

Religious Education

Summary of main beliefs and practices and glossary of terms

To note: The main beliefs have been identified but there will always be interpretation from within the Faith Communities themselves.

This glossary of terms identifies key terms used in each religious tradition. Variations on spelling and meaning/s for those terms have been identified where known.

CHRSTIANITY – background

The foundational belief for Christians is in God, the Creator of the world, who is revealed to people through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christians believe in God as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For Christians, the Bible is the revelation of God's relationship to humanity. It shows the inability of people to keep this 'covenant' with God, despite being given laws, teachings and prophets. The result of their disobedience was 'sin' (wrong doing) which separated them from God. The New Testament shows how God came in the person of Jesus Christ, to restore this broken relationship. Jesus was rejected and killed. Christians believe that his suffering and death, as a willing sacrifice, followed by his resurrection from the dead, destroyed the hold of death on the human race and brought about the possibility of a restored relationship with God.

The New Testament is of particular importance to Christians. It consists of 27 books and includes descriptions of the life and teaching of Jesus and the writings of some of the first Christians. These books provide Christians with authoritative guidance for their lives. The lives of some Christians, since the events of the Bible, are also regarded by many as exemplary.

Historically, there have been a variety of interpretations of the core belief of the Christian faith, so that there are now many different denominations and traditions. They include the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches and Free Churches which include Afro-Caribbean, Baptist, Methodist, Quaker, the Salvation Army, and United Reformed. Christians come from a wide range of races, nationalities and cultures.

Worship and practice varies considerably among Christians. However, most Christians meet regularly with others, often in a church. Most churches include a service in which bread and wine are shared together. This has been an important tradition ever since Jesus ate with his disciples, saying of the bread, 'This is my body', and of the wine, 'This is my blood'. In such churches the practice of Baptism is the normal prelude to membership.

CHRISTIANITY GLOSSARY

Most of the terms given below will be familiar to many people. The historic languages of the Christian scriptures are Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The Old Testament was written largely in Hebrew, with some texts in Aramaic and Greek (Apocrypha). The whole of the Old Testament was translated into Greek, although many words and passages have their origin in Aramaic. Latin became increasingly the language of the Western Church from the 5th century AD when the Bible was translated into Latin.

Preferred form	Main variants	Explanation
Absolution		The pronouncement by a priest of the forgiveness of sins.
AD	Anno Domini	<i>In the Year of Our Lord</i> . The Christian calendar dates from the estimated date of the birth of Jesus Christ.
Advent		<i>Coming</i> . The period beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas (40 days before Christmas in the Eastern Orthodox tradition). A time of spiritual preparation for Christmas.
Altar	Communion Table Holy Table	Table used for Eucharist, Mass, Lord's Supper. Some denominations refer to it as Holy Table or Communion Table.
Anglican		Churches in full communion with the See of Canterbury. Their origins and traditions are linked to the Church of England, and are part of the Anglican Communion.
Apocalyptic		(i) Revelatory, of God's present purposes and of the end of the world. (ii) Used of a literary genre, eg the Book of Revelation.
Apostle		One who was sent out by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel.
Ascension		The event, 40 days after the Resurrection, when Jesus 'ascended into heaven' (see Luke 24 and Acts I).
Ash Wednesday		The first day of Lent. In some Churches, penitents receive the sign of the cross in ashes on their foreheads.
Atonement		Reconciliation between God and humanity; restoring a relationship broken by sin.
Baptism		Rite of initiation involving immersion in, or sprinkling or pouring of, water.
Baptist		(i) A member of the Baptist Church, which grew out of the Anabaptist movement during the 16 th century Reformation. (ii) A Christian who practices Believer's Baptism.
Baptistry		(i) Building or pool used for baptism, particularly by immersion. (ii) Part of a church, where baptism takes place.
BC	Before Christ	Period of history before the estimated birth of Jesus Christ.
Blessed Sacrament		Bread and wine which have been consecrated and set aside for future use (usually in the Roman Catholic Church).
Canon	Scripture	The accepted books of the bible. The list varies between denominations.

Catholic		(i) <i>Universal</i> (ii) Often used as an abbreviation for Roman Catholic.
Charismatic		A modern movement within the Church, emphasising spiritual gifts, such as healing or speaking with tongues.
Christ	Messiah	<i>The anointed one.</i> Messiah is used in the Jewish tradition to refer to the expected leader sent by God, who will bring salvation to God's people. Jesus' followers applied this title to him, and its Greek equivalent, Christ, is the source of the words Christian and Christianity.
Christmas		Festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ (25 December in most Churches).
Church		(i) The whole community of Christians. (ii) The building in which Christians worship. (iii) A particular denomination.
Confession		<i>Contrition; penance</i> (i) One of the seven sacraments observed by some Churches whose priest confidentially hears a person's confession. (ii) An admission, by a Christian, of wrongdoing. (iii) A particular official statement (or profession) of faith.
Congregationalist		Member of the Christian body which believes that each local church is independent and self-governing under the authority of Christ.
Creed		Summary statement of religious beliefs, often recited in worship, especially the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
Crucifixion		Roman method of executing criminals and traitors by fastening them to a cross until they died of asphyxiation, used in the case of Jesus Christ and many who opposed the Romans.
Easter		Central Christian festival which celebrates and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Ecumenism	Oikoumene	Movement within the Church towards co-operation and eventual unity.
Epistle	Letter	From the Greek word for letter. Several such letters or epistles, from Christian leaders to Christian Churches or individuals, are included in the New Testament.
Eucharist		<i>Thanksgiving.</i> A service celebrating the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, using elements of bread and wine (see Holy Communion).
Evangelical		Group, or church, placing particular emphasis on the Gospel and the scriptures

		as the sole authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
Font		Receptacle to hold water used in baptism.
Free Churches		Non-conformist denominations, free from state control (used of 20 Churches).
Good Friday		The Friday in Holy Week. Commemorates the day Jesus died on the cross.
Gospel	Evangel	(i) Good news (of salvation in Jesus Christ). (ii) An account of Jesus' life and work.
Grace		(i) The freely given and unmerited favour of God's love for humanity. (ii) Blessing. (iii) Prayer of thanks before or after meals.
Heaven		The place, or state, in which souls will be united with God after death.
Hell		The place, or state, in which souls will be separated from God after death.
Holy Communion		Central liturgical service observed by most Churches (see Eucharist, Mass, Lord's Supper, Liturgy). Recalls the last meal of Jesus, and celebrates his sacrificial and saving death.
Holy Spirit		The third person of the Holy Trinity. Active as divine presence and power in the world, and in dwelling in believers to make them like Christ and empower them to do God's will.
Holy Week		The week before Easter, when Christians recall the last week of Jesus' life on Earth.
Icon/Ikon		Painting or mosaic of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, a saint, or a Church feast. Used as an aid to devotion, usually in the Orthodox tradition.
Incarnation		The doctrine that God took human form in Jesus Christ. It is also the belief that God in Christ is active in the Church and in the world.
Jesus Christ		The central figure of Christian history and devotion. The second person of the Trinity.
Kyrie (Greek)		O Lord. Addressed to Jesus, as in 'Kyrie eleison' (<i>Lord have mercy</i>).
Lectern		Stand supporting the Bible, often in the shape of an eagle.
Lectionary		List of scriptural passages for systematic reading throughout the year.
Lent		Penitential season. The 40 days leading up to Easter.
Liturgy		(i) Service of worship according to a prescribed ritual such as Evensong or Eucharist. (ii) Term used in the Orthodox Church for the Eucharist.

