

Glossary

Ahava

Hebrew: love and the giving of love .

Ahava Raba Ahavtanu

Deep is Your love for us, abiding is Your great compassion.

Ahura Mazda

Avestan (ancient Persian) meaning Lord of Wisdom or Wise Lord. The supreme God in the ancient Persian monotheistic religious system taught by Zoroaster sometime around 1000 BCE. Ahura Mazda is said to be the beginning and the end, the creator of everything which can and cannot be seen, the Eternal, the Pure and only Truth. Also referred to as Ormuzd.

Alhamdulillah

All praise be to God. Glory be to God.

Allah

Arabic: proper name for the Supreme Deity. The exact derivation of this word is unclear, but it is likely related to the Aramaic Alaha and to the ancient Hebrew El.

Allahu akbar

Arabic: commonly translated as: Allah is Greater, Allah is Great, or Allah is Most Great. This phrase is called Takbir.

Amin

Arabic: in this we trust, in this we have faith, amen, so be it. From the Arabic root meaning to be faithful, reliable, trustworthy; to reassure, safeguard and guarantee.

Baraka

Arabic: Blessing or grace.

Basir

Arabic: seeing, having eyesight, discernment, knowledgeable, having insight and acutely aware. The name al-Basir refers to Allah as the All-Knowing, All-Seeing, All-Perceiving.

Bhagavad-Gita

Song of the Blessed One, Song of Krishna, Celestial Song. A mystical poem (part of the Mahabharata) in which Lord Krishna summarizes the great Vedic teachings for Arjuna. Often simply referred to as the Gita .

Bhakti

Sanskrit: attachment, trust, homage devotion and worship.

Bismillah

Arabic: commonly translated as "In the name of Allah." It is a shortened version of 'Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem' (In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful) and it precedes all surahs (chapters) of the Quran except one. Bismillah is said as a blessing before eating food and other actions that are worthy of giving thanks to Allah or asking of His support.

Bodhi

Sanskrit: perfect knowledge, wisdom, enlightened intellect, learned, wise.

Bodhisattva

One who is on the way to perfect knowledge, a Buddha-to-be, one whose essence is perfect knowledge. Derived from bodhi meaning perfect knowledge or enlightened; and sattva meaning essence or true essence. The Spirit of Guidance.

Brahma

Sanskrit: the personal creator, one third of personal gods (Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Maintainer, Shiva the Destroyer).

Buddha

Sanskrit: awake, awakened, conscious, enlightened one. Generally used to refer to Siddhartha Gautama (c. 560 BC), who is also known as Shakya Muni (sage of the Shakya clan) or Buddha.

Cherag

Farsi, lamp, light, guide, director. The term cherag is also used to refer to one who is ordained in the work of the Universal Worship of the Sufi Movement.

Chishti

The Chishti Sufi Order was founded (c 900 AD) in the city of Chisht (a small town near Herat, Afghanistan) by Abu Ishaq Shami whose teacher sent him from Syria to spread the Sufi message. The Chishti Order is one of the oldest Sufi orders currently existing, and often makes great use of sound and music in its practices.

Daya

Sanskrit: sympathy; compassion; pity, mercy, clemency, kindness.

Dervish

Farsi: poor, indigent, beggar, religious mendicant.

Dharani/Dhyana Mudra

Sanskrit: The hands sweep up from the sides with palms up, meet palm-to-palm above the head, and are slowly lowered past the third eye, throat and heart centers, to the waist, then separating, moving earthward.

Dharma

Duty; that which is held fast; conduct; established decree; virtue, morality, good works; religion; ethical precepts, sacred duty. From the ancient root dhri meaning to bring forth; hold, carry, bear, support. It is said that the ultimate meaning of dharma is to be in total harmony with life, allowing the Divine Essence and Divine Will to flow through one's thoughts and actions, and consciously allowing one's own dharma to be in full accord with the Divine Dharma.



Glossary

Dhikr

Arabic: recollection, remembrance, reminiscence, commemoration; mentioning, speaking of; mention of the Lord's name; invocation of Allah.

Durood

Farsi: benediction, blessing, mercy; prayer; praise (especially of Muhammad); thanksgiving; congratulation; salutation.

El Allah Hu

Arabic: God/Allah alone exists; only the One, the all-pervading Presence.

