; actual or essential nature; essence. A revelatory appearance that makes clear the true nature of some thing.
Swarupasthiti:	Established in the Self; firmly established in one’s own essential nature.
Swasti:	“May it be well.: An expression of salutation meaning “may it be well with you.” Successful; fortune; well-being.
Swastika:	Sign of auspiciousness.
Swayambhu:	Self-existent or self-generated.
Swayamjyoti:	Self-luminous; self-illuminated.
Swatantra:	“Self-rule;” independent; free; absolute freedom.

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Tala:	Place; world. See Loka.
Talu chakra:	Energy center located at the root of the palate opposite the tip of the nose.
Tamas:	Dullness, inertia, folly, and ignorance. One of the three gunas.
Tamasic:	Possessed of the qualities of the tamo guna (tamas). Ignorant; dull; inert; and dark.
Tandava:	Dance of Destruction (Dissolution of the Cosmos) of Lord Shiva.
Tanmatras:	The pure elements; the subtle essence of the five elements, elemental essence.
Tantra:	A manual of or a particular path of sadhana laying great stress upon japa of a mantra and other esoteric practices relating to the powers latent in the human complex of physical, astral, and causal bodies in relation to the cosmic Power usually thought of as the Divine Feminine.
Tantric:	Pertaining to Tantra.
Tapa:	Trouble; acute anxiety; anguish; suffering.
Tapas:	See tapasya.
Tapaswin:	One who is practicing tapasya.
Tapasya:	Austerity, practical (i.e., result-producing) spiritual discipline; spiritual force. Literally it means the generation of heat or energy, but is always used in a symbolic manner, referring to spiritual practice and its effect, especially the roasting of karmic seeds, the burning up of karma.

Tapatraya:	Sufferings or afflictions of three kinds, to which mortals are subject: 1) those caused by one's own body (adhyatmika), 2) those caused by beings around him (adhibhautika), and 3) those caused by devas (adhidaivika).
Tapoloka:	The median causal world exclusively inhabited by advanced spirits who perpetually engage in meditation–tapasya.
Tara:	Savior; Deliverer; a title of the Divine Mother.
Taraka:	Deliverer.
Taraka Mantra:	From the root word tara—that which crosses. The Taraka Mantra is that which enables its invokers to cross over the ocean of samsara and attain liberation.
Taraka Nama:	The Delivering Name; Om.
Tarka:	Reasoning; logic; argumentation; debate.
Tat Twam Asi:	“Thou art That.” The Mahavakya (Great Saying) of the Chandogya Upanishad.
Tattwa:	“Thatness.” Principle; element; the essence of things; truth; reality.
Tattwa jnana:	Knowledge of Brahman; same as Brahmajnana.
Tejas:	Radiance; brilliancy (especially spiritual); Agni; heat; the element of fire, from which the sense of sight (rupa) arises.
Tejomaya:	Full of tejas; full of light; resplendent.
Thakur:	“Master” or “Lord.” A reference to God or to a holy person considered to be one with God.
Tilaka:	A sacred mark made on the forehead or between the eyebrows denoting what form of God the person worships.
Timira:	Darkness; disease of the eye producing double vision or darkening the vision; glaucoma.
Tirtha:	A sacred place of pilgrimage; a river or body of water in which it is auspicious and spiritual beneficial to bathe; the water offered in ritual worship and then sprinkled on or drunk by the devotees.
Titiksha:	Endurance of opposites; forbearance; tolerance; the ability to withstand opposites like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., with equal fortitude; the bearing of all afflictions without caring to change them and without anxiety or lament.
Tivra Mumukshutva:	Intense, earnest and consuming desire for liberation (moksha).
Trataka:	Steady gazing; the process of fixing the gaze on a small dot, point, yantra, etc.