Lord		Title used for Jesus to express his divine lordship over people, time and space.
Lord's Supper		Alternative term for Eucharist in some Churches (predominantly non-conformist).
Lutheran		A major Protestant Church that receives its name from the 16 th century German reformer, Martin Luther.
Mass		Term for the Eucharist, used by the Roman Catholic and other Churches.
Maundy Thursday		The Thursday in Holy Week. Commemorates the Last Supper.
Methodist		A Christian who belongs to the Methodist Church which came into existence through the work of John Wesley in the 18 th century.
Missal		Book containing words and ceremonial directions for saying Mass.
Mother of God		The title given to the Virgin Mary, mainly in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, to underline the Trinitarian belief that Jesus was truly God (in this context, God refers to God incarnate as seen in Jesus Christ).
New Testament		Collection of 27 books forming the second section of the Canon of Christian Scriptures.
Non-conformist		Protestant Christian bodies which became separated from the established Church of England in the 17 th Century.
Old Testament		That part of the Canon of Christian Scriptures which the Church shares with Judaism, comprising 39 books covering the Hebrew Canon, and in the case of certain denominations, some books of the Apocrypha.
Ordination		In episcopal Churches, the 'laying on of hands' on priests and deacons by a bishop. In non-episcopal Churches, the 'laying on of hands' on ministers by other representatives of the Church.
Orthodox		(i) The Eastern Orthodox Church consisting of national Churches (mainly Greek or Slav), including the ancient Eastern Patriarchates. They hold the common Orthodox faith, and are in communication with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. (ii) conforming to the creeds sanctioned by the ecumenical councils, eg, Nicaea, Chalcedon.
Palm Sunday		The Sunday before Easter. Commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem when he was acknowledged by crowds waving palm branches.
Paraclete	Comforter	Advocate. Term used for the Holy Spirit.

Parousia		Presence. The Second Coming or return of Jesus Christ.
Passion		The sufferings of Jesus Christ, especially in the time leading up to his crucifixion.
Patriarch		Title for principle Eastern Orthodox bishops. Also used for early Israelite leaders such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
Pentecost	Whitsun	The Greek name for the Jewish Festival of Weeks, or Shavuot, which comes seven weeks ('fifty days') after Passover. On the day of this feast, the followers of Jesus received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Pentecostalist		A Christian who belongs to a Church that emphasises certain gifts which were granted to the first believers on the Day of Pentecost (such as the power to heal the sick and speak in tongues).
Pope		The Bishop of Rome, head of the Roman Catholic Church.
Presbyterian		A member of a Church that is governed by elders or 'presbyters', the national Church of Scotland.
Protestant		That part of the Church which became distinct from the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches when their members professed (or 'protested' – hence Protestant) the centrality of the Bible and other beliefs. Members affirm that the Bible, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the ultimate authority for Christian teaching.
Pulpit		An elevated platform from which sermons are preached.
Purgatory		In some traditions, a condition or state in which good souls receive spiritual cleansing after death, in preparation for heaven.
Quaker		A member of the religious Society of Friends, established through the work of George Fox in the 17 th century.
Reconciliation	Confession	(i) Sacrament of the (Roman) Catholic Church, consisting of Contrition, Confession of sins, and Absolution. (ii) The human process of reconciling Christians with one another.
Redemption		Derived from the practice of paying the price of a slave's freedom, and so, the work of Jesus Christ in setting people free through his death.
Reformation		A 16 th century reform movement that led to the formation of Protestant Churches. It emphasised the need to recover the initial beliefs and practices of the church.

Resurrection		(i) The rising from the dead of Jesus Christ on the third day after the crucifixion. (ii) The rising from the dead of believers at the Last Day. (iii) The new, or risen, life of Christians.
Roman Catholic		That part of the Church owing loyalty to the Bishop of Rome, as distinct from Orthodox and Protestant Churches.
Sacrament		An outward sign of an inward blessing, as in baptism or the Eucharist.
Salvationist		A member of the Salvation Army founded by William and Catherine Booth in the 19 th century.
Sin		(i) Act of rebellion or disobedience against the known will of God. (ii) An assessment of the human condition as disordered and in need of transformation.
Synoptic		<i>Having a common viewpoint.</i> It is applied to the presentation of Jesus' life in the first three gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke in contrast with that given in the Gospel of John.
Tabernacle		(i) A receptacle for the Blessed Sacrament, not immediately consumed but set aside or 'reserved' (mainly in Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches). The presence of the consecrated elements is usually signalled by a continuously burning light. (ii) Term used by some denominations of their building.
Transubstantiation		Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the Mass, defined at the Lateran Council of 1215, and confirmed at the Council of Trent in 1551. This states that in the Eucharist, at the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and wine becomes the substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and that he is thus present on the altar.
Trinity		Three persons in one God, doctrine of the threefold nature of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Unction	Sacrament of the Sick	The anointing with oil of a sick or dying person.
United Reformed Church		A Church formed by the union of English Congregationalists with the Presbyterian Church of England, and subsequently the Reformed Association of the Churches of Christ.
Vatican		The residence of the Pope in Rome, and the administrative centre of the Roman Catholic Church. The chief building of the Vatican is St Peter's Basilica, built on the traditional site of St Peter's tomb.

Virgin Birth		The doctrine of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ by the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit and without the agency of a human father.
--------------	--	---

BUDDHISM - background

Buddhism is a path to liberation from the bondage of greed, anger and delusion, the cessation of which is known as Nirvana. The path consists of morality in the form of the precepts that guide the Buddhist towards compassion for all living things, and meditation that leads one to recognise the causes of suffering and to abandon them. This in turn leads to wisdom, which is the knowledge of things as they truly are.

The founder of Buddhism was Siddhattha Gotama, an Indian prince of the 6th Century BCE, who left his life of luxury when faced with the suffering that affects us all. He set out to find its cause and its cure. In stark contrast to his earlier luxurious life, he adopted severe ascetic practices that, in the end, showed him that the true way lies in being compassionate to oneself without being indulgent – the Middle Way. He finally realised Enlightenment, or Nirvana, and spent the remaining 40 years of his life teaching others.

Siddhattha Gotama is the supreme example for Buddhists, but he is not regarded as a god. They believe that all beings have the potential to realise Enlightenment as he did. He emphasised that his teaching, summarised as The Four Noble Truths, should not be accepted blindly and that everyone must tread the path for themselves.

All Buddhists take refuge in the Three Treasures: the Buddha as teacher and embodiment of the potential found within us all, the Dhamma (the Buddha's teaching), and the Sangha (the Buddhist community).

As Buddhism spread throughout the Far East and the teachings developed, many different traditions and schools evolved. Buddhism became a major influence in India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Thailand, Tibet, Burma and many other countries. Buddhism is now growing rapidly in western countries. There are presently more than 250 Buddhist organisations including monasteries and temples operating in the United Kingdom. These embrace all of the major traditions of Buddhism.

BUDDHISM GLOSSARY

As Buddhism spread throughout the East, it came to be expressed in many different languages. Terms in the Sanskrit and Pali of India are in most common use in the West, although Japanese and Tibetan terms also occur frequently. Pali is the language of the texts of the Theravada school, whilst Sanskrit is used for general Mahayana. Zen Buddhism uses terms expressed in Japanese, and Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan. There is no preferred form. For convenience, Pali terms appear in bold except in cases where the Sanskrit or other alternative is the more usual form.

Pali	Sanskrit	Explanation
Arahat, Arahant	Arhat	<i>Enlightened disciple.</i> The fourth and highest stage of Realisation recognised by the Theravada tradition. One whose mind is free from all greed, hatred and ignorance.
Atta	Atman	<i>Self; soul.</i>
Bhikkhu	Bhikshu	Fully ordained Buddhist monk.
Bhikkhuni	Bhikshuni	Fully ordained Buddhist nun.
Bodhi Tree		The tree (<i>ficus religiosa</i>) under which the Buddha realised Enlightenment. It is known as the Tree of Wisdom.

