

Words on the Way

The Yoga Wordbook



The Golden Glossary of Philosophical,
Mystical & Spiritual Sanskrit

by Muz Murray
(Ramana Baba)

Words on the Way

The Yoga Wordbook

The Golden Glossary of Philosophical, Mystical & Spiritual Sanskrit

Refreshingly simplified and readable explanations of deeply esoteric Philosophical and mystical terms, devoid of professorial obscurantism.

By

Muz Murray
(Ramana Baba)

Introduction

Words on the Way - The Yoga Wordbook

The Golden Glossary of Philosophical, Mystical & Spiritual Sanskrit

Refreshingly simplified and readable explanations of deeply esoteric Philosophical and mystical terms, devoid of professorial obscurantism.

“There’s glory for you,” said Humpty-Dumpty.

“I don’t know what you mean by ‘glory,’” Alice said.

Humpty-Dumpty smiled contemptuously. “Of course you don’t—till I tell you.

“I meant ‘there’s a nice knock-down argument for you,” said Humpty-Dumpty.

“But ‘glory’ doesn’t mean ‘a nice knock-down argument’” Alice objected.

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty-Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.” *

And alas, this seems to be the case with so many gurus and writers of spiritual texts in India.

It is for this reason that this compilation is written by way of encouragement for those spiritual aspirants either new to the teachings, or even for those deeply into the philosophy of yoga. (And also because I always desperately wanted such a book myself, when I was a young seeker wrestling with the badly written and excruciatingly inexplicable texts of so many gurus and pundits in India). Seekers can often get completely lost, confused and discouraged by the welter of unfamiliar and unexplained Sanskrit words that are so liberally sprinkled throughout the Indian philosophical & spiritual writings.

My idea is not to compile a dictionary for scholars. This is *not* a dictionary, so you won’t find every Sanskrit word in it. It is a comprehensive *Working Glossary* for the ordinary seeker.

(The full Indian Sanskrit Dictionary is called the *Nighanthu*).

Most of us only want to understand the spiritual concepts with which we are trying to grapple. Unfortunately, the great majority of writers of spiritual booklets in India automatically pepper their texts with Sanskrit terminology without any explanation or qualification, on the assumption that they are self-evident household words to every Hindu. But even in India this is not the case. The majority of Indians are totally unfamiliar even with many of the Sanskrit terms known to every yoga student in the West. And very few have any understanding of the deeper meaning of spiritual and philosophical terms. Even erudite Indian writers who believe they are writing clearly and simply for anyone to understand, often have the habit of making their writings incomprehensible to the layman, by tossing in Sanskrit words at every opportunity in order to show off their scholarship. For example, here is an example of a typical text you might encounter:

“The *prana*, by nature, is *rajasika* because its *vritti* in the form of *karma* is present in *chitta* and so in the *sattvika* state of *chitta* God should be repeatedly invoked by making *pranava mantra* the means of knowledge.”¹

Now that should be clear enough for anybody, right? And this kind of writing is typical of the average type of text you might pick up in India. Even the prolific Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, who generally made his writings as simple as possible, often falls into the same habit, as in the following example:

“When your *Advaita-nishtha* is accompanied by the utterance of *Aham Brahma Asmi*, you get *Sabdanuvida Savikalpa Samadhi*. When the repetition drops down, you enter into the pure *Nirvikalpa Avastha*. *Para-vairagya* is *Antaranga Sadhana* for entering into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. All the objects appear as *Atyanta Mithya* like mirage in the sand. Even all subtle desires vanish, when you develop this type of highest *Vairagya*.”²

To most of us non-scholarly beings this kind of thing is as clear as mud. And if this is the case with writers such as Sivananda, who are earnestly attempting to get their message across to readers, what to say of the books written by academics? The professorial texts are even more obscure. Here follows an ‘explanation’ for the general reader from a well-meaning Sanskrit scholar:

“There seems to be some confusion between *Ānaṇḍamaya* and *Ānaṇḍmaya-kośa* since *samaṣṭi* and *vyāṣṭi* aspects of creation are not taken into consideration. *Ānaṇḍamaya* is the *kāraṇa-śarira Īśvara* while *ānaṇḍamaya-kośa* is that of the *jīva*. The ‘*kośa*’ part of *ānaṇḍamaya-kośa* is *avidya* which *Īśvara* is devoid of. In the latter case, it is *Ānaṇḍamaya* where the ‘*maya*’ aspect is ‘*maya*’ with *sattva-guna* as *suddha-sattva* giving rise to omniscience etc., to *Īśvara*.”³

So I am glad at least *that* confusion is cleared up for you.

Thus it is that so many Sanskrit words appear without any elucidation—or even a glossary—(as ‘everybody-in-the-field-knows-the-meaning’). Such assumptions cause academic writings to be virtually incomprehensible to the layman. It is an unfortunate habit of professors to write mainly for the eyes of other specialists. And their delight seems to be to write as obscurely as possible—the more obscure the better—which makes their work appear more erudite. But for we lesser mortals who only want to understand the meaning, reading their texts can be a torture and an exercise in futility.

Even the much-vaunted *Vedas* are mostly incomprehensible, even to academics. Metaphors in the poetical fancy of the Vedic seers, which were current in the Vedic period of antiquity, are no longer accessible to us for the most part. For example, in the *Rg Veda*,⁴ a hymn to the dawn states: ‘*The rising sun lets out his cows.*’ No amount of learning Sanskrit words or breaking the syllables down into root meanings, will give us the remotest clue that the metaphorical meaning here is intended to say that ‘the sun releases its beams.’

And similarly, in another such verse, which calls dawn ‘*the mother of kine,*’ which is intended means ‘the originator of rays of light’ is similarly incomprehensible without knowing the poetical idea behind the allusion. So unless one is steeped in the metaphysical understanding as well as the obscure metaphorical and poetical fancies of the ancient seers, not to mention the intentional cryptic obfuscations of the sages, the reading of these ancient texts bears little fruit.

Alas, that is not the only problem. In countless books by various gurus, swamis and backyard ‘professors’ (who are less poetic but no less obscure) the implied meanings of the same terms are so disparate (as used by each school of thought), that it is difficult to believe it is the same word being used in the different instances.

Another problem is that Sanskrit terms are also subject to widely diverse transliterated spellings. So when a seeker thinks he has come to understand or remember a certain term, the next time he finds the word spelled in a totally different fashion in another text, he has doubts if it is the same word after all. And often it appears to have a completely different meaning or sense in the context.

For example, even a familiar word such as ‘*swami*’ may also be seen written as *swamy*, ‘*svami*,’ ‘*svamin*,’ ‘*s’aami*’ or even ‘*samy*.’ So when it comes to more complicated philosophical terms the confusion can be considerable.

In this volume I present the results of over 50 years of collecting these quirks and anomalies, which will hopefully prevent the bemused seeker from giving up the attempt to read the spiritual texts altogether. And like Humpty-Dumpty, even gurus and swamis do not always utilise a

synonymous term with the same, or correct, meaning, but take it to mean whatever they choose it to mean.

However, as I came across them, whether written in an obscurely spelled or obscurely interpreted fashion, I have added them to the list. You will find them after the sub-heading **Var:** (short for **Variations**). Where it appears that the usage is evidently incorrect, doubtful, or of abnormal spelling, the word is placed in parenthesis. For example (*s'aami* or *samy*) which are the south Indian pronunciations of *swami* in Tamil Nadu.

Where text is taken from an American publication, I retain the original spelling of words such as 'realized' as printed, in place of the English form 'realised.' Also where Sanskrit words are abbreviated in a copied text, such as the northern Indian use of '*pran*' instead of '*prana*,' then the original spelling is retained, although corrected in the subtitle or in my own explanations.

I may not always adhere to the expected 'classical' or literal interpretations of a concept, which often convey little or nothing to the uninitiated, but I attempt rather a *comprehensible* and intelligent understanding of the *spiritual* meaning of the word or phrase, by simplifying the sense of it, after deep contemplation and mystical insight, as well as arduous yoga practices, which have helped me make sense of the texts over which I have pored over for most of my life.

Even the supposedly inviolable and 'immutable' Vedic scriptures have (just like the Bible) come down to us in innumerable versions, their obscurities interpreted in many different ways by both scholars and gurus. So it is not a matter of finding the best 'translation' of a word, but of grasping the essence of its meaning and rendering it as well as possible in modern language. Let the purists scream.

This work is an ongoing labour of love.

References:

¹ *Science of Divine Sound (Divya Shabad Vijnana)*, Sri Yogeswaranand Paramahans (Yog Niketan Trust, Delhi. 1984/1997)

² *Mediation on OM*, Swami Sivananda (Divine Life Society, 1941/1997)

³ *Self: the Truth Absolute—A Review of Advaita Vedanta* — G. Subramanian (Giri Trading Agency, Madras. 1995)

⁴ *Rg Veda*, Chap. 3, *Diva duhita*, v. 81

USING THE GLOSSARY

In the definition of any word meaning, whenever a different Sanskrit word appears for the first time of necessity during the explanation, it will be printed in **bold** letters. This is for quick reference, indicating that the new word itself can be looked up elsewhere in the Glossary for further clarification. If the same word is repeated again in the same section, in a quotation for example, it will be bolded only in the first instance.

Where my own interpolations occur in any quoted text, in order to clarify an issue, these additions will be inserted in between square brackets [like so]. As in the following example:

“...The Principle which passes rewarding and punitive judgement on the individual soul and works within every soul as Absolute Judge is called **Ishvara**. [Ishvara is thus also our inner self-judge, or what we term 'Conscience': the psychological manifestation of 'Godness or Goodness' in the psyche]. Since Ishvara eternally guides consciousness it is called Teacher.”

In other instances, to save the reader from having to look up yet another unfamiliar word,

my interpolations in brackets may enclose a concise meaning of a Sanskrit term, to enable you to understand the gist of the text without searching elsewhere in the Glossary. As in the following example:

Ramana Maharshi stated that: “a *jnani* [an enlightened being] is a most natural person. He may have *sankalpas* [intentions or desires of will], but those *sankalpas* are not binding in nature. They arise either because of *prarabdha* [karma which has to be worked out in this lifetime] or due to divine promptings. They do not bind a person whose mind is dead.”

Purists may object to my choosing to spell *Shiva* rather than *Siva*, or *shraddha* (faith) rather than *sraddha*, but my preference is for this fashion of transliteration as it makes the pronunciation instantly clearer for Westerners. Thus the title- word for reference will usually favour the ‘*Sh*’ transliteration, except perhaps where the word is more commonly known without the ‘h’, such as in *Sri*, instead of *Shri* or *Shree*.

If, while reading an Indian text, you find a word that begins with an Ś, with this flying accent above it, or ṣ with a dot beneath it, then you may generally look under *Sh* in the Glossary for its explanation.

Pronunciation:

A simple form of pronunciation is appended in parenthesis after each word; for example — **Padmāsana** (*pad-maa-sannah*) with the syllable to be stressed in bold italic.

As the letter Ś is pronounced more as ‘Sh’ as in sheep, but more softly, with a bit of a lisp, as if you can’t pronounce your *s*’s properly, with your tongue between your teeth, the suggested pronunciation will generally be written as ‘sy’ or ‘syuh’ or perhaps ‘shya’, whichever looks better for any given word.

But the Ṣ with the dot under it, will be written as ‘sh’ and is pronounced with the tongue tip at the palate and flicking across the roof of the mouth towards the teeth.

