



MULTI FAITH CELEBRATIONS

Festivals of Different Religions

Celebrations | Messages | Values Promoted

Commissioned and Produced by

COVA
Peace Network

Hyderabad Development and Peace Program

In Partnership with



Social Harmony Project

Festivals of Different Religions

Celebrations | Messages | Values Promoted

Compiled and Curated by

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Foreword: Dr. Denzil Fernandez

Introduction: Dr. Mazher Hussain

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Foreward

Fr. Denzil Fernandes

Department of Peace and Reconciliation,
Indian Social Institute, Bangalore.

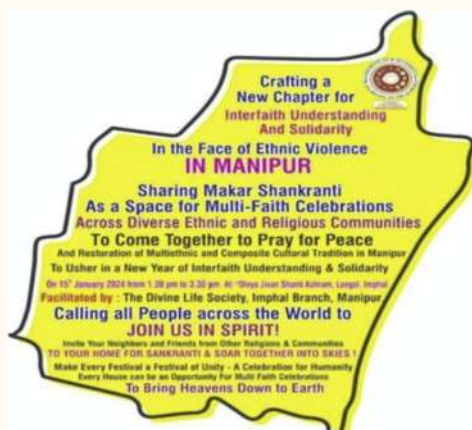
India is a mosaic of a multiplicity of religions and religious traditions that has added to the richness of the spiritual heritage of the people of the sub-continent. Every year, hundreds of festivals are celebrated in India making the country one of the most vibrant places in the world for spiritual celebrations. But, there is a tendency for people of one faith to celebrate their festivals among their own community. However, in a multi-religious society like India, there is a need for each religious community to not only celebrate their own festivals, but also celebrate the festivals of other faith traditions as well, so that the people of the country can be enriched by the joy and community bonding that each festival promotes.



In order to build peace and social harmony in the context of a plural and multi-religious society, Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) has been promoting Multi-Faith Celebration of festivals across the country. Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, has joined hands with COVA and several other organisations to celebrate festivals of different religions. On 8th April, 2025, several civil society organisations in Bengaluru came together to organise a Multi-Faith celebration of festivals, such as Ugadi, Eid-ul-Fitr, Ugadi, Ram Navami, `Mahavir Jayanti, Baisakhi, Naw-Rúz, and Easter, showcasing India's rich tapestry of religious and cultural traditions. This unique event was part of a nationwide initiative held in 15 cities aimed at promoting interfaith understanding, peaceful coexistence, social harmony and mutual respect across communities.



This booklet on the "Festivals of Different Religions" is an attempt to present a variety of religious festivals to promote greater knowledge and appreciation of the festivals celebrated by different religious communities in India. I sincerely hope that this booklet will help people of all faiths to come together to celebrate each other's festivals with joy and spiritual fervor.



Multi Faith Festivities at Mahim Darga- Mumbai

Introduction

Dr. Mazher Hussain

COVA Peace Network

Facilitating Proper Understanding, Inculcating Respect for All Religions And Observing Sanctity of Every Festival

IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Today, most people - especially youth- know little about their own faith. But thanks to WhatsApp and social media they are coming to know more about other religions and that too negatively. This is generating unwarranted / unsubstantiated misconceptions, stereotyping and antagonism that translates into hatred and violence. This has become a growing global phenomenon and is resulting in spread of hatred and violence in many parts of the world- including Southasia.

Multi Faith Celebrations: The Way Out

All religions have a number of festivals and every festival has a message and espouses some values. Hence, festivals become a good medium for understanding a religion and its core teachings in an interesting and enjoyable way! In fact, the festivals also show that the messages and values promoted across different religions are similar, underscoring the essential commonality of all faiths. This promotes acceptance and respect for other religions!!

Where there is respect, there cannot be hatred and where there is no hate, the possibility of any violence cannot arise!!!

Realising this great potency of festivals to promote understanding and peace, COVA Peace Network in collaboration with a number of networks and organisations across India evolved the concept of Multi Faith Celebrations vis s vis Interfaith Programs.

Multi Faith Festivities for all Religions : Every Time! Every Where!!

