

Religious Artefacts

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Buddhism

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Prayer flags



Prayer flags are tied between tree to tree, from a pole or ascending from a rock on the ground to the highest branches. They intend to link the earth to the sky. Prayer flags represent the 5 elements of the Earth. Blue represents the sky, white for the air, red for fire, green for water and yellow for the earth. All colours together signify balance. Many prayer flags have the wind horse painted on them.

Each time the flags flutter in the breeze the mantra written on them is sent into the wind, blessing everything as they go. Prayer flags are not taken down unless the string is broken. They are simply replaced when frayed and dull. This reminds Buddhists of the eternal circle of life. If the string should break they must not touch the ground. The prayer flags are dropped into a fire which sends the prayers out into the air completing the circle of birth and death.



Thankga

Thangkas are a material representation of Buddha. They are covered up until prayer when they are folded from the middle of the cloth and tied at the top. It gives a Buddhist a focal point and aids concentration. After praying, the image is covered again and sometimes the thangka is taken down completely and rolled up for the next time. This is a relatively small example. Some thangkas may take up an entire wall.





Buddha

(picture)

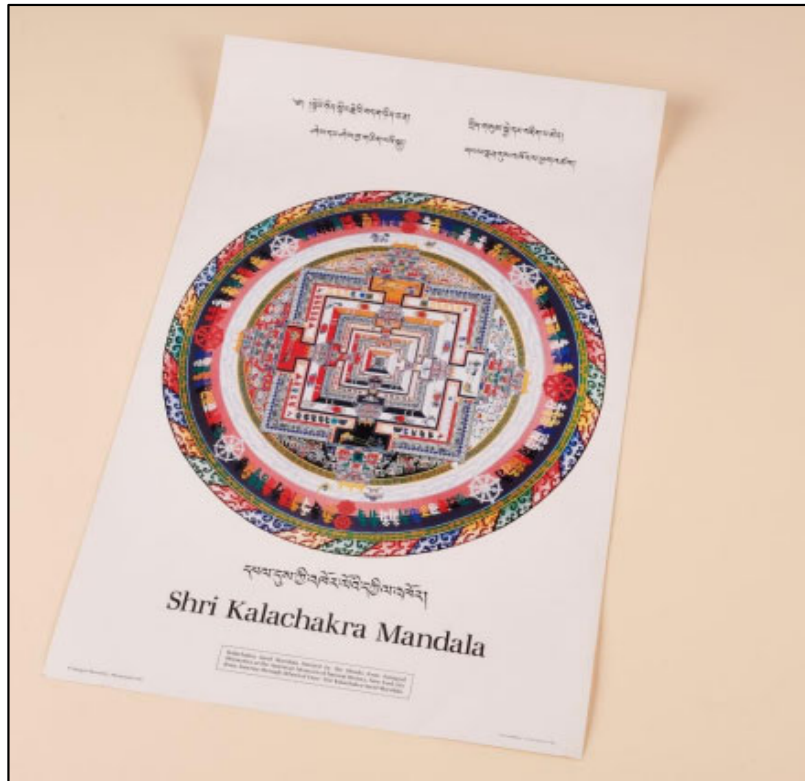
Siddhartha Gautama became enlightened whilst sitting under a tree. Buddha means enlightened. The tree was therefore named the Bodhi tree which means the tree of awakening. The glowing halo around Buddha's head represents his holiness. His palm is facing outwards as a sign of peace and his other hand is facing the sky. His legs are crossed in the lotus position for meditation.



Wheel of life

(picture)

The Wheel of Life is one of the most common subjects of Buddhist art. It shows Samsara, the cycle of birth and rebirth. There are Buddha figures in the corners and the Lord of the Underworld, Yama, holding the Wheel in his hooves. He is not evil, but devotes his life protecting Buddhism and Buddhists. The Wheel of Life is a diagram of our own life. You may even recognise some characters doing what you would do.



Mandalas

Mandalas are in the shape of a circle and usually made from coloured. It takes many days to complete a mandala. It is then viewed, destroyed and swept away. This reminds Buddhists that nothing lasts forever. It represents the universe and is a guide to enlightenment. Mandalas are used to help prayer and meditation as creating one calms and restores the artist's inner peace and wisdom.