Bodhisatta		<i>A Wisdom Being.</i> One intent on becoming, or destined to become, a Buddha. Gotama, before his Enlightenment as the historical Buddha.
Brahma Viharas		The four sublime states: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and evenness of mind.
Buddha	Buddha	Awakened or Enlightened One.
Dalai Lama (Tibetan)		<i>Great Ocean.</i> Spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people.
Dhamma	Dharma	<i>Universal law; ultimate truth.</i> The teachings of the Buddha. A key Buddhist term.
Dhammapada	Dharmapada	Famous scripture of 423 verses.
Dukkha	Duhka	<i>Suffering; ill; satisfactoriness; imperfection.</i> The nature of existence according to the first Noble Truth.
Gompa (Tibetan)		Monastery, place of meditation.
Gotama	Gautama	Family name of the Buddha.
Kamma	Karma	<i>Action.</i> Intentional actions that affect one's circumstances in this and future lives. The Buddha's insistence that the effect depends on volition marks the Buddhist treatment of kamma as different from the Hindu understanding of karma.
Karuna	Karuna	<i>Compassion.</i>
Kesa (Japanese)		The robe of a Buddhist monk, nun, or priest.
Khandha	Skandha	<i>Heap; aggregate.</i> The Five Khandas together make up the 'person' (form, feeling, perception, mental information and consciousness).
Lama (Tibetan)		<i>Teacher, or one who is revered.</i>

	Lotus Sutra	A scripture of major importance to various schools within the Mahayana tradition. It describes the virtues of the Bodhisattva, and emphasises that all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature and can attain Enlightenment (Nirvana).
Magga	Marga	<i>Path,</i> leading to cessation of suffering. The fourth Noble Truth.
Mala		Also, Juzu (Japanese). String of 108 beads used in Buddhist practice (like a rosary).
Metta	Maitri	<i>Loving kindness.</i> A pure love which is neither grasping nor possessive.
Metta Sutta		Buddhist scripture which describes the nature of loving kindness.
Metteya	Maitreya	One who has the nature of loving kindness. Name of the future Buddha.
Nibbana	Nirvana	<i>Blowing out</i> of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance, and the state of secure perfect peace that follows. A key Buddhist term.

Nirodha	Nirodha	<i>Cessation</i> (of suffering). <i>The third Noble Truth.</i>
Parinibbana	Parinirvana	Final and complete nirvana reached at the passing away of a Buddha.
Patimokkha	Pratimoksha	The training rules of a monk or nun – 227 in the case of a Theravada monk.
Pitaka		<i>Basket.</i> Collection of scriptures (see Tipitaka).
Rupa	Rupa	<i>Form.</i> Used of an image of the Buddha; also, the first of the Five Khandas.
Samatha	Samatha	<i>A state of concentrated calmness; meditation</i> (see Vipassana).
Samsara	Samsara	<i>Everyday life.</i> The continual round of birth, sickness, old age and death which can be transcended by following the Eightfold Path and Buddhist teaching.
Samudaya	Samudaya	<i>Arising; origin</i> (of suffering). The second Noble Truth.
Sangha	Sangha	<i>Community; assembly.</i> Often used for the order of bhikkhus and bhikkunis in Theravadin countries. In the Mahayana countries, the Sangha includes lay devotees and priests, eg in Japan.
Sankhara	Samskara	<i>Mental/karmic formation.</i> The fourth of the five Khandas.
Sanna	Samjna	<i>Perception.</i> Third of the five Khandas.
Siddattha	Siddhartha	<i>Wish-fulfilled.</i> The personal name of the historical Buddha.
Sutta	Sutra	<i>Text.</i> The word of the Buddha.
Sutta Pitaka	Sutra Pitaka	The second of the three collections – principally of teachings – that comprise the canon of basic scripture.
Tanha	Trishna	<i>Thirst; craving; desire</i> (rooted in ignorance). Desire as the cause of suffering. The second Noble Truth.
Thupa/Cetiya	Stupa	<i>Reliquary</i> (including pagodas).
Tipitaka	Tripitaka	<i>Three baskets.</i> A threefold collection of texts (Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidhamma).
Tiratana	Triratna	<i>The triple refuge.</i> Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Another way of referring to the three jewels.
	Vajrayana	<i>Thunderbolt; Diamond Way.</i> Teachings promulgated later, mainly in India and Tibet. Another term for esoteric Buddhism.
Vedana		<i>Feeling.</i> The second of the Five Khandas.
Vihara		<i>Dwelling place; monastery.</i>
Vinnana	Vijnana	<i>Consciousness.</i> The fifth of the Five Khandas.
Wesak or Vesak (Sinhalese)	Wesak	Buddha Day. Name of a festival and a month. On the full moon of Wesak (in May or June), the birth, Enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha took place, although some schools celebrate only the birth at this time, eg Zen.

Zen (Japanese)		<i>Meditation.</i> Derived from the Sanskrit 'dhyana'. A school of Mahayana Buddhism that developed in China and Japan
----------------	--	--

HINDUISM - background

'Hinduism' is a Western term that refers to the diverse religious and cultural traditions stemming from the Vedas, the ancient Sanskrit writings of India. Followers themselves often prefer the term 'Sanatan Dharma', thus indicating belief in universal and everlasting truths. The tradition, therefore, has no clearly definable beginning, although scholars date it back further than 4,000 years. Hinduism, we can state with certainty, has no single founder or single creed.

Nevertheless, there are a number of beliefs and concepts which are widely accepted. Practically all Hindus believe in the doctrine of reincarnation, whereby the eternal soul (atman) transmigrates through different species, from one body to another. This operates according to the law of action and reaction, commonly called 'the law of Karma'. The aim of human life, for most Hindus, is liberation from the cycle of birth and death through union with the Supreme (Brahman).

Hindus believe that God is one, depicted either as the all-pervading world soul or as the Supreme Person. The Supreme, however conceived, is worshipped in (or through) a variety of forms, but principally three: Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti (the goddess). Especially popular amongst British Hindus today are Rama and Krishna, two of the incarnations (avatars) of Vishnu.

Worship regularly takes place in the home as well as in the Mandir (temple). Families usually have a shrine devoted to particular deities in a room set aside for puja. Strong family structures are valued, although a feature of Hinduism is its emphasis on celibacy and asceticism, especially in later life. The system of four stages of life, together with four social classes by occupation, is called Varnashrama Dharma – the basis of the Hindu social system.

In the United Kingdom today there are at least 400,000 Hindus, originating mainly from Gujarat and Punjab and often coming via East Africa. The many Mandirs throughout the country serve as social and community centres, as well as places of worship. Although social and religious trends are changing with successive generations, the Hindu community is preserving its ancient heritage while applying its values to life in modern Britain.

HINDUISM GLOSSARY

The main references are to Sanskrit terminology, although variants are found and used in other Indian languages. Lakshmi, Laksmi, Vishnu or Vis Visnu type variants are not always included because of their frequency. Many of these terms will also be found in books on Buddhism and Sikhism, but with somewhat different meanings.

Proper names and place names are only included in this if variant forms are commonly used.