Greetings for Ugadi - Eid Ul Fitr - Ram Navami - Mahaveer Jayanti - Baisakhi - Easter

Come Lets Celebrate Together in Hyderabad

On Saturday, 5th April 2023 at Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Koti

10 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.	Blood Donation to add Compassion to all Celebrations Inviting Youth from All Faiths to show their Care for Humanity across all Divisions
12 Noon	Annadaanam : Lunch for the Needy
12.30 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.	Cultural Expressions - The Stage Awaits Your Soul Sing - Dance - Chant - Shlokas - Sufi Music - Skits or Plays
3.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.	Panel Discussion by Youth My Ideas for Celebrating Festivals
3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.	Multi Faith Assembly with Faith and Thought Leaders

Multi Faith Festivities are being Planned in 15 other Cities of India

Also
Experience the Magic of Multi Faith Festivities
By inviting Your Neighbours to Celebrate with You!!

Organisers :
Arya Samaj, COVA, Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Gurudwara Sri Akalgar Sahib,
Hindu Muslim Ekta Committee, Institution of Preventive Medicine, Government of Telangana,
Montfort Social Institute, Rukhara, Sikh Heritage Foundation of Hyderabad Deccan,
Sri Aji Parshava Yuva Sangathan., Tehreek Khair E Ummat, Youngistan Foundation

For Details of Programs and Pictures of Multi Faith Festivities Please Visit: <https://multifaithcelebrations.coovanetwork.org>

In Interfaith Programs, faith leaders, civil society organisations and concerned citizens gather to celebrate a festival of a religion to offer greetings and gain understanding of the festival. Such Programs promote cordial relations across faiths for religious and other leaders, but unfortunately common people are not involved and understanding and cordiality does not percolate to the communities at large.

In India, two to six festivals of different religions come together within a span of 2 to 5 weeks and the core concept of Multi Faith Celebrations is to select any one convenient day to celebrate all the festivals together on the same day- Hence Multi Faith Celebrations!!

People from the communities are invited and efforts are made to involve youth also through sports, games, cultural and literary programs as part of Multi Faith Celebrations where Faith Leaders explain the messages and values promoted by the festivals and show the commonality of the message and values of other religions. It is seen that invariably this promotes better mutual understanding and respect for all religions.

This Booklet titled *Festivals of Different Religions: Celebrations–Messages - Values Promoted* is compiled with the objective of enabling people to gain better understanding of the festivals and values of all religions.

The Faith Leaders whose contributions that made this Book possible are: Buddhism: Tashi Cheodup - Christianity: Bro. Varghese Tackaneth - Hinduism: Dr. Nch. Harikrishna - Jainism: Sushil Chanodia Jain- Islam: Dr. Irfan Basha - Sikhism: Rachhpal Singh Khalsa- Zoroastranism: Evard Mehernosh Bharucha and Fr. Denzil Fernandes

Multi Faith Festivities of All Festivals Every Time! Everywhere!!



The Spirit of Multi Faith Festivities should not be just sharing about our religion and practices but also understanding other faiths and their traditions to enlighten ourselves and develop empathy with all.

Dialogue to Discover Our Common

Values Let's bridge the divide created by Social Media through Multi Faith Festivities for Festivals in our Buddha Viharas, Churches, Temples, Masjids, Gurudwaras, Derasars, Fire Temples, Synagogues and Places of Worships of all Others Faiths and Belief Systems as well as in our Community Centres and Our Home!!

Let every festival of all faiths be an occasion To bond with our neighbours of different communities

All our Festivals are from one to five days or more. We can invite neighbours with their families from other Faiths on any one day of the Festival to join us by spending an hour together

To share a meal, share refreshments, share about our core values, And share our Understanding of The Almighty!

Two to six or more festivals of different religions and traditions come within a span of a month many times during a year. Faith Groups and Civil Society Organisations can come together to organise Multi Faith Festivities for all such Festivals on any one day

1. *Organise Meetings:* With Faith Leaders and Eminent personalities who speak about the importance and values promoted by the Festivals being celebrated.
2. *Blood Donation Camps*– At no cost except providing the venue- all expenses and arrangements will be by Red Cross or Blood Bank or Hospital collecting the blood.
3. *Feeding the Needy*– With support from some philanthropists if possible.
4. *Cultural Programs*
5. *Literary Activities*
6. *Sports and Games*

Or any other activities as decided by the organisers.

Festivals could be the best time to help set the narratives To promote better understanding and harmony in society and the Country

Appeal to All Faith Groups, Civil Society Organisations, citizens and youth to collaborate for Multi Faith Festivities and bring together different communities

This could also provide an opportunity to sensitise and motivate communities - especially youth – to celebrate the festivals with decorum for spiritual fulfilment and to promote goodwill and harmony in society.