Treta Yuga:	The Silver Age. See Yuga.
Triguna:	The three gunas or qualities: sattwa, rajas, and tamas. (See the entry under Guna).
Trigunatita:	Beyond the three gunas.
Triloka:	The three worlds: Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swah.
Trimurti:	“The three forms”—Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Hindu “Trinity.”
Triputi:	“The triple form.” The triad of: knowing, knower, and object known; cognizer, object, and cognition; seer, sight, and seen.
Trishna:	Thirst; craving; desire.
Triveni:	The confluence of the three sacred rivers: Ganges, Jumna (Yamuna), and Saraswati, located outside the sacred city of Rudraprayag (called Allahabad in modern times). Considered the most place for purificatory bathing.
Tukaram:	A poet-saint of seventeenth century India (Maharashtra) devoted to Krishna in his form of Panduranga (Vittala).
Tulasi (Tulsi):	The Indian basil plant sacred to Vishnu. Considered a manifestation of the goddess Lakshmi. Its leaves are used in worship of Vishnu and his avatars, and its stems and roots are formed into rosary beads used for counting the repetition of the mantras of Vishnu and his avatars. The leaves of tulasi are also used for purification and even medicinally.
Turiya:	Pure consciousness. “The superconscious; lit., ‘the fourth,’ in relation to the three ordinary states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep—which it transcends.”
Turiya-Turiya:	“The consciousness of Consciousness;” the Absolute Consciousness of God, the Consciousness behind our individualized consciousness (turiya).
Tushti(s):	Contentment; satisfaction; satisfaction, contentment, or happiness with the status quo.
Tyaga:	Literally: “abandonment.” Renunciation—in the Gita, the relinquishment of the fruit of action.
Tyagi:	A renouncer, an ascetic.

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Uchchaishravas:	The name of Indra’s horse (or the horse of the Sun god, Surya), that was born of the amrita that was churned from the ocean by the gods. The name means “high-sounding” and refers to the power of mantra.
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Uchchishhta[m]:	The remnants of food eaten by others, the actual leavings from someone's plate, considered extremely unclean physically and psychically. (This does not apply to food left in a serving dish or cooking vessel unless someone ate from it rather than serving it on their own dish.)
Udgitha:	The Pranava [Om] when it is sung aloud in Vedic recitation.
Uma:	See Parvati.
Upadesha:	Spiritual instruction.
Upadhi:	Adjunct; association; superimposed thing or attribute that veils and gives a colored view of the substance beneath it; limiting adjunct; instrument; vehicle; body; a technical term used in Vedanta philosophy for any superimposition that gives a limited view of the Absolute and makes It appear as the relative.
Upanayana(m):	Investiture with the sacred thread (yajnopavita) and initiation into the Gayatri mantra.
Upanishads:	Books (of varying lengths) of the philosophical teachings of the ancient sages of India on the knowledge of Absolute Reality. The upanishads contain two major themes: (1) the individual self (atman) and the Supreme Self (Paramatman) are one in essence, and (2) the goal of life is the realization/manifestation of this unity, the realization of God (Brahman). There are eleven principal upanishads: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, and Shvetashvatara, all of which were commented on by Shankara, thus setting the seal of authenticity on them.
Uparati:	Uparati is the power—once the sense have been restricted—to ensure that they may not once again be drawn toward worldly objects; indifference toward the enjoyment of sense-objects; surfeit; discontinuance of religious ceremonies following upon renunciation; absolute calmness; tranquillity; renunciation.
Upasana:	“Sitting near” or “drawing near;” worship; adoration; contemplation of God or deity; devout meditation; both teaching and learning.
Upasaka:	One who engages in upasana.
Urdhvareta yogi:	The yogi in whom the seminal energy flows upwards.
Ushmapas:	A class of ancestors (pitris) which live off subtle emanations or vapors.
Utsava:	Festival; celebration.
Utsava murti:	The image of a deity that is taken out in procession rather than the main image in the temple which is usually permanently affixed to a stone pedestal.
Uttama:	Highest; superior; best.

Uttara:	Higher.
Uttarayana:	“Northern way.” The half of the year beginning on the winter solstice (December 21) when the sun appears to be moving northward.

