

Glossary

Introduction

Baha'i

Buddhism

Christianity

Hinduism

Humanism

Islam

Judaism

Sikhism



Religious Education – glossary of terms

This glossary is based on: *Religious Studies – A Glossary of Terms*, GCSE which was published by the School Examination Council (SEC) in 1986. With the publication of the model syllabuses for religious education, and the work involving the faith communities in Britain, it was felt to be an appropriate time for its first revision. Since then many Agreed Syllabi have used it. For the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus 2018 additional sections on Baha'i and Humanism have been added and several other sections have been updated.

The glossary has been devised by the different faith and belief communities to:

- give guidance to teachers on key words and their meanings within religious traditions and Humanism
- try to reach some form of consensus on spellings. This is almost an impossible task, due to the problems of transliterating from one script to another, for example from Gurmukhi with 35 characters into the Roman script of 26 characters.

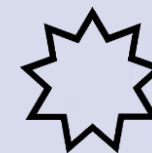
It is important for pupils to build up a working knowledge of key words and technical terms which are used within each religion, and which are therefore central to Religious Education.

Publishers take note of the work that went into the original glossary which had the full backing of religious traditions represented in the UK, so that all resources produced thereafter to support Religious Education, adopted the preferred form emphasised in bold within the documents.

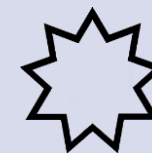
Words printed in **red** are themselves main entries and can be cross-referenced within this glossary. Literal translations into English are printed in italics.

Acknowledgements are due to:

- all those who produced the original glossary
- the faith communities and organisations consulted on this revision



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
'Abdu'l-Bahá*	Eldest son and appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh. His title literally means Servant of Bahá (Arabic word for Glory). He lived from 23 May 1844 - 28 November 1921. 'Abdu'l-Bahá travelled to Europe and North America; when he was released from exile for His religious beliefs, He came to London, including Woolwich, in 1911 and again in 1913 and gave many talks about the need for unity and peace in the world.
Báb, The*	His title literally means The "Gate". The title was given to Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad, who lived from 20 October 1819 - 9 July 1850. The Founder of the Bábi Faith, and told of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.
Baha'í	Literally "one of Glory" or "follower of Bahá'u'lláh."
Bahá'u'lláh*	The title translates as "The Glory of God". The title was given to Mirza Husayn-'Ali Nuri, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He lived from 12 November 1817 - 29 May 1892. In spite of a life of imprisonment and persecution, Bahá'u'lláh wrote thousands of letters, including to monarchs and rulers – one was addressed to Queen Victoria. He also revealed many other documents, all based on the central themes of the Bahá'í faith, and about 15,000 originals still exist. Bahá'u'lláh is referred to by a variety of titles, including the Blessed Beauty, the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, the Divine Physician and the Prince of Peace.
Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA)	A body of nine members, elected once per year, who are responsible for the spiritual and administrative affairs of a particular locality. In London, there is an LSA in each borough of the city. Elections take place during the Ridván festival, which happens between the end of April and the beginning of May every year. Campaigning and discussion of nominations is not allowed.
Manifestation of God	A Bahá'í term for the founders of the major world religions, who are seen as a voice of God. Bahá'í scripture identifies ten historic individuals as Manifestations: Abraham; Moses; Jesus Christ; Muhammad; Krishna; Zoroaster; Buddha; The Báb; and Bahá'u'lláh
National Spiritual Assembly	A body of nine members, elected once per year, who are responsible for the spiritual and administrative affairs of a particular country. The members are elected by the local spiritual assembly members in their country. Campaigning and discussion of nominations is not allowed.
Shoghi Effendi*	The title of Shoghi Rabbání, the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, appointed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi was a student at Oxford University. He is buried in the New Southgate Cemetery in North London.



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Universal House of Justice	Supreme governing body of the Bahá'ís around the world. They are an elected body of nine individuals, who are responsible for the administration and spiritual advancement of the Bahá'í world. Each member is elected to serve a period of five years but can be re-elected to serve more than one term. The members are elected by the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of each country. The seat of the Universal House of Justice is located in Haifa, Israel.

***Please note:** The titles given to each of the central Figures of the Faith are in the Arabic language.



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
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The primary languages of Buddhism are Indian in origin, especially Sanskrit and Pali and technical terms are generally referenced using one or the other. As Buddhism spread throughout the East, it came to be expressed in the local languages and the Japanese, Tibetan or Chinese equivalents are often used in traditions that come from these cultures. There is no preferred form. Both Pali and Sanskrit are used here, as appropriate and terms in other languages are indicated by brackets (Chinese) etc.

Abhidharma	Abhidhamma	<i>Further or higher teaching.</i> Systematic analysis of Buddhist doctrine, including analysis of mental states (sometimes referred to as Buddhist Psychology). The Abhidhamma Pitaka is the third of the Three Baskets and systematises the teachings found in the Sutta Pitaka .
Anatman	Anatta	<i>Non self; no self.</i> One of the Three Marks of Existence . The complete lack of substance or emptiness of our sense of self or 'me'.
Anitya	Anicca	<i>Impermanence and change.</i> A key quality of samsara and another of the Three Marks . The instability and insubstantiality of all things, including our sense of self.
Arhat	Arahat, Arahant	<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.
Arya Satya	Arya Satta	Four <i>Noble Truths</i>
Ashoka	Asoka	Emperor of India in the 3rd century BCE.
Atman	Atta	<i>Self; soul.</i>
Bhikshu	Bhikkhu	Fully ordained Buddhist monk.
Bhikshuni	Bhikkhuni	Fully ordained Buddhist nun
Bodhicitta Utpada		<i>Bodhisattva Vow; Arousing Bodhicitta.</i> The great aspiration to follow the bodhisattva path to its end, for the benefit of others.
Bodhicitta		<i>Awakened heart/awakened mind.</i> The union of Wisdom and Compassion.



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
Bodhisattva	Bodhisatta	<p>A person who has made the vow follow the bodhisattva path to complete awakening over many lifetimes. For example, Siddhartha Gautama, before his enlightenment as the historical Buddha.</p> <p>The inspiration of the bodhisattva vow is a central feature of Mahayana. The trainee bodhisattva works to give up any ambition to free themselves in order to help all other beings become liberated from suffering (see Mahayana).</p>
Maha Bodhisattva		<i>Great Bodhisattvas</i> like Avalokiteshvara, Tara and Manjusri are at the end of the path. They are more like Buddhas and have similar power and understanding.
Brahma Viharas	Brahma Viharas	The four immeasurable states: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and evenness of mind.
Buddha	Buddha	<i>Awakened or Enlightened One</i> . Not the name of an individual but a title given to those who have become awakened.
Dalai Lama (Tibetan)		<i>Great Ocean</i> . Spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people.
Dana	Dana	<i>Generosity, offering, giving</i> .
Dharma	Dhamma	Ultimate truth from the Buddhist perspective. The teachings of the Buddha . One of the Three Jewels.
Dharmapada	Dhammapada	Famous Pali scripture of 423 verses.
Dhyana	Jhana	Also Ch'an (Chinese) and Zen (Japanese). General term for meditation.
Duhkha	Dukkha	Normally translated as <i>suffering</i> , but actually a much broader term that implies the whole spectrum of unsatisfactory and frustrating experience, ranging from the most intense and claustrophobic pain to the most subtle sense of incompleteness. The first of the Four Noble Truths and one of the Three Marks .
Gompa (Tibetan)		Monastery; place of meditation.



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
Jataka	Jataka	<i>Birth story.</i> Accounts of the previous lives of the Buddha .
Kangyur (Tibetan)		<i>Translated Buddha Word.</i> Tibetan collection of Buddha's teachings.
Karma	Kamma	<i>Action.</i> Intentional actions that affect one's circumstances in this and future lives. Not the popular idea of the result of those actions.
Klesa	Kilesa	<i>Negative emotion; mental poison.</i> Hatred, desire and ignorance are the three fundamental kleshas. All the other kinds come from these three.
Koan (Japanese)		A technical term used in Zen Buddhism referring to enigmatic or paradoxical questions used to develop spiritual intuition. Also refers to religious problems encountered in daily life.
Kshanti	Khanti	<i>Patience; forbearance; acceptance</i>
Kwan-yin (Chinese)		Also, Kannon (Japanese). Bodhisattva of Compassion, depicted in female form. Identified with Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.
Lama (Tibetan)		<i>Teacher.</i> Tibetan translation of Sanskrit <i>Guru</i> .
Mahayana		<i>Great Way or Vehicle.</i> Teachings that spread from India into Tibet, parts of Asia and the Far East characterised by the Bodhisattva path and the prominence given to the development of both wisdom and compassion.
Maitri	Metta	<i>Loving kindness.</i> A pure love which is neither grasping nor possessive. The wish that others should have happiness and the cause of happiness.
Maitreya	Metteya	One who has the nature of loving kindness. Name of the future Buddha .
Maitri Sutra	Metta Sutta	Buddhist scripture which describes the nature of loving kindness.
Mala		Literally <i>garland</i> . Also, Juzu (Japanese). String of 108 beads used in Buddhist practice (like a rosary).