LAYOUT

Beneath each main word in the Glossary are sub-headings, such as:

Var: (short for **Variations**); Many Sanskrit words are so variously transliterated that one is never sure if it is the same word one has learned when one comes across it with a different spelling. In this section, in order to assist the reader in recognising the word, where it is evidently incorrectly spelled, it is entered in parenthesis as an example of usage, at the end of other more currently acceptable variations, i.e., *Swami*, *Svami*, (*S’aami*, *Samy*).

All such words listed in this Glossary with obscurely transliterated spellings (unbelievable as they seem) have been taken from *actual* examples I have come across over the years in books, booklets, journals or pamphlets in India.

A northern Hindu habit is to drop off the final ‘a’ from Sanskrit words, such as when writing *asan* instead of *āsanā*, or *pranayam*, instead of *pranayāma*. Although this form is currently acceptable in Hindi usage, in Sanskrit terms it is not considered correct and I have therefore placed such usage in parenthesis, ie. **Var:** *Aasanaa*, (*asan*).

Sometimes the word I have chosen for the heading may not be the most accepted version of its spelling (according to nit-picking Sanskrit scholars) but it will be the most current and widely used form that you are likely to encounter. For example, where a word is more currently known by its popular rendering, such as *Bhajan* (devotional worship by musically accompanied singing) it will be listed as such, whereas the original (and much less frequently used) term is *Bhajana*, which will then be listed under **Var:** for variations on the word *Bhajan*.

For words that begin, for example, sometimes with *Sva* and sometimes by *Swa*, I use the most frequently used prefix that appears in the majority of texts. And the same for words that variously begin with **B** or **V** or **W**, depending on regional differences in pronunciation. But in most cases the word will be listed under different spellings with cross-reference to the section in which it is more fully explained.

Remember, the *Glossary* is also cross-referenced throughout with **Bolded** words referring to their definition in their own appropriate alphabetical section. When new Sanskrit words appear in a quoted text, each one bolded (**like this**) will be mine, in order that you may look it up elsewhere in the *Glossary*, if a potted definition in brackets [like this] is not available.

Also, to avoid too much repetition, some words that are explained elsewhere will be given a cross-reference such as: **Paśupatiśiva** — see **Shiva**.

Synon: (for synonymous terms which have virtually the same meaning and are often used interchangeably, even if not precisely the same).

Sense: This section gives a succinct and concise meaning of the sense of a word for quick reference and easy memorising, in between single quotes such as ‘Abidance in the Self’. It is then followed by a fuller explanation.

Lit: (short for **Literally**); here the literal meaning of a word is given, where possible, which may not be the way the word is presently understood. An elaboration of the possible various meanings may follow.

Eso: (**Esoteric**); this section gives the secret or hidden meaning of a word as opposed to its meaning in current use. However, this sub-heading will not always appear as such explanation may have already been clarified in the main text.

Quotes: Here you will find quotations from ancient scriptures and also explanations by contemporary masters to clarify the different meanings, or their own particular conception of the word under scrutiny.

Other: This section gives completely different meanings for commonly used philosophical terms where the same word is used for everyday objects. As with the word ‘*Nada*’ which esoterically means ‘subtle sound current’, in this section the different meaning of the word *nada* is ‘a species of grass.’

Bib: (short for **Bibliography**): where books and texts relating to the specific word or subject matter are listed for your further research.

Refs: (**References**); this is a numbered list referring to the sources of the quotations used in the

preceding explanations.

Some of these sub-headings may not appear if they are not relevant to the word in question.

This is not simply an ordinary glossary just explaining words (although there are a great number of simple explanations), but constitute a mystic's understanding and deliberations over a lifetime's study and experience. Therefore certain entries will go further in answering a seeker's long-standing questions and throw light on little known secrets of yoga, ultimately revealing the hidden mysteries of spiritual life.

This Glossary is constantly being updated and developed, as and when time allows. Some words with only a brief description you may find with a fuller explanation at a later date. Occasionally, you may find words with no description at all, which indicates that they will be explained later. Also please remember, that if you don't find the word you are looking for now, it may appear in the Glossary in the future: keep on checking.

N.B. At Deccan College in Pune (Poona) a team of scholars have been working on a massive Sanskrit-English dictionary since 1948 — and they are still on the letter *A*! So please forgive any shortcomings, as this is a one-man's dedicated lifetime's work, between many other commitments.

Therefore you can understand that it is a monumental task to compile even this comprehensive Glossary: so please forgive any of my shortcomings. This is a one-man's dedicated lifetime's work, with many a midnight-hour updating, between many other commitments, and which will continue as long as I am still in the body, for the benefit of all.

However, if you can find a more useful and more deeply insightful dictionary anywhere, let me know, and I will gladly relieve myself of this arduous and lifelong labour of love.

Warmly yours,
Muz Murray
(Ramana Baba)

Other abbreviations used in the Glossary:

- Acc.** According to
- AD.** *Anno Domini* (in the 'Year of our Lord')
- BC.** Before Christ
- B.C.E.** Before Common Era
- CE.** Common Era (or 'Christian Era')
- Ch.** Chapter
- Cent.** Century
- Chap.** Chapter
- Comp.** Compiler of the book
- Dr.** Doctor
- Ed.** Editor/Edited by
- Fem.** Feminine gender
- Fr.** French
- Hse.** House (i.e., Publishing House)
- Ibid.** (Ibidem) 'In the same book' (as the previous quote)
- Info:** Information extracted from the book here named.
- Lit.** Literally
- N.B.** *Nota Bene* (Please note:)

No. Number
Pron: Pronounced
Pub. Publisher
Ref. Reference — the book or Journal from which a numbered quotation was taken.
RV. The *Rig Veda*
Sw. Swami.
Synon. Synonyms—words that have virtually the same meaning, or are used as such.
Tib. Tibetan
Tr. Translator
V. Verse
Var. Variations—different ways of spelling the same word.

For your interest: Yoga teachers have long sought an alternative to ‘*shavasana*’— the ‘corpse pose,’ which does not exactly have a pleasant ring to it. However, after long reflection I have come up with two possible alternatives which I offer to the yoga community: 1) *Tārakāsana* ‘the floating pose’ from *tāraka* — a float or raft , pronounced *taar-rak-kaahs-sannah*;
Or 2) *Niradhāsana* — ‘the surrender pose’; from *niradh*—to surrender or deliver up, as in this pose we surrender our mental forces and ego, let go and deliver ourselves up to the Absolute. Pron. *Nir-rad-dhar-sanna*.

A — WORDS on the WAY

Ā

Var: *ā, aa,*

Sense: ‘Not’— used as a prefix denoting the negative condition, indicating the contrary or ‘opposite to.’ As *vidya* means ‘knowledge,’ so *avidya* (*a-vidya*) means ‘not-knowledge’ or spiritual ignorance.

Aarati — see Ārati

Abedha-Nishta (*ah-bed-ha-nish-ta*)

Var:

Synon: *Abheda nishta, Atma Nishta, Sahaja Nishta, Self-realisation*

Sense: ‘Unificatory abidance in the Self:’ that state in which the movement of ‘mind’ is stilled when lost in the Self, just as water is lost when poured into milk.

Ābhāsa (*ah-bhaa-sah*)

Var: *aabhaasa, abhasa*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Unreal appearance, reflection (as moon in water).’

Ābhāsana (*ahb-bhah-sanna*)

Var: *aabhaasana, (abhasan)*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Making something appear which is actually of an unreal nature,’ such as in the process of ideation, when one mentally thinks pictures into being on the ‘screen of consciousness.’

If we take the unmanifest state of Universal

Consciousness as the ‘ground of Reality,’ then even the Divine Ideation (or the Creative Thoughts of God’) in which the universe is thought into being is manifesting ‘unreal’ phenomena, i.e., a passing and ever-changing universe as compared with the Reality which is eternal and free from differentiation and change.

Abhaya(m) (*a-bai-ya* or *a-buyer*, or *a-bhai-yam*)

Sense: ‘Absence of fear; fearlessness, freedom from anguish;’ also safety and inner peace. (See also **Mudra**)

Abheda-bhakti (*ab-bedda-bhak-tee*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘The culmination of devotion resulting in the total identification of the worshipper with that which is worshipped.’

Abhedabhāva (*ab-bhedda-bhar-vah*)

Var: *Abedhabhaava*,

Sense: ‘Non-separateness, union:’ the sense of being totally One with the Omnipresence and all creation. This is often the result of *abheda-bhakti* (or the sense of devotional unity).

Abhimatha (*ab-bhi-mah-tah*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘That to which the practitioner of yoga finds his mind becoming naturally attached.’ — *Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra*.

However, according to Krishnamacharya of Madras, this is the very tendency which yoga seeks to overcome, and therefore states that the correct rendering of Patanjali’s *Sutra* should be *yeth-abhimata*, or “according to one’s religious practice.”

Abhiniveśha (*ab-bhi-nee-vesh-syah*)

Var: *Abhiniveśa*

Sense: ‘Instinctive clinging to material life and fear of death.’

Other: Infatuation.

Abhiṣhekam (*ab-bhee-shay-kam*)

Var: *abisheka*,

Synon:

Sense: ‘Anointing, consecration, empowerment.’

It is the ritual oblation of liquids or holy water poured over an idol, person or object, generally the ritual bathing of a person or idol in a temple.

Anointing is a ritual initiation, for which reason *abhisheka* is sometimes translated as ‘initiation.’ In Hinduism, it generally refers to the ritual sprinkling of a temple image, idol, or **Shiva lingam**, by a **Brahmin** priest, pouring substances over them, such as coconut water, saffron, honey, rice-flower, limewater, rosewater, sandalwood paste and milk.

When a temple is to be dedicated, pots of liquid are prepared days in advance and consecrated before they are finally poured over the images amid general rejoicing. This is often known as *abishekam kumbha* ceremony. (**Kumbha** - retention, holding, gathering or convocation. It is also the form of a pear-shaped pot or pitcher.)

In Tantrism, *abhisheka* is a formal ceremony of empowerment, a transmission from teacher to student assisting his development from one grade to the next.

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Abhva (*ab-vah*)

Var:

Synon: *Ghora*

Sense: ‘Monstrosity, horror, terrifying, a monster’: from *a-bhu*, ‘non-being, nonexisting.’

Abhyantara (*ab-bhee-yan-tar-rah*)

Sense: ‘Internal.’

In *Hatha Yoga*: the regulation of internal respiration.

Abhyāsa (*ab-bhee-yaa-sa*)

Var: *Abhyaasa*,

Synon: *Sadhana*,

Sense: ‘Repeated and sustained spiritual practice, or *yoga sadhana*.’

The state of *yoga* (union) achieved through the constantly repeated practice of inward concentration, preventing the mind from straying outwards towards things of the world.

Root: *Abhi* — ‘in the direction of’ and *āsa* — ‘remaining’: that is, the attempt to remain continuously in the state of mental tranquillity.

One who constantly practises such inner awareness is an *abhyāsi* (aspirant.)

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Abhrasadaśhi (*ab-rah-sa-da-shyee*)

Var: *Abhrasadaśi*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The seat of Consciousness’ — that is, the Heart Centre of one’s being.’

Ācala — see **Āchala**

Ācamana (see **Āchamana**)

B — WORDS on the WAY

Bābā (*bar-bah*)

Var: *baba, babba, babaji, (bubba),*

Sense: ‘Father’ (with the inference of ‘wise old man’).