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Vach:	Word; Divine Word; logos; speech.
Vachaka:	That which is denoted by speech.
Vahana:	Vehicle; conveyance.
Vaidika:	Vedic.
Vaikhari:	Sound that is spoken and heard.
Vaikuntha:	The celestial abode (loka) of Vishnu and His devotees.
Vairagi:	A renunciate.
Vairagya:	Non-attachment; detachment; dispassion; absence of desire; disinterest; or indifference. Indifference towards and disgust for all worldly things and enjoyments.
Vaishnava:	A devotee of Vishnu.
Vaishvanara:	Universal Being. Brahman as the universe. The deity Agni, also the element of Cosmic Fire, which includes all forms of manifested fire, including digestive fire in the bodies of sentient beings.
Vaishya:	A member of the merchant, farmer, artisan, businessman caste.
Vajra:	Diamond; thunderbolt—the special weapon of Indra, king of the gods.
Vak:	Speech; voice, world; Primordial Word (Om); Logos.
Vakya:	Word or statement.
Valmiki:	The first poet of India, author of the Ramayana.
Vanaprastha:	Literally: a forest (vana) dweller. The third stage of life (ashrama) in which, leaving home and children, the husband and wife dwell together in seclusion and contemplation as a preparation to taking sannyasa.
Varna:	Caste. (Literally: color.) In traditional Hindu society there were four divisions or castes according to the individual’s nature and aptitude: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra.
Varnashrama:	Related to the four castes and the four stages (ashramas) of Hindu life; the

laws of caste and ashrama.

Varnashram dharma:	The observance of caste and ashram.
Varshneya:	Clansman of the Vrishnis—a title of Krishna.
Varuna:	A Vedic deity considered the sustainer of the universe and also the presiding deity of the oceans and water. Often identified with the conscience.
Vasana:	A bundle or aggregate of similar samskaras. Subtle desire; a tendency created in a person by the doing of an action or by enjoyment; it induces the person to repeat the action or to seek a repetition of the enjoyment; the subtle impression in the mind capable of developing itself into action; it is the cause of birth and experience in general; the impression of actions that remains unconsciously in the mind.
Vasanakshaya:	Annihilation of subtle desires and impressions.
Vashikara:	Mastery; control (especially complete control); power.
Vashishtha:	One of the most famous of Vedic seers (rishis).
Vasudeva:	“He who dwells in all things”—the Universal God; the father of Krishna, who is also sometimes called Vasudeva.
Vasuki:	The king of the serpents. He assisted at the churning of the milk ocean.
Vasus:	Eight Vedic deities characterized by radiance.
Vasyata:	Mastery; control; obedience.
Vayu (1):	The Vedic god of the wind.
Vayu (2):	Air; the element of air, from which the sense of touch (sparsha) arises.
Veda:	Knowledge, wisdom, revealed scripture. See Vedas.
Vedanta:	Literally, “the end of the Vedas;” the Upanishads; the school of Hindu thought, based primarily on the Upanishads, upholding the doctrine of either pure non-dualism or conditional non-dualism. The original text of this school is Vedantadarshana or the Brahma Sutras compiled by the sage Vyasa.
Vedanta Sutras:	The Brahma Sutras.
Vedantin:	A follower of Vedanta.

Vedas: The oldest scriptures of India, considered the oldest scriptures of the world, that were revealed in meditation to the Vedic Rishis (seers). Although in modern times there are said to be four Vedas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva), in the upanishads only three are listed (Rig, Sama, and Yajur). In actuality, there is only one Veda: the Rig Veda. The Sama Veda is only a collection of Rig Veda hymns that are marked (pointed) for singing. The Yajur Veda is a small book giving directions on just one form of Vedic sacrifice. The Atharva Veda is only a collection of theurgical mantras to be recited for the cure of various afflictions or to be recited over the herbs to be taken as medicine for those afflictions.

Vedic: Having to do with the Vedas.

Vega: Motion; velocity; inertia.

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Vibhu: All-pervasive; great.

Vibhuti (1): Manifestations of divine power or glory; might; prosperity; welfare; splendor; exalted rank; greatness; miraculous powers; superhuman power resembling that of God (Ishwara). The quality of all-pervasiveness (omnipresence). Also sacred ash from a fire sacrifice.

Vibhuti (2): Sacred ash from a fire sacrifice.

