



Glossary of Common Sanskrit terms

Atman – The Self

Brahman – another name for the Self/Noumenon

Brahmavidya – the science or study of the Supreme Being/One/Noumenon/Self. Note this is not an intellectual study but a deep drive towards experiential realisation or awakening.

Darshan – A spiritual blessing or insight conferred from teacher to student.

Dharma – support from within. The law of life, the pathway.

Gunas – a term for 3 types of energy or manifestation. The three gunas control all of manifestation. They are all manifested mind and matter and all manifestation is a combination of these three (it is never just one of these gunas present but always a combination of all three in some proportional mixture).

- **Tamas** – inertia, darkness, ignorance of reality, resistance, (analogy is frozen water and energy is locked up and bound), unconscious mind. Energy, habits etc are said to be “tamasic”
- **Rajas** – Activity. Distracts and scatters attention from reality (analogy is swollen river, uncontrolled power). It is mind activity from uncontrolled power from mind wandering. Habits, foods etc are said to be “rajasic” when operating mainly from this guna.
- **Sattva** – harmony, equilibrium (analogy of harnessed power), higher mind, detached, self-controlled from unity of purpose, character and desire. Substances, habits etc are said to be sattvic.

Karma – something that is done. Every event is both cause and effect. Karma helps us to learn to follow our Dharma. A Self-realised person has no karma and they are the Dharma (are embodying it).

Loka – refers to the “world” and sometimes means the physical world and sometimes the various subtle worlds or realms. There are many subtle (non-physical) worlds that we will have more experience of as we wake up to the Truth even more.

Maya – Illusion, manifestation of multiplicity

Moksha – Freedom, liberation, awakening to Reality.

Nirvana – Liberations, awakening or freedom.

Prana – life force, energy, kundalini. consciousness

Purusha – Spirit or the Knower of the Prakriti. Only Purusha is Consciousness/Self (Atman)

Prakriti – What can be known objectively, the phenomenal world of name and form. Prakriti is made up of the three gunas (see above). Also, Prakriti can be described as the totality of mind and matter.

Rayi – matter, form or the elements

Samadhi – a deep meditation where there is peace. Samadhi is the climax of meditation where there is intense concentration or focus upon the Real Self. Samadhi is where we are able to maintain our focus on one thing without it being distracted (or distractable). At first we will experience Samadhi in shorter periods, such as during deep meditation but then our attention is drawn back to thoughts or what the senses are perceiving when our formal meditation ends. Eventually we will find that we can effortlessly and continuously maintain focus on the Self and it is not a “doing” but a way of being. There are several stages in Samadhi and as it deepens it will become more obvious in the waking state.

Samsara – the illusion of the world of separate objects

Samskaras – Mental impressions or karmic patterns that seem to run on autopilot, over which we may seem to have very little control

Shanti – Infinite and fundamental peace.

Shraddha – “that which is placed in the heart” Faith, values, predispositions/beliefs etc. Shraddha is what we give our time, energy and lives to; it is our destiny.

Tapas – The development of our spiritual discipline and points to the consistency of our practice allowing us to burn away karma and resistance.

Tejas – The outpouring of love, compassion and creativity that is the result of our tapas or discipline. Tejas is the result or sweet fruit of tapas.

Turiya – This literally means “fourth state” which is beyond the three states of the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states. Turiya is that which is aware of all three states and is our real Self, it is not actually a state but that open space of Being in which all these three states rotate.

Upanishad – This word means literally “to sit down with” and references sitting in Satsang with a teacher or the Truth. Reading these beautiful writings are like a Satsang in themselves, or is “sitting down with Truth”

Yoga – this word has several meanings based on the context it is used in the Gita. I have listed some of these below:

1. Pathways to awakening, namely bhakti yoga (devotion/love), jnana (wisdom and disidentification), karma yoga (selfless service) and raja yoga (meditation)
2. a way of being
3. a bringing together of all the powers of mind and body
4. the pathway to self-realisation