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
Marga	Magga	<i>Path</i> , leading to cessation of suffering. The fourth Noble Truth
Mudita	Mudita	<i>Sympathetic joy</i> . Welcoming the good qualities and good fortune of others.
Mudra	Mudda	Ritual gesture, as illustrated by the hands of Buddha images
Nirodha	Nirodha	<i>Cessation</i> (of suffering). The third Noble Truth.
Nirvana	Nibbana	<i>Blowing out</i> of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance.
Paramita	Parami	<i>Transcendent perfection</i> or <i>virtue</i> . There are six or ten paramitas that need be perfected on the bodhisattva path for the attainment of Buddhahood.
Parinirvana	Parinibbana	Final and complete nirvana reached at the passing away of a Buddha
Prajna	Panna	<i>Wisdom</i> . Understanding the true nature of things.
Prajnaparamita Hrdaya Sutra		<i>Heart Sutra</i> . Buddha's heart teaching on transcendent wisdom.
Pratimoksha	Patimokkha	The training rules of a monk or nun - 227 in the case of a Theravada monk.
Samadhi	Samadhi	<i>Meditative absorption</i> . A state of deep meditation.
Samjna	Sanna	<i>Perception</i> . Third of the five Skandhas .
Samsara	Samsara	<i>Conditioned existence</i> ; the wheel of birth and death, driven by ignorance, desire and hatred, and characterized by dukkha, or suffering.
Samskara	Sankhara	<i>Mental/karmic formation</i> . The fourth of the five Skandhas .
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. More widely the community of practicing Buddhists.
Satori (Japanese)		<i>Awakening</i> . A term used in Zen Buddhism.



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
Shamatha	Samatha	<i>Calm abiding.</i> Meditation leading to a state of concentrated calmness; (see also Vipassana).
Shakyamuni	Sakyamuni	<i>Sage of the Shakyas</i> (the tribe of the Buddha). Epithet of the historical Buddha.
Shila	Sila	<i>Ethics and Discipline.</i> The Five Precepts are the basis for discipline in Buddhism. Monks and nuns follow a more elaborate form (Pratimoksha). In Mahayana the Bodhisattva vow has its own accompanying discipline and there are yet further elaborations in Vajrayana.
Siddhartha	Siddattha	<i>Wish-fulfilled.</i> The personal name of the historical Buddha when he was a prince.
Skandha	Khandha	<i>Heap; aggregate.</i> The Five skandhas together make up the 'person' (form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness).
Sthaviravada	Theravada	<i>Way of the Elders.</i> Form of Buddhism prevalent in Thailand, Sri Lanka and South East Asia generally. Also found in the West.
Stupa	Thupa/Cetiya	<i>Reliquary</i> (including pagodas). Devotional structure containing Buddhist relics. See example in Battersea Park.
Sutra	Sutta	Text containing the word of the Buddha.
Sutra Pitaka	Sutta Pitaka	The second of the Three Baskets or collections that contains the Buddha's fundamental teachings on meditation and wisdom.
Tathagata	Tathagata	Another epithet for the Buddha .
Tri Lakshana	Tilakkhana	<i>The Three Marks of Existence; Three Signs of Being.</i> Anitya, Dhukha, Anatman.
Trishna	Tanha	<i>Thirst; craving; desire</i> (rooted in ignorance). Desire as the cause of suffering. The second Noble Truth.
Tripitaka	Tipitaka	<i>Three Baskets.</i> A threefold collection of texts (Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidamma).



SANSKRIT	PALI	EXPLANATION
Triratna	Tiratana	<i>The Three Jewels or Refuges.</i> Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.
Tulku (Tibetan)		Incarnate Lama in Tibetan Buddhism
Upaya		<i>Skillful means</i> , e.g. meditation on loving kindness, to overcome anger. Compassionate action.
Upeksha	Upekkha	<i>Equanimity; evenness of mind.</i>
Vaishaka	Wesaka, or Vesaka (Sinhalese)	Buddha Day. Name of a festival and a month. The birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha are celebrated on the full moon of Wesak (in May or June). Some schools celebrate only the birth at this time, e.g. Zen.
Vajrayana		<i>Indestructible Vehicle, Diamond Way.</i> Form of Mahayana in which the Guru is central. Once widespread but now mostly found in Tibetan Buddhism.
Vedana	Vedana	<i>Feeling.</i> The second of the Five Skandhas.
Vihara	Vihara	<i>Dwelling place; monastery.</i>
Vijnana	Vinnana	<i>Consciousness.</i> The fifth of the Five Skandhas.
Vinaya	Vinaya	The rules of discipline of monastic life.
Vinayapitaka	Vinayapitaka	The first of the Three Baskets of the Buddhist canon, containing mostly the discipline for monks and nuns, with many stories and some teachings.
Vipashyana	Vipassana	<i>Insight meditation.</i> Meditation into the true nature of things. One of a pair with Samatha.
Virya	Virya	<i>Energy; exertion.</i>
Zazen (Japanese)		Formal seated meditation, in Zen Buddhism.
Zen (Japanese)		Meditation. Derived from the Sanskrit 'dhyana'. A school of Mahayana Buddhism that developed in China and Japan.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
<p>Unlike the other five world faiths included in this glossary, most of the terms given below are in English and 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.</p>		
Absolution		The pronouncement by a priest of the forgiveness of sins.
AD	Anno Domini	<i>In the Year of the 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.
Agape		<i>Love. Often the love of God.</i> New Testament word used for the common meal of Christians; a Love Feast.
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. They are part of the Anglican Communion. In England, the Anglican Church is called: The Church of England (Church in Wales in Wales; Church of Ireland in Northern Ireland and the Republic and Scottish Episcopal Church in Scotland)
Apocalyptic		(i) <i>Revelatory</i> , of God's present purposes and of the end of the world.(ii) Used of a literary genre, e.g. the Book of Revelation.
Apocrypha		Books of the Old Testament that are in the Greek but not the Hebrew Canon . Some Churches recognise the Apocrypha as part of the Old Testament Canon .
Apocryphal New Testament		A modern title for various early Christian books
Apostle		One who was sent out by Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel .



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Ascension		The event, 40 days after the Resurrection , when Jesus 'ascended into heaven' (see Luke 24 and Acts 1).
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 . iii) Title used for Jesus' cousin, John, which indicates that much of his ministry was about baptizing people.
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 .
Believer's Baptism		The baptism of people who are old enough to understand the meaning of the rite.
Benediction		(i) Blessing at the end of worship. (ii) late afternoon or evening service at the end of which the blessing is given with the consecrated host (generally displayed in a monstrance) usually in a Roman Catholic or Anglican context.
Blessed Sacrament		Bread and wine which have been consecrated and set aside for future use and to be taken to the sick and housebound. The blessed or reserved sacrament is usually kept in a tabernacle or aumbry. (usually in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican church).
Canon	Scripture	The accepted books of the Bible. Some add the deuterocanonical books to the OT Canon



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Catholic		(i) <i>Universal</i> . (ii) Often used as an abbreviation for Roman Catholic . (iii) used to describe a particular wing of the Anglican Church (Anglo-Catholic, Liberal Catholic, Modern Catholic are all part of this wing).
Charismatic		A movement within the Church , emphasising spiritual gifts, such as healing or speaking with tongues.
Chrismation		(i) The Orthodox second sacrament of initiation by anointing with chrism (a special oil). Performed at the same time as baptism . (ii) Anointing with oil, e.g. healing or coronation.
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 , 6th January in Eastern Orthodox Churches)
Church		(i) The whole community of Christians. (ii) The building in which Christians worship (iii) A particular denomination (iv) local church
Confession		Contrition; penance; admitting your mistakes/sins (i) One of seven sacraments observed by some Churches (mainly Roman Catholic and Anglican). There is a general confession at the beginning of the Eucharist/Mass/Holy Communion. Some churches also offer private confession: a priest confidentially hears a person's confession. The purpose of confession is to receive God's forgiveness and to change one's life. (ii) An admission, by a Christian, of wrong-doing. (iii) A particular official statement (or profession) of faith.
Congregationalist		Member of a Christian body which believes that each local church is independent and self-governing under the authority of Christ.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Consubstantiation		Doctrine of the Eucharist associated with Luther, which holds that after consecration, the substances of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and of the bread and wine co-exist in union with each other.
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.
Deuterocanonical		Books that some churches, but not all, include in the OT.
Easter		Central Christian festival which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Ecumenism	Oikoumene	Movement within the Church towards cooperation and eventual unity between denominations.
Episcopacy		System of Church government by bishops.
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. Most of them were written by the apostle Paul.
Eucharist		<i>Thanksgiving.</i> A service remembering the death and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ . During this service, Jesus' final supper with his friends is remembered and, in a small way, re-enacted 'in his memory' using elements of bread and wine (see Holy Communion).
Evangelical		Group, or church (or a wing within the Anglican Church) , placing particular emphasis on the Gospel and the scriptures as the sole authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
Evangelist		(i) A writer of one of the four New Testament Gospels; (ii) a preacher of the gospel .