Preferred Form	Main Variants	Explanation
Ahimsa	Ahinsa	<i>Not killing.</i> Non-violence; respect for life.
Artha		Development. The second aim of life.
Arti	Arati	Welcoming ceremony in which auspicious articles such as incense and lamps are offered to the deity or to saintly people.
Aryan		<i>Noble.</i> Refers to those who know the spiritual values of life. Scholars say it refers

		to the original inhabitants of the Sindhu region in India.
Ashram	Asram	A place set up for spiritual development
Aum	Om	The Sacred symbol and sound representing the ultimate; the most sacred of Hindu words.
Avatar	Avatara Avtara	<i>One who descends.</i> Refers to the descent of a deity, most commonly Vishnu. Sometimes it is translated as incarnation which, although inaccurate, may be the best English word available.
Ayodhya		Birthplace of Rama.
Bhagavad Gita		<i>The Song of the Lord.</i> Spoken by Krishna, this is the most important scripture for most Hindus. Tradition dates it back to 3,000 years BCE, though most scholars attribute it to the first millennium BCE. Considered an Upanishad.
Bhajan	Bjahanana	Devotional hymn or song.
Brahama		A Hindu deity, considered one of the Trimurti, and in charge of creative power; not to be confused with Brahman or Brahmin.
Brahmacharya	Brahmacarya Brahma ch@ari Brahma ch@arin	The first ashrama or stage of life.
Brahman		The ultimate reality, or the all-pervading reality, that from which everything emanates, in which it rests and into which it is ultimately dissolved.
Dharma		<i>Religion or religious duty</i> is the usual translation into English, but literally it means <i>the intrinsic quality of the self or that which sustains one's existence.</i>

Dhoti		A garment made of natural fibre (usually cotton or silk), worn by males, which covers the lower body and legs.
Dhyana		Meditation.
Diwali	Diwali, Dipavali, Deepavali	Festival of lights at the end of one year and beginning of the new year, according to one Hindu calendar.
Durga		Female deity. A form of the goddess Parvati, wife of Shiva.
Ganesha	Ganesh Ganupati Ganapata	A Hindu deity portrayed with an elephant's head – a sign of strength. The deity who removes obstacles.
Ganga		<i>The Ganges.</i> Most famous of all sacred rivers of India.
Guru		Spiritual teacher, preceptor or enlightener.
Hanuman		The monkey warrior who faithfully served Rama and Sita. Also called Pavansuta (<i>son of the wind God</i>).
Holi		The festival of colours, celebrated in Spring.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)		A religious group of the Vaishnava tradition.
Kali	Kaali	Name given to that power of God which delivers justice – often represented by the Goddess Kali (a form of Durga).
Kama		The third of the four aims of life – regulated sense of enjoyment.
Karma		<i>Action</i> . Used of work to refer to the law of cause and effect.
Karma-yoga		The path of self-realisation through dedicating the fruits of one's work to God.
Kirtan		Songs of praise, corporate devotional singing, usually accompanied by musical instruments.
Krishna		Usually considered an avatar of Vishnu. One of the most popular of all Hindu deities in contemporary Britain. His teachings are found in the Bhagavad Gita.
Mahabharata		The Hindu epic that relates to the story of the five Pandava princes. It includes the Bhagavad Gita.
Mala	Maala	Circle of stringed beads of wood or wool used in meditation.
Mandala	Mandala	A circle, area or community/group.
Mandir		<i>Temple</i> .
Mantra		That which delivers the mind. Refers to a short sacred text or prayer, often recited repetitiously.
Manusmriti		The laws of Manu. An ancient and important text on Dharma, including personal and social laws.
Mata		<i>Mother</i> . Often associated with Hindu goddesses who represent shakti (power).
Nirvana		The cessation of material existence.
Parvata		The consort of Shiva, also known by other names such as Durga, Devi, etc.
Prashad	Prasad Prasada Prashada	Sacred or sanctified food.
Puja	Pooja	<i>Worship</i> . General term referring to a variety of practices in the home or Mandir.
Purana		<i>Ancient</i> . Part of the Smriti scriptures. Contains many of the well-known stories of Hinduism.
Rakhi	Raakhi	A bracelet, usually made out of silk or cotton, tied to give protection and to strengthen the bond of mutual love.
Raksha Bandhan		The festival when women tie a decorative bracelet on their brothers' wrists.
Rama		The incarnation of the Lord, and hero of the Ramayana (avoid using the variant 'Ram' for obvious reasons).

Ramayana	Ramayan	The Hindu epic that relates the story of Rama and Sita, composed by the sage Valmiki thousands of years ago.
Ramnavami	Ramnavmi	The birthday festival of Rama.
Rig Veda	Rg or Rc Veda	The first scripture of Hinduism, containing spiritual and scientific knowledge.
Sadhu	Saddhu	Holy man, ascetic.
Sama Veda		The Veda changing; material mainly from the Rig Veda, arranged for ritual chanting in worship.
Samsara	Sansara	The world – the place where transmigration (the soul's passage through a series of lives in different species) occurs.
Samskar	Sanskar, Samskara	Sacraments designed to initiate a new stage of life. There is usually a total of sixteen such rites of passage (though many schools of thought do not practise them all).
Sanskrit		Sacred language of the Hindu scriptures.
Seva	Sewa	Service, either to the divine or to humanity.
Shaivism	Saivism	The religion of Hindus who are devotees of Shiva.
Shiva	Siva (many variants, even Civa, have been found)	A Hindu god. The name means <i>kindly</i> or <i>auspicious</i> .
Shivaratri	Sivaratri	The annual festival celebrated in February/March in honour of Shiva. Also called Mahashivaratri.
Shri	Sri	<i>Illustrious</i> . Used as a title of respect, eg Shri Krishna. Also, a respectful title for men. The feminine form of Shrimati (Mrs).
Sita	Seeta	The divine consort of Rama.
Sutra	Sutta	Short sayings or verses relating to various rituals, or encapsulating profound philosophical meaning.

Swami	Svami	<i>Controller</i> . Sometimes, more specifically, Goswami (one who can control his/her senses). An honorific title applied to a religious teacher or holy person, particularly the sannyasi.
Swastika	Svastika	From the Sanskrit for well-being; a mark of good fortune. The four arms signify the four directions (space), the four Vedas (knowledge), and the four stages (time) in the life cycle. Not to be confused with the Nazi symbol.
Vaishnavism	Vaisnavism	The religion of Hindus who are devotees of the god Vishnu.
Varanasi	Banares, Benares, Kashi, Kasi	City on the river Ganges, sacred to Shiva. It is one of the holiest pilgrimage sites and also an ancient centre of learning.
Varna		<i>Colour</i> . The four principal divisions of Hindu society. It is important to note that the word 'caste' refers strictly to sub-divisions within each varna, and not to

		varnas themselves.
Varnashrama	Varnasrama Dharma	The system whereby society is divided into four varnas (divisions) and life into four ashramas (stages).
Varsha Pratipada		The day of Creation, celebrated as New Year's Day by many Hindus.
Veda		Knowledge. Specifically refers to the four Vedas, though any teaching which is consistent with the conclusions of these scriptures is also accepted as Vedic.
Vishnu	Visnu	A Hindu god. With Brahma and Shiva forms the Trimurti.
Yatra	Jatra	Pilgrimage. Usually to important sacred places in India.
Yoga		Communion; union of the soul with the Supreme, or a process which promotes that relationship. The English word 'yoke's derived from yoga.

ISLAM - background

Islam is a comprehensive way of life, and is based on the Oneness of Allah and the role and status of the Prophet Muhammad* as an example to humankind. This is expressed in the declaration of faith 'There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'. A person becomes a Muslim not by race, nationality or culture, but by professing belief in that statement and by reflecting it in the practice of the Islamic way of life.

Muslims believe that Allah sent many Messengers and Prophets to whom He revealed His divine guidance. These included Ibrahim – Abraham (peace be upon him), Musa – Moses (peace be upon him), Isa – Jesus (peace be upon him) and the final prophet Muhammad*, who was born in Makka, Arabia in 570 CE. When he was 49 years old, Muhammad* began receiving revelations through the angel Jibra'il – Gabriel. These continued over the next 23 years of his life and were recited and proclaimed by him to his companions.

These revelations were learned by heart and dictated to scribes. The completed revelation, the Qur'an, gives detailed guidance on how humankind should behave, in terms of moral conduct and family relationships as well as the treatment of animals and the natural world. Whatever the language of the Muslim, the Qur'an is recited in the Arabic language of its revelation.

The Islamic way of life encompasses all aspects of a person's daily existence. Islam can best be described as a state of peace attained through willing obedience to Allah's divine guidance. Muslims strive to achieve this by following all the Qur'anic injunctions regarding behaviour and worship, for example the five daily times of salah (prayer), fasting during Ramadan, acts of charity and constant consciousness of their relationship with Allah.

An important part of Muslim community life for men and women in Europe is the Mosque. Friday is the day for congregational worship, but many Muslims attend the Mosque daily.