Incense

Incense is lit to freshen and perfume the air. This helps relaxation and to soothe and focus the mind. It is used in Buddhist temples and shrines when worshipping Buddha. The fragrance spreads far and wide, just as a good deed benefits many others. As the smoke rises in the air it disappears reminding Buddhists that nothing lasts forever.



Prayer bell

Bells are used as a call to prayer to allow time for people to settle and be ready. Buddhists will hold the bell in their right hand representing wisdom. The sound created a space of calm, stillness and awareness of the present moment in time by taking your mind off other things.



Mala beads

Buddhist mala beads consist of 108 wooden or plastic beads with one extra bead to mark the beginning and end. Malas are used to help focus the mind and by used to help focus the mind and by using the beads to count 108 chants whilst praying. 108 is a sacred number in Buddhism. These mala beads are usually worn around the right wrist and never touch the ground.



Dorje/Vajra

Dorje means thunderbolt and diamond. It is often used in meditation as a symbol linking everyday life to spiritual life. The dorje is held in the left hand referring to action and the bell is held in the right hand referring to wisdom.



Buddharupa

Buddharupa is the ancient word for statues or models of Buddha. They display Buddha at different parts of his life, for example, some Buddharupa are lying down, others standing or sitting, as a prince or as the enlightened one.

The tallest Buddharupa is in Thailand standing at 92 meters.



Laughing Buddha

The Laughing Buddha is considered a man of good and loving character. He is usually shown smiling or laughing.

According to legend, should anyone rub the belly of a Laughing Buddha it brings forth wealth and good luck. Keeping a Laughing Buddha at home is said to make a happy home.



Butter Lamp and Wicks

Butter lamps are found in all Buddhist temples and shrines.

Each morning they are lit to represent the wisdom of Buddha. The butter lamp is usually placed between the fourth and fifth offering bowls. They are used to help meditation and to focus the mind. It is said 'If you wish to reach full realisation, offer hundreds of light.'



Offering Bowls

Seven water offering bowls are traditionally set out at a Buddhist shrine. The bowls are upturned and stacked.

The top bowl is filled with water. Some of this water is poured into the next bowl then the first bowl is placed as an offering. This is repeated to ensure no empty bowls are offered. Then all bowls are filled within a barley grain width to the top with more water. At the end of the day The bowls are emptied from right to left and stacked down in readiness for the next morning.



Prayer Wheel

Prayer wheels contain a very thin paper roll wrapped around a spindle called the Life Tree. On the paper are written thousands of mantras (prayers, blessings) and with every turn of the wheel these mantras are sent out into the wind thus thousands of prayers are sent at each spin. Prayer Wheels may be handheld or large cylindrical wheels from floor to ceiling.



Lotus Flower

The Lotus flower is a symbol of purity. Other religions also use the Lotus flower as a sacred symbol. It begins its life in the dark mud and sludge at the bottom of a pond and as it grows it works through the mud and water. However, when it blooms the petals are not dirty nor are they wet. The Lotus must come to the surface to open. Its roots can be eaten and its stems and leaves can be used for medicine. The leaves can be used as wrapping or in the past they used to use it as paper. Once the Lotus dies the seed pods can also be eaten then the pod itself is used for medicine too.

Lotus flowers have a very delicate smell, and they are very beautiful which brings pleasure. Buddhists compare humans with great wisdom to the Lotus flower.

Hinduism

Diwali Cards

Puja Tray

Arti lamp

Ganesh Murti

Ramayana

Brahma

Shiva Nataraja

Prayer shawl

Rakhi

Janoi

Diva

Incense

Deities

Aum

Bhagavad Gita

Garlands

Chunari





Diwali Cards

Diwali is the Light Festival for Hindus. A celebration of good winning over evil, bringing light where there was dark and recalling the story of Rama and Sita's joyous return from exile. The celebration lasts five days in which Hindus clean and prepare their house, decorate and make special food, meet up with friends and family as well as sharing gifts and cards. The Goddess Laxmi is also worshipped at his time to bring prosperity into the household for the upcoming year.

Rangoli patterns are created on the paths and entrances to welcome visitors in. Divas and fireworks are lit to banish the darkness.



Puja Tray

Most Hindus worship daily at home at a small shrine containing a Puja tray. This is used as a focal point for worship and prayer. There are seven items on a Puja tray.