‘Baba’ is a term of respect and affection for any **sadhu**, sage, monk or great soul. No matter whether he is old or not, the appellation is in the same manner as one would address a Christian Priest as ‘father.’

In Hindi it means ‘grandfather’ and ‘babe’ in Gujarati. Generally a *baba* is a wandering monk, one who lives wild in caves or forests and avoids the institutional life, although these days a number of *babas* also run ashrams.

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Babu (*bah-buh*)

Var: *Babuji*

Sense: ‘A Hindi term of respect for a man of very high standing, not necessarily of spiritual stature;’ (although a socio-political saint such as Mahatma Gandhi was called ‘Babuji’). Generally used for people in official positions or someone in charge of some organisation, such as a manager, or director of a firm.

Baddha (*bad-dhah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘One who is bound’— the ordinary man in bondage to his ego, whose consciousness resides in the brain, as opposed

to the liberated man whose consciousness resides in the heart.

Quotes:

Other: *Baddha yoni mudra* — a *hathayogic* posture in which the eyes, nose and lips are ‘bound’ or closed by the position of the fingers.

Bib:

Refs:

Bagia Mukhi (*bag-gi-a moo-kih*)

Sense: ‘The Powerful One’

Bahaya (*bah-hai-yah*)

Sense: ‘External.’

In *Hatha Yoga*: it is that aspect of breath-control that deals with the practice of exhalation and its suspension.

Bahayakārana (*bah-hai-yah-kar-ran-nah*)

Var: *Bahaya-karana, bahayakaarana*

Synon:

Sense: ‘External instruments— i.e. the five sensory organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch and also the five motor organs.’

Bahu-śruta (*bah-hoo-shy-roo-trah*)

Var: *Bahusrutah, bahu-shruta,*

Sense: ‘One who has listened to many gurus.’ From **shruti** (*śruti*) ‘that which is heard.’

Bahya Puja (*bah-hyah poo-jah*)

Var: *Bahyapoojya, bahya-puja*

Sense: ‘External worship’ (as distinct from internal worship with mind and heart alone) by the use of idols, contemplative diagrams (**yantras**), ritual objects, flowers, water or any other

religious paraphernalia.

Baikhari japa — see **Vaikhari**

Bairagis (bairagya) — *Vaishnava* ascetics — See **Vairagya**

Bala (*bar-lah*)

Var: *Bal*

Sense: ‘A child or youth.’ Hence many youngsters who took to yoga in early life were dubbed ‘*bala-yogi*.’

Balarama (*bal-lar-ra-mah*)

Var: *Bala Rama*

Synon: *Skanda, Parasu Rama*

Sense: ‘Balarama is the Rama that bestows the knowledge of weaponry.’

He is considered as a partial incarnation (whatever that may mean) of Lord Rama, as are **Skanda** and **Parasu Rama**.

Balkrishna (*barl-krish-nah*)

Var: *Bala-Krishna*

Sense: ‘Child Krishna’ or ‘boy Krishna.’

The Bombay shopkeeper sage, Nisargadatta used the term to denote ‘child-consciousness;’ that is, the sense of existing during the first two or three years of life before the formation of mind in the totally unselfconscious infant.

Balidāna (*bal-li-dar-nah*)

Var: *Balidaana, bāli*

Sense: ‘Presentation of an offering to a deity.’

This is a ritual offering which precedes the practice of **homa** (the fire ceremony). **Tantric** texts state that no worship is successful

C—Words On The Way

Caitanya — see **Chaitanya**

Caste system — see **Varnās**

Chaitanya (*chai-tan-yah*)

Var: *Caitanya*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Pure Consciousness, Cosmic Consciousness or Cosmic Intelligence.’

Chaitanyam Ātmā (*chai-tan-yam art-mah*)

Var: *Chaitanyam aatmaa, caitanyam atma*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The Self is Consciousness:’ a quotation from the *Siva Sutras*, 1,1.

Chakra (*chak-rah*, and not *shak-rah*)

Var: *śakra, (chakhra)*

Synon: *Khor-lo* — ‘wheel,’ or *rtsa ‘khor* (Tibetan); *Latifas*— ‘subtle ones’ (Sufism);

Sense: ‘Wheel’ — but esoterically, ‘a psychic energy vortice’ emanating from the spinal column at certain points along the *sushumn nadi* or central psychic nerve situated within the spine, which runs from the coccyx up to the crown of the head.

These whirling centres of psychic energy manifest in the subtle body (**linga-sharira**) and govern both the psychic and physical being. They relate to specific areas of the gross body (the **sthula-sharira**) at seven basic points. The first, or root *chakra*, emanates from the spinal column (the **meru-daṇḍa**) at the base of the spine (known as **muladhara chakra**). Just above

it, at the next segment of the spine, is **svadisthana chakra**, governing the bladder and genital region. At the naval area is **manipura chakra**; at the heart **anahata**; at the throat **vishuddha**; between the brows **ajna** and at the crown of the head **sahasrara**. In the normal condition of life these centres are only marginally operating, but can be infused with life and energy by yogic practice or spiritual fervour.

There are dozens of other minor *chakras* all over the body, on the hands and arms, feet and legs and in the head, but the above seven are the most important.

CHAKRA CONSCIOUSNESS CENTRES

MULADHARA - Security, earth, stability, comforts, shelter, survival, urge for money & wealth

SVADISTHANA - Family, sex urge, procreation, pleasures, fantasies

MANIPURA - Name & fame, power, will, authority, acquisition, eye-desire

ANAHATHA - Sharing, devotion, love, compassion, solicitude, veneration & selfless service (but also ego)

VISHUDDA - Knowledge, dreaming, understanding, communication hearing & purification

AJNA - Realisation, control of physical & psychic limitations of time & space, intuition

Different philosophical schools have their own ideas as to how many 'petals' a particular chakra has.

In the Tibetan *Guhyasamāja* system, the crown chakra has only thirty-two petals (rather than a thousand), while the **Ājna** chakra has none and **Vishuddha** has sixteen. However, in the *Kālachakra* system the **sahasrara** only has four petals, the *Ājna* has sixteen and the throat chakra has thirty-two.

In regard to the foregoing, it seems a futile exercise to bother memorising the number of ‘petals’ that have no actual existence in any case, and are equally as subjective as the ‘colours’ of the *chakras*, which have been given different designations all down the centuries, according to the tradition of whichever clairvoyant yogi who had described them.

Quotes:

Other: a) *Chakras* are also a sect among the Tamil outcasts of southern India.

Bib: a) *The Chakras*, Peter Rendell. b) *The Chakras*, C.W. Leadbeater (Theosophical Pub. Hse. Adyar. 1968)

Refs:

Chakrapani (*chak-rah-par-nih*)

Var: *Chakra-pani*

Synon: *Shakti*

Sense: ‘Primordial energy.’

Chakra Puja (*chak-rah poo-jah*)

Var: *Chakra-puja*, (*chakra-puj*)

Sense: ‘A Tantric ritual in honour of the divine **Shakti**, symbolically represented by the symbol of **Sri Chakra**.’

The *Sri Chakra* is a kind of pyramid set on a square base, on which is a layered series of superimposed triangles. These gradually decrease in size and end in a single central point at the apex. There are many different versions of this rite, including **tamasic**, **rajasic** and **sattvic** styles, utilising practices known as **Panchamakara** (the Five ‘M-makers’: namely *mamsa* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mudra* (parched grain), *madira* (wine) and *maithuna* (sexual union). In right-hand **tantra**, these are merely symbolic representations of Tantric yoga practices

D — WORDS on the WAY

Da (*dah*)

Sense: ‘To give, donate or bestow’.

Other: Some maintain it means ‘the giver, or that which bestows.’

Dahara akasha (*hrid-dai-yam*)

Var:

Synon: *Hrid-Guha* (the cavity of the heart), *Hridayam* (the Cave of the Heart)

Sense: ‘The subtle space in the spiritual heart-centre, located to the right side of the chest.’

In conventional scholasticism, the texts state that since the Supreme Self or Absolute is impersonal, formless and unimaginable, the practice of *dahara vidya* (contemplation on the heart-space) should be accompanied by the visualisation of a personal image of god (an *Iṣṭa devata*). The Sages consider this method to be only for feeble-minded seekers, since the Absolute is manifesting in this space in all beings as the ‘I’-consciousness, concentration on which leads one directly to the experience of the Self.

Daiva (*dai-vah*)

Var:

Synon: *Apūrva*

Sense: ‘Divine, unseen potency.’

Daiva comes from the word **Deva** (God); but in this sense it means the **apūrva** or unseen potency of ‘God’ generated by one’s

attitude in a previous action that has determined a karmic repercussion.

Daivi Sampat (*dai-vih sam-pat*)

Var: *Daivi Sampad, daiveessampat*

Synon: *Rādhā*

Sense: ‘Leading upwards’— i.e., divine qualities, a godly nature.

Its antonym is **āsūrisampad** (hedonistic or materially-minded).

Daivi-viṇā (*dai-vih-veen-narh*)

Var: *Daivi-veena*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Divine lute (the human voice) a God-made instrument.’

Daksha (*dak-shah*)

Sense: ‘The Father of Creation.’

Among many other progenitors of the world, the **Vedas** name **Daksha** as such, in combination with **Mother Aditya** (‘she who has no second or division’).

Other accounts place **Shiva** and **Sati** (or **Shakti**) in this role, thus one may assume these are the same creative principles by other names. In this role, **Daksha-Shiva** appears to be a ‘trigger-principle’ which sets the emergence of the universe in motion, in combination with the **Sati-Shakti-Aditya** (Aditya being the personification of **akasha** or ‘ether,’ in which creation appears).

What then emerges is called **Eswara** (Lord of the Universe) in some texts, being exactly the same principle which is also called **Indra** in the *Vedas*.

Dakshina (*dak-shin-nah*)

Var: *Daksina*

Sense: ‘The honorarium or fee (which may include cows and other goods) offered to a priest for his services.’

These days, some **gurus** with an eye on their coffers, will demand *dakshina* (‘love offerings’) as a monthly expectation.

Dakshinachara (*dak-shin-ah-char-rah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘The right-hand path of **Tantra**, being the tradition which emphasises the way of meditation, spiritual discipline and purity, towards union with the Absolute.’

Dakṣiṇāmūrtī (*dak-shin-nah-murh-tih*)

Var: *Dakṣiṇāmūrtī, Dakshinamurti, Dakshinamurthi*

A great Self-realised teacher of antiquity, believed to have been an incarnation of Lord Shiva and the primary master of true Yoga, who for the most part taught in silence.

His four advanced ‘pupils’ are named as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata. However, as these four names have the same etymology, scholars contend that they are all one and the same person, or principle (being ‘Eternally well-born’) an epithet also ascribed to the god **Subramanya** (Murugana).

Dama (*dam-mah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘The practice of restraint from external activities by overcoming the desires of the sense organs.’

E—WORDS on the WAY

Eka (*ekka*)

Var: *Ekam*

Sense: ‘One, single.’

Originally used with reference to ‘the One’ (*Ekam*), the ‘*Tat Sat*’ (That Being) from whom everything came, which was later known as **Brahman**. All lesser gods were only aspects of the unknowable ‘One.’

Hence *ekatva* — ‘oneness.’