Fana

Arabic, passing away, cessation; destruction, annihilation; vanishing, extinction; nonexistence; obliteration of the self (ego).

Fikr

Arabic: thinking, cognition, reflection, meditation, contemplation. Inayat Khan used this term to describe silent repetition, such as a wazifa. (in contrast to Zikr, which he used to describe spoken repetition).

Gautama

Siddhartha Gautama, known as Buddha. Siddhartha's mother died shortly after his birth, and her younger sister, Gautami, raised the young prince, who was then called Siddhartha Gautama.

Gopi

Sanskrit: female cowherd, cowherdess (especially applied to the companions of the playful juvenile Krishna); wife of a cowherd; milk-maid, dairy-maid; protectress, female guardian.

Guru

Sanskrit: heavy, weighty, large, great; important, serious; valuable, prized; venerable, honourable, respected; honorific appellation of a spiritual guide; a spiritual guide.

Habib

Arabic: friend; beloved, sweetheart, lover; darling; dear one. From the Arabic root h-b-b meaning to evoke love or liking; to endear; to make lovable, dear, attractive; to show affection.

Hai

Arabic: alive or living.

Hama man am

Farsi: literally "all I am"; everything is me. The esoteric meaning is that God is all, and all is God.

Haḡḡ

Arabic: living, lively, animated, energetic; al-Haḡḡ is one of the beautiful names of Allah: The Ever-Living, The Everlasting.

Hu

Arabic: (formal) huwa or (common) hu: he, it; the Arabic third person personal pronoun; often used to refer to Allah; also considered to be a mystical sound, often used in chants such as 'Hu Allah' or simply 'Hu'.

Sanskrit: to worship, honour, make a sacrifice to (especially to pour butter into the fire); to offer oblation; to call upon, invoke, summon; call by name.

Imam

Arabic: prayer leader, model, standard, criterion; that which is followed. From the Arabic root a-m-m meaning to go, to go see, to go to a place; to follow an example.

Inayat

Arabic: concern, care; grace; assistance, aid; guarding, preserving; careful, painstaking, meticulous; a gift, present, favour, bounty. From the Arabic root 'n-y meaning to be concerned; feel concern; take care of, tend to, look after, to devote one's attention.

Ishq

Arabic: love; passionate love; unconditional love that is oblivious to any shortcomings.

Ishq Allah Mahbood Allah

Ishq = unconditional love; Mahbood = beloved, worshiped, adored. Literally, Allah is Love, Allah is Beloved.

Islam

Arabic: submission, resignation, reconciliation (to the will of Allah). From the Arabic root meaning to be flawless, unimpaired, intact, sound, whole, complete; to have well-being; success. The Arabic word salaam and the Hebrew shalom have arisen from the same ancient Semitic root.

Jain

An ancient religion, deeply rooted in India, that teaches that every living thing has an eternal soul, and thus the Jains practice harmlessness to avoid harm to any living creature. The Jains believe in religious tolerance, saying that no one view can fully express reality.

Jamal

Arabic: beauty, handsomeness, grace, elegance.

Kalama

Arabic: The Spoken Word. Kalam is another word for the Qur'an. Also refers to the phrase, "La illaha ill'Allah, Muhammad ar-Rasulillah."

Krishna

Sanskrit: dark, black; the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, often represented as a young and amorous cowherd with flowing hair and flute.



Glossary

La ilaha illa-Allah

Arabic: The four individual words in the phrase have the following meanings: la = no, not, none, neither; ilaha = a god, deity, object of worship; illa = but, except; Allah = Allah. Typical translations include: There is no god but Allah; There is nothing to worship or adore except Allah. This phrase is often called tahlil (acclaim, cry out with joy), and is used in the Qur'an in sura Muhammad.

Mabud (Mahbood)

Arabic: worshipped, adored, beloved; deity. From the Arabic root meaning to serve, worship, adore, venerate, idolize, deify.

Mantra, Mantram

Sanskrit: 'instrument of thought', sacred text, song of praise, Vedic hymn or chant; spiritual instructions; mystical verse or incantation.

Mawla

Arabic: lord, master, ruler; patron; judge, magistrate; the Supreme Lord.