A bell is rung to let God know someone has come to worship and to invite them into their home. Incense is lit to carry the prayers to the deity and has a pleasant smell to purify the air. A spoon and pot are used to offer water to the gods, just as we would offer a drink to a visitor in our own home. The diya lamp brings light to the shrine which is a symbol of God's presence. A small dish holds kum kum powder to mark both the forehead of the image of a deity and their own as a sign that they are blessed.



Arti lamp

The arti is a Hindu religious ritual of worship. It involves prayers for thanksgiving to the deities and when Hindus are reminded of God's presence. The arti lamp has five flames representing five elements – water, fire, wind, air and earth. The ceremony of light is performed by moving The arti lamp in front of the images of gods and goddesses to fill the flames with love and blessings.



Ganesh Murti

Murti are sacred images of deities and are important for Hindus during worship. Murti help Hindus develop and express their relationships with God. There are many different gods in Hinduism and each is different in their own unique way.



Ramayana

The Ramayana is an Indian epic about Lord Rama's quest to rescue Princess Sita, his beloved wife, from an evil demon.

Reading the Ramayana is similar to a religious act, such like praying. Lord Rama and Princess Sita are shown here with Hanuman the Money King and Lakshman, Rama's Brother. Rama is shown carrying a bow and some arrows which were presented to him by the gods to fight. They are symbols of Rama's strength, goodness and relationship relationship with the gods.



Brahma

Brahman, the supreme God for Hindus, is divided into three Deities, one of which is Brahma (The Creator). Brahman, the supreme God for Hindus, is divided into three deities, one of which is Brahma (The Creator). Brahma, together with Siva (The Destroyer) and Vishnu (The Carer) are called the Trimurti. Brahma has four heads looking in all directions.

This murti (statue) shows three of Brahma's heads - there is one we can't see that looks behind him. This murti (statue) shows three of Brahma's heads – there is one we can't see that looks behind him.



Shiva Nataraja

Lord Shiva is responsible for destroying the universe, along with Brahma who creates it and Vishnu who protects it. His wife is Parvathi and they are the father and mother of the universe. Ganesh is their son. Shiva has four hands and holds a deer, a skull and a drum. He had gathered these items from the wise men that argued with him. He was so cross that he started to dance. Everyone was mesmerised.



Prayer shawl

This is a sacred prayer shawl long enough to wrap around in total devotion during prayer and meditation. The writing is in ancient Sanskrit and, together with the patterns, surrounds the wearer with energy.



Rakhi

Raksha Bandhan is the Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. Sisters make a Rakhi bracelet for their brothers to say thank you for protecting them and in return the brothers offer a gift back.



Janoi

Janoi means 'sacred thread.' The thread is given to a boy who commits himself to Hinduism and starts to learn about his religion. He will wear the thread around his body all his life. This special occasion is a rite of passage called Upanayanam. The thread is made up of three strands representing good actions, thought and words.



Divas

Divas are often used in worship but are widely recognised as the candle is lit during the light festival of Diwali. The light brings good wishes to the home. They can be made very simply out of clay or highly decorated. Often more than one diva is used at a time.



Incense

Incense is often used in Hinduism. It is used for prayer (puja), meditation, rituals and as an offering. Incense cleans the air and helps to clear the mind ready for worship. As the smoke rises as do the prayers.



Deities (picture)

Hindus believe there are over 33 million gods and goddesses but only some are shown in pictures and statues, images and models. These are displayed in shrines and homes as a focus to prayer. Each deity has its own story to tell which describes its personality and relationship and to other Gods. Pictured here we have Krishna and Laxmi.



Aum

Aum or Om is the first sound whispered in a newborn baby's ear. It is considered the most sacred and greatest of all mantras (sound and prayer). Aum means God and all creation – the entire universe. It is chanted during meditation to calm the body and mind. Aum is also used as the main symbol for Hinduism and can be found everywhere in Hindu art, jewellery, patterns, pictures, pictures, murti and shrines.



Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita is known as the Song of God. It is among the most important religious texts of Hinduism and teaches Hindus the secret wisdom of life.



Garlands

Flowers are used for decorations and offering at the Hindu temple. Flower garlands are strung up around doors and used at weddings and other celebrations.



Chunari

The chunari is an important item of clothing used as a scarf, head wear and also as a covering or display cloth at a shrine. Chunari are usually hand made with brightly coloured embroidered fabric.