Vichara: Subtle thought; reflection; enquiry; introspection; investigation; enquiry/investigation into the nature of the Self, Brahman or Truth; ever-present reflection on the why and wherefore of things; enquiry into the real meaning of the Mahavakya Tattwam- asi: Thou art That; discrimination between the Real and the unreal; enquiry of Self.

Videha: Bodiless.

Videhamukti: Disembodied salvation; salvation attained by the realized soul after shaking off the physical sheath as opposed to jivanmukti which is liberation even while living.

Vidvan: A knower; usually applied to a knower of the Self as distinct from the body; one who is learned; an expert in all aspects of the Sanskrit language.

Vidvat sannyasa: Renunciation after the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. Asceticism resorted to by the wise (jnanis) and perfected ones (siddhas). Renunciation by the wise.

Vidya: Knowledge; both spiritual knowledge and mundane knowledge.

Vidyapith(a): A school.

Vijaya: Victory; triumph.

Vijnana:	Supreme knowledge; supreme wisdom; supreme realization.
Vijnana:	Buddhi; intellect.
Vijnanamaya kosha:	The jnanamaya kosha, the buddhi.
Vijnani:	One endowed with vijnana.
Vikalpa:	Imagination; fantasy; mental construct; abstraction; conceptualization; hallucination; distinction; experience; thought; oscillation of the mind.
Vikara:	Change, change of form, or modification—generally with reference to the modification of the mind, individually or cosmically.; gluiness; manifestation.
Vikshepa:	Distractions; causes of distractions; projection; false projection; the tossing of the mind which obstructs concentration.
Vilwa:	See Bel.
Vimala:	Purity; unblemished; without stain or defect.
Vimarsha:	Consideration; examination; test; reasoning; discussion; knowledge; intelligence; reflection.
Vinaya:	Humility; sense of propriety; manners; rule of conduct; education; mental culture and refinement; discipline.
Vipaka:	A type of transformation; ripening; resultant; fruition.
Viparyaya:	Erroneous cognition; wrong knowledge; illusion; misapprehension; distraction of mind.
Vipra:	“Twice-born.” A term usually applied to those that have been invested with the yajnopavita (sacred thread) and initiated into the Gayatri mantra. Since the Kshatriya and Vaishya castes no longer do this, today vipra almost exclusively means a Brahmin. Vipra can also be meant in a spiritual manner, indicated one that has been “born” spiritually as well as physically.
Viraj:	The macrocosm; the manifested universe; the world man—the masculine potency in nature in contradistinction to the feminine potency.
Viraja homa:	“Universal homa;” the final fire sacrifice done just before taking sannyas in which offerings are made to all living beings in petition for their releasing of the prospective sannyasin from all karmic obligations he might have in relation to them.
Virat:	The cosmic form of the Self as the cause of the gross world; the all-pervading Spirit in the form of the universe.

Virochana:	King of the demons (asuras). According to the Chandogya Upanishad, along with Indra he went to the Creator to learn the nature of the Self. Misunderstanding the
teaching:	“Virochana, satisfied for his part that he had found out the Self, returned to the demons and began to teach them that the body alone is to be worshiped, that the body alone is to be served, and that he who worships the body and serves the body gains both worlds, this and the next.”
Virodhat:	Opposition; conflict; contradiction.
Virya:	Strength; power; energy; courage.
Vishaya (1):	Object; object of perception (sensory experience) or enjoyment; subject matter; content; areas; range; field-object domain; sphere; realm, scope; matters of enjoyment or experience.
Vishaya (2):	Doubt.
Vishaya-chaitanya:	Consciousness as objects; the object known; the consciousness determined by the object cognized.
Vishayavritti:	Thought of sensual objects.
Vishesha:	Special; distinctive qualification; distinguishable; particularity; propriety.
Vishishta:	Qualified; particularity.
Vishishtadvaita Vedanta:	The philosophy of Qualified Non-Dualism formulated by Sri Ramanuja.
Vishnu:	“The all-pervading;” God as the Preserver.
Vishoka:	Blissful; serene; free of grief, suffering or sorrow.
Vishuddha:	Supremely pure; totally pure.
Vishuddha chakra:	“Supreme purity.” Energy center located in the spine opposite the hollow of the throat. Seat of the Ether element.
Vishuddhi:	Supreme purity; total purity.
Vishwa:	Universe; all pervasive.
Vishwa-devas:	A group of twelve minor Vedic deities.
Vishwanatha:	“Lord of the Universe;” a title of Shiva, often applied to his temple in Varanasi (Benares).
Vishwaprana:	Universal Life or Prana.
Vishwarupa:	Universal/Cosmic Form (see chapter eleven of the Bhagavad Gita); multiform

