

abhisheka: अभिषेक "Sprinkling; ablution." Ritual bathing of the Deity's image with water, curd, milk, honey, ghee, rosewater, etc. A special form of pūjā prescribed by Āgamic injunction. ahimsā: अहिंसा "Noninjury," nonviolence or nonhurtfulness. Refraining from causing harm to others, physically, mentally or emotionally.

āratī: आरती "Light." The circling or waving of a lamp—usually fed with ghee, camphor or oil-before a holy person or the temple Deity at the high point of pūjā. The flame is then presented to the

devotees, each passing his or her hands through it and bringing them to the eyes three times, thereby receiving the blessings.

ānava mala: आणवमल "Impurity of smallness; finitizing principle." The individualizing veil of duality that enshrouds the soul. It is the source of finitude and ignorance. The presence of anava mala is what causes the misapprehension about the nature of God, soul and world, the notion of being separate and distinct from God and the universe. Anava is the root mala and the last bond to be dissolved.

Aum: ॐ or आम Often spelled Om. The mystic syllable of Hinduism, placed at the beginning of most sacred writings. As a mantra, it is pronounced aw (as in law), oo (as in zoo), mm. Aum represents the Divine, and is associated with Lord Ganeśa. The dot above represents the Soundless Sound, Paranada.

bhajana: भजन Spiritual song. Individual or group singing of devotional songs, hymns



bindu: बिन्दु "A drop, small particle, dot." 1) The seed or source of creation. In the 36 tattvas, the nucleus or first particle of transcendent light, technically called Parābindu. 2) Small dot worn on the forehead be-

tween the eyebrows, or in the middle of the forehead. It is a sign that one is a Hindu. Mystically, it represents the "third eye," or the "mind's eye," which sees things that the physical eyes cannot see. The forehead dot is a reminder to use and cultivate one's spiritual vision.

brahmacharya: ब्रह्मचर्य "Divine conduct." Controlling lust by remaining celibate when single, leading to faithfulness in marriage.

chakra: चक्र "Wheel." Any of the nerve plexes or centers of force and consciousness located within the inner bodies of man. The seven principal chakras are situated along the spinal cord from its base to the cranial chamber. Additionally, seven chakras exist below the spine. They are seats of instinctive consciousness and constitute the lower or hellish world.

The seven upper chakras, from lowest to

highest, are: 1) mūlādhāra (base of spine): memory, time and space; 2) svādhishthāna (below navel); reason; 3) manipūra (solar plexus): willpower; 4) anāhata (heart center): direct cognition; 5) viśuddha (throat): divine love; 6) ajña (third eye): divine sight; 7) sahasrāra (crown of head); illumination, Godliness.

The seven lower chakras, from highest to lowest, are'1) atala (hips): fear and lust; 2) vitala (thighs): raging anger; 3) sutala (knees): retaliatory jealousy; 4) talātala (calves): prolonged mental confusion; 5) rasātala (ankles): selfishness; 6) mahātala (feet): absence of conscience; 7) pātāla (located in the soles of the feet): murder and malice.

darśana: दर्शन "Vision, sight." Seeing the Divine. Beholding, with inner or outer vision, a temple image, Deity, holy person or place, with the desire to inwardly contact and receive the grace and blessings of the venerated being or beings.

deva: देव "Shining one." A being living in the higher astral plane, in a subtle, nonphysical body. Deva is also used in scripture to mean "God or Deity."

dharma: धर्म "That which contains or upholds the cosmos." It is divine law, the law of being, the way of righteousness, religion, duty, responsibility, virtue, justice, goodness and truth. Essentially, dharma is the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature or destiny. Relating to the soul, it is the mode of conduct most conducive to spiritual advancement. There are four principal kinds of dharma, as follows. They are known collectively as -chaturdharma: "four religious laws." 1) -rita: "Universal law." The inherent order of the cosmos. 2) varna dharma: "Law of one's kind." Social duty. 3) -āśrama dharma: "Duties of life's stages." Human dharma. 4) -svadharma: "Personal law." One's perfect individual pattern through life, according to one's own particular physical, mental and emotional nature.

dīkshā: दीक्षा "Initiation." Action or process by which one is entered into a new realm of spiritual knowledge and practice by a teacher or preceptor through the transmission of blessings. Denotes initial or deepened connection with the teacher and his lineage and is usually accompanied by ceremony. Most Hindu schools, and especially Saivism, teach that only with initiation from a satguru is enlightenment attainable.