Islam

Hajj Ihram and Belt

Hijab and Topi

Prayer Mat

Mecca and Medina

Qur'an

99 Beautiful Names of Allah and Calligraphy Writing

Eid

Tasbeih Beads





Hajj Ihram and Belt

An important journey or visit to a holy place is called a pilgrimage. Muslims call this journey Hajj. Muslims aim to make the journey to Mecca in Saudi Arabia at least once in a lifetime. Mecca is where the prophet called Muhammad lived and died. When Muslims go on Hajj they wear two robes called Ihram around their body and shoulders held together with the belt which carries the only items they require. They do not take many things with them – a passport, medicine and money is all that is really needed. Hajj is all about worshipping Allah (God) and strengthening faith. Hajj is the Fifth Pillar of Islam.

Hijab and Topi



Hijab means veil. Muslim women choose to either cover Their whole body, or their face or just their hair. This Hijab is used like a scarf around the head covering up the hair. Muslim women will wear a hijab out in public but when they get home they may take it off amongst family members. It is an outward sign of their faith, telling everyone they are Muslim, as well as covering up to keep private. Men sometimes wear a little hat called a topi. This is out of respect for the elders and for Allah (God) when praying. The Prophet Muhammad also used to wear a little hat called a topi. This is out of respect for the elders and for Allah (God) when praying. The Prophet Muhammad also used to wear a hat so some Muslim men like to do the same.



Prayer Mat

Similar in other religions, praying (Salat), is an important act of worship. Salat is the Second Pillar of Islam. Allah ordered Muslims to pray at five set times of the day. In Islamic countries, Muslims know that it is time to pray when they hear the call to prayer from Mosques. When a Muslim prays they kneel on the floor and prayer. Muslims always face towards Mecca, the birthplace of The Prophet Muhammad – the founder of Islam. The compass (qiblah) helps to find this direction.



Mecca and Medina

Mecca is in Saudi Arabia and is the holiest city in Islam; Medina being the second. The Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, is entombed under the Mosque with the green dome. This is called The Prophet's Mosque. Only Muslims are allowed to enter the city of Medina.



Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad received these holy words from the Angel Jibra'il whilst praying in a cave at the outskirts of Mecca, in Saudia Arabia. The Qur'an is protected by putting it in a cloth or a precious box and placing it up high on a shelf. Muslims use a stand to hold the book safely. Like all other holy texts, the words offer guidance, stories and instructions. The Qur'an is written in Arabic and is read from right to left. Muslims try to learn the Qur'an off by heart and recite it out loud.



99 Beautiful Names of Allah and Calligraphy writing

Like many of us, Allah (G0d) is called many different Names. In fact, Allah has 99 Beautiful Names. They are sung and recited in prayer. The words of the Qur'an, which is the Holy book for Muslims, are so precious that they used to decorate mosques and are often displayed on walls as pictures.

Eid



Eid Ul-Fitr is the festival celebrated at the end of the Muslim holy month. During Ramadan, Muslims fast during day light hours to allow time to empathise and understand how others feel who have less. It is a time of self-evaluation and determination. Eid is a happy time thanking Allah for all that is received. Families and friends get together, wear new clothes, eat special food, decorate houses and give gifts. Muslims greet each other saying, 'Eid Mubarak!' meaning 'Blessed Eid!' There is another Eid in the Muslim year called Eid al-Adha. This is known as Little Eid but is thought to be more sacred. It is the Festival of Sacrifice. Eid al-Adha reminds Muslims of the sacrifice the Prophet Ibrahim made to Allah (God).



Tasbih Beads

Many religions use prayer beads to help with counting.

There are 100 beads on a string of Tasbih. 99 beads represent the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah and one last bead to hold when starting to pray to encourage peace. sometimes there are only 33 beads which would be used three times.

Judaism

Mezuzah Case
Shabbat Candlesticks and Candles
Challah Bread
Tefillin
Kiddush Cup and Saucer
Tallit
Kippah
Siddur
Bar and Bat Mitzvah Cards
Havdalah Candle and Spices
Kosher Stickers





Mezuzah Case

A mezuzah is a container for a holy scroll, though this one is empty so the scroll isn't damaged. The mezuzah is placed at a slant on the right-hand side of the front door. sometimes, it is also on doorposts inside a Jewish household too, particularly the dining room. Every time a Jewish person enters or leaves their home they will touch it as a way of sending blessings and to remember their commitment to God. It also shows everyone that the household follows Jewish rules.