Caution: No Missionary Spirit Please

Some people may take this as an opportunity to impress upon others about the superiority of their faith. This fetish about superiority of one's own faith and attempts to convince and convert others is a key cause for the conflicts plaguing the world.

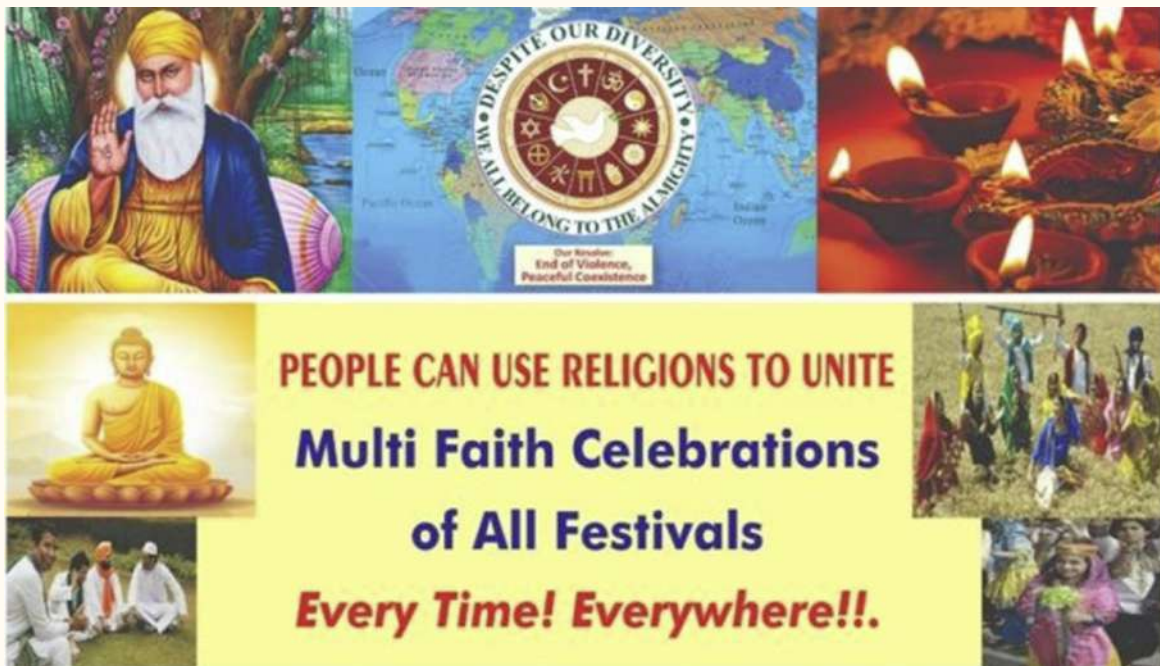
Buddhist Festivals

Namo Buddhaya! Namō Dharmaya! Namō Sanghaya

Although Buddhism was founded on teachings of one Buddha, unlike like popular view Buddhism is not a monolith. "One Teacher, Many Tradition" title of a Buddhist book by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and Bhiksuni Thubten Chodron presents summarises the reality beautifully. It essentially means that there many different Buddhist traditions in different parts of the world based on teachings of one person more than 2500 years ago.

Buddhism, which originated in what we now call India, over a course of time spread across the world and now practiced by millions of people from the caves in Himalayas to the urban cities in multiple continents. In these different parts of the world Buddhism is shaped by regional culture and other factors. This also influenced Buddhist festivals celebrated in different traditions of different regions. Most of the Buddhist festivals celebrate various aspects of Buddha's life such as birth, enlightenment, first teaching, death and so on. As much as they are about specific events of Buddha's life, they are essentially the opportunity for people to come together reflect on Buddha's teachings about non-violence, compassion, loving-kindness, equanimity, and also about practices such as generosity, patience, and so forth. These are the occasions that enable community building through reflection and celebration. People practice generosity by making offering to monasteries, monastics, and other charities. And like festivals across many religious traditions it involves sharing of stories, cooking cultural foods and celebrating as a community. Each Buddhist tradition has a particular way of celebrating these festivals rooted in their own regionality, culture and food practices.

Buddhist Festivals from some Buddhist Traditions



- **Theravada (India, Sri Lanka, & parts of Southeast Asia):** Focuses on the Pali Canon and lunar calendar.
Vesak (Visakah Puja): Birth, Enlightenment, and Death of Buddha. Also known as Buddha Jayanti and Buddha Poornima.
Asalha Puja (Dhamma Day): Commemorates the first sermon by Buddha.
Kathina: A post-Vassa festival in October/November where robes are offered to Buddhist monastics.
Songkran/Water Festival: Traditional New Year in April.

