

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Ahimsa: moral discipline (*yama*)

Akasha ("ether/space"): the first of the five material elements of which the physical universe is composed

Amrit ("immortal/immortality"): nectar of immortality, a designation of the deathless Spirit

Ananda ("bliss"): joy, which is an essential quality of the ultimate reality

Arjuna ("White"): from *The Bhagavad Gita*, a disciple of the God-man Krishna

Asana ("seat"): a physical posture; the third limb of Patanjali's eightfold path; originally this meant only meditation posture, but subsequently, in Hatha Yoga, this aspect of the yogic path was greatly developed

Ashram ("that where effort is made"): a hermitage

Ashtanga: ("eight-limbed union"): the eightfold yoga of Patanjali, consisting of moral discipline (*yama*), self-restraint (*niyama*), posture (*asana*), breath control (*pranayama*), sensory inhibition (*pratyahara*), concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*), and ecstasy (*samadhi*)

Asmita ("I-am-ness"): a concept of Patanjali's eight-limbed yoga

Atman ("self"): the transcendental Self, or Spirit, which is eternal and superconscious; our true nature or identity; sometimes a distinction is made between the atman as the individual self and the parama-atman as the transcendental Self; see also purusha;

Avidya ("ignorance"): the root cause of suffering (*duhkha*); also called *ajnana*

Ayurveda ("life science"): one of India's traditional systems of medicine, the other being South India's Siddha medicine

Bandha ("bond"): the fact that human beings are typically bound by ignorance (*avidya*), which causes them to lead a life governed by karmic habit rather than inner freedom generated through wisdom

Bhagavad Gita ("Lord's Song"): the oldest known book on yoga containing the three-type teachings on Karma Yoga, (the path of self-transcending action), Samkyya Yoga (the path of discerning the principles of existence correctly), and Bhakti Yoga (the path of devotion), as given by the God-man Krishna to Prince Arjuna on the battlefield 3,500 years or more ago.

Bhakti Yoga ("Yoga of devotion"): a major branch of the yoga tradition, utilizing the feeling capacity to connect with the ultimate reality conceived as a supreme Person (*uttama-purusha*)

Bindu ("seed/point"): the creative potency of anything where all energies are focused; the dot (a.k.a. *bindhi*) worn on the forehead, indicating the third eye

Bodhi ("enlightenment"): the state of the awakened master, or *buddha*

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Bodhisattva ("enlightenment being"): in Mahayana Buddhist yoga, the individual who, motivated by compassion (*karuna*), is committed to achieving enlightenment for the sake of all other beings

Brahma ("he who has grown expansive"): the Creator of the universe, the first principle (*tattva*) to emerge out of the ultimate reality (*brahman*)

Brahmacharya (from *brahma* and *acarya* "brahmic conduct"): the discipline of chastity

Brahman ("that which has grown expansive"): the ultimate Reality

Buddha ("awakened"): a designation of the person who has attained enlightenment (*bodhi*) and therefore inner freedom; honorific title of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, who lived in the sixth century B.C.E.

Chakra ("wheel"): literally, the wheel of a wagon; metaphorically, one of the psycho-energetic centers of the subtle body (*sukshma-sharira*)

Cin-mudra ("consciousness seal") (a.k.a. Gyan): a common hand gesture (*mudra*) in meditation (*dhyana*), which is formed by bringing the tips of the index finger and the thumb together, while the remaining fingers are kept straight

Cit ("consciousness"): the superconscious ultimate Reality (see *atman*, *brahman*)

Citta ("that which is conscious"): ordinary consciousness, the mind, as opposed to *cit*

Darshana ("seeing"): vision in the literal and metaphorical sense; a system of philosophy, such as the yoga-darshana of Patanjali

Deva/Devi ("he who is shining"): a male deity, such as Shiva, Vishnu, or Krishna, either in the sense of the ultimate Reality or a high angelic being/a female deity such as Parvati, Lakshmi, or Radha, either in the sense of the ultimate Reality (in its feminine pole) or a high angelic being

Dharana ("holding"): concentration, the sixth limb (*anga*) of Patanjali's eight-limbed yoga

Dharma ("bearer"): a term of numerous meanings; often used in the sense of "law," "lawfulness," "virtue," "righteousness," "norm"

Dhyana ("ideating"): meditation, the seventh limb (*anga*) of Patanjali's eight-limbed yoga

Drishti ("view/sight"): yogic gazing, such as at the tip of the nose or the spot between the eyebrows; cf. *darshana*