- After the name of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims say or write, 'Salla'llahu alaihi wa sallam' (peace and blessings of Allah upon him).

ISLAM GLOSSARY

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic; therefore, Arabic is the language of Islam, Islamic worship, theology, ethics and jurisprudence. Islam is inextricably linked with the Arabic language despite the variety of languages spoken by the believers.

For British teachers and pupils who have not encountered Islamic terms, this transliteration is a simplified version of that used by contemporary scholars. An apostrophe is used to indicate a pause. The reader will note that the words 'salah' and 'zaka'h' end in 'h' when they appear alone. When part of a phrase, these words are written with a 't' at the end, e.g. Salat-ul-Zuhr, Zakat-ul-Fitre, as a guide to pronunciation.

NB: pbuh = peace be upon him. The Arabic words are used by Muslims every time the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned. Similar respect is accorded to the other Prophets.

Preferred Form	Main Variants	Explanation
Abd		<i>Servant</i> . As in Abdullah, servant of Allah.
Abu Bakr		The first Khalifah, successor to the leadership of the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>).
Adam		Adam (peace be upon him). The first man, and first Prophet of Allah.
Adhan		Call to prayer. From the same root, Mu'adhin (one who makes the call to prayer).
Aishah		One of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>), and daughter of Abu Bakr (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>).
Akhirah		Everlasting life after death – the hereafter.
Akhlaq		Conduct, character, attitudes and ethics.
al-Amin		<i>The Trustworthy</i> . The name by which Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) was generally known, even before the revelation of Islam.
al-Aqsa		Masjid-ul-Aqsa (<i>The Farthest Mosque</i>) in Jerusalem, often known as the Dome of the Rock.
al-Fatihah		<i>The Opener</i> . Surah 1 of the Qur'an. Recited at least 17 times daily during the five times of salah. Also known as 'The Essence' of the Qur'an.
al-hamdu-li-Llah		<i>All praise belongs to Allah</i> . Frequently used as an expression of thanks to Allah.
al-Kafi		The title of the books of Hadith compiled by Muhammad ibn-Yaqub Koleini, a Shi'ah scholar.
al-Khulafa-ur-Rashidun		<i>The Rightly Guided Khalifahs</i> . The first four successors to the leadership role of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>). They were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (Radhi-

		Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>).
al-Madinah		<i>Madinatu'n-Nabi (The City of the Prophet)</i> . The name given to Yathrib after the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) migrated there in 622 CE and founded the first Islamic state.
Ali		Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>); husband of Fatimah Zahrah; father of Hassan, Hussein, and Zainab; the fourth of 'al-Khulafa ur-Rashidun' according to Sunnis, and the first successor accepted by Shi'ah Islam (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>).

Allah		The Islamic name for God in the Arabic language. Used in preference to the word God, this Arabic term is singular, has no plural, nor is it associated with masculine, feminine or neuter characteristics.
Allahu-Akbar		<i>Allah is most great.</i>
Angels		Beings created by Allah from light. They have no free will and are completely obedient to Allah.
Ansar		<i>Supporters.</i> The Muslims of al-Madinah, who welcomed, helped and supported the Muslims who migrated from Makkah.
Arafat		A plain, a few kilometres from Makkah, where pilgrims gather to worship, pray and ask for forgiveness. This takes place on the ninth day of the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah, the day before Id-ul-Adha.
Asr (Salat-ul-Asr)		Mid-afternoon salah which may be performed from late afternoon until a short while before sunset.
As-Salamu-Alaykum		<i>Peace be upon you.</i> An Islamic greeting.
Ayah (sing)		A unit within a Surah of the Qur'an.
Barakah		Blessings.
Bilal		The first Mu-adhin of Islam (see Adhan), a companion of Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>), formerly an Abyssinian slave (Radhi-Allahu-anhu - <i>may Allah be pleased with him</i>).
Bismillah		<i>In the name of Allah.</i>
Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim		<i>In the name of Allah – All gracious, All Merciful.</i> The preface to all Surahs of the Qur'an except the ninth one. It is usually said by Muslims before eating or beginning any action.
Dur-al-Islam		<i>House or abode of Islam.</i> Sometimes used to refer to lands ruled by Islamic Shari'ah.
Da'wah		<i>Call.</i> Inviting people to Islam, whether by literal invitation and preaching, or by the example of good actions.

Dawud		David (peace be upon him). A Prophet of Allah to whom the Zabur (the Book of Psalms) was given.
Dhimmi		A non-Muslim living freely under the protection of an Islamic state.
Dhul-Hijjah		The month of the Hajj, last month of the Islamic year.
Din		Way of life, religion together with its practices.
Din-ul-Fitrah		A description of Islam as the natural way of life.
Du'a		Varying forms of personal prayer and supplication.

Fajr (Salat-ul-Fajr)		Dawn saluh which may be performed from dawn until just before sunrise.
Fard		Obligatory duty according to divine law, eg offering salah five times a day.
Fatihah		See al-Fatihah.
Fatimah (al-Zahrah)		Daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>); wife of Ali, mother of Hassan, Hussein and Zainab (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>).
Fatwa		The legal guidance of a pious, just, knowledgeable Muslim scholar and jurist, based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and Islamic Shari'ah.
Fiqh		<i>Understanding</i> . Islamic jurisprudence.
Ghushl		Greater ablution. Formal washing of the whole body prior to worship (see Wudu).
Hadith		Saying; report; account. The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>), as recounted by his household, progeny and companions. These are a major source of Islamic law. Some Hadith are referred to as Hadith Qudsi (<i>sacred Hadith</i>) having been divinely communicated to the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>).
Hafiz		Someone who knows the whole Qur'an by heart.
Hajar	Hagar	Wife of the Prophet Ibrahim, and mother of the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon them).
Hajj		Annual pilgrimage to Makkah, which each Muslim must undertake at least once in a lifetime if he or she has the health and wealth. A Muslim male who has completed Hajj is called Hajji, and a female, Hajjah.
Haram		Anything unlawful or not permitted.
Haram Sharif		The grand mosque in Makkah, which encompasses the Ka'bah, the hills of Safa and Marwah and the well of Zamzam.
Hijab		Veil. Often used to describe the headscarf or modest dress worn by women, who are required to cover

		everything except face and hands in the sight of anyone other than immediate family.
Hijrah		<i>Departure; exit; emigration</i> . The emigration of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. The Islamic calendar commences from this event.
Hira		The name of a place near Makkah, where the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) went for solitude and worship. It was there that he received the first revelation of the Qur'an.
Ibadah		All acts of worship. Any permissible action

		performed with the intention to obey Allah.
Iblis		The jinn who defied Allah by refusing to bow to Adam (peace be upon him), and later became the tempter of all human beings (see Shaytan).
Ibrahim	Abraham (peace be upon him)'	A Prophet of Allah to whom the 'scrolls' were given.
Id		<i>Recurring happiness.</i> A religious holiday; a feast for thanking Allah and celebrating a happy occasion.
Id Mubarak		Id blessings! Greeting exchanged during Islamic celebrations.
Id-ul-Adha	Id-ul-Kabir (<i>the Greater Id</i>) Qurban Bayram (Turkish) – <i>feast of sacrifice</i>	Celebration of the sacrifice, commemorating the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il for Allah (peace be upon them).
Id-ul-Fitr	Id-ul-Sahhir (<i>the Lesser Id</i>) Sheker Bayram (Turkish) – <i>sugar feast</i>	Celebration of breaking the fast on the day after Ramadan ends, which is also the first day of Shawal, the tenth Islamic month.
Ihram		The state or condition entered into to perform either Hajj or Umrah. During this period, many normally permitted actions are placed out of bounds to Muslims. Also, the name of the two plain white unsewn cloths worn by male pilgrims to indicate the brotherhood, equality and purity of the pilgrim. For women, the dress of Ihram consists of their normal modest clothing.
Ijma		General consensus of scholars, expressed or tacit, on matters of law and practice.
Imam		<i>Leader.</i> A person who leads the communal prayer, or a founder of an Islamic school of jurisprudence. In Shi'ah, Imam is also the title of Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhu – <i>may Allah be pleased with him</i>) and his successors.
Imamah		Office and function of an Imam. Religious authority in Shi'ah Islam; successor to the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) as a leader of the Muslim community.
Iman		Faith.
Injil		<i>Gospel.</i> A book given to Prophet Isa (peace be upon him).
Iqamah		Call to stand up for Salah.
Isa		Jesus. A Prophet of Allah, born of the virgin Mary (peace be upon them).
Isha (Salut-ul-Isha)		Evening salah which may be performed from just over an hour after sunset, until midnight.
Islam		Peace attained through willing obedience to Allah's divine guidance.