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Font		Receptacle to hold water used in baptism . Usually placed near the entrance of the church as baptism is seen as the spiritual entry into the church.
Free Churches		Non-conformist denominations, free from state control (used of 20 Churches).
Good Friday		The Friday in Holy Week . Commemorates Jesus dying on the cross.
Gospel	Evangel	(i) <i>Good news</i> (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) A prayer said at the end of a service (The Grace) (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 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.
Iconostasis		Screen, covered with icons , used in Eastern Orthodox churches to separate the sanctuary from the nave.
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.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Jesus Christ		The central figure of Christian history and devotion. The second person of the Trinity .
Justification by Faith		The doctrine that we can be saved only by our faith in God, not by what we do.
Kerygma		The central message about Jesus proclaimed by the early Christians.
Kyrie (Greek)		<i>O Lord</i> . Addressed to God, as in 'Kyrie eleison' (<i>Lord have mercy</i>).
Lectern		(i) Stand supporting the Bible, sometimes in the shape of an eagle. (ii) stand used by people doing readings or giving sermons in church
Lectionary		List of scriptural passages for systematic reading throughout the year.
Lent		Penitential season. The 40 days leading up to Easter .
Liturgy		<i>work / public duty</i> (i) Service of worship according to a prescribed ritual such as Evensong or Eucharist . (ii) Term used in the Orthodox Church for the Eucharist.
Logos		<i>Word</i> . Pre-existent Word of God incarnate as Jesus Christ .
Lord		A way of addressing God or of addressing Jesus.
Lord's Supper		Alternative term for Eucharist in some Churches (predominantly Non-conformist).
Lutheran		A major Protestant Church that receives its name from the 16th century German reformer, Martin Luther.
Mass		Term for the Eucharist , used by the Roman Catholic and other Churches . The word mass comes from 'ita missa est' the sentence used at the end of the service to send people out into the world to do God's work.
Maundy Thursday		The Thursday in Holy Week . Commemorates the Last Supper And the institution of the Eucharist / Mass / Lord's Supper
Methodist		A Christian who belongs to the Methodist Church which came into existence through the work of John Wesley in the 18th century.
Missal		Book containing words and ceremonial directions for saying Mass .



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Mother of God		The title given to the Virgin Mary, mainly in the Orthodox, Anglican 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 17th 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 Deuterocanonical books.
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 communion 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	<i>Advocate</i> . Term used for the Holy Spirit .
Parousia		Generally used to refer to Jesus' second coming (which has not happened yet)
Passion		The sufferings of Jesus Christ , especially in the time leading up to his crucifixion .
Patriarch		(i) Title for principal Eastern Orthodox bishops. (ii) early Israelite leaders such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Pentecost	Whitsun	(i) The Greek name for the Jewish Festival of Weeks, or Shavuot, which comes seven weeks ('fifty days') after Passover. (ii) Celebration of outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the day of Pentecost .
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)
Pope		The Bishop of Rome, head of the Roman Catholic Church .
Presbyterian		A member of a Church that is governed by elders or 'presbyters'; for instance, 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. Great emphasis put on the importance of the local church (rather than the centralized church)
Pulpit		An elevated platform from which sermons are preached (not always used these days).
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 17th century.
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 16th century reform movement that led to the formation of Protestant Churches . It emphasized the need to recover the initial beliefs and practices of the Church .



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
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 , Anglican 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 19th century.
Sanctification		The process by which a believer is made holy, to become like Jesus Christ .
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 or Reserved Sacrament , not immediately consumed but set aside or 'reserved' (mainly in Roman Catholic , Anglican 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 in the bread and the wine.
Trinity		Three persons in one God; doctrine of the threefold nature of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit .



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Unction United Reformed Church	Sacrament of the Sick	The anointing with oil of a sick or dying person. 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.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
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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 list if variant forms are commonly used.

Acharya	Acarya	<i>One who teaches by example.</i> Usually refers to a prominent or exemplary spiritual teacher.
Advaita	Adwaita	<i>Non-dual.</i> Refers to the impersonalistic philosophy which unqualifyingly equates God, the soul and matter.
Ahimsa	Ahinsa	<i>Not killing.</i> Non-violence; respect for life.
Artha		Economic 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.
Ashrama	Asrama	A stage of life (of which there are four) adopted according to material considerations, but ultimately as a means to spiritual realisation.
Atharva Veda		The fourth of the Vedas .
Atman	Atma	<i>Self.</i> Can refer to body, mind or soul, depending on context. Ultimately, it refers to the real self, the soul.
Aum	Om	The sacred symbol and sound representing the ultimate; the most sacred of Hindu words.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
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	Bhajana	Devotional hymn or song.
Bhakti		<i>Devotion; love.</i> Devotional form of Hinduism.
Bhakti-yoga		The path of loving devotion, aimed at developing pure love of God.
Brahma		A Hindu deity, considered one of the Trimurti , and in charge of creative power; not to be confused with Brahman or Brahmin .
Brahmachari	Brahmacari Brahmacharin Brahmcarin	One in the first stage of life, a celibate student of Vedic knowledge.
Brahmacharya	Brahmacarya Brahma ch(c)ari Brahma ch(c)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.
Brahmin	Brahman	The first of the four varnas , the principal social Brahmana groupings from which priests are drawn. Some writers, rather confusingly, use the spelling 'brahman', and the meaning only becomes clear in the context of a few sentences (see also Brahman and Brahma).