- ***Mahayana (East Asia - China, Japan, Korea):***

Often uses the Gregorian or modified lunar calendar.

Buddha's Birthday (Hanamatsuri/Vesak): Celebrated on April 8th in Japan (Hanamatsuri) or the 8th day of the 4th lunar month in Korea/China.

Bodhi Day: Celebrated on December 8th in Japan to mark the Enlightenment of Buddha.

Ullambana (Ghost Festival): A time to honor ancestors.



Telangana Trends

Trending News, Unbiased and Unfiltered

Multifaith Harmony Marked Through Celebrations of Buddha Purnima and Tagore Jayanti by COVA at Hyderabad's New St. Maria High School

May 12, 2025



- ***Tibetan Buddhism (Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and India; Combination of Mahayana and Vajrayana):***

Losar: Tibetan New Year.

Saka Dawa: The entire fourth lunar month (usually May/June), with the full moon marking Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana.

Chotrul Duchen: Celebrates 15 days of miracles that Buddha performed

Chokhor Duchen: Marks the celebration of Buddha's first teaching.

- ***Navayana Buddhism (India; Buddhism as presented by Babasaheb Ambedkar):***

Dhammachakra Pravartan Day (October 14): Commemorates the historic day in 1956 when Dr. Ambedkar, along with over half a million Dalit followers, converted to Buddhism in Nagpur.

Ambedkar Jayanti (April 14): Celebrated as the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Ashok Vijayadashami: Often combined with the celebration of the conversion, this day honors Emperor Ashoka and the adoption of Buddhist path.

Along with these Vesak/Buddha Purnima is also celebrated.

Compiled by:

Tashi Cheodup

Buddhist Monastic

Christian Festivals

Good Friday – March or April

Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his voluntary sacrifice for humanity. It is a day of deep solemnity and reflection.

The event took place in Jerusalem in the 1st century CE, when Jesus was tried and crucified under Roman authority.

It is observed by Christians

In South Asia, Good Friday is observed in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, and Afghanistan wherever Christian communities exist.

It is known as Good Friday, Holy Friday, or Great Friday.

The day is marked by silence, prayer, and reflection, with churches holding special services focused on the Passion of Christ.

Many Christians observe fasting or abstinence, particularly avoiding meat.

Rituals include reading the Passion narrative, Stations of the Cross, veneration of the cross, and acts of charity.



12 Jan 2026



Telangana Trends
Trending News, Unbiased and Unfiltered

Youth, Faith Leaders & Activist in Sports4Peace

Easter – March or April

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and is the most important festival in Christianity. It symbolizes hope, renewal, and victory of life over death.

The resurrection is described in the New Testament and follows the events of Good Friday. It forms the foundation of Christian faith.

Easter is celebrated by Christians worldwide.

In South Asia, it is celebrated in all countries by Christian communities. It is known as Easter, Pascha, or Resurrection Day.

Celebrations include church services, hymns, Bible readings, and family gatherings. Festive foods include cakes, puddings, bread, and regional special meals.

Rituals include the Easter Vigil, candle lighting, singing of resurrection hymns, and baptism ceremonies.

Feast of Mother Mary (Assumption) – 15 August

The Feast of Mother Mary honors the belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, was taken up body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life.

The feast developed in early Christianity and was formally defined as doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church. It is celebrated by Christians, especially Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians.

In South Asia, it is celebrated in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives wherever Christian communities exist.

It is also known as the Feast of the Assumption or Assumption Day.

Special Masses, processions, Marian hymns, and prayers mark the day.

Festive meals vary by region and may include rice dishes, curries, cakes, and sweets.

Rituals include Marian prayers, floral offerings, candle lighting, and acts of charity.

Christmas – 25 December



Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, whom Christians believe to be the Son of God and the Savior of humanity. The essence of the day lies in love, humility, peace, generosity, and goodwill among all people.

The festival commemorates the Nativity of Jesus in Bethlehem, as described in the Gospels. Although the exact date of birth is unknown, 25 December was fixed in the 4th century CE based on tradition. It is celebrated by Christians worldwide,

In South Asia, Christmas is celebrated in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, and Afghanistan wherever Christian communities exist.

It is also known as Christmas, X'mas, Nativity of Christ, or Bada Din.