grace: "Benevolence, love, giving," from the Latin gratus, "beloved, agreeable." God's power of revealment, anugraha śakti ("kindness, showing favor"), by which souls are awakened to their true, Divine nature.

grihastha: गृहस्थ "Householder." Family man or woman. Family of a married couple and other relatives. Pertaining to family life.

guru: गर "Weighty one," indicating a being of great knowledge or skill. A term used to de-

scribe a teacher or guide in any subject, such as music, dance, sculpture, but especially religion. hatha voga: हठयोग "Forceful voga." A system of physical and mental exercise developed in ancient times as a means of rejuvenation and used today in preparing the body and mind for meditation.

hell: Naraka. An unhappy, mentally and emotionally congested, distressful area of consciousness that can be experienced on the physical plane or in the sub-astral plane (Naraka) after death of the physical body. It is accompanied by the tormented emotions of hatred, remorse, resentment, fear, jealousy and self-condemnation. In the Hindu view, the hellish experience is not permanent, but a temporary condition of one's own making.

Hindu: हिन्द A follower of, or relating to, Hinduism. Generally, one is understood to be a Hindu by being born into a Hindu family and practicing the faith, or by declaring oneself a Hindu. Acceptance into the fold is recognized through the name-giving sacrament, a temple ceremony called nāmakaraņa samskāra, given to born Hindus shortly after birth, and to selfdeclared Hindus who have proven their sincerity and been accepted by a Hindu community. While traditions vary greatly, all Hindus rely on the Vedas as scriptural authority.



japa: जप "Recitation." Practice of concentratedly repeating a mantra, often while counting the repetitions on a mālā or strand of beads. It may be done silently or aloud. For Saivites, Namah Śivāya in its

various forms is the most treasured mantra used in japa. The mantra Hare-Rāma-Hare-Krishna is among the foremost Vaishnava

īvanmukta: जीवन्मृक्त "Liberated soul." A being who has attained nirvikalpa samādhi—the realization of the Self, Parabrahman—and is liberated from rebirth while living in a human body. This attainment is the culmination of lifetimes of intense striving, sādhana and tapas, requiring total renunciation, sannyāsa, in the current incarnation.

karma: कर्म "Action, deed." Karma refers to 1) any act or deed; 2) the principle of cause and effect; 3) a consequence, "fruit of action" or "after effect" which sooner or later returns upon the doer. What we sow, we shall reap in this or future lives. Selfish, hateful acts will bring suffering. Benevolent actions will bring loving reactions. Karma is a neutral, self-perpetuating law of the inner cosmos, much as gravity is an impersonal law of the outer cosmos.

Karma is threefold: sañchita, prārabdha and kriyamāna. —sañchita karma: "Accumulated actions." The sum of all karmas of this life and past lives. - prārabdha karma: "Actions be-

gun; set in motion." That portion of sanchita karma that is bearing fruit and shaping the events and conditions of the current life, including the nature of one's bodies, personal tendencies and associations. -kriyamāna karma: "Being made." The karma being created and added to sanchita in this life by one's thoughts, words and actions, or in the inner worlds between lives.

kundalinī: कण्डलिनी "She who is coiled; serpent power." The primordial cosmic energy in every individual which eventually, through the practice of yoga, rises up the sushumnā nādī. As it rises, the kundalinī awakens each successive chakra. Nirvikalpa samādhi, enlightenment, comes as it pierces through the door of Brahman at the core of the sahasrāra and enters!

loka: लोक "World, habitat, realm, or plane of existence." From loc, "to shine, be bright, visible." A dimension of manifest existence; cosmic region. Each loka reflects or involves a particular range of consciousness. The three primary lokas are 1) -Bhūloka: "Earth world." The world perceived through the five senses, also called the gross plane, as it is the most dense of the worlds. 2) -Antarloka: "Inner or in-between world." Known in English as the subtle or astral plane, the intermediate dimension between the physical and causal worlds, where souls in their astral bodies sojourn between incarnations and when they sleep. 3) - Sivaloka: "World of Siva," and of the Gods and highly evolved souls. The causal plane, also called Kāraṇaloka, existing deep within the Antarloka at a higher level of vibration, it is a world of superconsciousness and extremely refined energy.