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Darshan Shastras		Six systems of Hindu philosophy – Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga , Vedanta and Meemansa.
Dassehra	Dussehra, Dassera, Dashara (Other variants also found)	<i>Ten days</i> . Also called Vijay Dashami . Celebrates the victory of Rama on the tenth day of the bright half of the lunar month of Jyeshtha. As is often the case with Hindu festivals, followers may interpret the festival differently, eg in connection with Durga (see Navaratri).
Dharma		<i>Religion or religious duty is the usual translation into English, but literally it means 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.
Divali	Diwali, Dipavali, Deepavali	Festival of lights at the end of one year and beginning of the new year, according to one Hindu calendar.
Durga		<i>Female deity</i> . A form of the goddess Parvati ; wife of Shiva .
Dvaita	Dwaita	<i>Dual</i> . Refers to the personalistic philosophy that differentiates between God, the soul and matter.
Dwarka	Dvarka Dvaraka Dwaraka	Pilgrimage site on the west coast of India.
Ganesha	Ganesh Ganupati Ganapati	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.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Gangotri		Source of the river Ganges.
Gotra		Exogamous group within Jati
Grihastha	Gristhi Grhastha	The second stage of Hindu life; one who belongs to that stage, ie, the householder (grihasti).
Guna		<i>Rope; quality.</i> Specifically refers to the three qualities of sattva (goodness), rajas (passion) and tamas (ignorance), which permeate and control matter.
Guru		Spiritual teacher, preceptor or enlightener.
Hanuman		The monkey warrior who faithfully served Rama and Sita . Also called Pavansuta (son of the wind God).
Havan		Also known as Agnihotra. The basis of many Hindu rituals used at weddings and on other ceremonial occasions; the ceremony or act of worship in which offerings of ghee and grains are made into fire.
Havan kund		The container, usually square or pyramid shaped, in which the havan fire is burned.
Hitopadesh		Stories with a moral.
Holi		The festival of colours, celebrated in Spring.
Homa		Term often used interchangeably with havan .
The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)		A religious group of the Vaishnava tradition.
Janeu	Jenoi	Sacred thread worn by Hindus who study under a guru .
Janmashtami	Janmashtmi	The birthday of Krishna , celebrated on the eighth day of the waning moon in the month of Badra.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Japa	Jap	The quiet or silent repetition of a mantra as a meditative process.
Jati		Caste is the usual translation, meaning occupational kinship group.
Jnana	Gyan	<i>Knowledge.</i>
Jnana-yoga	Gyan-yoga	The path of knowledge, that aims at liberation.
Kali	Kaali	Name given to that power of God which delivers justice - often represented by the Goddess Kali (a form of Durga).
Kali yuga		The fourth of the ages; the iron age or the age of quarrelling and hypocrisy.
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 .
Kshatriya	Khatri	Second of the four varnas of traditional Hindu society, the ruling or warrior class.
Lakshmi	Laksmi	The goddess of fortune.
Mahabharata		The Hindu epic that relates 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	Mandal	A circle, area or community/group.
Mandir		<i>Temple.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
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.
Marg		Path (see Jnana yoga , Karma yoga and Bhakti yoga).
Mata		<i>Mother</i> . Often associated with Hindu goddesses who represent shakti (power).
Mathura		Holy place connected with Krishna
Maya		Not this. Usually, it refers to illusion, particularly where the permanent soul identifies itself with temporary matter, eg the body, etc. It can also mean power.
Moksha	Moksa	Ultimate liberation from the process of transmigration, the continuous cycle of birth and death.
Mundan		The head-shaving ceremony. Performed in the first or third year of life.
Murti	Moorti	<i>Form</i> . The image or deity used as a focus of worship. 'Idol' should definitely not be used, and 'statue' may also cause offence.
Navaratri	Navaratra	The Nine Nights Festival preceding Dassehra , and held in honour of the goddess Durga
Nirvana		The cessation of material existence.
Panchatantra		Part of the supplementary Vedic scriptures, composed of animal stories with a moral.
Parvati		The consort of Shiva , also known by other names such as Durga , Devi, etc.
Prahlada	Prahalada	A great devotee of Vishnu , connected with the festival of Holi . Regulation of breath as a means of controlling the mind.
Pranayam	Pranayama	Regulation of breadth as a means of controlling the mind.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Prashad	Prasad Prasada Prashada	Sacred or sanctified food.
Pravachan		A lecture or talk, usually based on the scriptures.
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. Raja
Yoga Raj	Yoga	Path of self-control and meditation to realize God.
Rajas		Passion or creative potency, one of the three gunas (qualities of material nature).
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.
Rishi	Rsi, risi	A spiritually wise person. More specifically, one of the seven seers who received the divine wisdom.
Sadhana	Sadhan	One's regulated spiritual practices or discipline.
Sadhu	Saddhu	Holy man, ascetic.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Sama Veda		The Veda of chanting; 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).
Sanatan Dharma		The eternal or imperishable religion; also known as Vedic Dharma. Adherents often prefer this term to Hinduism since it characterises their belief in the revealed and universal nature of religion.
Sannyasa		The state of renunciation, the fourth stage of life.
Sannyasin	Samyasin, Samnyasin	A renunciate who, having given up worldly affairs and attachments, has entered the fourth stage of life, often as a mendicant.
Sanskrit		Sacred language of the Hindu scriptures.
Saraswati		The power of knowledge, often represented by the goddess Saraswati , the goddess of learning.
Sattva	Sattwa	<i>Goodness</i> , or the potency to sustain and nourish; one of the three gunas.
Seva	Sewa	Service, either to the divine or to humanity.
Shaivism	Saivism	The religion of Hindus who are devotees of Shiva .
Shakti	Sakti	Energy or power, especially of a Hindu feminine deity.
Shiva	Siva (many variants – even Civa - have been found).	<i>A Hindu god</i> . The name means kindly or auspicious



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Shivaratri	Sivaratri	The annual festival celebrated in February/March in honour of Shiva . Also called Mahashivaratri.
Shraddha	Sraddha	Ceremony in which sanctified food is offered to the poor and needy in memory of departed ancestors.
Shri	Sri	<i>Illustrious</i> . Used as a title of respect, eg, Shri Krishna. Also a respectful title for men. The feminine form is Shrimati (Mrs).
Smriti	Srti	<i>That which is remembered</i> . Scriptures less ancient than the Vedas . Includes the Ramayana & Mahabharata .
Sita	Seeta	The divine consort of Rama .
Shruti	Srti, Sruti	<i>That which is heard</i> . A term specifically applied to the four Vedas , including the Upanishads .
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.
Tamas		Ignorance or destructive potency; the lowest of the three gunas.
Trimurti		The three deities. Refers to Brahma , Vishnu and Shiva , who personify and control the three gunas . They



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
		represent and control the three functions of creation, preservation and destruction. ‘Trinity’ should be avoided.
Upanayana		Ceremony when the sacred thread is tied – to mark the start of learning with a guru.
Upanishad	Upanisad	<i>To sit down near.</i> A sacred text based on the teaching of a guru to a disciple. The Upanishads explain the teachings of the Vedas .
Vaishnavism	Vaisnavism	The religion of Hindus who are devotees of the god Vishnu .
Vaishya	Vaisya	The third of the four varnas of Hindu society, composed of merchants and farmers.
Vanaprastha		The third stage of life, typified by retirement and asceticism.
Vanaprasthi	Vanaprastha	<i>Forest dweller.</i> One who is in the third stage of life.
Varanasi	Kashi, Kasi	Banares, Benares, 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		<i>Knowledge.</i> Specifically refers to the four Vedas , though any teaching which is consistent with the



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
		conclusions of these scriptures is also accepted as Vedic.
Vijay Dashmi	Vijaya Dashami	Another name for Dassehra .
Vishnu	Visnu	A Hindu god. With Brahma and Shiva forms the Trimurti
Vrat	Vratam	Vow. Often including abstention from certain foods
Vrindavan	Brindavan Vrindavana, Brindaban	The sacred village connected with Krishna's pastimes as a youth.
Yajur Veda		One of the four Vedas , dealing with the knowledge of Karma .
Yamuna	Jamuna, Jumna	Tributary of the river Ganga (Ganges) considered by many Hindus to be the most sacred of all holy rivers.
Yatra	Jatra	Pilgrimage. Usually to important sacred places in India.
Yoga		Communion; union of the soul with Supreme, or a process which promotes that relationship. The English word 'yoke' is derived from yoga.
Yuga		Age, or extended period of time, of which there are four.



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Agnosticism	The belief that we cannot know for certain whether or not any god or gods exist
Atheism	The absence of belief in the existence of any god or gods, or living one's life as though there were no gods
Celebrant (Humanist)	A person who writes and conducts humanist ceremonies (e.g. namings, weddings, funerals)
Ceremonies (Humanist)	Personal and meaningful non-religious ceremonies (e.g. namings, weddings, funerals) conducted by a humanist celebrant: https://humanism.org.uk/ceremonies/
Consequentialism	The belief that the goodness of an action depends on its consequences (not all humanists are consequentialists but many will argue that consequences need to be taken into account when considering how we should act)
Democracy	A system in which every person has a say in how a society should be organised and run, not just a powerful few
Dialogue	Engagement between people with different approaches to life to build mutual understanding, identify common ground and, where it makes sense, engage in shared action.
Dignity	Being of value and worthy of respect (e.g. treating someone with dignity is to take their rights and wishes into account in how we treat them)
Doubt	To remain sceptical about the truth of a claim (normally due to the absence of persuasive evidence)
Empathy	The natural capacity to recognise, understand, and share the feelings of others, and can therefore support us in considering how we should treat others



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Equality	The goal that everyone should receive equal treatment and opportunities regardless of their gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disabilities, age, or marital status
Evidence	The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or claim is true
Evolution by natural selection	The scientific theory introduced by Charles Darwin that all life, including human beings, have evolved naturally over millions of years
Fallibility	The tendency to make mistakes or be wrong
Flourishing	To live a happy, personally meaningful, and fulfilling life
Freedom of thought, belief, and religion	The right to decide for oneself what one believes. This right includes freedom to change one's religion or belief. (For many humanists it includes the freedom to form one's own beliefs through a broad and balanced education.)
Freedom of expression	The right of every individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas
Golden Rule	To treat other people the way you would wish to be treated. To not treat other people in a way that you would not wish to be treated.
Good life	To live a happy, personally meaningful, and flourishing life (there is no one single answer to what makes a good life)
Happy human	The symbol used by many humanist organisations to represent humanism (designed by Dennis Barrington in 1965): http://happyhuman50th.org.uk/



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Humanity	(i) All human beings collectively. (ii) The quality of showing compassion, kind-heartedness, and respect for others.
Human rights	Moral principles that describe standards of how human beings should be treated. They are commonly understood to be held simply in virtue of being a human being.
Liberty	The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's behaviour or beliefs
Mortality	The state in which death is the end of one's personal identity
Naturalism	The belief that there are only natural laws and forces (as opposed to supernatural)
The One Life	Seeking to make the best of the one life we know we have, by creating meaning and purpose, finding happiness, and supporting others to do the same
Personal autonomy	The capacity and freedom to decide for oneself how one is going to live and the course of action one wishes to pursue
Quality of life	That which makes a life feel worth living, e.g. health, happiness, relationships, freedom, potential (this is important for humanists when considering ethical questions, e.g. assisted dying)
Reason	The capacity for consciously making sense of things, establishing and verifying facts, applying logic, and changing or justifying practices and beliefs based on new or existing information