Isma'il	Ishmael	A Prophet of Allah. Son of the Prophet Ibrahim and Hajar (peace be upon them).
Isnad		Chain of transmission of each Hadith.
Jibril	Gabriel	The angel who delivered Allah's messages to His Prophets.
Jihad		Personal individual struggle against evil in the way of Allah. It can also be collective defence of the Muslim community.
Jumu'ah (Salat-ul-Jumu'ah)		The weekly communal salah, and attendance at the khutbah performed shortly after midday on Fridays.
Ka'bah		A cube-shaped structure in the centre of the grand mosque in Makkah. The first house built for the worship of the One True God.
Khadijah		First wife of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>), Mother of Fatiman Zahrah (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>).
Khalifah		Successor; inheritor; custodian; vice-regent (see al-Khulafa-ur-Rashidun).
Khalifah		The institution of the Khalifah.
Khums		Contribution (additional to zakah) of one fifth of surplus annual income paid by Shi'ah Muslims. Sunni Muslims only apply Khums to booty.
Khutbah		Speech. Talk delivered on special occasions such as the jum'uah and Id prayers.
Laylat-ul-Qadr		The Night of Power, when the first revelation of the Qur'an was made to Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>). It is believed to be one of the last ten nights of Ramadan.
Madinah		See al-Madinah.
Maghrib (Salat-ul-Maghrib)		Sunset salah which is performed after sunset until daylight ends.
Mahdi, al-Muntazar		The (rightly) guided one who is awaited and will appear towards the end of time to lead the Ummah and restore justice on Earth. The one who is promised in the Judaic, Christian and Islamic traditions.
Makkah	Mecca	City where the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) was born, and where the Ka'bah is located.
Maryam	Mary	The virgin mother of the Prophet Isa (peace be upon them).
Masjid		<i>Place of prostration.</i> Mosque.
Mihrab		Niche or alcove in a mosque wall, indicating the Qiblah – the direction of Makkah towards which all Muslims face to perform salah.
Mina		Place near Makkah, where pilgrims stay on the 10 th , 11 th and 12 th of Dhul-Hijjah and perform some of the activities of the Hajj.

Minbar		Rostrum; platform; dais. The stand from which the Imam delivers the khutbah or speech in the mosque or praying ground.
Miqat		<i>Place appointed</i> , at which pilgrims enter into the state of ihram.
Mi'raj		The ascent through the heavens of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>).
Mu'adhin		Caller to prayer (see Adhan). Known in English as 'muezzin'.
Muhammad		<i>Praised</i> . Name of the final Prophet (<i>pbuh</i>).
Muharram		First month in the Islamic calendar, which is calculated from the time the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) migrated to Yathrib (Madinah).
Musa	Moses (peace be upon him)	A Prophet of Allah to whom the Tawrah (Torah) was given.
Mumin		Faithful. A believer, a practicing Muslim who wholeheartedly yields to Allah's guiding wisdom and is thus in harmony with His will and at peace with himself and fellow creatures.
Muslim		One who claims to have accepted Islam by professing the Shahadah.
Muzdalifah		Place where pilgrims on Hajj stop for a time during the night of the day they spend at Arafat.
Nabi		Prophet of Allah.
Niyyah		Intention. A legally required statement of intent, made prior to all acts of devotion such as salah, Hajj or sawm.
Qadar		Allah's complete and final control over the fulfillment of events or destiny.
Qiblah		Direction which Muslims face when performing salah – towards the Ka'bah (see Mihrab).
Qur'an	Koran	That which is read or recited. The Divine Book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>). Allah's final revelation to humankind.
Rak'ah		A unit of salah, made up of recitation, standing, bowing and two prostrations.
Ramadam		The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, during which fasting is required from just before dawn until sunset, as ordered by Allah in the Qur'an.
Rasul		Messenger of Allah.
Sa'y		Walking and hastening between Safa and Marwah, as part of the Hajj, in remembrance of Hajar's search for water for her son Ismai'il (peace be upon them).
Sadaqah		Voluntary payment or good action for charitable purposes.
Safa & Marwah		Two hills in Makkah, near the Ka'bah, now included within the grand mosque (see Sa'y).

Sahih al-Bukhari		The title of the books of Hadith compiled by Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, a Sunni scholar. The collection is described as Sahih (authentic).
Sahih Mulsim		The title of the books of Hadith compiled by Abul Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, a Sunni scholar. The collection is described as Sahih (authentic).
Salah		Prescribed communication with, and worship of, Allah, performed under specific conditions, in the manner taught by the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>), and recited in the Arabic language. The five daily times of salah are fixed by Allah.
Sawm		Fasting from just before dawn until sunset. Abstinence is required from all food and drink (including water) as well as smoking and conjugal relations.
Shahadah		Declaration of faith, which consists of the statement "here is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"
Shari'ah		Islamic law based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah.
Shaytan		<i>Rebellious; proud.</i> The devil (see Iblis).
Shi'ah		<i>Followers.</i> Muslims who believe in the Imamah, successorship of Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhu – <i>may Allah be pleased with him</i>) after the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>) and 11 of his most pious, knowledgeable descendants.
Shirk		Association. <i>Regarding anything as being equal or partner to Allah. Shirk is forbidden in Islam.</i>
Shura		Consultation of the people in the management of religious and worldly affairs. A duty prescribed in the Qur'an to leaders at all levels, from family to government.
Sirah		Biographical writings about the conduct and example of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>).
Subhah		String of beads used to count recitations in worship.
Sunnah		Model practices, customs and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>). This is found in both Hadith and Sirah.
Sunni		Muslims who believe in the successorship of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – <i>may Allah be pleased with them</i>) after the Prophet Muhammad (<i>pbuh</i>).
Surah		Division of the Qur'an (114 in all).
Takbir		Saying 'AllahuAkbar! Recited during salah, Id and other celebratory occasions.
Tawaf		Walking seven times around the Ka'bah in worship of Allah. Also, a part of Hajj and

		Umrah.
Tawhid		Belief in the Oneness of Allah – absolute monotheism as practiced in Islam.
Tawrah	The Torah	The book given to the Prophet Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him).
Ulama		Scholars of Islamic law and jurisprudence (sing Alim).
Umar ibn ul-Khattab		Second Khalifah of Islam.
Ummah		Community. World-wide community of Muslims; the nation of Islam.
Umrah		Lesser pilgrimage which can be performed at any time of the year.
Uthman		The third Khalifah of Islam.
Wudu		Ablution before salah.
Yathrib		Town to which the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) migrated from Makkah (see al-Madinah).
Zabur		The Book of Psalms given to Prophet Dawud (David) (peace be upon him).
Zakah		Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due. An obligatory act of worship.
Zakat-ul-Fitre		Welfare payment at the end of Ramadan.
Zamzam		Name of the well adjacent to the Ka'bah in Makkah. The water first sprang in answer to Hajar's search and prayers (see Hajar and Sa'y).
Zurh (Salut-ul-Zuhr)		Salah which can be performed after midday until afternoon.