Mahādeva: महादेव "Great shining one; God." Referring either to God Siva or any of the highly evolved beings who live in the Śivaloka in their natural, effulgent soul bodies. It is said in scripture that there are 330 million Gods.

mahāprasthāna: महाप्रस्थान "Great departure." Death of the physical body.

mahāsamādhi: महासमाधि "Great enstasy." The death, or dropping off of the physical body, of a great soul, an event occasioned by tremendous blessings. Also names the shrine in which the remains of a great soul are entombed.

mantra: मन्त्र "Mystic formula." A sound, syllable, word or phrase endowed with special power, usually drawn from scripture. Mantras are chanted loudly during $p\bar{u}j\bar{a}$ to invoke the Gods and establish a force field. Certain mantras are repeated softly or mentally for japa. To be truly effective, such mantras must be given by the preceptor through initiation. moksha: मोक्ष "Liberation." Release from trans-

migration, samsāra, the round of births and deaths, which occurs after karma has been resolved and nirvikalpa samādhi—realization of the Self, Parabrahman—has been attained. Same as mukti.

monastic: A monk or nunk (based on the Greek monos, "alone"). A man or woman who has withdrawn from the world and lives an austere, religious life, either alone or with others in a monastery. Terms for Hindu monastics include sādhaka, sādhu, muni, tapasvin, vairāgī, ūdāsin and sannyāsin. (Feminine: sādhikā, sādhvī, munī, tapasvinī, vairāgīnī, and sannyāsinī.) mudrā: मुद्रा "Seal." Esoteric hand gestures which express specific energies or powers.

nāda: नाढ "Sound; tone, vibration." Metaphysically, the mystic sounds of the Eternal, of which the highest is the transcendent or Soundless Sound, Paranada, the first vibration from which creation emanates. From Paranada comes Pranava, Aum, and further evolutes

nādī: नाडी "Conduit." A nerve fiber or energy channel of the subtle (inner) bodies of man. It is said there are 72,000. These interconnect the chakras. The three main nadis are named ida, pingalā and sushumnā. —idā: Also known as chandra ("moon") nādī, it is pink in color and flows downward, ending on the left side of the body. It is feminine in nature and is the channel of physical-emotional energy. —pingalā: Also known as sūrya ("sun") nādī, it is blue in color and flows upward, ending on the right side of the body. It is masculine in nature and is the channel of intellectual-mental energy. -sushumnā: The major nerve current which passes through the spinal column from the mūlādhāra chakra at the base to the sahasrāra at the crown of the head. It is the channel of kundalinī.



namaskāra: नमस्कार "Reverent salutations." Traditional Hindu verbal greeting and mudrā where the palms are joined together and held before the heart or raised to the level of the forehead.

namaste: नमस्ते "Reverent salutations to you." A traditional verbal greeting. A form of namas, meaning "bowing, obei-

nirvikalpa samādhi: निर्विकल्पसमाधि "Enstasy (samādhi) without form or seed." The realization of the Self, Parabrahman, a state of oneness beyond all change or diversity; beyond time, form and space.

Pati-paśu-pāśa: पति पशु पाश Literally: "master, cow and tether." These are the three primary elements of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy: God, soul and world—Divinity, man and cosmos seen as a mystically and intricately interrelated unity. Pati is God, envisioned as a cowherd. Paśu is the soul, envisioned as a cow. Pāśa is the all-important force or fetter by which God brings souls along the path to Truth.

ally, "vital-air," from the root pran, "to breathe." Prāṇa in the human body moves as five primary life currents known as vāyus, "vital airs or winds." These are prāṇa (outgoing breath), apāṇa (incoming breath), vyāṇa (retained breath), udāna (ascending breath) and samāṇa (equalizing breath). Each governs crucial bodily functions, and all bodily energies are modifications of these.



pūjā: पुजा "Worship, adoration." An Agamic rite of worship performed in the home, temple or shrine, or to a person, such as the satguru. Its inner purpose is to purify the atmos-

phere around the object worshiped, establish a connection with the inner worlds and invoke the presence of God, Gods or one's guru. During pūjā, the officiant (pujārī) recites various chants praising the Divine and beseeching divine blessings, while making offerings in accordance with established traditions. Pūjā is the Agamic counterpart of the Vedic vajña rite, in which offerings are conveyed through the sacred homa fire. —ātmārtha pūjā: Pūjā done for oneself and immediate family, usually at home in a private shrine. —parārtha pūjā: "Pūjā for others." Parārtha pūjā is public pūjā, performed by authorized or ordained priests in a public shrine or temple.