Ekāgratā (*ekkar-grah-tar*)

Var: *Ekagratha, ekagra*

Synon:

Sense: ‘One-pointedness of mind’—concentration focalised on a divine image, form, idea, deity, yantra or symbol, to the exclusion of everything else, until the practitioner becomes one with the image. A practice expounded by the Rishi Patanjali in his *Yoga Sūtras*.

Root:

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Eka-jīva-vāda (*ekka-jeev-vah-vaa-dah*)

Var: *Eka-jeeva-vaada, ekajiva-vaada*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The doctrine of the existence of one **jīva** only.’

This is the final understanding of the Self-realised being, that only ‘he’ exists as the Absolute and all other ‘beings’ are mere imaginings or projections. Just as when a dreamer awakens

from a dream in which he experienced being among thousands of people, only to find that although seeming real at the time, they were all projections of his own consciousness and on awakening, only he as the witness of the dream exists.

Thus the world and all those in it are seen simply as the projection of a single being animating a single body. In this conception there is no distinction between the liberated and the bound souls, since all others are no more than imaginary creations of the mind.

Someone who considers that there is only one single *jīva* (or sentient being) in existence is known as an *eka-jīva-vādin* (*eka-jeeva-vaadin*). The opposite view is that of *aneka-jīva-vāda* (belief in the plurality of beings).

Quotes:

a) “In my outlook I alone exist and not you.

In your outlook you alone exist and not I.

In one’s outlook only he exists and not anything else.

On scrutiny all that exists is only Me.”¹

Refs:

¹ *Guruvācaka Kovai*, Sri Muruganār (Sri Ramanashramam).

Ekākṣara (*ek-ark-shah-rah*)

Var: *Ekakshara, ekaakṣara, (ek-ākshara)*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Monosyllable’ — with reference to the Primordial Sound, **Om̐**, or **Pranava**.

Lit. ‘One syllable.’

Ekamevādītīyam (*Eh-kam-evah-dit-tee-yam*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘One only without a second’ — i.e., **Brahman**.

G—WORDS on the WAY

Gadā (*gad-daah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘A cattle goad.’

In the hand of a god or deity, it symbolises anger, impatience, or the perturbed psyche, over which the deity has control.

Gānas (*gar-naz*)

Var: *Gaanas*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Groups, genus, species, senses, or the deities corresponding to human faculties.’

Other: *Gāna* — ‘a certain musical style.’

Ganapatti (See Ganesha)

Gandhāra (*gan-dhaar-rah*)

Var: *Gandaara*

Synon:

Sense: ‘A musical metre.’

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Gandharvas (*gan-dhaar-vaz*)

Var:

Sense: ‘Celestial male fairies.’

Gandharvas are a class of beings connected with the sun, who are invoked for attracting conception and are said to impregnate women even before marriage. They are the male counterparts of

the **Apsaras** (celestial nymphs and dancing girls). In later writings they became heavenly musicians and patrons of music and dance.

Ganesha

Var: *Ganesh, Ganesana,*

Synon: *Adibija* (‘Primal seed’), *Ainkaran, Bhalachandra* (‘Moon-browed’), *Brahmanaspati* (‘Lord of the Universe’), *Chintamani, Ekadanta* (‘One-toothed’), *Gajamukha* (Elephant-faced), *Gajakarna* (‘Elephant-eared’), *Ganapata, Ganapatti, Ganapati, Ganapathy, Ganapaty, Ghanapathy, Heramba, Jyestharāja, Lambodara* (‘Large-bellied’), *Vakratunda* (crooked mouthed), *Vinayaka* (the first to be worshipped), *Vignaharta* or *Vighneshwara* (he who destroys obstacles)

Sense: ‘Lord of the Hosts’ (of **Ganas**) symbolising **OM**.

Ganesh is a pictorial and symbolic representation of *Om̐*, the mystical sound vibration from which all vibratory elements (including atomic and sub-atomic) came into manifestation. For this reason he is also named ‘*Brahmanaspati*’—Lord of Mantras (emanating from **Brahman**).

The symbol of *Om̐*, a glyph resembling the figure three, has a curling stroke like the trunk of an elephant, emanating from between the curves of the 3 (which are imagined as the brow and tusk of an elephant). Thus Ganesh was given the iconographic form of an elephant for the purpose of meditation and worship. This personification was also known as *Gajānana*—the Elephant-faced deity (from *gaja*, elephant and *ānana*, face.)

He later became popular as Ganesha—from *gaṇa*—group, genus or species, combined with *Iśa* (or *Isha*)—Lord or Ruler of the **Bhūtas** or elements; making him *Gaṇa-iśha* (Ganesha) the deity in control of all the groups of elements which compose the

H—WORDS on the WAY

Hamsa (*Hamn-sah*)

Var: *Hamsah, hamsa*

Synon: *Hamsopasana, Ham'so, hamsa, so'ham*

Sense: 'Sunbird, or mythical celestial goose or swan.'

It is also considered as a mantra in the **hatha**-yogic practice of *Hamsah* or **So'ham**, when concentrating on the sound of the inbreath and outbreath, utilised as a form of meditation, for stilling all mental movement and aligning oneself with the Divine Absolute (here designated as '*Hamsa*').

'*Hamsa*' actually means 'goose' a migratory bird (a symbol of the Supreme Spirit and migration of souls), but popularly it is usually translated as 'Divine Swan,' since a goose does not have great public appeal.

Some schools consider that the whisper of the breath entering the nostrils makes the sound of '*Saah*' and '*hamm*' is the sound that occurs on the outbreath; hence (according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar) the combination of these two sounds are written as *So'ham*, and known as *Soham mantra*. Other schools reverse the sounds, taking '*hammm*' as the sound of the inbreath, while the exhalation makes the sound of '*saaa*.' Therefore it is known as either the *Hamsa* mantra or *So'ham* mantra; a natural form of *ajapa-japa* (that is, mantra which occurs automatically by itself).

Quotes:

a) The sage Gorakshanath appears to concur with the *so'ham* style of breathing, but still calls it *hamsa* mantra, stating:

“The **prana** of the **jiva** goes out with '*ha*' and enters with the sound '*sah*.' It thus recites the mantra '*hamsa-hamsa*.' In one night the *jiva* makes 21,600 recitations

(automatically). This is *ajapa Gayatri*. It liberates the yogis. Its undertaking frees you from all sins. There is no other knowledge or *japa* comparable to it. Such knowledge did not exist in the past and will not appear in the future.”¹

Refs:

1 *Gorakshasamhita*—Gorakshanath.

Hanuman (*han-oo-man*)

The mythological monkey chief and hero of the **Ramāyana** epic, in which story he builds a bridge of monkeys over to Sri Lanka, where **Ravana** the ten-headed demon is holding captive **Sita**, the wife of Lord **Rama**. Hanuman is the great devotee of Rama and is therefore worshipped as a model of devotion in many temples constructed in his honour. Red-faced and standing erect, his statues are regarded as guardian spirits.

Hara (*harrah*)

Sense: ‘The Redeemer’: an epithet of Lord **Shiva**.

Harathi — see **Ārati**

Hathi (*hat-tee*)

Var:

Sense: ‘One who is devoted to the practise of Hatha Yoga.’

Hatha Yoga (*hatta-yo-gah*)

Var: *Hathayoga*, (*Hathayog*)

Sense: ‘The physical practise of yoga postures combined with breath control.’

Note the pronunciation of *Ha-tah* (*hatta*) and not *Ha-tha* as popularly mispronounced. From *Ha* — the sound of the solar breath entering the right nostril and *Tha* — the lunar breath experienced in

I—WORDS on the WAY

Iccha (*ee-schah*)

Sense: ‘Divine Will:’ the dynamic power of **Brahman**.

Iccha-shakti is also the power of individual will.

Ichātva (*eesh-shart-vah*)

Var: *Icchaatva*,

Synon:

Sense: ‘The desire nature of one who wishes to create.’

Quote: “O Devi, she is called Sakti, inherent in the sustainer of the world, assumes the desire nature [*icchātva*] of Him who desires to create.” — *Mālinivījayottara Tantra* (Ch.2, v.6)

Idā (*ee-dah*)

Var: *idaa, ida*,

Synon:

Sense: ‘The **nadi** or psychic nerve current which runs between the coccyx and the tip of the left nostril and follows the **suṣhumṇā** or central *nadi* up the spinal column to the brain.’ Its complimentary current is **pingala** in the right nostril.

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Idam (*idd-dam*)

Sense: ‘This.’

In general, *idam* refers to the universe as ‘all this’ (*Idam sarvam* = ‘this all’), being everything in visible manifestation; as opposed to *Tat* (that) which is transcendent.

Idam bhava is “This-ness,” as *Aham Bhava* is “I-ness.”

Idandra—see **Indra**

Indra (*in-drah*)

Var:

Synon: *Achakraya, Anilah, Eswara, Idandra* (‘It-seeing’— that which perceives the Absolute), *Kiejah, Puranadara, Suparna, Swadhaya, Vartamanah*

Sense: ‘The primordial War God who inhabits the mid-regions of space,’ (according to the Vedic scriptures).

Originally he was also variously said to be the soul within everyone, the life of all life, the support of sun and moon, the prime element among all elements, primal teacher and lord of the intellect, the *Deva-Deva* or ‘Shining one who lights all other shining entities,’ He who is pervading everything, etc.¹

Ancient scriptural injunction stated: “One must worship Indra and study the Veda.”

In the later **Puranas**, the original Omnipresent characteristics of Indra were greatly distorted and he was reduced to the menial status of a simple rain god in the writings of **Vaishnavaite** authors, in order to accord supremacy to Vishnu.

Indriyas are commonly called senses. But actually *indriya* is the activity of the hand. And that cosmic power which makes all hands move is designated as ‘*Indra*.’ Thus oblation to ‘Indra’ is reverencing the good use of all hands working for the welfare of the world.

The **bija-mantra** or seed-sound of Indra, which defines the *Indra*-quality of energy is ‘*La*.’

In Buddhism, Indra is only given the status of an archangel ruling the *Tāvātimsa* heaven.

J-Words on the Way

Jada (*jar-dah*)

Var: *Jada*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Inert, insentient;’ in reference to such objects as a table, which although it is suffused with the consciousness of the universe, has no reflecting medium such as ‘mind’ (or mindstuff) in which to register intelligence.

Jagadacharya (*jag-gad-achar-ree-yah*)

Var: *Jagad-acharya*,

Synon:

Sense: ‘The world teacher.’

A Self-realised spiritual adept who is capable of illuminating the consciousness of seekers all over the world.

Jagadamba (*jag-gad-dam-bah*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘The Mother of the Universe.’

Jagannatha (*jag-ga-nat-tah*)

Var: *Jagannath*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Lord Protector of the World,’ (generally applied to **Vishnu** or **Krishna**).

Jāgarita

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘The waking state’ of the **jiva** (individual) as opposed to

the state of deep sleep (**sushupti**).

Jagat (*jaggatt*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘Pertaining to things such as insentient objects, including the world and the universe.’

The presence of **buddhi** (intellect + ego) makes the difference between sentience and insentience.

Jāgrat (*jahg-gratt*)

Var: *Jaagratt*

Synon: *Jāgara*

Sense: ‘Partial waking; being in a subtle state before actual waking;’ (although generally used as the waking state).

