

Faith Festivals September 2018

* Sept/Oct Harvest Festival Christian (Western, Anglican and Free Churches)

Displays of various foods are made in churches and Sunday schools and services are held to give thanks for the goodness of God's gifts in nature.

Saturday 1st September Ecclesiastical year begins

Tradition: **Orthodox Christian** Orthodox New. For more on Year, see

<http://www.antiochian.org/ecclesiastical-new-year> and <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith7070>

Saturday 1st September is Harvest Festival

Tradition: **Christian** (Western, Anglican and Free Churches)-Dates vary.

Special services are held around this time of year to give thanks for the goodness of God's gifts in providing a harvest of crops along with all the other fruits of society. Displays of produce are often made, usually distributed afterwards to those in need. Increasingly the emphasis is on a wider interpretation than just the harvests of the fields and seas.

Saturday 1st September commemorates the Installation of the Sikh Scripture in the Harmandir Sahib

Tradition: **Sikh**

In 1604, in the place of worship where the Golden Temple now stands in Amritsar (Punjab), the Sikhs' fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, installed for the first time the Adi Granth, a volume of scripture for the Sikh community. It consisted of the hymns of the first five Gurus plus those of other 'saint-poets'. Hymns by the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, were later incorporated in the scripture, so forming the present Guru Granth Sahib. For more see <http://sgpc.net/history-of-harmandir-sahib/> and <http://www.goldentempleamritsar.org/>

Sunday 2nd September Janmashtami/Krishna Jayanthi - Birthday of Krishna.

Tradition: **Hindu**.

Krishna is a very popular avatar or incarnation of Vishnu and this festival is celebrated widely. Many Hindus fast till midnight, the time of Krishna's birth. Those unable to fast will take fruit and milk. In the temples Krishna is welcomed with singing, dancing and sweets. In some homes and temples an image of the new-born Krishna is put in a cradle and special sweets (e.g. the powder, panjiri, given traditionally to women after childbirth) are offered and distributed. Source <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/2016-religious-festivals/augusthttp://londonmandir.baps.org/forthcoming-events/krishna-janmashtami>

Tuesday 4th September is Fravardin Mah Parab (Shenshai calendar)

Tradition: **Zoroastrian/Parsi**

Fravardin day is a day of the guardian spirits in the Zoroastrian calendars. On the day of Fravardin, the 19th day of the month of Fravardin, the first month of the year, Zoroastrians visit the vicinity of the Towers of Silence in India (or in the UK the Zoroastrian Cemetery in Brookwood, Surrey) to participate in a jashan ceremony in memory of the departed fravashis (guardian spirits and souls of the community). Sacred food is prepared as an offering to the departed during the jashan and is later shared by the participants. For more see <http://delhiparsis.com/2007/08/19/the-parsi-zoroastrian-calendar-days-and-their-meanings/> or <http://www.avesta.org/angels.html> or <http://www3.sympatico.ca/zoroastrian/fravar.htm>

6th September (Thursday) - 13th September (Thursday) PARYUSHAN

Tradition: **Jain**.

Eight days of purification, devoted to study, prayer, meditation and fasting, and ending with a period of confession and forgiveness. For more information <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/2016-religious-festivals/august>

Monday 10th September – 11th September Tuesday Rosh Hashannah

Tradition: **Jewish**

(New Year's Day, 5778 years from the creation of the world). Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of ten days of repentance and self-examination, during which G-d sits in personal judgment on every individual. The blowing of the ram's horn (shofar) in the synagogue is a reminder of Abraham's sacrifice of a ram instead of his son, Isaac. Apples dipped in honey are eaten in the hope of a 'sweet' new year. The greeting is 'Leshanah Tovah Tikatev' (may you be inscribed for a good year).

