

Faith festivals September 2019

* **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.

1st September Sunday 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>

2nd September Monday 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/festivals/holidays/a/ganeshchaturthi.htm>

10th September Tuesday 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/>

29th September Sunday to 7th October Monday is Navaratri

Tradition: - **Hindu**

Sharad Navaratri (winter Navaratri) also Known as Maha Navaratri (The Great Navaratri) or simply Navaratri for our Hindu friends. It is the most important of the five Navaratri periods celebrated in the Hindu year and lasts 9 days (Navaratri means nine nights). Navaratri is divided into sets of three days to adore different aspects of the supreme goddess. Hindus from different areas celebrate in different ways. During the nine days of Navaratri, the Mother Goddess is honoured in all her manifestations, including Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. It's a festival full of worship and dance. The festival culminates with Dussera, the victory of good over evil, on the tenth day. The festival is celebrated all over India but in different ways. The most flamboyant and renowned Navaratri celebrations can be seen in western India, throughout the state of Gujarat and in Mumbai. In West Bengal, Navaratri and Dussera are celebrated as Durga Puja. In western India, Navaratri is celebrated with nine nights of dancing. The traditional dances of Gujarat, known as garba and dandiya raas, are performed in circles with dancers dressed up in colourful clothes. Small, decorated sticks called dandiya are used in the dandiya raas".Source

<http://goindia.about.com/od/festivalsevents/p/navaratri.htm> . In north India the Ram Lila is performed each night, in celebration of Lord Rama's victory over Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. Families from Gujarat gather, wherever they are in the world, to participate in circle dances associated with the Goddess and Lord Krishna. Many Punjabis worship the Goddess daily during Navaratri, and observe a strictly vegetarian diet. On the eighth day, Durga Ashtami, Punjabi Hindus fast before conducting worship of the Goddess that involves honouring young girls as the embodiment of her power. Source <http://www.when-is.com/navaratri-2014.asp> " On the first three days, the Mother is invoked as powerful force called Durga in order to destroy all our impurities, vices and defects. The next three days, the Mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, Lakshmi, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees the inexhaustible wealth. The final set of three days is spent in worshipping the mother as the goddess of wisdom, Saraswati. In order have all-round success in life, we need the blessings of all three aspects of the divine mother; hence, the worship for nine nights." Source <http://hinduism.about.com/od/festivalsholidays/a/navaratri.htm> For more, see <http://www.rudraksha-ratna.com/navratri.htm>.

30th September Monday -1st October 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).