Jāgrat Avasthā (*jahg-gratt avas-tah*)

Var: *Jaagratt avasthaa*

Synon: *Jāgara*

Sense: ‘The waking state:’ normal daily consciousness.

Jāgrat-svapna (*jahg-gratt-svap-na*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘Day-dreaming or fanciful imagining.’

Jahnavi (*jah-nah-vi*)

Var:

Synon: *Janeū, yajnopavita*

Sense: ‘The Sacred Thread’—the string worn by the three upper class ‘twice-born’ castes (**Brahmins** or **Brahmanas**) after the ceremony of investiture (*upanayana-samskara*) at the age of seven or eight.

It is made up of three twisted cotton strands, representing the three major *nadis* and the psychic current that opens the third eye; also the holy trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and various other esoteric threesomes according to different authorities. Each strand is also made up of another three strands, making the esoteric number nine, which represents the Changeless Absolute—*Brahman*. There are three knots in the thread, representing the three psychic ‘knots’ (*granthis*) within *sushumna nadi*, which must be pierced before *kundalini* is fully awakened and enlightenment can occur.

The thread is worn over the left shoulder, running across the chest to the waist on the right side and diagonally across the back. It indicates that the wearer (theoretically) follows the virtuous Vedic code of behaviour. The study of the *Vedas* (the path of *jñāna* or wisdom) is believed to be assisted by wearing this thread, which is said to control and enhance the functioning of the *Surya Nadi* or ‘sun channel’ breath, flowing in the right nostril.

As a sash across the chest of a king or general creates a sense of command, the mental effect of sensing this slender cotton ‘sash’ is intended to create a spiritual sense of command, which is essential for the path of *jñāna*.

Thus the *jahnavi* or *janeū* is treated with the utmost respect. When squatting for excretion, for example, it must be kept undefiled by draping it over the right ear. It is only when performing rituals such as *Pith Tarpana* (ancestor worship) that the thread is worn over the opposite (right) shoulder to the left waist.

Most Shaivite *sannyāsins* discard the thread as a sign of renouncing the world and caste, although one may see a fair number who do still retain it. Vaishnavas tend to retain it as a reminder of religious vows and contend that it should not be dispensed with until final illumination.

K—WORDS on the WAY

Kaivalya (*kai-val-yah*)

Var: *Kaivalyam, Kaibalya,*

Synon: *Brahman, moksha, Sivam, maunam*

Sense: ‘The state of Supreme Oneness: final liberation.’

Kaivalya Nishtha (*kai-val-yah nish-tah*)

Var: *Kaivalyanishtha, Kaivalya-nishta*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Established poise, or abidance in Existence-Consciousness.’

Kāla (*kar-lah*)

Var: *Kaala, Kal* (the Lord of Time)

Synon: *Mahakāla*

Sense: ‘Time, fate or death, or pure energy state.’

As *Kāla* is eulogised in the **Veda** as the power which determines everything, it is related to fate and even death (*Mahakāla*), being another name for **Yama** the God of Death. *Kāla* is also a state of consciousness which is bound only by the laws of time, but not of space or form. *Kāla* is a passive force (the aspect of **Shiva**) whilst **Kālī** is the aspect of **shakti** or energy of *Kāla*.

Other:

- a) In **Hatha Yoga**: ‘life-force’— of which there are said to be sixteen different kinds in the human body.
- b) Time—the past, present and future.
- c) Eternity.
- d) A digit, or portion of time.

Kalā (*ka-larh*)

Var: *Kalaa*,

Sense: ‘Part or fraction.’

Kālī (*kah-lee*)

Var: *Kalee, Kalai*

Synon: *Annapurṇā* (in her aspect as nourisher); Bhadra (the auspicious); *Chāmundā* (as the killer of the Buffalo-demon Mahisha); *Maheśī*— as consort of Mahesh (Shiva)

Sense: ‘Goddess Kālī represents that aspect of *shakti* or energy, which sustains and devours Life and Time in the cosmic activity of destruction and creation.’

Although her roots have been traced back to pre-Aryan Vedic sources, Kālī developed over centuries to finally become the primary, supreme and awesomely fierce goddess of the **Tantric** tradition. Her earliest known literary debut was in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, in which she is said to have been born from the brow of Durgā (the consort of Shiva) during a battle with demons. She is dark-skinned, naked and gory, with blood-dripping fangs, a necklace of skulls, a skull in one hand and a cleaver in the other.

In this form she was worshipped by the *thuggees* (hashish imbibing assassins: from which the word ‘thugs’ was derived in English). And she is still so worshipped at Kalighat in Kolikatta (Calcutta) together with dreadful ritualistic animal sacrifices.

By contrast, her image in the temple at Dakshineswar is benign and beatific. But in both forms she is believed to be kind and compassionate towards her devotees, but devastating to her enemies.

Root: Kālī derives from the feminine of **Kāla** (Time) —another aspect of **Shiva** (The Lord of Time)—and therefore she is the Mistress of Time and Nature (**Prakṛiti**); the cycles of ages and

the emanation and dissolution of the phenomenal worlds. As Time, she ‘drinks the blood’ or swallows up, all beings. Thus her horrific image in iconography is simply a pictorial and symbolic representation of reality as it is.

Kal means ‘to count, or measure’ or ‘set in motion,’ again inferring Time.

Kali has many different aspects: as beauty, as horror, as creatrice and destructrice, as the Eternal principle, as active power, as the element of air or wind, to name a few. In her form as a loving goddess, she is called Bhadra and is said to reside in the spiritual heart centre on the right side of the chest.

Her **bija**—the contracted seed **mantra** of her name—is **krīm**, related to **kriya**, or action.

As the primary goddess of tantric practitioners, worshippers have to pass through the *Kālī Maha Vidya* — ‘Great Knowledge of Kālī,’ before being allowed to continue with the perception of deeper tantric studies.

Quotes:

Other:

a) The side of a throwing dice with only one dot.

Bib:

a) *Kali: The Goddess of Feminine Energy* — Ajit Mookerji (Thames & Hudson.)

Refs:

Kālī-Yuga (*kar-lee-yoo-gah*)

Var: *Kaliyuga, (Kali-yug, Kaaleeyug)*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The Age of Kālī (the black deity) — known as the Iron Age.’ A time period calculated by Sanskrit scholars, such as Kullka Bhatta, as consisting of 432,000 human years’. This present age is said to have begun in 3102 B.C.

L—WORDS on the WAY

Lakṣaṇa (*lak-shah-nah*)

Var: *Lakshana*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The nature of something or someone,’ or ‘secondary implication.’

Lakshmi (*lak-shmih*)

Var: *Laxmi, Lakshmi-Narāyana, Mata* (mother)

Lakshmi

Synon: *Devi, Shri, Shree,*

Sense: ‘The Goddess of Wealth and consort of **Vishnu**.’

The concept of Goddess Lakshmi means ‘Good Luck’ or ‘Good Fortune’ and she is therefore worshipped as the goddess of wealth and prosperity, both material and spiritual.

Root: ‘*Lakshmi*’ derives from *lakshya*, meaning ‘aim’ or ‘goal.’

She is usually depicted as a beautiful woman with a golden complexion, sitting or standing on a full-bloomed lotus and holding a lotus bud, which represents beauty, purity and fertility. She has four arms, her hands representing the four ends of human life: **dharma**—righteousness, **kama**—desires, **artha**—wealth, and **moksha**—liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Gold coins are endlessly falling from her hands, conveying the idea that those who worship her will become wealthy. She is always shown wearing a red *sari* (symbolising activity) with a golden lining, again indicating prosperity.

She is the ‘consort’ or active energy of Vishnu, and is also known as Lakshmi-Narāyana in his company.



Beside the goddess, two elephants are usually depicted, spraying water from their trunks. This is intended to convey the idea that ceaseless effort, in accordance with one's **dharma** and governed by wisdom and purity, leads to both material and spiritual prosperity.

Although worshipped every day in countless homes, as a domestic goddess, her main **puja** is on a full moon night in October. She is also prayed to at home on a full moon night following **Dusshera** or **Durga Puja** and also on **Diwali** night, at which times the neighbours are invited in for the ceremony.

Lalitā — see **Ādyā Nityā Lalitā**

Lasya (*lass-yah*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: 'The Dance of Creation.'

Laukika

Sense: 'Mundane.'

Laya (*lai-yah*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: 'Temporary absorption of mind.'

Laya Yoga (*lai-yah yo-gah*)

Var:

Synon: *Kundalini yoga, yogasamadhi,*

Sense: 'The fusion of one principle into another': the yoga of absorption and dissolution—therefore the yoga of transformation.

Technically, it is the state of mental absorption in deepest concentration, in which the multifarious thought-forms no longer

M—WORDS on the WAY

Maalaa — see Mālā

Maaran — see Māran

Madhu (*mad-dhoo*)

Var: *Madhoo*

Sense: ‘Honey, sweetness, or the wine of delight.’

Madhu Vidya (*mad-dhoo vid-yah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘Honey-wisdom.’

Madhuparka (*mad-duh-par-kah*)

Sense: ‘The fruit offering given after the mouth has been ritually rinsed three times.’

Madhūra Bhava (*mad-dhoor-rah-bar-vah*)

Var: *Madhoora-bhava, Madhūrya Bhāva*

Synon.: *Kanta Bhāva*

Sense: ‘The manifestation of pure bliss,’—a state of **bhava** (ecstatic mood), which is the highest form of **Bhakti**, or spiritual love.

In this condition the God-intoxicated lover has gone beyond all personal ideas and conventions, and the purity of his or her heart is overwhelmed with blissful joy having merged with God, as **Radha** with **Krishna**, or **Parvati** with **Shiva**.

(See **Bhava** for other states, leading up to this one).

Madhya (*mad-yuh*)

Var:

Sense: 'Middle.'

Mādhyā Nādi (*mah-dya-nar-dee*)

Var: *Maadhya naadi, madhya-nadi*

Synon: *Atmanadi, atma nadi, Amritanadi, amrita nadi, Amrita, Atma, Ganga, Kaivalya, Para, Sushumna*

Sense: 'The central psychic nerve conduit within the spine: Sushumna.'

Mādhyana (*mard-yar-nah*)

Var: *Maadhyana*

Sense: 'The state of conceptualisation in thought before words are vocalised.'

Mādhyamikas (*mard-dhee-yam-mik-kas*)

Var: *Maadhyamikas*

Sense: 'The Buddhist sect which propounds the doctrine of the non-existence of soul, known as **anātman** (no *Ātma*).

This concept is a misunderstanding of the teaching of the Buddha who had refused to comment one way or the other on the existence of soul, preferring investigation to speculation.

Madhyestha (*madh-yes-tah*)

Var: *Maadhyesta,*

Synon: *Upekkha or Upekkhaa),*

Sense: 'The capacity to maintain equanimity in all situations.'

Root:

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Maha (*mah-hah*)

Sense: ‘Great, immense, cosmic.’

Maha is usually found prefixing a noun as a superlative, as in **Mahatma**—Great Soul, or **Mahavakyas**—Great Utterances, **Mahārishi**—Great Sage or Seer, **Maharaja**—Great King.

Māhābhārata (*mah-har-bhar-rar-tah*)

The great epic story of the social and spiritual history of India (*Maha*—great, *Bharata*—ancient India).

