

APPENDIX B:

GLOSSARY OF CONCEPTS, PERSONS, AND PLACES

Acaranga Sutra: Sacred text in the Jain religion. Contains teachings of Mahavira.

Adab: Applied and practical ethics; respect, courtesy, and politeness; good behavior, manners and etiquettes.

Adhem, Abou Ben: See Ibn Adham.

Adi Shankara: See Shankara.

Agape: The highest form of love and charity. It is also the love God has for man and vice versa. The phrase “God is love” appears two times (4:8 and 4:16) in the *First Epistle of John*.

Agency: The inherent human capacity of decision-making and action—somewhat independently of other (external) factors, yet in consort with those factors. See chapter 15.

al-Ghazali: Eleventh-century Persian polymath. A highly influential Islamic philosopher, logician, and theologian.

Aparigraha: Non-attachment. This trait is one of the vows (*vratas*) in Jainism and one of the restraints (*yamas*) in Hinduism.

Apophysis: “Theology by Negation.” Describing something by stating which characteristic it does not have. Especially applicable in theology since human language, thought, and intellect are considered inadequate in grasping various concepts such as the Divine nature or essence.

Atma Bodha: A short text in Sanskrit attributed to Adi Shankara (see Shankara below). It describes awareness of self-knowledge.

Avicenna: See Ibn Sina.

Bahá'u'lláh: Nineteenth-century prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith. One of the two considered by the Baha'is to be Divine Messengers. The other is The Bab, who is the Herald of the Baha'i Faith. (Several phrases in this definition directly copied from Wikipedia and Bahai.org.)

Bhagavad Gita: A scripture comprising of several hundred verses; part of the epic *Mahabharata*. It is a holy scripture in Hinduism. Sometimes, *Bhagavad Gita* is shortened to *Gita*. (Literally means Divine Song or

Song by God.) Traditionally, Sage Vyasa is considered to be the author of the *Mahabharata* (and *Gita*).

Bodhisattva: One who travels on the path towards Buddhahood.

Cordovero, Moses: Sixteenth-century rabbi and Talmudic scholar who lived in Safed (in Galilee, now Israel). He is a central mystical figure in Judaism whose seminal works have been influential in the development of Kabbalah.

Deen/Din: Literally, submission or following. See chapter 10, section Structural Linguistic Limitations....

Dhammapada: One of the best-known Buddhist scriptures; a collection of the Buddha's sayings in verse form.

Dharma or Dhamma: A fundamental concept in Indic religions with many meanings and connotations. "Moral and religious duty" would perhaps provide the simplest understanding today. Dharma in Sanskrit and Dhamma in Pali signify the same concept.

Diwan: A complete collection of poems by one poet. Sometimes this may exclude the really long poems (such as Rumi's *Masnavi*). The word simply implies a form of poetry collection; it does not reflect the type of poetry in that collection.

Dukkha or Duhkha: A foundational concept in Indic religions especially Buddhism. In Buddhist thought, it indicates the nature of all existence. "Suffering" is the usual translation into English, though there is more to the word's connotations. Sukha would be one of its antonyms.

Eckhart: See Meister Eckhart.

Ein Sof: In Kabbalah, refers to God prior to any self-manifestation. The expression's translation would be "without end" or "unending." It is understood to mean "infinite." It is believed that Rabbi Azriel of Gerona may have been the first person to make such use of the expression.

Enlightenment: The intellectual and philosophical movement in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Various ideas (liberty, tolerance, separation of church and state, etc.) considered so fundamental today to the Western civilization came out of this period. Also known as the Age of Reason or the Age of Enlightenment.

Enneads: Six-volume collection of the writings of Plotinus, a Hellenistic philosopher who was born in Roman Egypt around 200 AD. Porphyry, a student of Plotinus, compiled the work.

Erasmus: Sixteenth-century Dutch philosopher and Catholic theologian, considered to be a noted scholar of his time. His place in

Renaissance humanism can be seen by the “Prince of the Humanists” sobriquet he still enjoys.

Etymology: Study of the history of words and linguistic forms; analysis of a word to find its origin or original meaning.

Exegesis: Critical interpretation and explanation of a text, usually a religious one.

Faiz, Faiz Ahmed: Famous twentieth-century Pakistani poet and intellectual. His people-centered and inspiring poetry is well known the world over.