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Rationalism	The practice or principle of basing opinions and actions on reason, science, and verifiable evidence, rather than on religious belief or emotional response
Responsibility	(i) The state of being responsible for one's own destiny and the choices one makes. (ii) The state of being responsible when making decisions about how to act for taking into consideration the needs and wishes of other people, animals, and the environment
Respect	To show regard for something's qualities (e.g. for a human being's feelings)
Scepticism	To approach knowledge from a position that recognises we are capable of making mistakes when deciding what we believe is true and to therefore begin from a position of doubt when it comes to extraordinary claims
Science	The intellectual and practical activity that seeks truth through the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the natural world through observation and experiment, an enterprise that builds and organises knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions
Secularism	The principle that state institutions are separate from religious institutions, the state is neutral on matters of religion or belief, and the guarantees the freedom of belief for all. In such a state, no one should be privileged nor disadvantaged on grounds of their religious or non-religious beliefs.
Shared human values	The almost universal values shared by human beings that can support us to judge whether an action is right or wrong



PREFERRED FORM

EXPLANATION

ﷺ - This Arabic 'logo-type' is composed of the words 'Salla-llahu alaihi wa sallam' - peace and blessings of Allah upon him. They are used by Muslims every time the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is mentioned. Similar respect is accorded to the other Prophets. 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 zakah end in 'h' when they appear alone. When part of a phrase, these words are written with a 't' at the end, eg Salat-ul-Zuhr, Zakat-ul-Fitr, as a guide to pronunciation.