Moon Attunement

To explore lunar qualities and energies, Murshid Samuel Lewis suggested exhalation through the left nostril, allowing inhalation to arise naturally through both nostrils, breathing receptively into the heart, receiving from all directions. This attunement is used in many Dances and Sufi walking meditations.

Mudra

A seal, symbolized by positions of the hands or intertwining of the fingers and is used in ritual practices.

Mureed

Arabic: aspirant, disciple, follower, seeker, or an adherent.

Murshid

Arabic: advisor; leader; spiritual guide, guide to the right way; master of a spiritual brotherhood. From the Arabic root, to be on the right way, be well guided, follow the right course.

Namaste Position/Pranam Position

Bowing to partner with hands palm-to-palm at the heart, used in the traditional Hindu greeting "Namaste" ("the Divine with me greets the Divine within you").

Namaz

Farsi: prayers (especially the Muslim prayers said five times a day), adoration, worship, devotion, service, obedience.

Naqshbandi

Farsi: one of the four earliest Sufi orders; followers of the Sufi path of Bahauddin Naqshband Bukhari.

Nirvana (Nirwana)

Sanskrit: (nir = out, away, away from; vana = going, moving; as a blowing breeze or rolling waters) put out, vanished; calmed, quieted, tamed; blown out, extinguished, perfect calm, highest bliss; annihilation of desires and passions.

Om

Sanskrit: Om appears first in the Upanishads as a mystic monosyllable used as the object of profound religious meditation, the highest spiritual effects being attributed not only to the whole word but also to the three sounds a, u, m of which it consists. In later times is used as the mystic name for the Hindu triad, the union of the three gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Also considered as a divine affirmation of respectful assent sometimes translated by 'yes, verily, so be it' (in this sense compared with Amen), and also regarded as a divine salutation as 'hail!'

Om Mani Padme Hum

Buddhist mantra: Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus. The Tibetan Sanskrit is Om Mani Peme Hung. The sound of this mantra is said to be the vibration of compassion itself.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Hindu mantra: God who at once is Truth and Power, impersonal and personal, victory to Thee, victory, victory to Thee.

On the Breath

Dancing in silent awareness, holding the sacred phrase on the breath alone.

Prayer Mudra

The position of hands held at the heart, palm-to-palm with fingers pointing up.

Puja

Sanskrit: honour, worship, respect, reverence, veneration, homage (to superiors), adoration (of the gods).

Qur'an

Arabic: guidance for mankind as given to the Prophet Muhammad. From the Arabic root meaning to read, recite; deliver, transmit, convey, proclaim.

Radha

Sanskrit: prosperity, success; the name of Krishna's favourite gopi.

Raga

Sanskrit: colour, passion, joy, loveliness, beauty; musical melody.

Rahman

Al Rahman is one of the names of God. It means merciful & beneficent to all His creations.

Rahm

Arabic (rahma): pity, compassion, forgiveness; sympathy, understanding; divine mercy. The root r-h-m also indicates womb; that which provides protection and nourishment, and that from which all of creation is brought into being.



Glossary

Rama, Ram

Sanskrit, Hindi: causing rest; dark-coloured; pleasing, charming, lovely; the name of several Hindu deities considered to be incarnations of Vishnu; often indicating the seventh incarnation of Vishnu as described in the famous epic poem, the Ramayana, as the ideal of dharma and virtues. Frequently called Lord Rama or Shri Rama, his wife is Sita.

Raqs

Arabic: movement, dancing. From the Arabic root meaning to dance with joy, to set to a swinging motion, to move.

Rasulillah (or Rasoolollah)

Arabic: 'Messenger of Allah (God)'. This is one of the titles of a Messenger Prophet; A Prophet who is sent with a Message (usually a scripture) is known as a Rasool (Messenger). You will often find this word in one line of the Adhan - the call to prayer: Ash-hadu ana Muhammadun Rasoolollah - I bear witness that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah.

Ruh

Arabic: breath, wind, inspiration; breath of life; spirit; soul; human life; essence; divine inspiration, revelation. The ancient Semitic roots (which also led to the Hebrew Ruach and Aramaic Ruha) point toward the ideas of expansion and dilation; something that comes and goes; movement from the centre to the circumference; wind, breath, soul, spirit; that which moves, stirs, animates, inspires, transports.

Saki (Saqi)

Arabic, Farsi: cup-bearer; wine-server or wine-pourer. Frequently used in Persian poetry to describe the glorious Server who continually pours out wine everlasting to all of mankind.