Celebrations include Midnight Mass, church services, carol singing, decorations, and family gatherings. Stars are hanged and cribs depicting the nativity scenes are common.

Traditional foods include cakes, puddings, roasted dishes, and regional festive meals.

Rituals include attending church services, lighting candles, reading Gospel passages visiting relatives and friends and engaging in acts of charity.

Appraised by:

Bro. Varghese Theckanath s.g.

President, COVA Peace Network

महारक्तदान शिविर / महा रक्त दान शिविर

آپ کے دے گئے خون کے عطیات، ہیں ہر مریض کے لیے آپ حیات۔

रामनवमी, ईद-उल-फितर, महावीर जयंती, बैसाखी एवं गुड फ्राइडे पर्वों को रक्तदान करके मनायें

आओ करें रक्तदान, बचाएं जान

स्थान : रेवड़ी तलाब पार्क, वाराणसी

तिथि : रविवार 6 अप्रैल, 2025 समय : 10:30 AM

मानव रक्त फाउंडेशन राष्ट्रीय वीर हमीद अब्दुल फाउंडेशन सौहार्द पीस सेंटर

संपर्क सूत्र: अबू हाशिम : 7007090183 / अरविन्द कुमार : 8318301760 / अनीस अहमद : 9336897053

Multi Faith Celebrations - Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Hindu Festivals

Makar Sankranti – 14 January



Makar Sankranti marks the transition of the Sun into the zodiac sign Capricorn (Makara). It symbolizes renewal, gratitude, prosperity, and harmony with nature. Unlike most Indian festivals that follow the lunar calendar, Sankranti is based on the solar cycle and marks the Sun's northward journey, known as Uttarayana. This transition is considered highly auspicious in Hindu thought, signifying a movement from darkness toward light and from stagnation toward growth.

The festival has ancient Vedic roots and is referenced in early Hindu scriptures. Astronomical awareness and seasonal rhythm were integral to early Indian civilization, and Makar Sankranti represents the deep linkage between cosmic order and human life. Over centuries, the festival evolved into a major agrarian celebration closely connected with harvest cycles, seasonal change, and rural economy.

It is primarily celebrated by Hindus. However, as a harvest festival, it is also observed culturally by farming communities across religious boundaries, reflecting its civilizational rather than strictly sectarian character.

In South Asia, Makar Sankranti is celebrated widely in India and Nepal. Variations of the festival are also observed among Hindu communities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, adapted to local agricultural calendars.

The festival is known by different names in different regions: Makar Sankranti in much of North and Central India, Pongal in Tamil Nadu, Magh Bihu or Bhogali Bihu in Assam, Uttarayan in Gujarat, Maghi in Punjab and Haryana, and Khichdi in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Celebrations typically begin with early morning ritual baths, followed by prayers offered to the Sun God (Surya). Community gatherings, fairs, and outdoor activities are common. Kite flying has become an iconic feature of the festival in regions like Gujarat, Telangana, and parts of Maharashtra. Traditional foods emphasize seasonal produce and warming ingredients. Common preparations include sesame (til) and jaggery sweets, khichdi, chikkis, laddoos, and Pongal dishes. These foods symbolize warmth, unity, and sweetness in social relationships. Rituals performed on Makar Sankranti include Surya worship, charitable giving—especially of food, clothes, and grains—honoring cattle, and in some regions remembrance of ancestors. The emphasis is on gratitude, generosity, and alignment with nature.

Holi – March

Holi is the festival of colors and joy, symbolizing renewal, equality, forgiveness, and the triumph of good over evil. It marks the end of winter and the arrival of spring, celebrating social harmony and shared humanity.

he festival draws from Hindu mythology, especially the story of Prahlad and Holika, which symbolizes the destruction of arrogance and injustice. Holi is also closely associated with the playful and loving traditions of Lord Krishna, particularly in the Braj region. Holi is primarily celebrated by Hindus but has evolved into a cultural festival enjoyed by people of various communities.

In South Asia, Holi is widely celebrated in India and Nepal, and by Hindu communities in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan. In Nepal, it is a national festival.

It is known by different regional names such as Holi, Phagwa, Dol Jatra, Dol Purnima, and Shigmo. Celebrations begin with Holika Dahan, where bonfires are lit to mark the victory of good over evil. The following day is spent playing with colors, singing, dancing, and visiting friends and relatives. Traditional foods include gujiya, malpua, laddoos, dahi vada, puran poli, and the festive drink thandai.

Rituals include Holika Dahan, application of colors, prayers for well-being, reconciliation, and charitable acts.