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 ﷺ.
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 ﷺ, 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 was generally known, even before the revelation of Islam.
al-Aqsa	<i>Masjid-ul-Aqsa (The Farthest Mosque) in Jerusalem, located near the Dome of the Rock.</i>
al-Fatihah	<i>The Opener. 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.</i>
al-hamdu-li-Llah	<i>The Opener. 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.</i>
al-Kafi	<i>The title of the books of Hadith compiled by Muhammad ibn-Yaqub Koleini, a Shi'ah scholar.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
al-Khulafa-ur-Rashidun	<i>The Rightly Guided Khalifahs. The first four successors to the leadership role the Prophet Muhammad. They were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhum - may Allah be pleased with them).</i>
al-Madinah	<i>Madinatu'n Nabi (The City of the Prophet). The name given to Yathrib after the Prophet Muhammad migrated there in 622 CE and founded the first Islamic state.</i>
Ali	<i>Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; 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 - may Allah be pleased with them).</i>
Allah	<i>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 it is associated with masculine, feminine characteristics</i>
Allahu Akbar	<i>Allah is most great.</i>
Angels	<i>Beings created by Allah from light. They have no free will and are completely obedient to Allah.</i>
Ansar	<i>Supporters. The Muslims of al-Madinah, who welcomed, helped and supported the Muslims who migrated from Makkah.</i>
Arafat	<i>A plain, a few kilometres from Makkah, where pilgrims gather to worship, forgiveness. This takes place on the ninth day of the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah, the day before Id-ul-Adha.</i>
Asr (Salat-ul-Asr)	<i>Mid-afternoon salah which may be performed from late afternoon until a short while before sunset.</i>
As-Salamu-Alaykum	<i>Peace be upon you. An Islamic greeting.</i>
Ayah (sing.)	<i>A unit within a Surah of the Qur'an.</i>
Barakah	<i>Blessings</i>
Bilal	<i>The first Mu'adhin of Islam (see Adhan), a companion of Prophet Muhammad, formerly an Abyssinian slave (Radhi-Allahu-anhu - may Allah be pleased with him).</i>
Bismillah	<i>In the name of Allah.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir- Rahim	<i>In the name of Allah - All Gracious, All Merciful. 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.</i>
Dar-ul-Islam	<i>House or abode of Islam. Sometimes used to refer to lands ruled by Islamic Shari'ah.</i>
Da'wah	<i>Call. Inviting people to Islam, whether by literal invitation and preaching, or by the example of good actions.</i>
Dawud	<i>David (peace be upon him). A Prophet of Allah to whom the Zabur (the Book of Psalms) was given.</i>
Dhikr	<i>Remembrance. Remembrance of Allah in one's heart or by reciting His names or sections from the Qur'an.</i>
Dhimmi	<i>A non-Muslim living freely under the protection of an Islamic state.</i>
Dhul-Hijjah	<i>The month of the Hajj, last month of the Islamic year.</i>
Din	<i>Way of life, religion together with its practices.</i>
Din-ul-Fitrah	<i>A description of Islam as the natural way of life.</i>
Du'a	<i>Varying forms of personal prayer and supplication.</i>
Fajr (Salat-ul-Fajr)	<i>Dawn salah which may performed from dawn unit just before sunrise.</i>
Fard	<i>Obligatory duty according to divine law, eg, offering salah five times a day.</i>
Fatihah	<i>See al-Fatihah.</i>
Fatimah (al-Zahrah)	<i>Daughter of the Prophet Muhammad; wife of Ali; mother of Hassan, Hussein and Zainab (Radhi-Allahu-anhum – may Allah be pleased with them).</i>
Fatwa	<i>The legal guidance of a pious, just, knowledgeable Muslim scholar and jurist, based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and Islamic Shari'ah.</i>
Fiqh	<i>Understanding. Islamic jurisprudence</i>
Ghusl	<i>Greater ablution. Formal washing of the whole body prior to worship (see Wudu).</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Hadith	<i>Saying; report; account. The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, as recounted by his household, progeny and companions. These are a major source of Islamic law. Some Hadith are referred to as Hadith Qudsi (sacred Haddith) having been divinely communicated to the Prophet Muhammad.</i>
Hafiz	<i>Someone who knows the whole Qur'an by heart.</i>
Hajar	<i>Hagar. Wife of the Prophet Ibrahim, and mother of the Prophet Isma'il (peace be upon them).</i>
Hajj	<i>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.</i>
Halal	<i>Any action or thing which permitted or lawful</i>
Haram	<i>Anything unlawful or not permitted.</i>
Haram Sharif	<i>The grand mosque in Makkah, which encompasses the Ka'bah, the hills of Safa and Marwah and the well of Zamzam.</i>
Hijab	<i>Veil. Often used to describe the head scarf 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.</i>
Hijrah	<i>Departure; exit; emigration. The emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah in 622 CE. The Islamic calendar commences from this event.</i>
Hira	<i>The name of a place near Makkah, where the Prophet Muhammad went for solitude and worship. It was there that he received the first revelation of the Qur'an.</i>
Ibadah	<i>All acts of worship. Any permissible action performed with the intention to obey Allah.</i>
Iblis	<i>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).</i>
Ibrahim	<i>Abraham (peace be upon him). A Prophet of Allah to whom the 'scrolls' were given.</i>
Id	<i>Recurring happiness. A religious holiday; a feast for thanking Allah and celebrating a happy occasion.</i>
Id Mubarak	<i>Id blessings! Greeting exchanged during Islamic celebrations.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Id-ul-Adha	<i>Celebration of the sacrifice, commemorating the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Isma'il for Allah (peace be upon them). Also known as Id-ul-Kabir - the Greater Id - and Qurban Bayram (Turkish) feast of sacrifice.</i>
Id-ul-Fitr	<i>Celebration of breaking the fast on the day after Ramadan ends, which is also the first day of Shawal, the tenth Islamic month. Also known as Id-ul-Saghir - the Lesser Id - and Sheker Bayram (Turkish) - sugar feast.</i>
Ihram	<i>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.</i>
Ijma	<i>General consensus of scholars, expressed or tacit, on matters of law and practice.</i>
Imam	<i>Leader. A person who leads the communal prayer, or a founder of an Islamic school of jurisprudence. In Shi'ah Islam, Imam is also the title of Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhu - may Allah be pleased with him) and his successors.</i>
Imamah	<i>Office and function of an Imam. Religious authority in Shi'ah Islam; successor to the Prophet Muhammad as leader of the Muslim community.</i>
Injil	<i>Gospel. A book given to Prophet Isa (peace be upon him).</i>
Iqamah	<i>Call to stand up for salah.</i>
Isa	<i>Jesus. A Prophet of Allah, born of the virgin Mary (peace be upon them).</i>
Isha (Salat-ul-Isha)	<i>Evening salah which may be performed from just over an hour after sunset, until midnight.</i>
Islam	<i>Peace attained through willing obedience to Allah's divine guidance.</i>
Isma'il	<i>Ishmael. A Prophet of Allah. Son of the Prophet Ibrahim and Hajar (peace be upon them).</i>
Isnad	<i>Chain of transmission of each Hadith.</i>
Jibril	<i>Gabriel. The angel who delivered Allah's messages to His Prophets.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Jihad	<i>Personal individual struggle against evil in the way of Allah. It can also be collective defence of the Muslim community.</i>
Jinn	<i>Being created by Allah from fire.</i>
Jumu'ah (Salat-ul-Jumu'ah)	<i>The weekly communal salah, and attendance at the khutbah performed shortly after midday on Fridays.</i>
Ka'bah	<i>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.</i>
Khadijah	<i>First wife of the Prophet Muhammad. Mother of Fatimah Zahrah (Radhi- Allahu-anhum - may Allah be pleased with them).</i>
Khalifah	<i>Successor; inheritor; custodian; vice-regent (see al-Khulafa-ur-Rashidun).</i>
Khilafah	<i>The institution of the Khalifah.</i>
Khums	<i>Contribution (additional to zakah) of one fifth of surplus annual income paid by Shi'ah Muslims. Sunni Muslims only apply Khums to booty.</i>
Khutbah	<i>Speech. Talk delivered on special occasions such as the Jum'uah and Id prayers.</i>
Laylat-ul-Qadr	<i>The Night of Power, when the first revelation of the Qur'an was made to Prophet Muhammad. It is believed to be one of the last ten nights of Ramadan.</i>
Madinah	<i>See al-Madinah.</i>
Maghrib (Salat-ul-Maghrib)	<i>Sunset salah which is performed after sunset until daylight ends.</i>
Mahdi, al-Muntazar	<i>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.</i>
Makkah	<i>City where the Prophet Muhammad was born, and where the Ka'bah is located.</i>
Maryam	<i>Mary. The virgin mother of the Prophet Isa (peace be upon them).</i>
Masjid	<i>Place of prostration. Mosque.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Mihrab	<i>Niche or alcove in a mosque wall, indicating the Qiblah - the direction of Makkah, towards which all Muslims face to perform salah.</i>
Mina	<i>Place near Makkah, where pilgrims stay on the 10th, 11th and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah and perform some of the activities of the Hajj.</i>
Minbar	<i>Rostrum; platform; dais. The stand from which the Imam delivers the khutbah or speech in the mosque or praying ground.</i>
Miqat	<i>Place appointed, at which pilgrims enter into the state of ihram.</i>
Mi'raj	<i>The ascent through the heavens of the Prophet Muhammad.</i>
Mu'adhin	<i>Caller to prayer (see Adhan). Known in English as 'muezzin'.</i>
Muhammad	<i>Praised. Name of the final Prophet.</i>
Muharram	<i>First month in the Islamic calendar, which is calculated from the time the Prophet Muhammad migrated to Yathrib (Madinah).</i>
Musa	<i>Moses (peace be upon him). A Prophet of Allah to whom the Tawrah (Torah) was given.</i>
Mumin	<i>Faithful. A believer, a practising 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.</i>
Muslim	<i>One who claims to have accepted Islam by professing the Shahadah.</i>
Muzdalifah	<i>Place where pilgrims on Hajj stop for a time during the night of the day they spend at Arafat.</i>
Nabi	<i>Prophet of Allah.</i>
Niyyah	<i>Intention. A legally required statement of intent, made prior to all acts of devotion such as salah, Hajj or sawm.</i>
Qadar	<i>Allah's complete and final control over the fulfilment of events or destiny.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Qiblah	<i>Direction which Muslims face when performing salah - towards the Ka'bah see Mihrab).</i>
Qur'an	<i>That which is read or recited. The Divine Book revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Allah's final revelation to humankind.</i>
Rak'ah	<i>A unit of salah, made up of recitation, standing, bowing and two prostrations.</i>
Ramadan	<i>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.</i>
Rasul	<i>Messenger of Allah.</i>
Sa'y	<i>Walking and hastening between Safa and Marwah, as part of the Hajj, in remembrance of Hajar's search for water for her son Isma'il (peace be upon them).</i>
Sadaqah	<i>Voluntary payment or good action for charitable purposes.</i>
Safa & Marwah	<i>Two hills in Makkah, near the Ka'bah, now included within the grand mosque (see Sa'y).</i>
Sahih al-Bukhari	<i>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).</i>
Sahih Muslim	<i>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).</i>
Salah	<i>Prescribed communication with, and worship of, Allah, performed under specific conditions, in the manner taught by the Prophet Muhammad, and recited in the Arabic language. The five daily times of salah are fixed by Allah.</i>
Sawm	<i>Fasting from just before dawn until sunset. Abstinence is required from all food and drink (including water) as well as smoking and conjugal relations.</i>
Shahadah	<i>Declaration of faith, which consists of the statement, 'There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah'.</i>
Shari'ah	<i>Islamic law based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Shaytan	<i>Rebellious; proud. The devil (see Iblis).</i>
Shi'ah	<i>Followers. Muslims who believe in the Imamah, successorship of Ali (Radhi- Allahu-anhu - may Allah be pleased with him) after the Prophet Muhammad and 11 of his most pious, knowledgeable descendants.</i>
Shirk	<i>Association. Regarding anything as being equal or partner to Allah. Shirk is forbidden in Islam.</i>
Shura	<i>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.</i>
Sirah	<i>Biographical writings about the conduct and example of the Prophet Muhammad.</i>
Subhah	<i>String of beads used to count recitations in worship.</i>
Sunnah	<i>Model practices, customs and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. This is found in both Hadith and Sirah.</i>
Sunni	<i>Muslims who believe in the successorship of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (Radhi-Allahu-anhum - may Allah be pleased with them) after the Prophet Muhammad.</i>
Surah	<i>Division of the Qur'an (114 in all).</i>
Takbir	<i>Saying 'Allahu Akbar!' Recited during salah, Id and other celebratory occasions.</i>
Tawaf	<i>Walking seven times around the Ka'bah in worship of Allah. Also, a part of Hajj and Umrah.</i>
Tawhid	<i>Belief in the Oneness of Allah - absolute monotheism as practised in Islam.</i>
Tawrah	<i>The Torah. The book given to the Prophet Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him).</i>
Ulama	<i>Scholars of Islamic law and jurisprudence (sing. Alim).</i>
Umar ibn ul-Khattab	<i>Second Khalifah of Islam.</i>
Ummah	<i>Community. World-wide community of Muslims; the nation of Islam.</i>
Umrah	<i>Lesser pilgrimage which can be performed at any time of the year.</i>
Uthman	<i>The third Khalifah of Islam.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	EXPLANATION
Wudu	<i>Ablution before salah.</i>
Yathrib	<i>Town to which the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Makkah (see al-Madinah).</i>
Zabur	<i>The Book of Psalms given to Prophet Dawud (David) (peace be upon him).</i>
Zakah	<i>Purification of wealth by payment of annual welfare due. An obligatory act of worship.</i>
Zakat-ul-Fitr	<i>Welfare payment at the end of Ramadan.</i>
Zamzam	<i>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).</i>
Zuhr (Salat-ul-Zuhr)	<i>Salah which can be performed after midday until afternoon.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
<p>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.</p>		
Afikomen (Greek)		<i>Dessert.</i> Portion of a matzah eaten near the end of the Seder .
Agadah	Aggadah	<i>Telling.</i> Rabbinical teachings on moral values.
Aleinu		Key prayer at the conclusion of each service.
Aliyah		<i>To go up.</i> (i) Being called to read the Sefer Torah in the synagogue . (ii) The migration of Jews to Israel .
Amidah		<i>Standing.</i> The standing prayer said in silence during all services. Contains 18 blessings but with variations on Shabbat and festivals.
Aron Hakodesh		<i>Holy Ark.</i> The focal point of the synagogue , containing Torah scrolls.
Ashkenazim		Jews of Central and Eastern European origin.
Bar Mitzvah		<i>Son of Commandment.</i> A boy's coming of age at 13 years and a day, usually celebrated in the synagogue on the Shabbat following his Jewish birthday by the boy receiving his first Aliyah and often actually reading from the Torah and the weekly's reading from the profits. Some will also lead part or all of the service.
Bat Mitzvah	Bat Chayil	<i>Daughter of Commandment.</i> As above, but for girls from 12 years old. May be marked differently between communities.
Bet ha Kneset	Beit ha Kneset; Shul	<i>House of Assembly.</i> Synagogue .
Bimah		<i>Dais.</i> Raised platform primarily for reading the Torah in the synagogue . Where the leader of the service stands
Brit Milah	Berit Milah, Bris	<i>Covenant of Circumcision.</i> See <i>Circumcision</i> below.