punarjanma: पुनर्जन्म "Reincarnation." From punah, "again and again," and janma, "taking

reincarnation: "Re-entering the flesh." Punarjanma; metempsychosis. The process wherein souls take on a physical body through the birth process. The cycle of reincarnation ends when karma has been resolved and Parabrahman has been realized. This condition of release is called *moksha*. Then the soul continues to evolve and mature, but without the need to return to physical existence.

sacrifice: Yajña. 1) Giving offerings to a Deity as an expression of homage and devotion. 2) Giving up something, often one's own possession, advantage or preference, to serve a higher purpose. The literal meaning of sacrifice is "to make sacred," implying an act of worship. It is the most common translation of the term yajña, from the verb yuj, "to worship." In Hinduism, all of life is a sacrifice—called jīvayaiña, a giving of oneself—through which comes true spiritual fulfillment.

sādhana: साधन "Effective means of attainment." Religious or spiritual disciplines, such as pūjā, yoga, meditation, japa, fasting and austerity. The effect of sādhana is the building of willpower, faith and confidence in oneself and in God, Gods and guru.

sādhu: साध् "Virtuous one; straight, unerring." prāna: प्राण Vital energy or life principle. Liter- A holy person dedicated to the search for God.

A sādhu may or may not be a yogī or a sannyāsin, or be connected in any way with a guru or legitimate lineage. Sādhus usually have no fixed abode and travel unattached from place to place, often living on alms.

Saivism (Saiva): शैव The religion followed by those who worship Siva as supreme God, of whom there are about 400 million in the world today. Oldest of the four sects of Hinduism.

śākāhāra: शाकाहार "Vegetarian diet." From śāka. "vegetable;" and āhāra, "eating; taking food." Śāktism (Śākta): शाक "Doctrine of power." The religion followed by those who worship the Supreme as the Divine Mother-Sakti or Devi-in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Śāktism is one of the four primary sects of Hinduism.



samādhi: समाधि "Enstasy," which means "standing within one's Self." "Sameness; contemplation; union, wholeness; completion, accomplishment." Samādhi is the state of

true yoga in which the meditator and the object of meditation are one. Samādhi is of two levels. The first is savikalpa samādhi ("enstasy with form or seed"), identification or oneness with the essence of an object. Its highest form is the realization of the primal substratum or pure consciousness, Satchidananda. The second is nirvikalpa samādhi ("enstasy without form or seed"), identification with the Self, in which all modes of consciousness are transcended and Absolute Reality, Parabrahman, beyond time, form and space, is experienced. This brings in its aftermath a complete transformation of consciousness.

sampradaya: संप्रदाय "Traditional doctrine of knowledge." A living stream of tradition or theology within Hinduism, passed on by oral training and initiation.

samsāra: संसार "Flow." The phenomenal world. Transmigratory existence, fraught with impermanence and change. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth; the total pattern of successive earthly lives experienced by a soul.

sannyāsa: सन्यास "Renunciation." "Throwing down or abandoning." Sannyāsa is the repudiation of the dharma, including the obligations and duties, of the householder and the acceptance of the even more demanding dharma of the renunciate.

Satchidananda (Sachchidananda): सञ्चिदानन्द "Existence-consciousness-bliss." Lord Siva's Divine Mind and simultaneously the pure superconscious mind of each individual soul. It is perfect love and omniscient, omnipotent consciousness, the fountainhead of all existence, yet containing and permeating all existence. It is also called pure consciousness, pure form, substratum of existence, and more. In

Advaita Vedānta, Satchidānanda is considered a description of the Absolute (Brahman). Whereas in monistic, or śuddha, Śaiva Siddhanta it is understood as divine form—pure, amorphous matter or energy—not as an equivalent of the Absolute, formless, "atattva," Parabrahman. In this latter school, Parabrahman is radically transcendent, and Satchidananda is known as the primal and most perfectly divine form to emerge from the formless. sin: Intentional transgression of divine law. Akin to the Latin sous, "guilty." Hinduism does not view sin as a crime against God, but as an act against dharma—moral order—and one's own self. It is thought natural, if unfortunate, that young souls act wrongly, for they are living in nescience, the darkness of ignorance." Sin automatically brings negative consequences. In Hinduism, there are no such concepts as inherent or mortal sin.