Salat

Arabic: prayer, praying.

Sama

Arabic: listening, hearing, receiving. Often used to refer to the musical portion of a Sufi gathering. From the Arabic root meaning to hear; learn, be told, listen, pay attention to.

Sattva

Sanskrit: 'true essence'; the abode of goodness; purity. One of the three gunas. Derived from sat meaning real, true, good; and tva meaning state of being, or abode of.

Shakti

Sanskrit: power, ability, strength, might, energy, capability; faculty, skill; power over; the energy or active power of a deity (often personified as the power of the wife).

Shalom

Hebrew: peace, completeness, and welfare and can be used idiomatically to mean both hello and goodbye. As it does in English, it can refer to either peace between two entities (especially between man and God or between two countries), or to the well-being, welfare or safety of an individual or a group of individuals. Its equivalent cognate in Arabic is salaam.

Shiva

Sanskrit: the destroyer, assimilator; in whom all things lie; one of the principle Hindu deities (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Shiva the destroyer); personification of time.

Sikh (Sikhism)

Punjabi, from Sanskrit shishya meaning disciple or student. A monotheistic religion that originated during the 15th century AD in the Punjab of India, founded by Guru Nanak Dev who taught a life of simplicity and honesty. The One God is called Ek Onkar, and is often referred to as Wahe Guru (wonderful lord). By tradition, a Sikh man takes the surname Singh (lion), and a Sikh woman takes the name Kaur (princess).

Spirit

Derived from the Latin spiritus, meaning breath.

Sufi

Arabic: The exact etymology of the term Sufi is unproven, but is generally thought to be related to the Arabic Sufi which means wool, in reference to the simple wool cloaks worn by early ascetics; another theory is that it is may related to Sufi which means purity. However, scholars have generally discarded the idea that Sufi could have been derived from the Greek Sophia (wisdom).

Sufism

Arabic: mysticism.

Sun Attunement

To explore solar qualities and energies, Murshid Samuel Lewis suggested inhalation through the right nostril, allowing exhalation to happen naturally through both nostrils, breathing radiantly in the heart, shining light in all directions. This attunement is used in many Dances and Sufi walking meditations.



Glossary

Taqwa

Taqwa is a concept in Islam that is interpreted by some Islamic scholars as God consciousness. It has many further understandings and interpretations. Taqwa may mean piousness, fear of Allah, love for Allah, and self restraint. Having Taqwa allows a person to be constantly aware of both God's presence and attributes and a reminder of their relationship and responsibility to God as His creation and servant. The scholars explain that the way to taqwa is through obedience of God, avoiding disobedience, and striving to stay away from doubtful matters.

Vishnu

Sanskrit: the preserver; one of the principle Hindu deities (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Shiva the destroyer); personification of light and the sun.

Wali

Arabic: one who is near, nearby; helper, benefactor, guardian, defender; sincere friend, friend of God; saint, holy man.

Wazifa

Arabic: daily ration; task, duty; assignment, lesson; job. An esoteric practice of concentrating on certain Divine Attributes or Qualities in order to more effectively express those qualities in every moment.

Ya

The word 'Ya' is often followed by another word like Allah, so 'Ya Allah' means 'O God'.

Yaj

Sanskrit: to worship, adore, honour; to consecrate, hallow; to offer, bestow; to sacrifice.

Yaqin

Arabic: belief, conviction, certainty, certitude, true faith.

Yoga

Sanskrit: the task of yoking, connecting together; joining, junction, union; concentration, meditation; spiritual practices as a means by which the human spirit may attain union with the Supreme Spirit; the union of the individual soul with the universal soul.

Zakir

A remembrancer; a grateful person, a praiser of God.

Zarathushtra

Persian prophet, called Zoroaster by the Greeks, who founded a monotheistic religion, probably sometime around 1000 BC. The Zoroastrian religion prevailed across the Persian empire until the empire was conquered by the Arabs who brought the religion of Islam.

Zikr

Farsi: recollection, remembrance, reminiscence, commemoration; mentioning, speaking of; mention of the Lord's name; invocation of Allah. Inayat Kan used this term to describe spoken repetition, such as a wazifa. (in contrast to fikr, which he used to describe silent repetition).