Duhkha ("bad axle space"): suffering, a fundamental fact of life, caused by ignorance (*avidya*) of our true nature (i.e., the Self or *atman*)

Gayatri-mantra: a famous Vedic *mantra* recited particularly at sunrise: *tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah pracodayat*

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Guna ("quality"): a term that has numerous meanings, including "virtue"; often refers to any of the three primary "qualities" or constituents of nature (*prakriti*): *tamas* (the principle of inertia), *rajas* (the dynamic principle), and *sattva* (the principle of lucidity)

Hamsa ("swan/gander"): apart from the literal meaning, this term also refers to the breath (prana) as it moves within the body; the individuated consciousness (jiva) propelled by the breath; see *jiva-atman*; see also *parama-hamsa*

Hatha Yoga ("Forceful Yoga"): a major branch of yoga, developed c. 1000 C.E., focusing on the physical aspects of the transformative path, notably postures (*asana*) and cleansing techniques (*shodhana*), but also breath control (*pranayama*)

Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika: one of three classical manuals on Hatha Yoga. 14th-15th Century.

Ida-nadi ("pale conduit"): the *prana* current or arc ascending on the left side of the central channel (*sushumna nadi*) associated with the parasympathetic nervous system and having a cooling or calming effect on the mind when activated; cf. *pingala-nadi*

Ishvara ("ruler"): the Lord; referring either to the Creator (see *Brahma*) or, in Patanjali's yoga-darshana, to a special transcendental Self (*purusha*)

Ishvara-pranidhana ("dedication to the Lord"): in Patanjali's eight-limbed yoga one of the practices of self-restraint (*niyama*); see also *bhakti yoga*

Jaina (sometimes *Jain*): pertaining to the *jinas* ("conquerors"), the liberated adepts of Jainism; a member of Jainism, the spiritual tradition founded by Vardhamana Mahavira, a contemporary of Gautama the Buddha

Japa: the recitation of *mantras*

Jiva-atman, jivatman ("individual self"): the individuated consciousness, as opposed to the ultimate Self (*parama-atman*)

Jivan-mukti ("living liberation"): the state of liberation while being embodied; cf. *videha-mukti*

Jnana ("knowledge/wisdom"): both worldly knowledge or world-transcending wisdom, depending on the context; see also *prajna*; cf. *avidya*

Jnana-Yoga ("Yoga of wisdom"): the path to liberation based on wisdom, or the direct intuition of the transcendental Self (*atman*) through the steady application of discernment between the Real and the unreal and renunciation of what has been identified as unreal (or inconsequential to the achievement of liberation)

Kali: a Goddess embodying the fierce (dissolving) aspect of the Divine

Kama ("desire"): the appetite for sensual pleasure blocking the path to true bliss (*ananda*)

Kapila ("He who is red"): a great sage, the quasi-mythical founder of the Samkhya tradition, who is said to have composed the Samkhya-Sutra (which, however, appears to be of a much later date)

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Karma ("action"): activity of any kind, including ritual acts; said to be binding only so long as engaged in a self-centered way; the "karmic" consequence of one's actions; destiny

Karma Yoga ("Yoga of action"): the liberating path of self-transcending action

Karuna ("compassion"): universal sympathy; in Buddhist yoga the complement of wisdom (*prajna*)

Kosha ("casing"): any one of five "envelopes" surrounding the transcendental Self (*atman*) and thus blocking its light: *anna-maya-kosha* ("envelope made of food," the physical body), *prana-maya-kosha* ("envelope made of life force"), *mano-maya-kosha* ("envelope made of mind"), *vijnana-maya-kosha* ("envelope made of consciousness"), and *ananda-maya-kosha* ("envelope made of bliss"); some older traditions regard the last kosha as identical with the Self (*atman*)

Krishna ("Puller"): an incarnation of God Vishnu, the God-man whose teachings can be found in the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata-Purana/p>

Kundalini-shakti ("coiled power"): according to Tantra and Hatha Yoga, the serpent power or spiritual energy that exists in potential form at the lowest psycho-energetic center of the body (i.e., the *mula-adhara-cakra*) and which must be awakened and guided to the center at the crown (i.e., the *sahasrara-cakra*) for full enlightenment to occur

Kundalini Yoga: the yogic path focusing on the *kundalini* process as a means of liberation

Laya Yoga ("Yoga of dissolution"): an advanced form or process of Tantric yoga by which the energies associated with the various psycho-energetic centers (*cakra*) of the subtle body are gradually dissolved through the ascent of the serpent power (*kundalini-shakti*)