Shabbat Candlesticks and

Two candles are lit at sunset on Friday evening to welcome in the Sabbath (Shabbat) which means holy day of rest. This finishes at sunset on Saturday evening. Jewish parents bless their children before the meal begins and bread and wine is shared. The candles are left lit until they burn to the wick. Shabbat candles are never blown out. Jewish people remember stories from their past and rest, as God did on the seventh day after creating the world.



Challah Bread

Challah (pronounced Harla) is braided loaf of bread eaten on the Jewish Sabbath and on holidays. Usually two loaves of challah are covered with a white cloth to represent dew that collected in the morning during the long exodus to the Promised Land. The dough for the challah uses plenty of eggs so the bread has a soft and fluffy texture.



Tefillin

Tefillin are a pair of small black boxes containing sacred Hebrew text. One box is tied at the hair line with a strap hanging over each shoulder. The other box is worn on the bicep of the weakest arm facing towards the heart. The long strap is then wrapped around the length of the arm and around the hand. This is so the words of the Torah are ever in their thoughts.

Men usually wear tefillin every morning during prayers apart from Saturday or festive holidays.

These tefillin are simply toys for Jewish children to pretend to be grown-ups with. It would be disrespectful to handle and play with real tefillin.



Kiddush Cup and Saucer

The Kiddush cup is filled with wine or grape juice and is placed on the Shabbat table on a Friday evening or on the eve of a festival. A blessing is recited over the cup and the wine is shared among the family members starting with the youngest. This symbolises the beginning of the holy day. Traditionally the cup is gold or silver and some have no stem. The saucer is to catch any spills.



Tallit

The tallit is a prayer shawl which is wrapped around the shoulders and over the head whilst praying. Sometimes the tallit is worn all day hanging off the shoulders. Wearing a tallit is mentioned in old Hebrew text where it states the body must be covered when praying. There are stringed Fringes, known as tzitzit, at each of the four corners. The strings are a visual reminder to obey the Jewish Law and be holy before God.



Kippah

A kippah, sometimes called a yarmulke, is a dome shaped hat that Jewish men and boys wear all the time. Some women may also choose to wear one. Wearing a kippah is in recognition that someone 'above' us is watching our every act. It is also a sign of respect and worship when Praying, reading the Torah, saying blessings or entering a synagogue.



Siddur

The Jewish Siddur prayer book contains daily prayers in a particular order. It is used every day and on the Sabbath but not at festivals where another scripture is read instead. It is written in Hebrew which is read from the left, therefore the book opens from the left. It is different from the Torah,

The Holy Book of Judaism, as the Torah contains the five books of Moses whereas the Siddur contains psalms (songs), poetry and quotations from scripture.



Bar and Bat Mitzvah Cards

Boys have a Bar Mitzvah and girls have a Bat Mitzvah. This translates to a son or daughter of the Commandment. It is a rite of passage when Jewish boys (13 years) and Jewish girls (12 years) take responsibility for living according to Jewish Law. In the synagogue, the child will read a passage from the Torah and the Rabbi gives a sermon and blesses the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Large parties with family and friends are held and gifts are given.



Havdalah Candle and Spices

On Saturday , when the sun sets on Shabbat (Sabbath), the Havdalah begins. It is the closing ritual for the day of rest, a simple multi-sensory ceremony with blessings and songs. Lighting the Havdalah candle is the first light of the week. The wine cup is filled to the brim so it overflows a little and symbolises joy. The spices, usually cloves or cinnamon represent the lingering scent of the sweetness of Shabbat and awaken the senses in preparation for a hard working week. To extinguish the flame, it is dipped in the wine and the sound that escapes in the week.



Kosher Stickers

Jewish people follow strict rules for food. The food that is allowed to be eaten is called Kosher. Kosher food is based around eating meat and fish that they believe is clean, as well as being careful not to mix meat with dairy. For these reasons items around the kitchen will be used for different foods so stickers like these help identify the correct pan or spoon, shelf or plate. The red stickers are for meat products. The blue is for anything used for dairy products. And the green stickers are for parveve – items that are kosher but not dairy or meat – such as vegetables. Some Jewish people have two separate sinks and areas in their kitchens to keep the food apart.