Ugadi – March or April

Ugadi marks the beginning of the New Year according to the lunar calendar followed in parts of South India. It represents renewal, balance, and acceptance of life's contrasting experiences. According to Hindu belief, Ugadi marks the day when Lord Brahma began the creation of the universe. It coincides with the start of the Chaitra month, considered auspicious.

It is celebrated mainly by Telugu- and Kannada-speaking Hindus, and holds both religious and cultural significance.

In South Asia, Ugadi is celebrated predominantly in India, especially in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and parts of Maharashtra. Telugu and Kannada communities in Sri Lanka also observe it. It is known as Ugadi, Yugadi, and is closely related to Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra.

Celebrations include cleaning homes, decorating with mango leaves and rangoli, visiting temples, and listening to Panchanga Shraavanam, the traditional almanac reading.

The most symbolic dish is Ugadi Pachadi, combining sweet, bitter, sour, spicy, and salty tastes. Other dishes include pulihora and bobbattu.

Rituals include prayers, sharing food, charity, and seeking blessings from elders.

Raksha Bandhan – August

Raksha Bandhan symbolizes protection, responsibility, affection, and moral duty. Traditionally, it celebrates the bond between a sister and a brother, where mutual care and lifelong responsibility are reaffirmed

The festival has roots in ancient Indian traditions and historical narratives, where sacred threads were tied for protection and blessings. Stories from epics and history highlight its ethical dimension beyond family ties. It is primarily celebrated by Hindus, though culturally observed by people of other religions in South Asia.

In South Asia, Raksha Bandhan is widely celebrated in India and Nepal, and by Hindu communities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. It is also known as Rakhi, Shraavan Purnima, and Janai Purnima (in



Ram Navami – March or April

Ram Navami commemorates the birth of Lord Rama and represents dharma, moral discipline, truthfulness, and ideal leadership.

The festival is rooted in the Ramayana, which narrates the divine birth of Rama in Ayodhya as part of restoring moral order.

It is celebrated by Hindus across regions, particularly followers of Vaishnavism.

In South Asia, Ram Navami is widely celebrated in India and Nepal, and among Hindu communities in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

It is generally known as Ram Navami or Shri Ram Navami.

Devotees visit temples, recite the Ramayana and Ramcharitmanas, sing devotional songs, and organize processions.

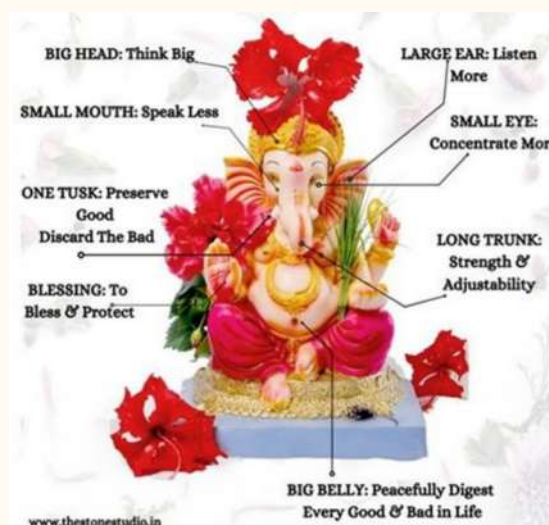
Many observe fasting or eat simple vegetarian food such as fruits, kheer, and panakam.

Rituals include fasting, abhishek of Rama idols, chanting Rama's name, and acts of charity.

Ganesh Chaturthi – August or September

Ganesh Chaturthi celebrates the birth of Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and the deity of wisdom, intellect, and auspicious beginnings.

Ganesh's worship has ancient Puranic origins. In modern history, public celebration was promoted by Lokmanya Tilak to foster social unity.



It is celebrated primarily by Hindus, though culturally respected by many others.

In South Asia, it is widely celebrated in India, particularly in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, and by Hindu communities elsewhere.

It is also known as Vinayaka Chaturthi or Ganpati Utsav.

Clay idols of Ganesha are installed in homes and public pandals, followed by daily prayers and community gatherings.

Modak, laddoos, karanji, and vegetarian meals are prepared.

Rituals include pranapratishta, daily aarti, offerings, and immersion (visarjan) of the idol.

Dussehra (Vijayadashami) – September or October

Dussehra symbolizes the victory of good over evil, righteousness over arrogance, and moral order over chaos. It affirms the ethical principle that injustice and tyranny are ultimately defeated.