This huge poem was composed by the poet-sage Veda Vyasa, around the 4th century C.E., which tells the story of the struggle between the Kaurava and Pandava brothers in their dispute over the rule of a kingdom. Amid their trials and tribulations, the narrative discloses a vast amount of spiritual, religious and secular lore.

Bib:

a) *The Māhābhārata Text as Constituted in its Critical Edition* (19 Vols.) — R.N. Dandekar (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. 1974)

Maha-Bhava (*mah-hah bhar-vah*)

Var: *Mahabhav*,

Synon:

Sense: ‘An extremely rare and high spiritual condition of total immersion in divine love and bliss.’ (cf.) **Bhava**.

Root:

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Mahābhūtāni (*mar-har-bhoo-tar-nee*)

Var: *Mahaabhootaani*, *maha-bhutani*, *Mahābhūtas*,

Synon: *Mahabhotana*

N—WORDS on the WAY

Nāda (or **Nādam**) (*nah-duh* or *nah-dum*)

Var: *Nadam, naad, nada, (nad)*

Synon: *Shabd (Shabda)*

Sense: ‘Sound—but specifically referring to the sacred subtle sound;’ a vibratory frequency born out of the conjunction of the **Shiva** and **Shakti** principles emanating from the Absolute.

In metaphysical terms it is the original impetus of these two principles moving towards manifestation as the universe.

Root: *nad*—sound, roaring, or loud sound.

Nadam is a refined and subtle tone that continues to subliminally sound from the moment of manifestation until the dissolution of the universe. In *Hatha Yoga* terms it is a very fine high-pitched sound heard in consciousness during meditation, apparently in the ears or the brain, but is actually arising from the heart-centre (**anāhata chakra**). It is also known as **Surat Shabd Yoga** in the spiritual terminology of Sikhism.

Manifesting the universe it is called **Om** and is otherwise known as the **praṇava** (the ever-fresh sound).

Quotes: ‘The universe is a concentrated form of *nadam*. *Nadam* is the subtle form of the universe. This is the secret doctrine of *Samkhya Yoga*.’¹

Other: a) Musical sound, in classical Indian music. b) Also the name of a species of grass.

Refs:

¹ *The Textbook of Yoga Psychology*, Ramamurti S. Mishra M.D. (p.142)

Nāda Yoga (*nar-dah yoh-gah*)

Var: *Naada-yoga, naad-yog, nadayog*

Sense: ‘The yogic practice of spiritually intent musical application or absorption in spiritual sound for attunement to

the Divine.’

Quotes: “Nada Yoga is the science of using vibration to connect with God, or **Brahman**, the one without a second, or the all-pervading consciousness. Brahman manifests in this universe as vibration. This first manifestation of the Absolute is referred to as *Om* or *Nada Brahman*. It is the immutable essence underlying all creation.”

— *Yogi Hari*¹

Refs: ¹ *The Bhajans, Kirtans, Shlokas and Chants — Yogi Hari* (Nada Productions Inc., USA, 1999)

Nādi (*nah-dee*)

Var: *Naadi, nadi, (nad)*,

Synon: *rtsa* (Tib.)

Sense: ‘An energy circuit, or ‘channel’ of the subtle psychic nervous system.’

Root: *Nad*—‘sound.’ Thus the nadis are ‘sound and energy transmitting channels’ or ‘pathways’ suffusing the **prāṇamaya kośha** or subtle mental energy field that interpenetrates and surrounds the physical body.

Yoga and **Tantra** schools determine there are 72,000 *nādis* in this system. But this figure is often taken to mean an uncountable number. However, the **Sutras** calculate the number as 80,000.

The *Katha Upanishad* maintains that there are 101 nadis emanating from the heart centre, the most important being **amṛita nādi** rising to the crown (**sahasrara**). It is stated that when energy moves in this channel ‘one rises to immortality.’ Other texts speak of 108 *nadis* spreading from the secret **hrit chakra**, just below the heart and servicing the higher spiritual centres: for this reason 108 is deemed the holiest number in yoga philosophy.

In the Tibetan Highest **Tantra** tradition, the currents of psychic energy which flow in the Central spinal column and throughout the *nadi* system are known as **vayus**—‘winds.’ in the subtle system

Other:

a) *Nādis* (*naa-deez*) are also ancient sacred manuscripts written on palm leaves.

Nādi Shodhana (*nah-dee sho-dha-na*)

Var:

Sense: ‘Purification of the *nadi* (psychic nerve) system, by alternate nostril breathing.’

Nāga (*nar-gah*)

Var: *Nag*

Sense: ‘Serpent, snake, cobra.’

Other: ‘Elephant’ in Buddhism, being the symbol of endurance, strength, and restraint. The Buddha himself is called *nāga* or *mahānāga*, the great elephant. One legend has it that he descended from heaven in the form of an elephant to be born on earth.

Nāga Babas (*nar-gah bar-bahz*)

Sense: ‘The wild, naked warrior sadhus who belong to various **akharas** or ‘regiments,’ originally created to repel foreign aggressors of earlier centuries, such as the Muslim invaders, and later the British army.’

They are dedicated to Lord **Shiva**, generally in his wrathful aspect as **Bhairava** and carry his emblems of a trident, fire-tongs, **lingam** and **kamandalu** (water pot).

Their mantra is *Shivo’ham*: ‘I am Shiva’

Nagas generally first undergo a probationary period of twelve years, after initiation by a Guru of the line (usually at the Ganges or *Kumbha Mela*), accepting the **geru** robe and a personal mantra and travelling everywhere with the master until the next Kumbha

O—WORDS on the WAY

Ojas (*oh-jahs*)

Var:

Synon: *Ojas-sakti, ojas-shakti,*

Sense: ‘Spiritually transformed mental energy through the transmutation of bodily secretions.’

In general terms, the essence of sperm and other bodily secretions, hormones, enzymes, etc. When developed through celibacy following specific yogic practices, it becomes a substance which feeds the brain cells enhancing spiritual energy, vigour and vitality.

It is often known as *ojas-shakti*—or psychic force, which controls all hormonal forces and secretions of the body.

Quotes: a) The reason for the yogic conservation of semen is given by Yogiraj Vethathiri: “The life-force in a physical body is based in the sexual vital fluid: a chemical compound of high potential and proportionate mixture of various essential ingredients designed to hold, charge and protect the requisite quantity of life-force particles... The sexual vital fluid is like a battery for the life-force. *The quantity and quality of the sexual vital fluid, will determine the strength and character of the life-force and biomagnetism.*

“Let us consider what happens if the sexual fluid gets reduced in quantity. The life-force becomes correspondingly less and the biomagnetism is also depleted. The cells are not supplied with biomagnetism. As a result the machinery at first slows, and then breaks down. So, in order to maintain the biomagnetism, adequate life-force particles are absolutely necessary. And in order to hold the life-force, the sexual vital fluid should be sufficient.”¹

b) “There are two classes of *ojas*:

- 1) *Para ojas*, is responsible for the life principles. On its destruction, death is certain to occur. Its main office is the heart, and through cardio-respiratory motions, it helps the mind to control all motions of the cells and the entire body.
- 2) *Apara ojas* is constantly in *tanmātric* [subtle essence] motion, through the circulation. On its deficiency or destruction there are various physical and mental diseases in the body.

By means of *ojas*, psychic power, the mind works with the senses for acquisition of knowledge of the external and internal environment. Knowledge is not possible if the power of *ojas* is not with the mind.”²

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

¹ *Journey of Consciousness*, Yogiraj Vethathiri Maharishi (MacMillan India Limited)

² *Atma Bodha: Self Analysis & Self Knowledge* — Shri Ramamurti Mishra, (CSA Press, Georgia, USA. 1997). ISBN: 0-87707-190-X.

Om̐ (*Ommn*)

Var: *Om̐kāra, Omkar, Om-kara, (Ongkar, Onkaara, Ohnkaara)*

Synon: *Humkara, Pranava, Taraka Mantra, Tara Vidya, Udgitha*

Sense: ‘The sound of *Om̐*: the Supreme Being manifesting in the form of the universal sound.’

Om̐kāra means ‘the sound of *Om̐*.’ Constant vocal repetition of this sound is called *Om̐kara-japa* (*Om̐kar*, or *onkara-japa*).

The sound of the **pranava** or **Om** is called *Adi* in the *Chhandogya Upaniṣhad*, as it was the first emanation out of the mysterious universal substratum known as **Brahman**.

Quotes:

Other: a) Indestructible.

Bib:

Refs:

Onkār — see **Om̐kāra** under **Om̐**

P—WORDS on the WAY

Pāda(m) (*pah-dah* or *pah-dam*)

Var: *Padam, paada, paadam*

Sense: ‘Foot, feet or ultimate support’ (of the universe).

The Awareness-Consciousness which is the substratum of the manifested universe is metaphorically considered as the ‘supportive base pillar’ or ‘sustaining “foot” on which all apparent existence rests.

Quotes: a) “Because it bears and sustains the whole world, the completely perfect being-consciousness is termed *Padam*.”¹

The *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣhad*) defines the Brahman as having four quarters (*pādas*), signifying states of consciousness. Operating through a human being, the first ‘*pāda*’ is called **vaiśvānara**, the activity of which is the waking state (**jāgarita**); the second *pāda* is called **taijasa**, relating to the dream state; the third *pāda* is **prājña**, which is operative in the state of deep sleep (**suṣhupti**); and the fourth *pāda* is the state of absorption in Absolute Brahman, known as **turiya** (literally, ‘the fourth’).

Other: a) *Pādas* are quarters of verses in the **Vedas**, which contain the complete sense of a single idea in that portion.

b)

c) A word.

Refs:

1 *Padamalai—The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Recorded by Muruganār. Ed. David Godman (Avadhuta Foundation, USA). ISBN: 0-9711371-3-7.

Pāda Puja (*pah-dah poo-jah*)

Var: *Paada-puja, (pad-puj)*

Sense: ‘Ceremonial worship of the feet of the Guru or spiritual preceptor, or his sandals.’

Padārthābhāvanā (*pad-daar-tah-bhah-vannah*)

Padasevana (*pad-da-sev-va-nah*)

Var.

Synon:

Sense: ‘Service to the feet of the Lord.’

This is one of many forms of **Bhakti** (devotional) **Yoga**, in which the devotee feels impelled to do service at the ‘feet of the Lord.’ Evidently, the **Brahman**, or the Consciousness which governs the universe has no ‘feet,’ but it the sentiment that arises in the devotee, is such as if he or she was sitting at the feet of God.

Thus the real meaning of *pada-sevana* is to take the whole of humanity as the ‘feet’ of God and serve everyone and every thing (including the sick, the poor, animals, temple idols, etc.), as service to the Lord.

Padma-kshetra (*pad-mah ksh-etrah*)

Var.

Synon:

Sense: ‘Lotus-field’ — referring to the psychic ‘field’ or ‘energy sheath’ of the subtle body in which the **chakras** (here visualised as lotuses) function.

Padmāsana (*pad-maa-san-nah*)

Var: *Padmaasana*

Sense: ‘The lotus pose’ — a seated position in **hatha yoga**, in which the legs are crossed tailor-wise, with the feet resting on the

thighs and the soles pointing skywards. The hands rest on the knees, with the thumb and forefinger joined together, the other fingers straight, but relaxed.

From *padma*—lotus, *āsana*—seat or posture.

Pādya (*pahd-yah*)

Sense: ‘Washing the feet of’ an idol, or whatever other symbol may be utilise in ritual worship. The esoteric significance is that the water is offered to the ‘feet’ of God.