Fatwa: Consult, Opinion, Advice, Ruling. In Islam, it means a legal-theological consult; the notion finds its origin in the *Qur'an* (4:127, 176 etc.). The opinion-seeker goes to an expert for a consult. (The seeker may even be a civil judge or a ruler.) The advice of the expert is non-binding and does not apply to any person or institution other than the fatwa petitioner. Just like other concepts in the hands of religious establishments, the notion of fatwa has also evolved into all kinds of opportunistic interpretations. For further clarification, see Berger, Maurits S. “Fatwa.” In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t342/e0003> (accessed Apr 24, 2022).

Genjokoan: Well-known and influential essay by Dogen Zenji, founder of Soto School in Zen Buddhism. As Shohaku Okumura explains, “Genjokoan begins with an explanation of Zen and then goes on to elucidate delusion and realization, wholehearted practice, and the relationship of self to realization and environment.” (*Realizing Genjokoan: The Key to Dogen's Shobogenzo*, p 23-24.)

Ghalib: Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan Ghalib is considered the all-time greatest Urdu poet. He lived in India in the nineteenth century.

Gita: See *Bhagavad Gita*.

Gurdwara: Place of assembly and worship for Sikhs. People from all backgrounds and faith are welcomed to any Gurdwara Sahib.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji: Fifth of the Sikh Gurus, who compiled the first official edition of *Adi Granth*, which later expanded to become the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Lived in the sixteenth century. (“Ji” is an honorific in Indic languages and signifies love and respect.)

Guru Granth Sahib: The holy religious scripture in Sikhism.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji: Founder of Sikhism and the first Guru of the religion. Lived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Hadith: Collection of Prophet Muhammad’s reported sayings and actions. The earliest one was compiled some two centuries after the Prophet’s death. The word literally means tradition. Hadith Qudsi (sacred tradition) is something Prophet Muhammad said to convey God’s message (this is different from the *Qur’an* which is God’s direct revelation).

Haft Vadi, Chahar Vadi: Two mystical treatises in the Persian language written by Bahá’u’lláh, founder of the Bahai Faith. Literal meaning: Seven Valleys, Four Valleys.

Hobbesian: In accordance with political philosopher Thomas Hobbes’s doctrines and ideas, especially the belief that humans naturally compete and fight exclusively for their own interests.

Holistic: Theory that systems (biological, physical, social) can be optimally viewed as wholes, not a mere collection of parts. This is in contrast to the concept of reductionism. Holism is a neologism coined by Jan Christian Smut of South Africa.

Ibn Adham, Ibrahim: An eighth-century Sufi saint, he was born in Balkh, currently in Afghanistan—the same place where Rumi was born. Rumi wrote about Ibrahim in the *Masnawi*. Ibrahim was born a prince and became the monarch of his kingdom. He, however, left everything and chose an ascetic life. It is believed that a Christian monk named Simeon was Ibn Adham’s earliest spiritual teacher.

Ibn Arabi: A twelfth and thirteenth century Arab Andalusian Muslim scholar, philosopher, poet, and mystic. He would arguably be one of the most prolific authors who ever lived. His place as a recognized saint (*waliallah* in Islam) earned him the honorific *al-Shaykh al-Akbar* (the Greatest Shaykh). Even in medieval Europe, he enjoyed the sobriquet *Doctor Maximus* (the Greatest Teacher). As for the present time, Yale’s Professor Robyn Creswell says that Ibn Arabi “represents a grand synthesis of Sufi thought. Ignorance of his works in the West is one of the great scandals of intellectual history.”

Ibn Sina: Avicenna. Eleventh-century Persian polymath whose works span the field of medicine, philosophy, physics, mathematics, theology, logic, psychology, geology, geography, and astronomy. His *Canon of Medicine (al-qanun fi al-tibb)* was used as a standard medical text in Europe until the eighteenth century.

Identity: The term “identity” in this book is used mostly in the sense of social, group, and collective affiliation based upon such classifications as national, religious, gender, racial, ethnic, etc. See chapter 4 for a fuller discussion.

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Ihsan: Beauty in action or pursuit of excellence. A Qur'anic concept mentioned scores of times in the holy book. (See chapter 18, subtitle "Non-Separation ...").

Iqbal, Muhammad: Twentieth-century South Asian Muslim philosopher and politician. An acclaimed poet, he wrote his verse in Urdu and Farsi.

ISI: Inter-services Intelligence. Pakistan's military intelligence agency.

ISIL or ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Also known as Islamic State and Daesh. A militant and extremist group that derives its inspiration from its version of Islamic teachings. Saudi Arabia is known to have been its biggest supporter (before developing its own curriculum, ISIL even used Saudi textbooks in its "education" system). In 2014, ISIL came to prominence when it conquered certain areas in Iraq and Syria—establishing a state and engaging in various types of atrocities.