Sikhism

Flower Garland

Rumalla

Guru Nanak

Guru Gobind Singh

Nitnem

Chauri

Kirpan, Kachera, Kanga and Kara

Guru Nanak (picture)

Guru Gobind Singh (picture)

The Gurus (picture)

Golden temple/Sri Harimandir Sahib (picture)

Mala beads

Nishan Sahib

Ek Onkar

Khanda

Turban

Bowl of Prashad





Flower Garland

Flowers are often used as decorations in and around Sikh Gurdwaras and homes. They are draped around the holy book and hung from ceilings. For festivals real flowers are used and the garlands are made by hand.



Rumalla

Many Sikh hymns that are sung in worship are written by The Sikh Gurus. These are written down in the Sikh holy book called the Guru Granth Sahib. The sacred book is covered by a rumalla to keep clean when it is not being read and placed upon an eternal throne called a Takht.



Guru Nanak

Over 500 years ago a man named Guru Nanak who lived in the Punjab region in India, founded Sikhism. He taught people to see each other as equal, to lead a good life, to do good things and to make the right choices. Guru means teacher and the word Sikh comes from a Punjabi word meaning 'learner' or someone who follows a teacher.



Guru Gobind Singh

Guru Gobind Singh declared himself as the last living Guru. There were 9 others before him with the first being Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh formed the first Khalsa which are members of the Sikh community who commit to the faith. The Khalsa all wear the 5 K's (5 objects that begin with the letter K), like you would wear a uniform to show you belonged to a certain group. Guru Gobind Singh made the final eternal Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib, which is the holy book for Sikhs. Also, from that moment on all Sikh men were named Singh, meaning Lion, and the females, Kaur, meaning Princess.



Nitnem

Nitnem is a collection of hymns to be read or recited by Sikhs every day. Nitnem morning prayers are read at daybreak, evening prayers are read at sunset and bedtime prayers are the last thing before sleeping. The language is Punjabi which is from Punjab in India. Guru Nanak came from the Punjab region.



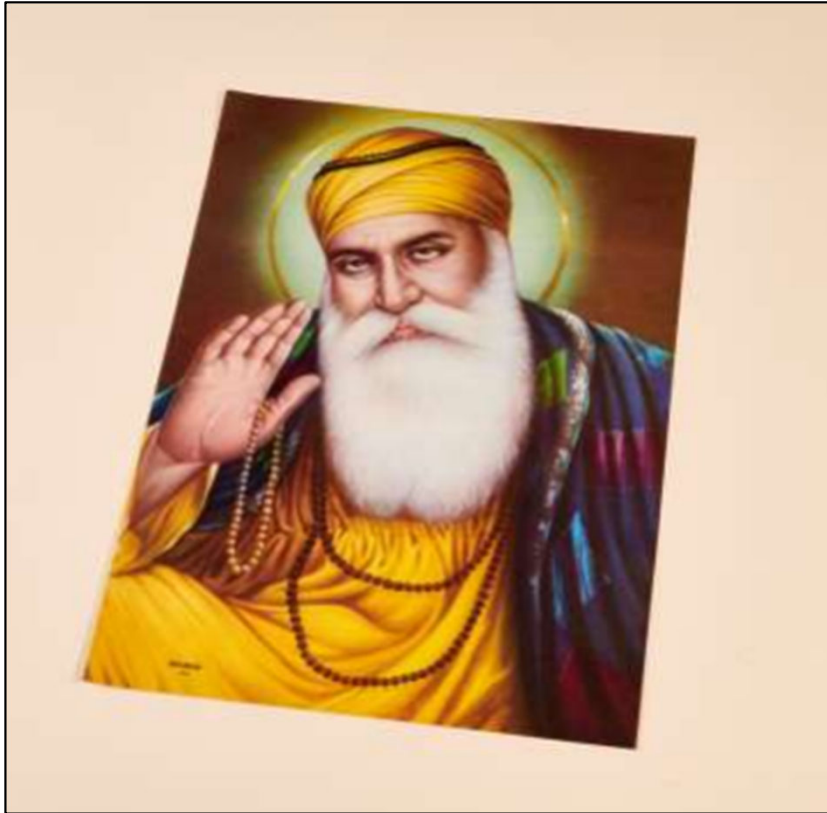
Chauri

The Guru Granth Sahib is the last and eternal Guru of the Sikh faith. It is as important as a living Guru and so is treated as one. Every morning it is woken and paraded up high, with a Chauri waved around it, towards a throne under a canopy. Chauri are usually waved around royalty as a sign of respect and to freshen the air. It is read by a specially trained Granthi then taken back to its room to rest. Chauri are usually wooden or silver with yak's hair.