Pakvi — see **Paripakvi**

Pañcakośa — see **Panchakośha viveka**

Pancakṣhara — see **Panchakṣhara**

Pancanga lakṣaṇa — see **Panchanga Lakṣhaṇa**

Panch-āgni-tapasyā (*panch-ahg-nee-tap-pas-yah*)

Var: *Panchaagni, pancha-āgni tapas, pancagni*

Synon: *Dhūni-tap, dhooni-tapas, panchakkini*

Sense: ‘The austerity of sitting between five fires’—namely, four fires on the ground oriented to the cardinal points, with the sun above counted as the fifth.

A scripturally approved method of purification, in which the practitioner, utilising the repetition of mantra, is himself the ‘offering to the fire’; sometimes sitting between the ‘five fires’ for up to twenty years. In the 20th century it has become customary in some areas, to increase the number of fires over a long period of practice.

Root: *Pancha*-five, *āgni*-fire, *tapasya*—austere spiritual practice.

(See **Āgni**)

Quotes:

R—WORDS on the WAY

Ra (*rah*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘Light’ (acc. to Kriya Yoga.)

Root:

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Rādhā (*rar-dhah*)

Var:

Synon: *Rādhākṛiṣhṇa, rādhāswāmi*

Sense: ‘The psycho-spiritual current of consciousness in a rising flow towards absorption in the Absolute.’

Hence, in mythology, the consort of **Krishna** is named *Rādhā*; as the combined word **rādhākṛiṣhṇa**, means ‘that pure Consciousness which uplifts and attracts the senses from outward things towards the Source of Being.’ The reverse flow is the downward current towards outward sensual objects and is known as **dhāra**, the reverse of *rādhā*.

Rādheshyam (*rar-dhesh-shyam*)

Var: *Rādhe Shyam*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The dark-blue lover of **Radha—Krishna**.’

Rādhāswāmi (*rar-dhah-swar-mih*)

Var: *Rādhāsvāmi*

Synon:

Sense: ‘The rising vibration of **nadam** (the primordial sound) in

consciousness, which leads one up to the Godhead.’

Lit: ‘The Master of Rādhā,’ as in mythological terms, *rādhā* is the upward moving current of consciousness; otherwise known as *rādhākṛiṣṇa*.

Raga (*rar-gah*)

Var: (*Rag*)

Synon: *Āśhakti*

Sense: ‘Desire—attraction and attachment, with ego-involved expectations towards persons or objects.’

Root: *Raj* or *ranj*—to be affected, moved, coloured.

Its opposite number is **dwesha**—dislike, repulsion and hatred. And from these two opposing attitudes of mind, *raga* and *dwesha*, a whole philosophy named *raga-dwesha* has developed. It is maintained that the endless cycles of birth and death are kept in motion by the effects of these two mental states. Our likes and dislikes cause us to reap the fruits of our attractions and aversions.

Quotes:

a) “The mind of an ordinary man runs into the grooves cut by Raga and Dwesha. As soon as he gets up in the morning, two currents begin to play. He takes tea, puts on a suit and hat and begins to do the same actions over and over again. He is a mere toy in the hands of the two currents. But he who does self-analysis, introspection and meditation goes above Raga and dwesha and attains eternal bliss and immortality.”¹

Other: a) A form of music played in certain rhythms at specific times of day.

Bib:

Refs:

Sabikalpa (see **Savikalpa Samadhi**)

Śabda — see **Śhabda**

Śabdhabhyasa — see **Śhabdabhyasa**

Saccidānanda — see **Sat-chit-ānanda**

Ṣaḍaṅga (*sad-dan-gah*)

Sense: ‘The Science of Forms.’ According to the theory of this science, the external forms of things do not intrinsically correspond to that which is perceived by the eye, but relates to a ‘known’ prototype in the mind.

Sadashiva (*sah-dah-shee-vah*)

Var: *Sadasiva*

Synon: *Para-shakti**

Sense: ‘The force which transcends and motivates the entire universe.’

Sadashiva (‘the always auspicious’) is an aspect of **Shiva**, which rules the element of space. In tantrism, this force is conceived of as the presiding deity of **vishuddha chakra** (the energy vortice of the throat) and the third manifesting element (**tattva**) in descent from Shiva as the Ultimate Reality.

In the philosophy of the Trika school of Kashmir Shaivism, Shiva is Pure Knowledge, Pure Awareness, without movement. When his energy is manifesting in action, it is known as **Shakti**. When both aspects are in harmonious equilibrium, this state is known as *Sadashiva*. The *Shiva-Mahapurana* (or *Rudra Samhita*) explains that after the great dissolution of the universe, in the empty void there arose a force of creative energy known as

Sadashiva.

***Para-shakti** is the kinetic energy of the universe, conceived as feminine and manifesting the universe in four ‘bodily’ forms. Her first ‘body, is the sky. (Also represented as ‘*Ishvari*’—Empress of the Universe, as counterpart to the god **Ishvara**). Her second ‘body’ is deemed to be **Surya** the sun, as Light, conditioned by the goddess **Gayatri** the creatrix of beings. Earth is her third ‘body’ maintained as **Lakshmi** the sustainer of beings. The moon is her fourth ‘body’ related to **Kali** as destroyer of beings.¹

Refs: ¹ Extracted from: *Bhagavan and Nayana* — S. Shankaranarayanan (V.S. Ramanan, Ramanashramam, 1983/1997)

Sadguru — see **Sat-Guru**

Sādhaka (*sar-dha-kah*)

Var: *Sādhika, (Sadhak)*

Sense: ‘One who follows a **sādhana** (spiritual practice) is called a *sādhak*, or more correctly, a *sādhaka* or *sādhika* (feminine).’

Root: *Sidh, sadhati*—to attain, accomplish, succeed.

Quotes:

a) “*Sadhaka* means the process of getting established in the **Iswara** principle, the consciousness.”¹

Refs:

¹ *Prior to Consciousness: Talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*— Jean Dunn (Chetana Pvt. Ltd, Mumbai, 1998) ISBN: 81-85300-35-6

Sādhana (*sar-dhan-nah*)

Var: *Sadhana, Saadhana, (Sadhna),*

Synon: *Purusharth, abhyasa*

Sense: ‘Spiritual practice or effort’—done with the intention of

achieving Self-realisation.

Root: *Sidh, sadhati*—to attain, accomplish, succeed.

One who follows a spiritual *sadhana* is a **sādhaka**.

Quotes:

a) “Transform your desire into aspiration; transform your passion into dispassion. This is the purpose of all *Sadhana*.”¹

b) “*Sadhana* is not doing, but being. Withdrawing attention from external objects both of the world and of the mind, and clinging to the first person, ‘I’, alone is *sadhana*.”²

c) “Nowadays householders want a magic pill from the hands of **Sannyasins** for their spiritual upliftment. They do not want to do any *sadhana*. Everyone should tread each step of the spiritual ladder himself.”³

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

¹ *Song of Silence* — Chandra Swami Udasin (Seeker’s Trust, Domet, U.P. 1997). p.374.

² Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi —in *The Mountain Path* journal (Jayanti 2005)

³ *Science of Yoga Vol.3, Ethical Teachings*—Swami Sivananda (Sivananda pres, Durban, 1971)

Sāadhanacatuṣṭaya (*sar-dhan-nah-chat-tus-tayah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘The fourfold scriptural requirement for the practice towards *advaitic* experience’ (the state of non-duality).

According to **Śhānkārāchārya** in his *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣhya*, the four requirements are: 1) Discernment between the eternal and the ephemeral, 2) disinterest for enjoyment of the rewards [of rites and duties] in this life and hereafter, 3) plus the group of qualities conducive [to Self-knowledge], such as control of mind and

senses; and 4) a desire for liberation.¹

Refs:

¹ Quoted by Roger Marcaurelle in *Freedom Through Inner Renunciation: Śankara's Philosophy in a New Light* (Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 2002).

Sādhika — see **Sādhaka**

Sadhu (*sar-duh*)

Var: *Sadhoo*,

Sense: ‘A spiritual truth seeker, ascetic or holy man; a good person, renouncer.’

Often a wandering ascetic, not necessarily affiliated to any monastery or order. Generally, one who has withdrawn from worldly life in order to exclusively pursue the life of the spirit. The term sometimes (but rarely) refers to one who has already realised the Self.

Root: *Sadh*—to go straight (towards the spiritual goal).

Other: Straight, right.

Bib:

a) *Sadhus: Holy Men of India* — Dolf Hartsuiker (Thames & Hudson, 1993)

Sādhyas (*sard-yaz*)

Var: *Saadhyas*

Sense: ‘A class of ancient minor gods, or semi-divine heavenly beings.’

But said to be ‘those who should be propitiated.’ They are mentioned in the *Chandogya Upanishad*.

Sad-Vidya—see **Hṛidaya Vidya**

Saguṇa (*sa-goo-na*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘With qualities:’ that is — an exalted spiritual condition, but one in which is mixed attributes or psychic elements, which are inherently active enough to ensure that one will return to the normal state of consciousness once again.

Root: *Sa*—with, *guṇa*—attribute. Its antonym is *nirguṇa*—without attributes.

Saguṇa Brahman is therefore the Absolute with attributes added. The sense of ‘I-am-ness’ (acc. Nisargadatta Maharaj).

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Saha-gamanam — see **Satī**

Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi — see **Samadhi**

Sahajaniṣṭhā (*sah-har-jah-nish-tah*)

Var: *Sahaja Nishta, sahaja-nishta*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Permanently remaining in the natural state of abidance in the Self.’

One established in such steady abidance of the true state of being is *sahaja-niṣṭhā*.

Sāhaṃkāra (*sah-ham-kar-rah*)

Var: *Saahaṃkaara, sahamkara*

T—WORDS on the WAY

Tadvana (*tad-vah-nah*)

Var:

Sense: ‘That which is most adored.’

This is with reference to the **Brahman** in the *Kena Upaniṣhad*.

Taijas (*tie-jahz*—as in ‘old school tie’)

Sense: ‘The visual aspect of the Supreme as Light.’

Taijasa (*tie-jassa*)

Var:

Synon:

Sense: ‘The perceiver of the dream, who is part of the dream and therefore only a dream person himself,’ — as distinguished from the waking individual, which is known as **viśva** (**viśhva**).

Other:

a) **Taijasa** is also described as the second ‘quarter’ or aspect of **Brahman**, really meaning the universal aspect of dreaming consciousness in every being.

b) The **kundalini** life-force energy which is continuously running from **Muladhara** to **Sahaśrara** at every moment is called *taijasa*.

Tamas (*tammas*)

Var: *thamas*,

Sense: ‘The binding element in consciousness and in all other aspects of manifestation characterised by inertia, dullness, stagnation, solidification, passivity, darkness, stupor and stasis.’

One of the three **guṇas**—attributes or conditionings, governing every aspect of existence, together with **Rajas** and

Sattva.

Tāmbūla (*tahm-boo-lah*)

Var: *Taamboola, tambula*

Sense: ‘The offering of betal leaf and betal nut as a purification for the mouth after food.’ One of the aspects of *naivedya* (ritualistic food offering).

Eso: Considered as ‘the word-of-wisdom emanating from the feast of **mantra**.’ — *Sant Keshavadas*.