having all forms.

Vitaraga:	Free from attachment (raga); one who has abandoned desire/attachment; a sannyasi.
Vitarka:	Thought; reasoning; cogitation with sense perception; discussion; debate; logical argument.
Vittaishana:	Desire for wealth.
Vitthala:	A title of Krishna, meaning "the one standing on a brick," a reference to the image of Krishna worshipped in Pandharpur in Western India.
Vivarta:	Illusory appearance; doctrine of creation as an illusory appearance/manifestation of the Absolute; seeming change; superimposition; appearance..
Vivarta-vada:	Phenomenalism. See Vivarta.
Viveka:	Discrimination between the Real and the unreal, between the Self and the non-Self, between the permanent and the impermanent; right intuitive discrimination.
Viveki:	One who possesses discrimination (viveka).
Vividisha sannyasa:	Renunciation for the purpose of knowing Brahman.
Vrata:	Vow; a resolution; rule of conduct.
Vritti:	Thought-wave; mental modification; mental whirlpool; a ripple in the chitta (mind substance).
Vyadhi:	Disease of the body.
Vyakta:	Manifest(ed); revealed.
Vyana:	The prana that holds prana and apana together and produces circulation in the body.
Vyasa:	One of the greatest sages of India, commentator on the Yoga Sutras, author of the Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavad Gita), the Brahma Sutras, and the codifier of the Vedas.
Vyasti:	Individual; microcosm.
Vyavahara:	Worldly activity; relative activity as opposed to Absolute Being; empirical/phenomenal world; worldly relation.
Vyoma:	Ether (akasha); the sky.
Vyutthana:	Rising up; awakening; emergence; externalization; outgoing; rising; waking state; a stage in Yoga.

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Yajna:	Sacrifice; offering; sacrificial ceremony; a ritual sacrifice; usually the fire sacrifice known as agnihotra or havan.
Yajnavalkya:	A great Vedic seer whose teachings are found in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
Yajnaypitha:	See Yajnasthala.
Yajnasthala:	An open sided, roofed structure in which the fire sacrifice is performed.
Yajnopavita:	Sacred thread. A triple thread worn by the twice-born (dwijas) that represents the threefold Brahman. It is essential for the performance of all the rites of the twice-born. Usually worn only by Brahmins, originally it was worn by Kshatriyas and Vaishyas as well.
Yajnopavitin:	Wearer of the sacred thread (yajnopavita).
Yaksha:	There are two kinds of yakshas: 1) semidivine beings whose king is Kubera, the lord of wealth, or 2) a kind of ghost, goblin, or demon. Yama (1): Restraint; the five Don'ts of Yoga: 1) ahimsa–non-violence, non-injury, harmlessness; 2) satya–truthfulness, honesty; 3) asteya–non-stealing, honesty, nonmisappropriateness; 4) brahmacharya–continence; 5) aparigraha–non-possessiveness, non-greed, non-selfishness, non-acquisitiveness. Yama (2): The Lord of Death, controller of who dies and what happens to them after death.
Yantra:	Geometrical designs of the energy patterns made by mantras when they are recited or which, when concentrated on produce the effects of the corresponding mantras. Though often attributed to deities, they are really the diagrams of the energy movements of those deities' mantras.
Yasha(s):	Fame; celebrity; good repute.
Yati:	“Wanderer;” a wandering ascetic.
Yatra:	Pilgrimage.
Yatri:	Pilgrim.
Yoga:	Literally, “joining” or “union” from the Sanskrit root yuj. Union with the Supreme Being, or any practice that makes for such union. Meditation that unites the individual spirit with God, the Supreme Spirit. The name of the philosophy expounded by the sage Patanjali, teaching the process of union of the individual with the Universal Soul.