The festival has two major scriptural associations. In North India, it marks Lord Rama's victory over Ravana as narrated in the Ramayana. In eastern India, it marks Goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasura. The day concludes the nine-day Navratri period.

It is celebrated primarily by Hindus, though its moral symbolism resonates widely.

In South Asia, Dussehra is celebrated in India and Nepal, and among Hindu communities in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bhutan. In Nepal, it is observed as Dashain.

It is known by different names such as Dussehra, Vijayadashami, and Dashain.

Celebrations vary by region: burning of Ravana effigies in the north, Durga idol immersion in the east, and Ayudha Puja in the south.

Festive vegetarian meals are prepared after the completion of Navratri fasts. Rituals include prayers, blessings, symbolic destruction of evil, and charitable acts.

Diwali (Deepavali) – October or November

Telangana Today

FOR LOCAL TO GLOBAL NEWS

The Hyderabad-based Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) organised 'Diwali-Mahavir Nirvana-Guru Nanak Jayanthi', a multi-faith celebrations comprising of children, young men and women of different religions and caste at Urdu Ghar on Sunday.

BY TELANGANA TODAY
PUBLISHED DATE - 3 NOVEMBER 2024, 09:46 PM



Diwali is the festival of lights, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. It emphasizes inner awakening, renewal, and moral clarity.

The festival has multiple religious associations. In Hindu tradition, it marks Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya, the worship of Goddess Lakshmi, and Lord Krishna's victory over Narakasura. For Jains, it marks Lord Mahavira's nirvana, and for Sikhs, it coincides with Bandi Chhor Divas.

It is celebrated primarily by Hindus and is also religiously significant for Jains and Sikhs. It is culturally celebrated by people of other faiths.

In South Asia, Diwali is widely celebrated in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and among Hindu, Jain, and Sikh communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

It is known as Diwali, Deepavali, Tihar (Nepal), and Festival of Lights.

Celebrations include cleaning and decorating homes, lighting oil lamps, exchanging greetings and gifts, and family gatherings.

A wide variety of sweets and snacks are prepared and shared. Rituals include Lakshmi–Ganesha Puja, lighting lamps, charity, and acts of forgiveness and goodwill.

Appraised by:

Dr. Nch. Harikrishna

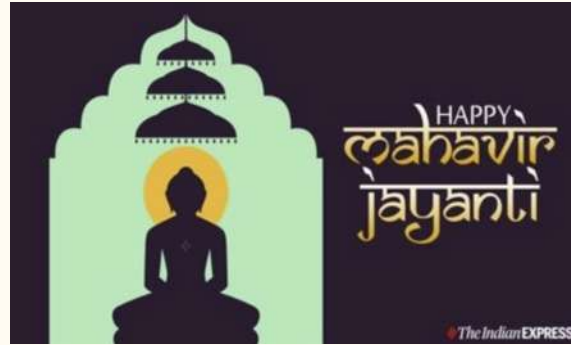
Sanskrit Scholar

Jain Festivals

The three main festivals of Jains is Paryushan Parv (Das Lakshan Dharm). Its last day is celebrated as Kshamawani (forgiveness day) Mahaveer Jayanti and Mahavir Nirvan divas (falls on Diwali).

Das Lakshan Parva is a significant Jain festival, particularly observed in the Digambara tradition, dedicated to the contemplation and practice of the ten supreme virtues (Dashlakshan Dharma). These virtues represent the intrinsic qualities of the soul and are observed over ten days, each day devoted to one virtue. While householders practice these principles to a practical extent, Jain monks observe them at the highest level.

A central philosophical framework in Jainism distinguishes between two perspectives: Vyavahar Naya (practical or worldly conduct) and Nischay Naya (absolute or spiritual reality). Vyavahar focuses on ethical living and social harmony, leading to the accumulation of merit (punya karma). Nischay, however, is paramount, as it directs the soul toward self-realisation, purification, and ultimately liberation (moksha). The true aim of Das Lakshan Parva lies in internal transformation rather than mere external observance.



The Ten Supreme Virtues (Uttam Dharma)

Uttam Kshama (Forgiveness):

Externally, forgiveness fosters harmony by releasing resentment toward all living beings. Internally, it involves freeing the soul from self-inflicted suffering caused by false identification with body and emotions, leading toward right faith (Samyak Darshan).

Uttam Mardav (Humility):

Pride rooted in wealth, status, or intellect binds the soul. Humility arises from recognising the inherent equality and liberating potential of all souls.