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Challah	Hallah	<i>Enriched bread used particularly on Shabbat and during festivals.</i>
Chazan	Hazan	<i>Cantor Leader of reading, singing and chanting in the services of some synagogues.</i>
Chumash		<i>Five. The Torah in book form, used in the synagogue and the home. Printed in Hebrew with vowels, punctuation and notes. Also usually with English translation and commentary.</i>
Circumcision		<i>Religious rite of Brit Milah, performed by a qualified mohel on all Jewish boys, on the eighth day after birth unless the infant is not well enough for the procedure.</i>
Gemara		<i>Gemarah Commentary on the Mishnah included in the Talmud.</i>
Genizah		<i>Storage place for damaged religious texts.</i>
Haftarah		<i>Completion. Passages from Nevi'im (Prophets) read in the synagogue (linked to weekly Torah and festival readings).</i>
Hagadah	Haggadah	<i>Telling. A book used at Seder.</i>
Halakhah	Halacha	<i>The Way. Jewish Laws. The code of conduct encompassing all aspects of Jewish life.</i>
Hanukiah	Chanukiah; Menorah	<i>Nine-branched Hanukkah lamp used at the festival of Hannukah</i>
Hannakah	Chanukah	<i>Dedication. An eight-day festival of lights to celebrate the re-dedication of the temple following the Maccabean victory over the Greeks.</i>
Hasid	Chasi; Hasidim (pl.); Chasidim	<i>Pious. Member of the Orthodox movement of Hasidism</i>
Hasidism	Chasidism	<i>A religious and social movement formed by Israel Baal Shem Tov (from the 18th century onwards).</i>
Havdalah		<i>Distinction. Ceremony marking the conclusion of Shabbat.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Hebrew	Ivrit	<i>Ancient Semitic language; language of the Tenakh (Hebrew-Scriptures) and used by Jews for prayer and study. Also, everyday language in Israel.- modern Hebrew is known as Ivrit.</i>
Huppah	Chuppah	<i>Canopy used for a wedding ceremony, under which the bride and groom stand.</i>
Israel		<i>One who struggles with God. The phrase refers to the world-wide Jewish community; the land of Israel and the modern state of Israel. The name given by G-d to Jacob. Hence the term Children of Israel for the Jewish people.</i>
Kabbalah	Cabala	<i>Jewish mysticism.</i>
Kaddish		<i>Prayer publicly recited by mourners.</i>
Kashrut		<i>Laws relating to keeping a kosher home and lifestyle.</i>
Ketubah	Kettubah Ketuvim (pl)	<i>Document that defines rights and obligations within Jewish marriage. The Jewish marriage certificate which may have a decorative design.</i>
Kibbutz	Kibbutzim (pl.)	<i>Israeli collective village based on socialist principles.</i>
Kiddush		<i>Holy. A prayer sanctifying Shabbat and festival days, usually recited over wine or grape juice. Recited at the dinner table before the evening meal and another version before the midday meal.</i>
Kippah	Yamulkah; Capel	<i>Skull cap head covering worn by males during prayers, Torah study, etc. Orthodox males wear it constantly when awake.</i>
Knesset		<i>Assembly. Israeli parliament.</i>
Kol Nidrei	Kol Nidre	<i>All vows. Prayer recited on the evening of Yom Kippur.</i>
Korach		<i>Name of the leader who defied Moses in the wilderness</i>
Kosher	Kasher	<i>Fit; proper. Foods permitted by Jewish dietary laws. Also used to refer to items such as mezuzah or Torah Scroll that are fit for use.</i>
Ladino		<i>Language used predominately by Sephardim.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Magen David		<i>Shield of David, popularly called Star of David. The 6 point star.</i>
Maimonides		<i>Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1135-1204), a leading Jewish philosopher, medical writer and codifier of Jewish law.</i>
Mashiach	Moshiach; Messiah	<i>The anointed one who will herald in a new era for Judaism and all humankind.</i>
Matzah	Matzot (pl.)	<i>Flat cracker-like bread which has been baked before it rises; used at Pesach.</i>
Menorah		<i>Seven-branched candelabrum which was lit daily in the Temple initially by Aaron and then by the Cohanim.</i>
Mezuzah		<i>A small scroll placed on doorposts of Jewish homes, containing two paragraphs from the Torah hand written on parchment as the Torah. Enclosed in a metal; glass; wood or plastic case which is often decorative.</i>
Mikveh		<i>Ritual bath used for the immersion of people and objects.</i>
Minyan		<i>Quorum of ten men, over Bar Mitzvah age, required for a full service. Progressive communities may include women but do not always require a minyan.</i>
Mishnah		<i>First writing down of the Oral Tradition. An authoritative document forming part of the Talmud, codified about 200 CE.</i>
Mishkan		<i>Dwelling. The original travelling sanctuary used prior to the building of the permanent Temple in Jerusalem.</i>
Mitzvah	Mitzvot (pl.)	<i>Commandment. The Torah contains 613 Mitzvot. Commonly used to describe good deeds.</i>
Mohel		<i>Person trained to perform Brit Milah.</i>
Moshav	Moshavim (pl.)	<i>Collective village or farm in Israel.</i>
Ner Tamid		<i>Eternal light. The perpetual light above the Aron Hakodesh.</i>
Nevi'im		<i>Prophets. Second section of the Tenakh.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Noachide Laws		<i>Seven laws given to Noah after the flood, which are incumbent on all humankind. These laws form the foundation for a just society.</i>
Parev	Parveh	<i>Neutral foods, which are neither milk nor meat, eg, vegetables, eggs, fish.</i>
Pesach	Passover	<i>Festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. One of the three biblical pilgrim festivals. Pesach is celebrated in the spring.</i>
Pikei Avot	Pirke Avot	<i>Ethics of the Fathers. Part of the Mishnah containing ethics of Rabbinical sages in six chapters, read one per week at the end of the afternoon service each Shabbat from the end of Pesach to Rosh Hashanah.</i>
Pikuakh Nefesh		<i>Save a soul. The setting aside of certain laws in order to save a life.</i>
Pogrom		<i>Organised attack on Jews, especially frequent in 19th and early 20th century Eastern Europe.</i>
Purim		<i>Festival commemorating the rescue of Persian Jewry as told in the book of Esther.</i>
Rabbi		<i>My teacher. An ordained Jewish teacher. Often the religious leader of a Jewish community.</i>
Rashi		<i>Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzhak (1040 -1105). A French rabbinical scholar and leading commentator on the Torah and Talmud.</i>
Rebbe		<i>Rabbi. The term used by Hasidim for their religious leader.</i>
Rosh Hashanah	Rosh Ha-Shanah	<i>Head of the Year. Jewish New Year.</i>
Seder		<i>Order. A home-based ceremonial meal in the first two nights of Pesach, at which the Exodus from Egypt is recounted using the Hagadah.</i>
Sefer Torah		<i>Torah scroll. The five books of Moses handwritten on parchment using a quill pen and rolled to form a scroll.</i>
Sephardim	Sefardim	<i>Jews originating from Mediterranean countries, especially Spain, North Africa and the Middle East.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Shabbat	Shabbos	<i>Day of spiritual renewal and rest commencing at sunset on Friday, terminating at nightfall on Saturday.</i>
Shatnez	Shaatznez	<i>Garments containing a forbidden mixture of wool and linen.</i>
Shavuot		<i>Weeks. One of three pilgrim festivals. Shavuot is celebrated in the summer, seven weeks after Pesach. Also known as Pentecost as it is celebrated on the 50th day from the start of Pesach.</i>
Shekhina		<i>The divine presence.</i>
Shema		<i>Major Jewish prayer affirming belief in one God. The Shema is found in the Torah. and is said in the morning and evening services.</i>
Shemot		<i>Names. Seven holy names of God. The name of the 2nd book of the Torah.</i>
Shiva		<i>Seven days of intense mourning following the burial of a close relation. During this period, all ordinary work is prohibited.</i>
Shoah		<i>Desolation. The suffering experienced by European Jews at the hands of the Nazis, including the systematic murder of six million Jews between 1933 and 1945.</i>
Shofar		<i>Ram's horn blown during the morning service of Rosh Hashanah a total of one hundred notes per day. Also one blast at the end of the morning service each day during the Jewish month preceding Rosh Hashanah to herald in the New Year. It is not blown on Shabbat.</i>
Siddur		<i>Order. Daily prayer book.</i>
Simchat Torah		<i>Rejoicing of the law. Festival celebrating the completion and recommencement of the cycle of the weekly Torah reading occurring at the end of Sukkot.</i>
Sukkah	Sukkot (pl.)	<i>Tabernacle; booth. A temporary dwelling used during Sukkot</i>
Sukkot		<i>One of three biblical pilgrim (foot) festivals, Sukkot is celebrated in the Autumn. A harvest festival.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Synagogue	Shul; Bet Haknesset; Bet Hamidrash	<i>Building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly</i>
Tallit	Tallith	<i>Prayer shawl. Four-cornered garment with fringes (Tzitzis).</i>
Talmud		<i>Mishnah and Gemara, collected together.</i>
Tefillah	Tefila	<i>Self-judgement. Jewish prayer and meditation.</i>
Tefillin	Tephilin; T'filin; Phylacteries	<i>Small leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, strapped on the forehead and arm for morning prayers on weekdays.</i>
Tenakh	Tanakh	<i>The collected 24 books of the Jewish Bible, comprising three sections: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim (Te;Na;Kh).</i>
Teshuva		<i>Repentance. Returning to God.</i>
Tikkun Olam	Tikun	<i>Care for the world and environment.</i>
Torah		<i>Law; teaching. The Five Books of Moses.</i>
Tzedaka		<i>Righteousness. An act of charity.</i>
Tzitzit	Tzittit Tzitis	<i>Fringes on the corners of the Tallit. Also commonly refers to the fringed undervest worn by Jewish males.</i>
Yad		<i>Hand - pointer used in reading the Sefer Torah usually shaped like a hand with outstretched finger on the end.</i>
Yahrzeit		<i>Year-time. Anniversary of a death.</i>
Yeshiva		<i>College for study of the Torah and Talmud.</i>
Yiddish		<i>Language used predominantly by Ashkenazim. A combination of Hebrew and German.</i>
Yishuv		<i>Gathering. The Jewish community of Israel.</i>
Yom Hashoah		<i>Day to commemorate the Shoah. The Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day set by the Israeli Parliament to be 5 days after the end of Pesach.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Yom Kippur		<i>Day of Atonement. A twenty five hour fast day occurring on the tenth day after Rosh Hashanah; a solemn day of Tefillah and Teshuva. Starts at sunset the night before to nightfall.</i>
Zionism		<i>Political movement securing the Jewish return to the land of Israel.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
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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.