Janissary: A loyal or subservient supporter or troop who exhibits unquestioning loyalty and enthusiasm for a leader or a cause.

Kaaba: The cube-shaped building in Mecca that is considered the most sacred site in Islam. This is the point (qibla) Muslims face towards when performing the daily ritual prayers.

Kabbalah: Esoteric discipline and school of thought in Judaism. It provides the foundation of mystical religious thought, interpretation, and practice within Judaism.

Lao Tzu or Laozi: Ancient Chinese philosopher considered to be the author of *Tao Te Ching* and the founder of philosophical Taoism. He is believed to have lived somewhere in the 6th-4th century BCE time period. The name is an honorific title that translates to "old and venerable master."

Luria, Isaac: Sixteenth-century leading rabbi and mystic, who has a central place in today's Kabbalah. His literary works are few, yet his spiritual enlightenment drew followers towards him. Some traditions say that Luria arrived in Safed the exact day of Rabbi Cordovero's funeral. There also are accounts that he was Cordevero's student for a short time. The concept of Tikkun is part of Lurianic Kabbalah.

Maharshi, Ramana: 19th and 20th century Indian Hindu sage. He prescribed self-enquiry and self-awareness as the main paths towards removing ignorance and gaining happiness.

Mahavira: Spiritual guide in Jainism. As Britannica says, "Technically, the 24th of the Tirthankaras (meaning ford-maker or savior of the Jain

community), Lord Mahavira is believed to have lived around the 6th century BCE.” The honorific Mahavira translates to “great hero.” He is believed to have been an older contemporary of the Buddha.

Masnavi: Rumi’s magnum opus. See Chapter 11 for a fuller discussion.

Meister Eckhart: 13th–14th century Christian theologian, mystic, and philosopher. He was born in what is now Germany in the Holy Roman Empire.

MI6: Formally Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), is the foreign intelligence service of the United Kingdom. MI6 may be considered the equivalent of the CIA. (**MI5** is responsible for domestic counterintelligence.)

Mysticism: Spirituality that is aware and accepting of human relation and connection with God, resulting in an integral and inseparable consciousness of the unceasing Divine Presence. Religion (way of life, state of being) as it emerges from such consciousness is simultaneously passionate, profound, and humble.

Nihilism: The most common and popular implication is the rejection of all social and political institutions, or that life itself is without intrinsic purpose and values. More formally, the philosophy has more complex facets.

Obscurantism: Resistance to, or effort to disallow, the spread of knowledge; a policy of withholding knowledge from the general public.

Operation Cyclone: Code name for CIA’s program to arm and finance the Afghan mujahideen in Afghanistan (against the Soviet invasion) from 1979 to around 1992. See chapter 1.

Panna or Prajna: Discernment; used as an important concept in Indic philosophy and religions.

Rabi’a al-Adawiyya: Also called Rabi’a of Basra. Eighth-century Sufi Muslim. She is considered one of the cardinal saints (waliallah) in Islam.

Ramakrishna: Nineteenth-century Indian Hindu mystic from Bengal. After his spiritual practice and deliberation, he came to the conclusion that various religions represent various paths to the same goal.

Reductionism: Idea or philosophy that a phenomenon can be understood in terms of other simpler or more basic phenomena. Also, a position that interprets or understands a complex system as the sum of its parts. See holism also as a contradictory concept.

Rig Veda: Ancient Indian collection of hymns. One of the four sacred canonical texts in Hinduism, it is the oldest known Vedic Sanskrit text and among the oldest extant texts in Indo-European language. (Rig Veda would translate to praiseful knowledge.)

Rousseau, Jean Jacques: Eighteenth-century Genevan philosopher whose political philosophy influenced the progress of Enlightenment in Europe (and may have had some influence on the French Revolution). Highly influential in modern political thought, Rousseau is today considered one of the most important Enlightenment thinkers.

Rumi: Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi; author of the *Masnavi*. See chapter 11.

Samadhi: In Indic religions, a state of meditative consciousness attained by practicing dhyana (withdrawing the mind away from sensory perceptions into a state of equanimity and awareness).

Santosha: Contentment and satisfaction; an important ethical and practical concept in Indian philosophy.

Sefirot: In Kabbalah, the Ten Sefirot—singular Sefirah—are Ein Sof's revealed attributes / emanations that interact with each other and the world. See chapter 13 for more information.

Seva: A common word in Indian languages denoting service. In Indic religions, it signifies selfless dedication to others and service performed without the expectation of anything in return.