Mahatma (from maha-atman, "great self"): an honorific title (meaning something like "a great soul") bestowed on particularly meritorious individuals, such as Gandhi

Mandala ("circle"): a circular design symbolizing the cosmos and specific to a deity

Mantra (from the verbal root *man* "to think"): a sacred sound or phrase, such as *om*, *hum*, or *om namah shivaya*, that has a transformative effect on the mind of the individual reciting it; to be ultimately effective, a mantra needs to be given in an initiatory context (*diksha*)

Mantra Yoga: the yogic path utilizing *mantras* as the primary means of liberation

Maya ("she who measures"): the deluding or illusive power of the world; illusion by which the world is seen as separate from the ultimate singular Reality (*atman*)

Moksha ("release"): the condition of freedom from ignorance (*avidya*) and the binding effect of *karma*; also called *mukti*, *kaivalya*

Mudra ("seal"): a hand gesture (such as *cin-mudra*) or whole-body gesture (such as *viparita-karani-mudra*); also a designation of the feminine partner in the Tantric sexual ritual

Nada ("sound"): the inner sound, as it can be heard through the practice of nada yoga or kundalini yoga

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Nada Yoga ("Yoga of the [inner] sound"): the yoga or process of producing and intently listening to the inner sound as a means of concentration and ecstatic self-transcendence

Nadi ("conduit"): one of 72,000 or more subtle channels along or through which the life force (*prana*) circulates, of which the three most important ones are the *ida-nadi*, *pingala-nadi*, and *sushumna-nadi*

Narada: a great sage associated with music, who taught *bhakti yoga* and is attributed with the authorship of one of two *Bhakti-Sutras*

Natha ("lord"): appellation of many North Indian masters of yoga, in particular adepts of the Kanphata ("Split-ear") school allegedly founded by Goraksha

Neti-neti ("not thus, not thus"): an Upanishadic expression meant to convey that the ultimate Reality is neither this nor that, that is, is beyond all description

Nirodha ("restriction"): in Patanjali's eight-limbed yoga, the very basis of the process of concentration, meditation, and ecstasy; in the first instance, the restriction of the "whirls of the mind" (*citta-vritti*)

Niyama ("[self-]restraint"): the second limb of Patanjali's eightfold path, which consists of purity (*saucha*), contentment (*samtosha*), austerity (*tapas*), study (*svadhyaya*), and dedication to the Lord (*ishvara-pranidhana*)

Om: the original mantra symbolizing the ultimate Reality, which is prefixed to many mantric utterances

Parama-atman or *paramatman* ("supreme self"): the transcendental Self, which is singular, as opposed to the individuated self (*jiva-atman*) that exists in countless numbers in the form of living beings

Patanjali: compiler of *The Yoga-Sutra*

Pingala-nadi ("reddish conduit"): the prana current or arc ascending on the right side of the central channel (*sushumna-nadi*) and associated with the sympathetic nervous system and having an energizing effect on the mind when activated; cf. *ida-nadi*

Prakriti ("creatix"): nature, which is multilevel and, according to Patanjali's *yoga-darshana*, consists of an eternal dimension (called *pradhana* or "foundation"), levels of subtle existence (called *sukshma-parvan*), and the physical or coarse realm (called *sthula-parvan*); all of nature is deemed unconscious (*acit*), and therefore it is viewed as being in opposition to the transcendental Self or Spirit (*purusha*)

Prakriti-laya ("merging into Nature"): a high-level state of existence that falls short of actual liberation (*kaivalya*); the being who has attained that state

Prana: breath, life force, life in general

Pranayama (from *prana* and *ayama*, "life/breath extension"): breath control, the fourth limb (*anga*) of Patanjali's eightfold path, consisting of conscious inhalation (*puraka*) retention

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

(*kumbhaka*) and exhalation (*recaka*); at an advanced state, breath retention occurs spontaneously for longer periods of time

Prasada ("grace/clarity"): divine grace; mental clarity

Pratyahara ("withdrawal"): sensory inhibition, the fifth limb (*anga*) of Patanjali's eightfold path

Puraka ("filling in"): inhalation, an aspect of breath control (*pranayama*)

Raja-Yoga ("Royal Yoga"): a late medieval designation of Patanjali's eightfold *yoga-darshana*, also known as Classical Yoga

Rama: an incarnation of God Vishnu preceding Krishna; the principal hero of the *Ramayana*