Names of persons and places are only included in this list if variant forms are commonly used.

Akal Purakh		<i>The Eternal One.</i> A designation frequently used of God by Guru Nanak .
Akal Takht	Akal Takhat	<i>Throne of the Eternal; throne of the Timeless One.</i> Building facing the Golden Temple in Amritsar, where Sikhs gather for political purposes.
Akhand Path		Continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end.
Amrit		<i>Nectar.</i> 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		<i>Prayer.</i> The formal prayer offered at most religious acts.
Baisakhi	Vaisakhi	<i>A major Sikh festival celebrating the formation of the Khalsa, 1699 CE.</i>
Bangla Sahib		<i>The site of the martyrdom of Guru Har Krishan (Delhi).</i>
Bhai Khanaya		<i>A Sikh commended by Guru Gobind Singh for serving water to the enemy wounded.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Bhai Lalo		<i>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.</i>
Chanani	Chandni	<i>Canopy over the scriptures, used as a mark of respect.</i>
Chauri	Chaur	<i>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'.</i>
Dasam Granth		<i>Collection of compositions, some of which are attributed to the tenth Sikh Guru, compiled some years after his death.</i>
Giani		<i>A person learned in the Sikh scriptures.</i>
Granthi		<i>Reader of the Guru Granth Sahib, who officiates at ceremonies.</i>
Gurbani	Bani, Vani	<i>Divine word revealed by the Gurus. The Shabads contained in the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Gurdwara	Gurudwara	<i>Sikh place of worship. Literally the 'doorway to the Guru'.</i>
Gurmat		<i>The Guru's guidance.</i>
Gurmukh		<i>One who lives by the Guru's teaching.</i>
Gurmukhi		<i>From the Guru's mouth. Name given to the script in which the scriptures and the Punjabi language are written.</i>
Gurpurb	Gurpurab	<i>A Guru's anniversary (birth or death). Also used for other anniversaries, e.g. of the installation of the Adi Granth, 1604 CE.</i>
Guru		<i>Teacher. In Sikhism, the title of Guru is reserved for the ten human Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Guru Arjan		<i>The fifth Guru who was the first Sikh martyr (1563-1606).</i>
Guru Gobind Singh	Guru Govind Singh (Original name: Guru Gobind Rai)	<i>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.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Guru Granth Sahib	Adi Granth (Granth' by itself should be avoided)	<i>Primal collection of Sikh scriptures, compiled by Guru Arjan and given its final form by Guru Gobind Singh.</i>
Guru Har Gobind	Guru Hargobind; Guru Hargovind	<i>Sixth Sikh Guru.</i>
Guru Har Krishan	Guru Harkrishan	<i>Eighth Sikh Guru.</i>
Guru Nanak		<i>The first Guru and the founder of the Sikh faith (1469-1539).</i>
Guru Tegh Bahadur		<i>The ninth Guru who was martyred for the principle of religious tolerance (1622-1675).</i>
Haumai		<i>Egoism. The major spiritual defect.</i>
Hukam		<i>God's will.</i>
Hukam	Vak	<i>Random reading taken for guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Ik Onkar		<i>There is only One God. The first phrase of the Mool Mantar. It is also used as a symbol to decorate Sikh objects.</i>
Janamsakhi	Janamsakhi	<i>Birth stories. Hagiographic life stories of a Guru, especially Guru Nanak.</i>
Japji Sahib		<i>A morning prayer, composed by Guru Nanak, which forms the first chapter of the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Jivan Mukht	Jivan Mukht	<i>Enlightened while in the material body; a spiritually enlightened person, freed from worldly bonds.</i>
Kachera		<i>Traditional underwear/shorts. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).</i>
Kakka	Singular of the Punjabi letter K (plural 'Kakke')	<i>See panj kakke.</i>
Kangha	Kanga	<i>Comb worn in the hair. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).</i>
Kara		<i>Steel band worn on the right wrist. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).</i>
Karah parshad	Karah Prasad	<i>Sanctified food distributed at Sikh ceremonies.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Kaur	Kes	<i>Princess. Name given to all Sikh females by Guru Gobind Singh (see Singh).</i>
Kesh		<i>Uncut hair. One of the five K's (see panj kakke).</i>
Khalsa		<i>The community of the pure. The Sikh community.</i>
Khanda		<i>Double-edged sword used in the initiation ceremony. Also used as the emblem on the Sikh flag.</i>
Kirat karna		<i>Earning one's livelihood by one's own efforts.</i>
Kirpan Sword.		<i>One of the five K's (see panj kakke). 'Dagger' should be avoided.</i>
Kirtan		<i>Devotional singing of the compositions found in the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Kirtan Sohila		<i>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.</i>
Kurahit	Guru ka Langar	<i>Prohibitions, eg intoxicants.</i>
Langar		<i>Guru's kitchen. The gurdwara dining hall and the food served in it.</i>
Mela		<i>Fair. Used of Sikh festivals which are not gurdwaras.</i>
Manji	Manji Sahib	<i>Small platform on which the scripture is placed.</i>
Manmukh	Munmukh	<i>Self-orientated (as opposed to gurmukh).</i>
Mool Mantar	Mul Mantar	<i>Basic teaching; essential teaching. The basic statement of belief at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Nam Simran	Nam Simaran; Naam Simran	<i>Meditation on the divine name, using passages of scripture.</i>
Nankana Sahib		<i>Birthplace of Guru Nanak. Now in Pakistan.</i>
Nishan Sahib		<i>Sikh flag flown at gurdwaras.</i>
Nit nem		<i>The recitation of specified daily prayers.</i>
Panj kakke		<i>The five K's. The symbols of Sikhism worn by Sikhs.</i>



PREFERRED FORM	MAIN VARIANT	EXPLANATION
Panj piare	Panj Pyare (other forms may also be found)	<i>The five beloved ones. Those first initiated into the Khalsa; those who perform the rite today.</i>
Panth		<i>The Sikh community.</i>
Patases	Patashas	<i>Sugar bubbles or crystals used to prepare Amrit.</i>
Punjab	Panjab	<i>Land of five rivers. The area of India in which Sikhism originated.</i>
Ragi		<i>Sikh musician who sings compositions from the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Rahit		<i>Sikh obligations, eg, to meditate on God.</i>
Rahit Maryada	Rehat Maryada	<i>Sikh Code of Discipline.</i>
Sadhsangat	Sangat	<i>Congregation or assembly of Sikhs.</i>
Sewa	Seva	<i>Service directed at the sadhsangat and gurdwara, but also to humanity in general.</i>
Shabad	Sabad Shabd	<i>Word. Hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib; the divine word.</i>
Sikh		<i>Learner; disciple. A person who believes in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib, and who has no other religion.</i>
Singh		<i>Lion. Name adopted by Sikh males (see kaur).</i>
Sis Ganj Sahib		<i>The site of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Delhi).</i>
Vak	Vask	<i>A random reading taken for guidance from the Guru Granth Sahib.</i>
Vand chhakna		<i>Sharing one's time, talents and earnings with the less fortunate.</i>
Waheguru		<i>Wonderful Lord. A Sikh name for God.</i>