

# Glossary of terms used in Siddhartha

**Advaita:** non duality, identity of the spirit and matter - essentially are all 'one'. The philosophical belief that underlies the teaching in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads*. There is only one Consciousness, one Supreme Spirit, despite multiplicity; this is the 'ultimate truth' in the text known to Vasudeva and Buddha.

**Atman:** breath, principle of life, the individual soul; in the grammar of Sanskrit it is also used as the reflexive pronoun: oneself

**Bhagavad Gita:** A series of discourses between Lord Krishna and the warrior prince Arjuna from which flow the essential teachings of Indian philosophy, equivalent to the New Testament. It forms one episode in India's Great Epic, the *Mahabharata*, written later than the 'classical' *Upanishads*.

**Brahman:** from root 'bhri' to grow, expand, increase. Hence the 'swelling of soul' that leads to the meaning of the self-existent, impersonal Spirit, the Absolute, the Eternal, the Universal essence from which all created things emanate or with which they are identified and to which they return; not generally an object of worship, but rather of meditation and knowledge.

**Brahmin:** not to be confused with Brahman (see above). The priestly class, highest of the four divisions in ancient Hindu society; strictly speaking, one who knows and repeats Vedas, e.g. Siddhartha and his family.

**Buddha:** from the Sanskrit root 'budh' 'to wake up', hence, The Awakened or Enlightened One. Hence Buddha is not a proper name but a title.

**Chandogya Upanishad:** see under Upanishads.

**Cycle of rebirth:** reincarnation is an essential belief in the East, not only in India. When we become one without the Creator (the heaven of Christianity) the chains of rebirth are broken forever. For many, to achieve such a state (bliss) is the sole goal of human existence.

**Doppelganger:** literally 'double', a common device in modern novels in which the author and the main character are generally one and the same person; a favourite method of writing of Hesse's.

**Gotama:** Buddha's family name in the last of his earthly incarnations in the sixth century BC.

**Govinda:** literally 'cowman'; one who looks after cows; Govinda is one of the thousand names of Krishna; another Govinda was the teacher of Shankara, founder of the monastic

order in India; his commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads* are accepted masterpieces.

**Grenzsituation:** literally a 'borderline situation', 'crisis point', with necessitates and results in some action or change in events.

**Guru:** a Sanskrit term having multiple meanings, the basic one being 'heavy or weighty', also meant a spiritual parent or preceptor from whom a youth receives instruction, prayer, the 'sastras' (rules sacred teachings). Hence the modern usage.

**Karma:** literally 'action, works'. How is one to become free from the bonds of work and therefore from rebirth? This is a vast topic and linked to the belief in reincarnation; put simply, karma is one's individual fate (as the certain consequences of actions done in previous lives); what happens to us in this life is the direct result of actions performed in other incarnations. Hence the importance of 'action under knowledge', a key theme in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads*.

**Kamala:** literally 'a lotus flower', 'rose coloured or pale red', no doubt a reference to her lips. Her name is derived from Kama, the Hindu god of desire, sexual love, e.g. Kama Sutra.

**Kamaswami:** a name made from Kama (see above) and swami meaning 'master', owner, but more usually as a title to a monk or ascetic. The compound name in the context of the book 'a master of desire', the role of Kamaswami in this book.

**Krishna:** Krishna and Rama are the two most famous earthly incarnations of Vishnu. Many legends surround the figure of Krishna as a great hero and teacher. In more recent legends he is often represented as a young and amorous flute playing shepherd, the eighth son of Vasudeva.

**Lakshmi:** Goddess of beauty, prosperity and good luck. In later mythology often regarded as the wife of Vishnu or Narayana. Like Venus, she was born from the ocean's foam.

**Magadha:** In ancient India this was a kingdom near the present day state of Bihar.

**Mara:** from the root 'mri', meaning killing or destroying (cf. English 'murder'). Hence the Evil One, the Destroyer, who tempts men to indulge their passions and is seen as the great enemy of Buddha and of his religion.

**Maya:** a Sanskrit term denoting illusion, the physical world of appearances that surrounds us, blinding us to the reality behind it. Maya is that power in Nature that creates this illusion. The work of spiritual aspirants is to seek and experience the unity behind apparent multiplicity.

**Nirvana:** from the root 'nirva', to blow out, extinguish. Hence, when all desires and passions are extinguished the highest bliss or beatitude, reunion with the Supreme Spirit, may be experienced.

**Om:** pronounced (Aum); whole texts have been written on this sound. Simply; it appears in the Upanishads as a mystic monosyllable, the object of this profound religious meditation. Later it came to represent the Hindu triad, Vishnu, Siva, Brahma. Om often begins and ends prayers, chants and meditations.