Ramayana ("Rama's life"): one of India's two great national epics telling the story of Rama; cf. *Mahabharata*

Rig-Veda; see *Veda*

Rishi ("seer"): a category of Vedic sage; an honorific title of certain venerated masters, such as the South Indian sage Ramana, who is known as *maharshi* (from *maha* meaning "great" and *rishi*); cf. *muni*

Sadhana ("accomplishing"): spiritual discipline leading to siddhi ("perfection" or "accomplishment"); the term is specifically used in Tantra

Samadhi ("putting together"): the ecstatic or unitive state in which the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation, the eighth and final limb (*anga*) of Patanjali's eightfold path; there are many types of *samadhi*, the most significant distinction being between *samprajnata* (conscious) and *asamprajnata* (supraconscious) ecstasy; only the latter leads to the dissolution of the karmic factors deep within the mind; beyond both types of ecstasy is enlightenment, which is also sometimes called *sahaja-samadhi* or the condition of "natural" or "spontaneous" ecstasy, where there is perfect continuity of superconscious throughout waking, dreaming, and sleeping

Samkhya ("Number"): one of the main traditions of Hinduism, which is concerned with the classification of the principles (*tattva*) of existence and their proper discernment in order to distinguish between Spirit (*purusha*) and the various aspects of Nature (*prakriti*); this influential system grew out of the ancient (pre-Buddhist) Samkhya-Yoga tradition and was codified in the *Samkhya-Karika* of Ishvara Krishna (c. 350 C.E.)

Samsara ("confluence"): the finite world of change, as opposed to the ultimate Reality

Samskara ("activator"): the subconscious impression left behind by each act of volition, which, in turn, leads to renewed psychomental activity; the countless *samskaras* hidden in the depth of the mind are ultimately eliminated only in *asamprajnata-samadhi* (see *samadhi*)

Samyama ("constraint"): the combined practice of concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*), and ecstasy (*samadhi*) in regard to the same object

PINK LOTUS YOGA~ BASIC YOGIC TERMS

Sat ("being/reality/truth"): the ultimate Reality (*atman* or *brahman*)

Satsang ("true company/company of Truth"): the practice of frequenting the good company of saints, sages, Self-realized adepts, and their disciples, in whose company the ultimate Reality can be felt more palpably

Satya ("truth/truthfulness"): truth, a designation of the ultimate Reality; also the practice of truthfulness, which is an aspect of moral discipline (*yama*)

Shakti ("power"): the ultimate Reality in its feminine aspect, or the power pole of the Divine

Shakti-pata ("descent of power"): the process of initiation, or spiritual baptism, by means of the benign transmission of an advanced or even enlightened adept (*siddha*), which awakens the *shakti* within a disciple, thereby initiating or enhancing the process of liberation

Shiva ("He who is benign"): the Divine; a deity that has served yogins as an archetypal model throughout the ages

Shuddhi ("purification/purity"): the state of purity; a synonym of *shodhana*

Siddha ("accomplished"): an adept, often of Tantra; if fully Self-realized, the designation *maha-siddha* or "great adept" is often used

Siddhi ("accomplishment/perfection"): spiritual perfection, the attainment of flawless identity with the ultimate Reality (*atman* or *brahman*); paranormal ability, of which the yoga tradition knows many kinds

Sutra ("thread"): an aphoristic statement; a work consisting of aphoristic statements, such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutra or Vasugupta's *Shiva-Sutra*

Svadyaya ("one's own going into"): study, an important aspect of the yogic path, listed among the practices of self-restraint (*niyama*) in >Patanjali's eightfold yoga; the recitation of *mantras* (see also *japa*)

Tantra ("loom"): a type of Sanskrit work containing Tantric teachings; the tradition of Tantrism, which focuses on the *shakti* side of spiritual life and which originated in the early post-Christian era and achieved its classical features around 1000 C.E.; Tantrism has a "right-hand" (*dakshina*) or conservative and a "left-hand" (*vama*) or unconventional/antinomian branch, with the latter utilizing, among other things, sexual rituals

Tapas ("glow/heat"): austerity, discipline; which is an ingredient of all yogic approaches, since they all involve self-transcendence

Tattva ("thatness"): a fact or reality; a particular category of existence such as the *ahamkara*, *buddhi*, *manas*; the ultimate Reality (see also *atman*, *brahman*)

Upanishad ("sitting near"): a type of scripture representing the concluding portion of the revealed literature of Hinduism, hence the designation Vedanta for the teachings of these sacred works