JUDAISM - background

Jews believe that God is One and that He is the Creator of the world who cares for all His Creation. They believe their special relationship with God is expressed in the 603 mitzvot (laws). Jews also believe that God's special relationship with all humanity is expressed through obedience to the seven Noachide laws.

The Torah, which was revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, is the central core foundation of Jewish life. The Torah sets out practical rules and guidance (including the Ten Commandments) for all aspects of daily individual, family and community life. Together with the Oral Law, set out in the Talmud, and described in Halakhah, the Torah remains the basis of belief. The written Torah forms the First Five books of the Tenakh (Bible). The New Testament is not part of Jewish religious teaching.

The Jewish people are very family-orientated, and this is reflected both in the celebration of weekly Shabbat, festivals throughout the Jewish year and a proud tradition of caring institutions. Shabbat and festivals are celebrated both in the home and in the synagogue.

Much of Jewish history is connected with the struggle for Israel and identity as a people. The Tenakh describes this early history from the Creation. It contains key events such as the Exodus (the escape from slavery in Egypt under the leadership of Moses), the building of a portable sanctuary in the desert, and the establishment of the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was destroyed in 586 BCE, and the Jews were exiled to Babylonia. Re-settlement and the rebuilding of the Temple commenced about 70 years later.

In 70 CE the Romans destroyed the second Temple, and over many centuries the Jews were dispersed throughout the world. Since 1948, the foundation of the State of Israel has provided a beacon of hope for a people nearly destroyed by the Nazis in Hitler's Germany. The Holocaust and the systematic murder of 6,000,000 Jewish men, women and children is a permanent reminder of the evils of racism.

There is a resurgence of Jewish life and culture in many parts of the world. The future of Judaism will be ensured through the Jewish family, education and Torah study, thus enhancing Jewish continuity.

JUDAISM GLOSSARY

Most of the terms included in this section are Hebrew in origin. However, since the Jewish diaspora, many terms reflect the different countries where Jews have settled. For example, many words are in Yiddish, a common language (a mixture of German, Russian and Hebrew) developed by Jews throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The preferred form in this glossary uses the Sephardic pronunciation, which is equivalent to modern Hebrew as spoken in Israel today. As with all transliterations, there may be acceptable differences in the ways in which words are spelt.

Ashkenazim		Jews of Central and Eastern European origin.
Bar Mitzvah		<i>Son of Commandment.</i> A boy's coming of age at 13 years old, usually marked by a synagogue ceremony and family celebration.
Bat Mitzvah	BatChayil	<i>Daughter of Commandment.</i> As above, but for girls from 12 years old. May be marked differently between communities.
Bet he Knesset	Beit ha Knesset Shul	<i>House of Assembly.</i> Synagogue.
Bimah		<i>Dias.</i> Raised platform primarily for reading the Torah in the synagogue.
Brit Milah	Berit Milah, Bris	<i>Circumcision.</i>
Challah	Hallah	Enriched bread used particularly on Shabbat and during festivals.
Chazan	Hazzan Cantor	Leader of reading, singing and chanting in the services of some synagogues.
Chumash		<i>Five.</i> The Torah in book form, used in the synagogue and the home.
Circumcision.		Religious rite of Brit Milah, performed by a qualified mohel on all Jewish boys, usually on the eighth day after birth.
Hagadah	Haggadah	<i>Telling</i> - A book used at Seder.
Hanukiah	Chanukiah Menorah	Nine-branched Hanukkah lamp used at the festival of Hanukkah.
Hanukkah	Chanukah	Dedication. An eight-day festival of lights to celebrate the re-dedication of the temple following the Maccabean victory over the Greeks.
Hasid	Chasid Hasidim (pl) Chasidim	<i>Pious.</i> Member of the Orthodox movement of Hasidism.
Hasidism	Chasidism	A religious and social movement formed by Israel Baal Shern Tov (from the 18 th century onwards).
Hebrew	Ivrit	Ancient Semitic language; language of the Tenakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and used by Jews for prayer and study. Also, everyday language in Israel.
Israel		<i>One who struggles with God.</i> The phrase refers to the world-wide Jewish community; the land of Israel and the modern state of Israel.

Kaddish		Prayer publicly recited by mourners.
Kashrut		Laws relating to keeping a kosher home and lifestyle.
Ketuvim		<i>Writings</i> . Third section of the Tenakh.
Kibbutz	Kibbutzim (pl)	Israeli collective village based on socialist principles.
Kiddush		<i>Holy</i> . A prayer sanctifying Shabbat and festival days, usually recited over wine.
Kippah	Yamulka Kapel	Head covering worn during prayers, Torah study, etc. Some followers wear it constantly.
Knesset		Assembly. Israeli parliament.
Kol Nidrei	Kol Nidre	All vows. Prayer recited on the evening of Yom Kippur.
Kosher	Kasher	Fit; proper. Foods permitted by Jewish dietary laws.
Magen David		Shield of David, popularly called Star of David.
Matzah	Matzot (pl)	A flat cracker-like bread which has been baked before it rises; used at Pesach.
Menorah		Seven-branched candelabrum which was lit daily in the Temple.
Mezuzah		A scroll placed on doorposts of Jewish homes, containing a section from the Torah and often enclosed in a decorative case.
Midrash		Collections of various Rabbinic commentaries on the Tenakh.
Mishkan		<i>Dwelling</i> . The original travelling sanctuary used prior to the building of the permanent Temple in Jerusalem.
Mitzvah	Mitzvot (pl)	<i>Commandment</i> . The Torah contains 613 Mitzvot. Commonly used to describe good deeds.
Noachide Laws		Seven laws given to Noah after the flood, which are incumbent on all humankind. These laws for the foundation for a just society.
Parev	Parveh	Neutral foods, which are neither milk nor meat, eg vegetables, eggs, fish.
Pesach	Passover	Festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. One of the three biblical pilgrim festivals. Pesach is celebrated in the Spring.
Purim		Festival commemorating the rescue of Persian Jewry as told in the book of Esther.
Rabbi		<i>My teacher</i> . An ordained Jewish teacher. Often the religious leader of a Jewish community.
Rosh Hashanah	Rosh Ha-Shanah	<i>Head of the Year</i> . Jewish New Year.
Seder		<i>Order</i> . A home-based ceremonial meal during Pesach, at which the Exodus from Egypt is recounted using the Hagadah.

Sefer Torah		Torah scroll. The five books of Moses
		handwritten on parchment and rolled to form a scroll.
Sephardim	Sefardim	Jews originating from Mediterranean countries, especially Spain, North Africa and the Middle East.
Shabbat	Shabbos	Day of spiritual renewal and rest commencing at sunset on Friday, terminating at nightfall on Saturday.
Shavuot		Weeks. One of the three pilgrim festivals. Shavuot is celebrated in the summer, seven weeks after Pesach.
Shekhina		The divine presence.
Shema		Major Jewish prayer affirming belief in one God. The shema is found in the Torah.
Shemot		<i>Names.</i> Seven holy names of God.
Shofar		Ram's horn blown at the session of Rosh Hashanah.
Siddur		<i>Order.</i> Daily prayer books.
Simchat Torah		<i>Rejoicing of the law.</i> Festival celebrating the completion and recommencement of the cycle of the weekly Torah reading.
Sukkah	Sukkot (pl)	<i>Tabernacle; booth.</i> A temporary dwelling used during Sukkot.
Sukkot		One of three biblical pilgrim festivals, Sukkot is celebrated in the Autumn.
Synagogue	Shul Bet Haknesset Bet Hamidrash	Building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.
Tallit	Tallith	<i>Prayer shawl.</i> Four-cornered garment with fringes.
Talmud		Mishnah and Gemara, collected together.
Tefillah	Tefila	<i>Self-judgement.</i> Jewish prayer and meditation.
Tefillin	Tephilin T'filin Phylacteries	Small leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, strapped on the forehead and arm for morning prayers on weekdays.
Tenakh	Tanakh	The collected 24 books of the Jewish Bible, comprising three sections: Torah, Nevi''m, and Ketuvim (To; Na; Kh).
Torah		Law, teaching. The Five Books of Moses.
Yad		Hand-held pointer used in reading the Sefer Torah.
Yiddish		Language used predominantly by Ashkenazim.
Yom Kippur		<i>Day of Atonement.</i> Fast day occurring on the tenth day after Rosh Hashanah; a solemn day of Tefillah and Teshuva.
Zionism		Political movement securing the Jewish return to the land of Israel.