Yoga Darshan(a):	Hinduism embraces six systems of philosophy, one of which is Yoga. The basic text of the Yoga philosophy—Yoga Darshana—is the Yoga Sutras (also called Yoga Darshana), the oldest known writing on the subject of yoga, written by the sage Patanjali, a yogi of ancient India. Further, the Yoga Philosophy is based on the philosophical system known as Sankhya, whose originator was the sage Kapila.
Yoga Marga:	The path of meditation and inner purification leading to union with God.
Yoga Maya:	The power of Maya—divine illusion. Maya in operation rising from the presence (union—yoga) of Ishwara within it, and therefore possessing delusive power.
Yoga Nidra:	A state of half-contemplation and half-sleep; light yogic sleep when the individual retains slight awareness; a state between sleep and wakefulness. In its higher sense Yoga Nidra is the state in which the yogi experiences pure consciousness within the state of dreamless sleep, when he is neither awake nor asleep in the usual sense. And in the highest sense Yoga Nidra is the state in which the three “normal” states of waking, sleep, and deep sleep have become transmuted into the turiya state of pure consciousness and the yogi remains “asleep” in relation to those three lesser states.
Yoga Siddhi:	Spiritual perfection or psychic power resulting from the practice of Yoga.
Yoga Sutras:	The oldest known writing on the subject of yoga, written by the sage Patanjali, a yogi of ancient India, and considered the most authoritative text on yoga. Also known as Yoga Darshana, it is the basis of the Yoga Philosophy which is based on the philosophical system known as Sankhya.
Yoga Vashishtha:	A classical treatise on Yoga, containing the instructions of the Rishi Vashishtha to Lord Rama on meditation and spiritual life.
Yogabhrashta:	One who has fallen away from the practice of Yoga.
Yogabhyasa:	Practice of Yoga.
Yogeshwara:	Lord of Yoga; a Master Yogi; a title of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.
Yogi:	One who practises Yoga; one who strives earnestly for union with God; an aspirant going through any course of spiritual discipline.
Yogic:	Having to do with Yoga.
Yogin:	Yogi.
Yogini:	A female practitioner of yoga.
Yogiraj:	“King of Yogis,” a title often given to an advanced yogi, especially a teacher of yogi.
Yogyata:	Fitness.

- Yojana:** A measure of distance equivalent to nine or ten miles.
- Yuga:** Age or cycle; aeon; world era. Hindus believe that there are four yugas: the Golden Age (Satya or Krita Yuga), the Silver age (Treta Yuga), The Bronze Age (Dwapara Yuga), and the Iron Age (Kali Yuga). Satya Yuga is four times as long as the Kali Yuga; Treta Yuga is three times as long; and Dwapara Yuga is twice as long. In the Satya Yuga the majority of humans use the total potential—four-fourths—of their minds; in the Treta Yuga, three-fourths; in the Dwapara Yuga, one half; and in the Kali Yuga, one fourth. (In each Yuga there are those who are using either more or less of their minds than the general populace.) The Yugas move in a perpetual circle: Ascending Kali Yuga, ascending Dwapara Yuga, ascending Treta Yuga, ascending Satya Yuga, descending Satya Yuga, descending, Treta Yuga, descending Dwapara Yuga, and descending Kali Yuga—over and over. Furthermore, there are yuga cycles within yuga cycles. For example, there are yuga cycles that affect the entire cosmos, and smaller yuga cycles within those greater cycles that affect a solar system. The cosmic yuga cycle takes 8,640,000,000 years, whereas the solar yuga cycle only takes 24,000 years. At the present time our solar system is in the ascending Dwapara Yuga, but the cosmos is in the descending Kali Yuga. Consequently, the more the general mind of humanity develops, the more folly and evil it becomes able to accomplish.
- Yukti (1):** Union or Yoga.
- Yukti (2):** Reasoning (about something; skill; cleverness; device).