Smartism: स्मार्त "Sect based on the secondary scriptures (smriti)." The most liberal of the four major Hindu denominations, an ancient Vedic brāhminical tradition (ca 700 BCE) which from the 9th century onward was guided and deeply influenced by the Advaita Vedanta teachings of the reformist Ādi Śankara.

soul: The real being of man, as distinguished from body, mind and emotions. The soulknown as ātman or purusha—is the sum of its two aspects, the form or body of the soul and. the essence of the soul—the essence or nucleus of the soul, Pure Consciousness (Parāśakti or Satchidananda) and Absolute Reality (Parabrahman). This essence was never created, does not change or evolve and is eternally identical with the Supreme God's perfections of Parāśakti and Parabrahman.

swāmī: स्वामी "Lord; owner." He who knows or is master of himself. A respectful title for a Hindu monk, usually a sannyāsin, an initiated, orange-robed renunciate, dedicated wholly to religious life.

tantra: तन्त्र "Loom, methodology." 1) Generally, a synonym for śāstra, "scripture." 2) A synonym for the Agamic texts, especially those of the Śākta faith, a class of Hindu scripture providing detailed instruction on all aspects of religion, mystic knowledge and science. The tantras are also associated with the Saiva tradition. 3) A specific method, technique or spiritual practice within the Saiva and Sakta traditions.

tapas: तपस् "Heat, fire." 1) Purificatory, psychetransforming spiritual disciplines, severe religious austerity, penance and sacrifice, including endurance of pain and bodily mortification. Scriptures generally warn against extreme asceticism which would bring harm to the body. 2) On a deeper level, tapas is the intense inner state of kundalinī "fire" which stimulates mental anguish and separates the individual from society. The association with a satguru, Sadāśiva, brings the devotee into

tapas, and it brings him out of it. The fire of tapas burns on the dross of sanchita karmas. This is the source of heat, dismay, depression and striving until the advent of final and total surrender, prapatti. Guru bhakti is the only force that can cool the fires of tapas.

tattva: तत्व "That-ness" or "essential nature." Tattvas are the primary principles, elements, states or categories of existence, the building blocks of the universe. Rishis describe this emanational process as the unfoldment of thirtysix tattvas, stages or evolutes of manifestation. descending from subtle to gross.

Vaishnavism (Vaishnava): वैष्णव One of the four major religions, or denominations of Hinduism, representing roughly half of the world's one billion Hindus. It gravitates around the worship of Lord Vishnu as Personal God, His incarnations and their consorts. The doctrine of avatāra (He who descends) is especially important to Vaishnavism.

vrata: व्रत "Vow, religious oath." Often a vow to perform certain disciplines over a period of time. Vratas extend from the simplest personal promise to irrevocable vows made before God, Gods, guru and community.

yajña: यज्ञ "Worship; sacrifice." One of the most central Hindu concepts-sacrifice and surrender through acts of worship, inner and outer. 1) A form of ritual worship especially prevalent in Vedic times, in which oblations—ghee, grains, spices and exotic woods—are offered into a fire according to scriptural injunctions while special mantras are chanted. The element fire, Agni, is revered as the divine messenger who carries offerings and prayers to the Gods. Yajña requires four components, none of which may be omitted: dravya, sacrificial substances; tyāga, the spirit of sacrificing all to God; devatā, the celestial beings who receive the sacrifice; and mantra, the empowering word or chant.



yoga: योग "Union." From yuj, "to yoke, harness, unite." The philosophy, process, disciplines and practices whose purpose is the yoking of individual consciousness with

transcendent or divine consciousness. One of the six systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. Yoga was codified by Patañjali in his Yoga Sūtras (ca 200 BCE) as the eight limbs (ashtānga) of rāja yoga. It is essentially a one system, but historically, parts of raja yoga have been developed and emphasized as yogas in themselves. Prominent among the many forms of yoga are hatha yoga, kriyā yoga (emphasizing breath control), as well as karma yoga (selfless service) and bhakti yoga (devotional practices) which could be regarded as an expression of raja yoga's first two limbs (yama and niyama).