SIKHISM - background

Sikhism stresses belief in One God, for all humanity, who looks to actions rather than people's religious labels. Guru Nanak, the founder, also taught the complete equality of men and women everywhere, and the importance of service to others.

Guru Nanak was followed by nine other Gurus. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, decreed that there would be no more living Gurus and that the Guru Granth Sahib (sacred scriptures) should be read for future guidance. The Guru Granth Sahib is therefore treated with great respect, both in the gurdwara and in the home.

Sikhs, like Hindus, believe in 'Samsara', the cycle of rebirth or reincarnation, through which one strives to achieve union with God.

Sikhs are encouraged to be formally confirmed into their faith through an initiation ceremony known as Amrit. This was started by Guru Gobind Singh who gave Sikhs a distinctive uniform – the five Ks. These are kesh (uncut hair), kangha (a comb), kirpan (a sword), kara (a wristband) and kachera (short trousers).

The gurdwara functions not only as a place of worship, but as a community centre, demonstrating Sikhs' commitment to the poor. Belief in the equality of men and women is shown by the sharing of all responsibilities within the gurdwara, and by the shared meal (langar) which is open to people of all races and all creeds.

SIKHISM GLOSSARY

Sikh terms are drawn from the Punjabi language, and the versions below are based upon that language. Many of these terms will also be found in books on Hinduism and Buddhism but with somewhat different meanings. As with all transliterations, there are problems which are difficult to resolve. This is particularly true when moving from the Gurmukhi script which has an alphabet of 35 letters, to the Roman alphabet which has only 26 letters.

Preferred Form	Main Variants	Explanation
Akal Purakh		The Eternal One. A designation frequently used of God by Guru Nanak.
Akhand Path		Continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end.
Amrit		Nectar. Sanctified liquid made of sugar and water, used in initiation ceremonies.
Amrit ceremony	Amrit Sanskar Amrit Pahul Khande di Pahul Sometimes just 'Amrit' or 'Taking Amrit' ('Amrit Chhakna')	The Sikh rite of initiation into the Khalsa. 'Baptism' should not be used.
Anand karaj	Anand Sanskar	<i>Ceremony of bliss.</i> Wedding ceremony.
Ardas		Prayer. The formal prayer offered at most religious acts.
Baisakhi	Vaisakhi	A major Sikh festival celebrating the formation of the Khalsa, 1699 CE.

Bangla Sahib		The site of the martyrdom of Guru Har Krishan (Delhi).
Bhai Khanaya		A Sikh commended by Guru Gobind Singh for serving water to the enemy wounded.
Bhai Lalo		A humble carpenter who opened his house to Guru Nanak. The Guru preferred Bhai Lalo's simple food to the offerings of a local rich merchant.
Chanani	Chandni	Canopy over the scriptures, used as a mark of respect.
Chauri	Chaur	Symbol of the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib. Fan waved over scriptures, made of yak hairs or nylon. It should not be called a 'fly whisk'.
Dasam Granth		Collection of compositions, some of which are attributed to the tenth Sikh Guru, compiled some years after his death.
Granthi		Reader of the Guru Granth Sahib, who officiates at ceremonies.
Gurdwara	Gurudwara	Sikh place of worship. Literally the 'doorway to the Guru'.
Gurpurb	Gurpurab	A Guru's anniversary (birth or death). Also used for other anniversaries, eg of the installation of the Adi Granth, 1604 CE.
Guru		Teacher. In Sikhism, the title of Guru is reserved for the ten human Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib.
Guru Arjan		The fifth Guru who was the first Sikh martyr (1563-1606).
Guru Gobind Singh	Guru Govind Singh (original name: Guru Gobind Rai)	Tenth Sikh Guru. It is important to note that the title 'Guru' must be used with all the Gurus' names, Sikhs usually use further terms of respect, eg Guru Gobind Singh Ji or Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
Guru Granth Sahib	Adi Granth (Granth' by itself should be avoided)	Primal collection of Sikh scriptures, compiled by Guru Arjan and given its final form by Guru Gobind Singh.
Guru Har Gobind	Guru Hargobind Guru Hargovind	Sixth Sikh Guru.
Guru Har Krishan Guru Harkrishan	Guru Harkrishan	Eighth Sikh Guru.
Guru Nanak		The first Guru and the founder of the Sikh faith (1469-1539).
Guru Tegh Bahadur		The ninth Guru who was martyred for the principle of religious tolerance (1622-1675).
Hukam		God's will.
Hukam	Vak	Random reading taken for guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib.
Japji Sahib		A morning prayer, composed by Guru Nanak, which forms the first chapter of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Jivan Mukht	Jivan Mukht	Enlightened while in the material body; a spiritually enlightened person, freed from worldly bonds.
Kachera		Traditional underwear/shorts. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).
Kangha	Kanga	Comb worn in the hair. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).
Kara - an iron/steel circle		A Kara (iron bracelet) is to be worn at all times. The Kara is a constant reminder to always remember that whatever a person does with their hands has to be in keeping with the advice given by the Guru. The Kara is an iron/steel circle to symbolise God as never ending. It is a symbol of permanent bonding to the community, of being a link in the chain of Khalsa Sikhs (the word for link is "kari").
Karah parshad	Karah Prasad	Sanctified food distributed at Sikh ceremonies.
Kaur		Princess. Name given to all Sikh females by Guru Gobind Singh(see Singh).
Kesh	Kes	Uncut hair. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).
Khalsa		The community of the pure. The Sikh community.
Khanda		Double-edged sword used in the initiation ceremony. Also used as the emblem on the Sikh flag.
Kirat karna		Earning one's livelihood by one's own efforts.
Kirpan		Sword. One of the five K's (see panj kakke). 'Dagger' should be avoided.
Kirtan		Devotional singing of the compositions found in the Guru Granth Sahib.
Kirtan Sohila		A prayer said before retiring for sleep. It is also used at the cremation ceremony and when the Guru Granth Sahib is laid to rest.
Langar	Guru ka Langar	Guru's kitchen. The gurdwara dining hall and the food served in it.
Mela		Fair. Used of Sikh vestivals which are not gurburbs.
Manji	Manji Sahib	Small platform on which the scripture is placed.
Nishan Sahib		Sikh flag flown at gurdwaras.
Nit nem		The recitation of specified daily prayers.
Panj piare	Panj Pyara (other forms may also be found)	The five beloved ones. Those first initiated into the Khalsa; those who perform the rite today.
Panth		The Sikh community.
Punjab	Panjab	Land of five rivers. The area of India in which Sikhism originated.
Ragi		Sikh musician who sings compositions from the Guru Granth Sahib.
Raheguru		Wonderful Lord. A Sikh name for God.

Rahit		Sikh obligations, eg to meditate on God.
Rahit Maryada	Rehat Maryada	Sikh Code of Discipline.
Sadhsangat	Sangat	Congregation or assembly of Sikhs.
Sewa	Seva	Service directed at the sadhsangat and gurdwara, but also to humanity in general.
Shabad	Sabad Shabd	Word. Hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib; the divine word.
Sikh		<i>Learner; disciple.</i> A person who believes in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib, and who has no other religion.
Singh		<i>Lion.</i> Name adopted by Sikh males (see Kaur).
Vak	Vaak	A random reading taken for guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib.
Vand Chhakna		Sharing one's time, talents and earnings with the less fortunate.