

Faith festivals July 2018

1st July Sunday is Tirgan AKA Jashn-e Tirgan

Tradition: **Zoroastrian.**

Jashn-e Tirgan is an ancient quarter year summer festival, celebrated about three months after the spring NoRuz. Tirgan is devoted to the divinity Tir and is associated with the dog-star Sirius and the coming of the rains in Iran and the fertility they bring. On this day it is customary to visit the Fire Temple to give thanks to Ahura Mazda, to participate in a jashan or thanksgiving ceremony, listen to stories of how the boundaries of Iran were established in antiquity with its Central Asian neighbour Turan (now Turkmenistan) by an archer shooting an arrow, share a community meal, play with 'rainbow' bracelets made of seven coloured silks, splash each other with water, and dance and make merry. This traditional Zoroastrian festival also celebrates the rainfall which is meant to bring assurance of bountiful harvest leading to prosperity. This is celebrated near water bodies where people play water sports, swim, splash water on one another, etc. It is also a custom to wear a rainbow coloured thread on the wrist on this day which is then set afloat in a stream after ten days. Source <http://www.123newyear.com/2015/zoroastrian-holidays-calendar.html>

10th July Tuesday is the Martyrdom of the Bab, (begins sundown on the 8th)

Tradition: **Baha'i**

It marks the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Bab, the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, in 1850. Work is suspended on this day. For our- Baha'i friends, this major holy day is celebrated on the 9th July at noon and commemorates the events surrounding the death of the Báb in 1850. The Báb (a title meaning 'the Gate') had many followers but his beliefs did not meet with approval from the leaders of the state religion in Persia, and they decided he should be taken from prison and put to death. One of his young followers begged to be allowed to share his fate, and this wish was granted. An Armenian firing squad lined up and shot at the Báb and his follower, but when the smoke cleared, the young follower remained there unharmed and the Báb had gone. The Báb was found back in his cell, and the soldiers were so shaken by the 'miracle' that they refused to try to kill him again so a new regiment had to be called for. This time, when the squad opened fire the Báb and the follower died, and their bodies were thrown into a moat outside the town. The Báb's followers rescued the bodies, and years later, the remains were buried on Mount Carmel in Israel, in a shrine that is now a place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís worldwide. To commemorate this day, Bahá'ís read special prayers at noon, which is the time the execution was scheduled for. This is also a day of rest, when Bahá'ís should not work. More <http://www.planetbahai.org/cgi-bin/articles.pl?article=30>

14th July (Saturday) Ratha Yatra

Tradition: Hindu

'Chariot Journey'. This is observed most notably at Puri in the Indian state of Orissa, where processions of thousands of devotees pull huge waggons (*rathas*) supporting images of Krishna. He is known under the name of 'Jagannath', (Lord of the Universe), from which the English term 'juggernaut' comes. Krishna is attended on his journey by his brother and sister. The festival and others like it are celebrated in Britain with processions through various parts of London on appropriate Sundays. Source: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>

15th/16th July (Sunday/Monday), Chokor (also CHO KOR DU CHEN)

Tradition: **Buddhist**

This Tibetan/Nepalese festival commemorates the first teaching (the turning of the wheel of law) given by the historical Buddha. It is a colourful and relaxed mid-summer festival in which statues of the Buddha and copies of the scriptures, engraved on narrow, rectangular

wooden blocks, are carried round the district with music and jollity, symbolising the promulgation of the Buddha's teaching. The whole community, clerical and lay, male and female, joins in the processions and the picnics that follow. Source <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>

22nd July (Sunday) Tisha B'av

Tradition: **Jewish**

This is the saddest day of the Jewish calendar. A full day fast is held at the conclusion of three weeks of mourning, while reflecting on the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem. Other tragedies in Jewish history are also recalled, many of which have coincidentally happened on this day. The Book of Lamentations is read at this time.

Source: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/2016-religious-festivals/august>

27th July Friday, Dharma Day AKA Asalha Puja day

Tradition: **Buddhist**

It marks the beginning of the Buddha's teaching. The word Dharma can be translated as truth and is the term used for the path to enlightenment, or the Buddhist teaching. Soon after his Enlightenment, the Buddha went to find his former disciples and share his experience with them. This event could be seen as the start of the Buddhist religion, and is what Dharma day celebrates. Dharma Day is usually celebrated with readings from the Buddhist scriptures, and is an opportunity to reflect deeply on their content. If an individual practices Buddhism within a monastic tradition, Dharma Day is, wherever possible, celebrated in a temple, Buddhist centre or monastery in the presence of monks or nuns. The first teaching to the Buddha's original five disciples is known as "The First Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma (Dharmachakra)." For more: <http://www.buddhapadipa.org/event-write-up/asalha-puja-day/> and the story <http://www.dmc.tv/pages/en/scoop/Asalha-Puja-Day.html>