Shankara: Eighth-century Indian Vedic scholar who is the preeminent proponent of the Advaita Vedanta tradition. Same person as Adi Shankara.

Shari'ah: For nuances in the concept, see chapter 10, subtitle "Structural Linguistic Limitations ...".

Society: The human collective, with a thread of commonality, that is interdependent or connected with one another. It may be a clan, a village, a whole country, or all of humanity. This extended community network creates kinship bonds on various possible dimensions: moral, traditional, spiritual, sartorial, linguistic, artistic, culinary, commercial, etc. Society thus is that collective where mutual dependence and forming take place. "Value" then is the most salient aspect of this process of mutual dependence and formation.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib: See Guru Granth Sahib.

Sufism: See Tasawwuf.

Structure: See chapter 3, subtitle "Structure and Corruption: Defining ... the Concepts."

Sukha: A concept in Indic religions that translates to bliss, happiness, ease. Dukkha would be one of its antonyms.

Systematic: Methodical. Following a set methodology, schedule, arrangement, or pattern.

Systemic: What relates to or affects an entire system. In an interconnected system, change at point A may cause a change at Point M.

Tagore, Rabindranath: 19th–20th century Indian polymath from Bengal. He was a philosopher, composer, playwright, and painter. As a poet, he is known for the beautiful verse in *Gitanjali*, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 1915, King George V awarded knighthood to Tagore, which he repudiated in 1919 in the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre by the British forces. In his renouncement letter, he wrote: “The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation ...”

Tao Te Ching: Classic Chinese text traditionally credited to Lao Tzu. It is believed to have been written in the fourth century BCE. Along with *Zhuangzi*, *Tao Te Ching* is a fundamental text for Taoism (both religious and philosophical). Next to the *Bible* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Tao Te Ching* is the world’s most translated book.

Tasawwuf: Also known as Sufism. Within Islam, a school of thought that emphasizes spirituality, esotericism, and relative asceticism. It has also been defined as Islamic mysticism (which is a bad definition since the word “mysticism” does not have an objective definition and is generally used pejoratively). Rumi and his *Masnawi* are examples of Tasawwuf.

Te: Moral force, character, virtue, personality, integrity, etc. See chapter 10, subtitle “Shifting Meaning of Words.”

Teshuva: In Judaism, repentance with the primary purpose of ethical self-transformation.

Tikkun: See chapter 15, subtitle “Tikkun and its Place” for an elaboration of the concept.

Upanishads: Hindu philosophy texts of the late Vedic era. Commonly referred to as Vedanta, the Upanishads deal with diverse topics such as meditation, consciousness, philosophy, and ontology. Around a hundred Upanishads are known, of which a dozen or so are considered the principal Upanishads.

Uttaradhayana Sutra: An important sacred book in Jainism that deals with aspects of doctrine and discipline.

Wahhabism: A Sunni Muslim revivalist movement associated with the doctrines of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an eighteenth-century

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preacher. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar are the only two countries with Wahhabi majority, though Saudi Arabia has spent tens of billions of dollars to promote its religiopolitical ideology all over the world.

Waheguru: Word used for God in Sikhism. The word “wah” in this name comes from Persian and is an interjection of awe, admiration, and delightful bewilderment. “Wondrous Teacher” would be the literal translation of the word.

Yochai: Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was a second century sage and teacher in ancient Judea.

Zeitgeist: A German concept meaning spirit of the time or age. It signifies an invisible force influencing a certain era in human history. Rev. Martin Luther King used this word frequently.

Zenji, Dogen: Thirteenth-century Japanese Buddhist philosopher and poet who founded the Soto school of Zen.

Zohar: Foundational text in Kabbalah. It addresses various theological subjects and includes commentary on the mystical aspects of the *Torah*. Within Orthodox Judaism, the traditional view has been that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is the author of Zohar. Gershom Scholem’s research in the twentieth century, however, established that Rabbi Moses de Leon (thirteenth century) authored it. Now it is widely believed, especially within academic circles, that de Leon was the author of this key text.

Zoroaster: Also Zarathushtra, Zardosht. Ancient Iranian spiritual leader (prophet); founder of what is now called Zoroastrianism. While there is no consensus, he is believed to have lived around the sixth century BCE.

Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu): Along with *Tao Te Ching*, it is one of the two ancient Chinese foundational texts of Taoism. It is attributed to and named after its traditional author Zhuangzi (Master Zhuang). Though mainly philosophical, it also enjoys a prominent place amongst the greatest literary works in Chinese history. It is believed to have been authored around 400 BCE.