Kirpan, Kachera, Kanga and Kara

Some adult Sikh men and women choose to become members of the Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh formed the first Khalsa in 1699 by selecting the true followers of Sikhism. Members of the Khalsa wear five items that begin with the letter K in the Punjabi language to show their commitment to their faith. Khalsa members wear a Kara bangle around their wrist, a Kirpan dagger for protection, a Kanga comb in their hair for cleanliness, Kachera shorts as the first Sikh soldiers did and finally, they do not cut their hair (Kesh). Most of these items can be seen by everyone as bold symbols of faith.



Guru Nanak

(picture)

Guru Nanak taught that everyone is equal; men, women, rich or poor. One day he disappeared in a river and when he returned three days later people asked him where he had been. He told them that he had been with God. He travelled to far-off lands encouraging people to be kind to one another. People started to call him Guru, which means teacher.



Guru Gobind Singh

(picture)

Guru Gobind Singh changed his own name from Gobind Rai after forming the Khalsa – the community of dedicated Sikhs. He was the 10th and last living Guru leaving the book called the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru. He is often shown holding a white falcon in his left hand, wearing jewels and carrying a bow. He was required to protect Sikhs and had to become a warrior. The turban became a crown needed to show power.



The Gurus

(picture)

The ten living Gurus were spiritual messengers between the years 1469-1708. They set excellent examples of how to live a holy and worthy life by using actions, being equal to one another and believing in one god. Each Guru added to the growing faith. One built a golden temple, another created free kitchens, another wrote hymns for the sacred book and the last living Guru formed the Khalsa. There are 11 Gurus in this picture; the 11th Guru is the Eternal Guru and it is the holy book for Sikhs , The Guru Granth Sahib.



Golden Temple/Sri Harimandir

Sahib

(picture)

The fourth Guru called Guru Ram Das instructed the building of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, India. It has become the most sacred place for Sikhism. In each Sikh temple (Gurdwara), food is served in a free kitchen called a Langar. Everyone takes part in creating the meal. People who are skilled may cook, people who can spare money may give, and people who can spare time may serve. Everyone eats together sitting on the floor to show that all people are equal.



Mala beads

Many religions use beads while saying prayers. It helps to count how many have been said. There are 108 beads on Sikh mala beads. They are often worn on the head around the turban



Nishan Sahib

This is the Sikh Holy flag. Gurdwaras wave these flags on a long pole. Every year, at the festival of Baisakhi, the flag is brought down and washed in milk then the flag is replaced.

The Khanda, which is the symbol for Sikhism, is on the yellow flag.



Ek Onkar

This symbol reads Ek Onkar which means 'One God' and is the most important teaching in Sikhism. Sikhs do not worship any other gods then Waheguru.



Khanda

This symbol is called the Khanda. It is the main symbol for Sikhism. There are four items drawn in this symbol. The shape down the middle is a double edged sword called a Khanda. The circle, like the kara bangle that is worn, represents God without beginning or end. There are also two kirpans around the outside which represent God's power.



Turban

Turbans are long pieces of cloth tied in a special way around the head to keep the hair clean and off the face. Men usually wear turbans but some ladies do too. Sikhs believe that hair (Kesh) is a gift from God so they not cut it. Sikh men's hair can grow very long. Every morning the hair is combed with the Kanga and then tied in a knot with the comb wedged in. Finally the turban is wrapped around the head. At the end of the day, the hair is uncovered and combed again as a symbol of cleanliness.

Bowl for Prashad



Seva, or service, lies at the heart of Sikhism. Serving kara prashad in gurdwaras takes from this belief. The place of worship for Sikhs is a Gurdwara which translates to 'the door to the guru,' and it is believed that a guru never sends back anyone empty-handed or hungry. So, a sweet and divine blessing is offered in the form of kara prashad, a sweet food mixture, which is accepted by cupping your hands. Since the prashad, it is rude to turn it down. Both the offering and receiving of this sweet shows community service and hospitality – two qualities that are very close to the heart of Sikhs. Prashad is served out in equal quantities from a large bowl.