**Prajapati:** from Sanskrit prefix 'pra' plus root 'jan', to be born, produce, create and 'pati', father lord, etc. Hence the meaning 'Father of creation, Protector of Life'.

**Rig Veda:** the oldest of the *Vedas* (see **Veda**).

**Sakyamuni:** compound of 'sakya', the Buddha's family name and 'muni', sage, seer, saint. In the book the term is rendered as 'the wise man from the race of Sakya'.

**Sansara:** a Sanskrit term meaning 'circuit of mundane existence', the existence within worldly illusion. What befalls Siddhartha when he leaves the Samanas and joins the world of *Kamaswami* and *Kamala* aptly describes, in this context, what Hesse intends to convey by using the term.

**Samana:** a variant of the Sanskrit 'sramana', to exert oneself, become weary, hence the meaning of performing 'acts of austerity', etc. Its opposite is 'ashram', a place to rest, retreat from the toils of this life and world.

**Satyam:** Sanskrit for 'true, real, pure', that which abides and exists beyond 'maya', illusion.

**Savathi:** at the time of Buddha the capital of Kosala, the present day province of Oudh.

**Self:** one's innermost being, the 'embodied or individual self', as opposed to the small self or ego. As such the embodied self is a minute part of God Himself: it is this truth which is realized in self-realization / enlightenment, in the experience of unity. This is what both Govinda and Siddhartha seek.

**Siddhartha:** In Sanskrit a compound of 'siddha', acquired, accomplished, fulfilled, gained and of 'artha', aim use, purpose, wealth, opulence; hence literally 'the wealth accrued to one who has fulfilled his aim'. The greatest wealth being self-realization / enlightenment.

**Sutra:** Sanskrit for 'thread', from 'siv', to sew; see French 'suture'. Also 'that which runs through and holds things together'. Hence aphorisms, manuals, treatises, e.g. Dharma-sutras.

**Sva-tantra:** Sanskrit, literally meaning 'self or own' - 'system or model, class', etc. hence that which has the system within itself. Compare with , 'the kingdom of Heaven is within us'.

**The Eight Fold Path:** Following on from the Buddha's famous Four noble Truths, a) that life is suffering b) suffering results in desires c) to stop suffering, stop desiring, d) to stop desiring there is the eight fold path. This path consists of 1) right views, 2) right livelihood, 3) right speech, 4) right action, 5) right livelihood, 6) right effort, 7) right awareness, 8) right concentration.

**The potter's Wheel:** A very common image in Sanskrit texts, despite the diverse forms created by the potter, the tool (the wheel) is the same. There is the tool then and the energy which is placed into it by the potter. Man (the tool) and God the potter, and life the various creations resulting.

**Urbmensch:** Literally 'over - or superman', both of which hardly do justice to the meaning implied by Nietzsche and therefore best left as it is. In context of Siddhartha, however, and as a guide, the sense is closer to our notion of 'hero'.

**Upanishads:** According to some 'the sitting down at the feet of another to listen to his words', acquiring profound secretive knowledge in this manner. But native authorities claim that the term means 'setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit'. In the Upanishads nothing is spoken of as a means to the attainment of the highest end of man (enlightenment) of the self and Brahman; texts such as Isha, Kena, Brihadaranyaka are well worth our study. The novel mentions others.

**Vasudeva:** Name of the father of Krishna; the root 'vas' means to dwell or to shine' hence we may interpret the name as 'one in whom all things dwell or 'who dwells/shines in all things'.

**Veda:** from the root 'vid', to know; that body of sacred knowledge which constitutes the basis of the first period of the Hindu religion. Major texts are the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas.

**Vedanta:** An amalgamation of Veda, to know, and 'anta' means end, hence Vedanta either means the 'complete knowledge of the Vedas', or that which comes as the end of such writings, which are the Upanishads. The chief doctrine of Vedanta, as expounded by Shankara, is 'Advaita', the view that nothing really exists but the One Self or Supreme Soul, Brahman.

**Vishnu:** The preserver as the second Godhead in the Hindu trinity. His name stems from the root 'vish', all pervader. In many places today he is the most popular deity in Hindu worship.

**Yoga-Veda:** This does not exist as such. Hesse probably extrapolated with the word Yoga-sutra. In the novel he employs the term, however, with its original meaning of 'knowledge about the practices of yoga'.

**Yoga:** In Sanskrit, the root verb 'yuj' meaning to join, yoke, unite, connect etc. has a plethora of uses. In Siddhartha it's concerned with the 'integration' which the practices of yoga bring about. These are the disciplines of the four paths of traditional yoga: bhakti (devotion), karma (action), jnana (knowledge), raja (meditation); strictly speaking, the purpose of all yogic practice is to concentrate the mind to obtain union with the Universal Spirit; hence those who think that yoga means 'asanas' (postures) and nothing else are mistaken. Yoga has eight limbs or aspects.