12th September Wednesday Islamic New Year 1439 / AL-HIJRA / RA'S UL 'AM (Muharram 1)

Tradition: **Muslim**

This day commemorates the Hijra or migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Medina in 622 CE, which led to the establishment of the Muslim community there. The day is not universally celebrated amongst Sunni Muslims but is notable as Muslim years are dated from this time and are marked AH (After the Hijrah). In 2015 CE the Muslim year 1437 AH begins. For some Muslim communities this is a day of celebration at the mosque, where stories are told of the Prophet and his Companions. For the Shi'a community the more important significance is that this is the first day of the period of fasting, mourning and remembrance leading up to Ashura. For more information:

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

13th September (Thursday) Ganesh Chaturthi (Birthday of Ganesh)

Tradition: **Hindu**

Ganesh Chaturthi / Vinayaka Chaturthi is a Hindu festival in honour of Ganesh/Ganesha, (also known as Ganapati and Vinayaka), the god of good fortune and new beginnings. A popular story explains why Ganesha, the son of Parvati and Shiva, has the head of an elephant. For more, see

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythological_anecdotes_of_Ganesh. This festival is particularly significant for Hindus from Maharashtra and is celebrated in a major way in Mumbai. "Lord Ganesh is the symbol of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune. Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated on Shukla Chaturthi of the Hindu month of Bhadra (generally falls between August and September). This festival is celebrated by Hindus with a great enthusiasm. People bring idols of Lord Ganesh to their homes and do worship. The duration of this festival varies from 1 day to 11 days, depending on the place and tradition. On the last day of the festival the idols are taken out in a colourful and musical procession and immersed traditionally in water. As per Hindu mythology Lord Ganesh is considered as "Vigana Harta" (one who removes obstacles) and "Buddhi Pradaayaka" (one who grants intelligence). This festival is very important for students; they worship Lord Ganesh to illumine their minds." Source <http://www.calendarlabs.com/holidays/india/ganesh-chaturthi.php> For more, see <http://hinduism.about.com/od/festivalsholidays/a/ganeshchaturthi.htm>

13th September (Thursday) Samvatsari (International Forgiveness Day)

Tradition: **Jain**

This is the last day of Paryushana, which many regard as the most important eight or ten day festival of Jainism. It is the holiest day of the Jain calendar and many Jains observe a complete fast. The whole day is spent in prayers and contemplation, asking for forgiveness from others.

Wednesday 19th September YOM KIPPUR

Tradition: **Jewish**. This is the final day of the ten days of repentance, and is the holiest day of the year in the Jewish calendar. The Bible calls it the 'Sabbath of Sabbaths', and it is marked by 'afflicting the soul' – expressed through a total fast lasting 25 hours. Jews spend the eve and most of the day in prayer, asking for forgiveness for past wrongs and resolving to improve in the future. The Book of Jonah is read. A common greeting is 'G'mar Chatimah Tovah' ('May you finally be sealed for good')

For more see: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/2016-religious-festivals/october>

21st September Friday is Ashura (10th Muharram)

Tradition: **Muslim**

For Sunni Muslims this is one of the two days of a minor fast that the Prophet kept in his lifetime. The second day of the fast may be observed either on the day preceding or the day following the 10th of Muharram. For Shi'a Muslims this is a day when they recall a great tragedy that took place on Muharram 10, AH 61 (680 CE). The Imam Husayn (son of Ali and Fatimah and therefore grandson of the Prophet) travelling with his family and many followers was attacked by the troops of the Caliph Yazid. After eight days without water Husayn was killed and his family and followers massacred at Karbala (now in Iraq). Shi'a Muslims remember the events in the days leading up to Ashura when they fast and recall these terrible events. The importance of this holy day can be judged from a popular Shi'a saying which some attribute to a Muslim poet and some to the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Saadiq: "Live as if every day is Ashura, every land Karbala!" For more:

<http://www.ashura.com/>

24th September Monday – 1st October Monday SUKKOT

Tradition: **Jewish**

A seven day harvest festival also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, which commemorates the 40 years that the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. A temporary hut or booth – called a sukkah – is used during this time for eating meals and for visits and socialising. In hot countries families may live in their sukkah during the festival. The roof, which has to be open in part to the elements, is covered with branches and decorated with fruit. Four species of plant, the lulav (palm branch), the etrog (a yellow citrus fruit), the hadas (myrtle) and the aravah (willow) are used at the festival. For more see:

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

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