

Glossary

S

amrit – nectar; the baptismal drink of Khalsa made in iron implements mixing water and sugar wafers with the double edged sword, while each of five Khalsa recite the five daily prayers respectively; originally administered by Guru Gobind Singh

asana – yogic postures

atma – soul

avtars – incarnations of God

Bhawani – one name for the Goddess

chakra – vortex in the body

Chauri Sahib – fly whisk; waved reverently over Guru Granth Sahib or other objects of veneration

dervish – Muslim term for saint

Dharam – (Dharma) God's eternal order, from the laws of nature which hold everything from the cosmos to the sub-atomic particles in balance; applied to human life it refers to spirituality; the universal teachings of God which empower a person to maintain a righteous life and bring justice to the world

Durga Mata – the Goddess; Parvati, Lord Shiv ji's wife; usually seen riding on her tiger

Ek Onkar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru – There is one God whose name is Truth. Praise the ever more wondrous, ever greater God; Nam given by Baba Virsa Singh ji

Gurbani – the Guru's teachings, typically as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib – Holy scripture of the Sikhs, revered as the Eternal Guru

gyan – enlightenment; inner wisdom; enlightened wisdom

hukam – divine order, as transmitted through God’s messengers;
refers to daily readings from Guru Granth Sahib

Jap ji Sahib – Guru Nanak’s preamble to Guru Granth Sahib and
first daily prayer of a Sikh

Ka’aba (Ka’bah) – Holiest sanctuary of Islam in Mecca, part of
which was built by Abraham and Ismael, which contains the
sacred black stone.

kafir – unbeliever; one who suppresses the truth

Kali Yuga – the present age; considered the darkest, most corrupt
of times

karah prasad – blessed offering distributed to everyone regardless
of race or creed in every Gurdwara; a sweet pudding made of
sugar, ghee, and flour; a food for the gods that Guru Nanak
brought back from Heaven

karma – fruit of our actions, whether in this life or in the past;
literally actions

kharbs of yojans – the ancient measurement by which the distance
between planets and other heavenly bodies was described
(1 kharb yojan = 250,000,000,000,000 miles)

khir – rice pudding

kirat – Guru Nanak’s spiritual path of working hard to support
yourself and sharing the fruits of your labor with others

kirpan – sword; one of the five symbols of Khalsa; mostly worn
today as a small ceremonial sword

lakh – one hundred thousand

mu’min – in Islam, a believer; one who stands for truth

Nam – God’s Holy Name; the name of God;

Ek Onkar Sat Nam Siri Wahe Guru – There is one God
whose name is Truth. Praise the Ever more wondrous
God; Nam given by Baba Virsa Singh ji

Nami – God; the One who is named

Naniji – grandmother

nawab – local ruler

neti – infinite; that which is beyond

Panj Piaras – Five Beloveds; first five members of Khalsa that
Guru Gobind Singh personally baptized

Paramatma – God; literally, Supreme soul; Emerson’s “oversoul”

pir – Muslim saint

puja – the term for prayer and worship in Hindu tradition; form
of prayer and worship

Rabia – the great eighth-century female Muslim saint of Iraq

ragi – one who sings the Guru’s hymns; integral part of Sikh
worship

samadhi – spiritual absorption

sangat – congregation

sewa – voluntary service

sewadar – devotees who serve the community

Sahibzadas – the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh who were
martyred: the older two in battle and the younger two, by burying
them alive in a wall

shabd – God’s Holy Name; literally, word

shabds – Names of God; alternatively, hymns sung from Gurbani

Sukhmani Sahib – the psalm of bliss; Guru Arjan Dev ji’s hymn
of peace in Guru Granth Sahib

surat – attention; consciousness

The Sikh Gurus – the spiritual Light Guru Nanak Dev ji
(1469 - 1539) passed to nine successors. Guru Gobind Singh ji
(1666 – 1708) the tenth Guru, then coronated Guru Granth
Sahib, “Eternal Guru” in 1708.

The tenth door – the portal to the spiritual realm; nine portals to
the material world are visible, i.e. eyes, ears, nose, mouth, etc;

Tirthankaras – incarnations or prophets within the Jain tradition

Vedas – ancient scriptures of India