

YOGA VOCABULARY

Acharya	Teacher-by-example, authorized by an established disciplic line (<i>sampradaya</i>)
Ahankara	Material ego, identification of self with body/mind
Ahimsa	Non-aggressive action (as opposed to “do no harm”)
Ananda	Bliss
Archana	Scriptural system for worship of an approved deity (<i>archa-vigraha</i>)
Ashrams	1) Religious schools; 2) Four orders of Vedic social life: <i>brahmacharya</i> (student), <i>grihastha</i> (family life), <i>vanaprastha</i> (retired), <i>sannyasa</i> (renounced order)
Astanga	The eightfold yoga path codified by Sage Patanjali (dates unknown, assumed between 400-200 BCE): <i>yama</i> and <i>niyama</i> (moral codes), <i>asana</i> (postures), <i>pranayama</i> (breath control), <i>pratyahara</i> (mind withdrawn from external stimuli), <i>dharana</i> (steady mind), <i>dhyana</i> (meditation), <i>samadhi</i> (“union” with God)
Atma	The non-material self, the source of consciousness in the body
Bhagavan	God who is the “Possessor of opulence,” i.e. beauty, strength, fame, wealth, knowledge, renunciation
Bhakti	(also Bhakti-yoga) Devotional service to God
Bhava	Ecstatic love for God
Brahmin	(also <i>brahmana</i>) Member of the priesthood
Brahman	1) the individual soul; 2) the impersonal, all-pervading energy of God
Darshan	Vision: both physical as well as metaphysical: “vision of truth”
Deva	Demigod, empowered being
Dharma	1) religious principles, 2) righteous behavior
Gunas	The three dominant behavioral types: <i>sattva</i> (goodness, creation, light and harmony), <i>rajas</i> (passion, preservation, ambition), and <i>tamas</i> (ignorance, inertia, destruction)
Jnana	Knowledge, study
Jnana-yoga	The path of knowing God through intellectual and philosophic scrutiny
Kali-Yuga	The current and most problematic age in the cycle of four cosmic ages
Karma	Material actions (performed for one’s own benefit or one’s extended circles)

Karma-yoga	Linking with God by offering the results of action (e.g. charity)
Krishna	God in personal form; sometimes described as eighth <i>avatar</i> (incarnation) of Vishnu, yet also as <i>avatari</i> : source of all incarnations
Mantra	Non-material sound, hymn, <i>manas-traya</i> : sound that liberates from the mind
Maya	Illusion, “that which is not,” e.g. thinking the visible world to be the only reality
Mayavada	Doctrine of teacher Shankara (8 th century), also called <i>Advaita-Vedanta</i> , which asserts that all forms are temporary and when ego disappears the soul loses its individuality and merges into <i>brahman</i>
Mukti	The soul’s liberation from further births in a material body
Nirguna	Without attributes or qualities, i.e. beyond material form
Nirvana	Similar to <i>mukti</i> , the dissociation of self from any material identity; a state of mind in which greed and anger have been “blown out” (<i>nir-vana</i>)
Om	(also AUM) The first and generating sound of creation, “the Word,” used at the start of most Sanskrit hymns; God in the form of sound
Paramatma	“Super-soul,” God in the heart of each being as witness and well-wisher accompanying each soul through its many births
Parampara	Disciplic succession, chain of teachers through history who preserve teachings
Prakriti	Material nature, environment
Sat-chit-ananda	The inviolable qualities of all souls: eternity, self-awareness, bliss
Saguna	Possessing qualities and form; with reference to God or the soul, possessing eternal individuality and shape
Samsara	Cycle of birth and death
Shastra	Sacred texts
Siddhis	The eight mystic powers achieved through intense yoga practice
Upanishads	108 philosophical treatises within the Vedic canon
Vedas	Four original “revealed” texts (<i>Rig, Sama, Atharva, Yajur</i>) and certain supplements including the <i>Brahmanas, Itihasas, and Upanishads</i>
Yajna	Sacrifice; any action offered as a gesture of love for God (and not contrary to scriptural standards)
Yoga	Various contemplative, physical, meditative techniques for linking with God