Tandraloka (*tan-drah-loh-kah*)

Var: *Tandra-loka*

Synon:

Sense: ‘A condition of consciousness similar to waking-sleep, in which incomprehensible mysteries are revealed and invisible things become apparent.’

Tañhā (*tan-har*)

Var: *Tanhaa*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Craving’ in Buddhism.

In the *Dhammapada* (The Path of Discipline) the Buddha stated that *craving* was the ‘builder of the house’ of the body and mind and is therefore the cause of re-birth; but if we shake off craving there is nothing to bind us to the wheel of existence.

Tanmātra (*tan-mah-trah*)

Var: *Tanmaatra, (Thanmathra),*

Synon:

Sense: ‘Subtle essence.’

Quotes:

Other:

U—WORDS on the WAY

Ucchatan (*ooch-chat-tan*)

Var: *Uchatan*

Sense: ‘Separation, dejection, uprooting, and mental distraction caused by negative incantations projected by another.’

Classical texts offer mantras for the confusing the minds of enemies, making them act badly, or causing them meet with failure and insult, or to drive them (or birds and animals) away from their homes. Although the scriptures sanction such methods against enemies of the state, or for self protection, spiritually such practices are ultimately self-defeating as the karmic repercussion, in the fullness of time, brings the same effect upon oneself.

Udāna (*ud-dhar-nah*)

Var: *Udaana*

Sense: “Upward-moving life-current’— one of the five vital ‘airs’ in *pranayama*.

Air within the body, which is pranically charged and moves upwards through the chest and throat into the head.

Physiologically *udana* is that force by means of which one speaks, burps, vomits, weeps, laughs, etc. Psychologically, it corresponds to the capacity to comprehend ideas.

Root:

Quotes:

Other:

Bib:

Refs:

Udāsīna (*ood-dars-seen-nah*)

Var: *Udasinah, udaasina, udaaseena, Udasin*

Synon:

Sense: ‘One who is seated high above’: that is, someone who has reached the pinnacle of existence and abides as pure Being.

Other: ‘One who belongs to the Order of Udāsīn monks — a much respected spiritual tradition of north India.’

At the time of initiation, *Udāsīn or Udāsī sadhus* are given a new name, a mantra, a cap and a black holy thread (*sehli*) and wear necklace of beads known as *nazar bathu*. Many tend to grow thick matted locks (*jaṭā*) in the manner of Shaivite yogis, wound in coils on top of their heads.

Legend is that the Order originated with Sanatana Kumar, a **rishi** of the Vedic period. He was one of the four mythic Kumara brothers (Sanak, Sanadan, Sanatana and Sanat Kumar) mentioned in the **Vedas** and **Puranic** tales.

Baba Bhuman Shaji (1687-1747) of Bhuman Shah Village (which was named after him) previously in Montgomery District, West Punjab (but is now in Pakistan) was a great sage of this tradition.

Another was Baba Sri Chanderji, 165th in the line of succession, the son of Guru Nanak Dev, who established four monasteries in the four corners of India, just as Shankaracharya did for the Śhaivite *sannyasins*. There is still a shrine to him in Afghanistan.

Sri Brahmananda Saraswati Udasin (previously known as Dr. Mishra, or Sri Ramamurti) of the I.C.S.A. Ashrams in USA, was also of this line. And Chandra Swami of Sadhana Kendra, Domet, U.P., is the latest sage and **Mahant** of this tradition.

Udaya

Sense: ‘Rising’, and so ‘the dawn; *jñānodaya* is the rising, the dawn, of wisdom (*jñāna*), in the innermost firmament of the

V—WORDS on the WAY

The letter ‘v’ in Sanskrit is generally pronounced much softer than in English, being much closer to the sound of ‘b’, or ‘vw’ but in transliteration the letter ‘v’ is generally preferred by scholars, as otherwise many words seem ungainly in English if written with a ‘b’ or sometimes with ‘w’; although the more usual *tattva* and *sattva* are often seen written as *tattwa* and *sattwa* and Goddess Sarasvatī as *Saraswatī*, but never as *Sarasbati*.

Vāc (*vark*)

Var: *Vaac*, *Vak*

Synon: *Brahman*, *Shabd*

Sense: ‘The Word, the Imperishable, the Firstborn of All;’ the offspring of the Absolute—the revealed sound, which is the life giving principle and breath of life within all beings.

Vāc is also considered as a Goddess, as in Vedic terms the word is grammatically feminine. She existed before creation and was *that* which initiated the creative process. This function later became known as **Shakti** [primordial energy].

In the **Brahmānas**, the texts that explain the Vedic hymns, she is extolled as a queen with a kingly partner in **Prajāpati**, the Creator.

Quote:

a) “*This*, [before Creation] was the only Lord of the Universe. His Word was with him. This Word was his second. He contemplated. He said, “I will deliver this Word so that She will produce and bring into being all this world.” ¹

b) “It would be inadequate to describe *vāc* exclusively as the principle of intelligibility of the universe, because she is equally the principle of pure affirmation emerging out of nothingness. *Vāc*

is really the total living Word, that is to say, the Word in her entirety, including her material aspects, her cosmic reverberation, her visible form, her sound, her meaning, her message. *Vāc* is more than merely meaning or sound devoid of sense; she is more than just an image or simply a vehicle of certain spiritual truths. She does not contain revelation; she *is* revelation. She was at the beginning. She is the whole of the *śruti* [the revealed Word, **mantra** and scripture]. The *śruti* is *vāc*.”²

c) ‘The Word is not only speech, though constitutively connected with it; it is also intelligibility, the principle of reason, the power of the intellect, the rational structure of reality... it is also action, spirit, the unique Word permeating everything.’³

See also **VAK**

Refs:

¹ *Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa*, XX,14,2.

² *The Vedic Experience - Mantramanjari: An Anthology of the Vedas for Modern Man*—Dr. Raimundo Panikkar (All India Books, Pondicherry. 1997/1989)

³ *Ibid.*

Vachaspati—see **Br̥haspati**

Vada (*vadda*)

Sense: ‘Doctrine.’

Vāgdevī (*vahg-dev-vee*)

Var: *Vaagdevee*, *Vagdevi*

Synon: *Vak*, *Sarasvati*

Sense: ‘The Goddess of Speech, sound or voice—**Sarasvatī**.’

‘Mother’ Sarasvati, the mythological consort of the creator god **Brahma**, symbolises sound or voice and her three-stringed instrument, the *vina*, produces the vibration of **Om**—the Primordial Sound.

Y—WORDS on the WAY

Yagña (*yag-nyah* or *yaj-nyah*)

Var: *Yajña, yaagna, yagnya, (yaga)*

Synon: *Havan, homa*

Sense: ‘Sacrifice: a sacrificial rite of offering to God or deity.’

Root: *Yaj* — the act of sacrificing, worshipping, or the sacrificer himself. *Yaj* is also said to mean ‘worship of the deity (*devapuja*). *Ya* (or *Yam*) is also the **bija** mantra of **Anahata** or the **chakra** of the heart centre, which corresponds to the air element, indicating that a *yagna* is affecting ethereal regions and ethereal beings. Such beings, or **devas**, are believed to feed on the fragrance of the smoke from the fire and are attracted by the devotion in the mantras. The second syllable *jña* or *gña* means ‘spiritual wisdom’ as in the word **jñana**.

Ritualists use substances to represent the seasons; such as butter being for the springtime, wood or herbs for the fire being summertime and any offering to the fire symbolises autumn.

There are five basic kinds of *Yajñas*, viz.: 1) *Brahma Yajña* — the practices of early morning meditation at *Brahma mahurta* (4 a.m.) after following the prescribed ablutions. Holy pilgrimages, scriptural study, periodic fasting, worship and identification with the attributes of deities, all come under umbrella of this *yajña*. These activities are for the cultivation of *sattvic* (purificatory) sensibilities, such as reverence, responsibility, love and vigilance in practice. 2) *Rishi Yajña* — association with and rendering service to a sage (known as **Satsanga** and *Guru Seva*). This form of holy association allows the **sattvic** temperament of the guru to automatically infiltrate the seeker effecting subtle changes. 3) *Pitri Yajña* — the sacrificing of something to one’s ancestors with due respect and gratefulness. 4) *Bhuta Yajña* — the feeding of a

cow, a cat, or dog or any other creature, with love and appreciation of their specific qualities. 5) *Manushya Yajña* — making a ‘sacrifice’ for our fellow beings; either by daily feeding a friend or relative, or a poor man, or giving a helping hand to a neighbour or a service to the needy.

Simplified versions of yajña are known as **homa** or **havan**.

Quote:

“The entire process of chronological manifestation is called *yajña* — cosmic chemistry. Psychic forces and the individual self are all-inclusive in an individual organism. Evolution of matter becomes energy; the evolution of energy becomes the life principle; the evolution of the life principle becomes psychic forces; the evolution of psychic forces becomes the individual self and the evolution of the individual self goes into the Universal Self.” —*Ramamurti S. Mishra M.D.*¹

Thus it can be understood that each form of existence sacrifices itself to a higher form or frequency and becomes absorbed. One’s own inner urges are automatically aligned with the aspirational urge of evolution as one steadily sacrifices the ego-bound sense of selfhood to the Limitless Absolute.

Other: The renowned Swami Rama Teertha disparages the custom of propitiatory *yajnas* for what he calls ‘commercial’ gain with the desire of progeny, victory, wealth, etc. He says: “All these *Yajnas* were originally no more than fair and square transactions with the gods. They involved no cringing, sneaking, bowing, self-condemning and begging element. They were conducted on healthy terms of equality with the powers of Nature as understood by the ancients... Instead of lighting artificial fire for **havan**, let the pious youth make use of the glowing glory of the morning Sun or the setting Orb as the altar-fire to offer his dwarfed limited ego.”²

Bib:

Refs:

¹ *Kena Upanishad*—Commentary by Ramamurti S. Mishra M.D. (Yoga Society of Syracuse, N.Y. 1964)

² *In the Woods of God Realisation*—Swami Rama Teertha (Rama Teertha Pratisthan, Lucknow, 1956)

Yajña — see **Yagna**.

Var: *Yajna, yagnya*

Sense: ‘Sacrificial ritual worship, generally by fire.’

Yajñopavita-samskara (*yagj-nyo-pah-vittah-sam-skar-rah*)

Synon: *Upanayana-samskara* (*cf.*)

Sense: The ceremony of the investiture of the sacred thread, given to young *brahmin* boys at the age of eight (by parents and priest), at the time of initiation into the *Gayatri* mantra. As part of the ceremony the mother ties a new loincloth on the boy and enjoins him to lead a celibate and holy life and to look upon every woman as his mother until the age of twenty-four. After this ceremony the boy is considered to be ‘twice-born’ (*dvija*) and is thereby entitled to study the revelations of the *Vedas*.

Root: *Yaj* — the act of sacrificing, worshipping (or the sacrificer himself.)

The sacred thread, known as a *Janeu*, is composed of three intertwined strands, offered as a symbol of purity, representing the Holy Trinity, *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*. It also represents many other triads, such as the feminine deities, *Mahasarasvati*, *Mahalakshmi*, and *Mahakali*; the three *gunas* (or qualities of nature) *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; the past, present and future; the states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep; the gross, subtle and causal bodies; the three dimensions, heaven (*swarga*) earth (*martyaloka*) and the nether regions (*patala*); the three letters A-U-M forming the sound of OM; the three ‘feet’ (the three lines of