Uttam Aarjav (Straightforwardness):

Harmony between thought, speech, and action builds integrity. At the spiritual level, it requires honest recognition of the soul's true nature, distinct from body and emotions.

Uttam Shauch (Contentment):

Material accumulation fuels desire rather than satisfaction. True contentment comes from understanding that happiness is an inherent quality of the soul, not of external objects.

Uttam Satya (Truth):

Truthful speech is restrained, necessary, and precise. Spiritually, truth is alignment with existence itself—recognising and dwelling in the soul's real nature.

Uttam Sanyam (Self-Restraint):

This includes non-violence toward all life forms and restraint from passions. Liberation begins when desires and emotions are recognised as alien to the soul.

Uttam Tap (Penance):

Beyond fasting, penance regulates desires. In its highest form, deep meditation dissolves bodily needs, allowing the soul to experience inner bliss.

Uttam Tyag (Renunciation):

Renunciation weakens attachment and desire. True renunciation is internal—abandoning passions and emotional bondage.

Uttam Aakinchay (Non-Attachment):

Detachment from possessions and inner vices such as anger, pride, fear and desire purifies the soul and advances it toward liberation.

Uttam Brahmacharya (Celibacy):

More than sexual restraint, it signifies dwelling in the soul itself. Mastery arises from inward absorption; enslavement follows outward indulgence.

Samvatsari is the most sacred day for Svetambar Jains of Paryushan Parva and the Sthanakavasi Sampradaya observes it with deep simplicity, introspection, and spiritual discipline.

Sthanakvasi Jains emphasize inner purity over external rituals. So Samvatsari is centered on self-realization, repentance, forgiveness, and restraint.

The Samvatsari Pratikraman is the most important observance. It is usually long and detailed, involving: Alochana (confession of faults); Prayaschitta (repentance); Pratyakhyan (resolution to avoid future sins); It is performed collectively in sthanaks (prayer halls) or individually at home; Micchami Dukkadam – Seeking Forgiveness

Kshamavani – The Culmination

The final day of Das Lakshan Parva is Kshamavani, the day of forgiveness. On this day, Jains seek and grant forgiveness for all harms caused knowingly or unknowingly. Its true essence lies not in ritual apology but in sincere inner repentance (Kshama Bhav), dissolving pride through seeking forgiveness and anger through granting it. Spiritually, Nischay Kshamavani calls the soul to heightened self-awareness and vigilance toward its true nature.

Mahavir Jayanti – March or April

Mahavir Jayanti marks the birth of Lord Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism. It emphasizes non-violence, truth, renunciation, and self-discipline.

According to Jain tradition, Lord Mahavira was born in 599 BCE at Kundagrama near Vaishali. He renounced worldly life at the age of 30 and attained keval jnana after intense austerities.

The festival is celebrated by followers of Jainism, including both Digambara and Shvetambara sects. In South Asia, Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated primarily in India, with observances among Jain communities in neighboring countries.

It is also known as Mahavira Janma Kalyanak.

Celebrations include temple visits, sermons, peaceful processions, and community prayers.

Many Jains observe fasting or consume very simple vegetarian food, strictly avoiding root vegetables.

Rituals include abhishek of Mahavira's idol, recitation of Jain scriptures, meditation, and charitable acts.

Mahavir Nirvan

(or Mahavir Nirvana Kalyanak) is the most important day of Jain calendar and commemorates the day Lord Mahavira, the 24th Jain Tirthankara, attained Nirvana (liberation/moksha) at Pawapuri, Bihar, in 527 B.C.. It falls on the Amavasya (new moon) of the Ashwin or Kartik month in the Hindu calendar.

This day is celebrated as Diwali by Jains, marking the inner light of knowledge, and involves fasting, special prayers, and lighting lamps in homes and temples.

Key Details and Traditions:

- **Significance:** It marks the day Mahavira left his physical body and achieved liberation at the age of 72.
- **Celebration as Diwali:** Jains celebrate this day as Deepawali, as it is believed the 16 Gana kings of Kasi and Kosal lit lamps to honor the passing of the master's knowledge.
- **Rituals:** Devotees visit temples to offer prayers and perform *Nirvana Ladoo* offerings.
- **Place:** The primary celebration occurs at Pawapuri, Bihar, where the *Jal Mandir* is adorned to mark the occasion.
- **Teachings:** The occasion emphasizes Mahavira's message of non-violence (*Ahimsa*), truth, and non-possession (*Aparigraha*).
- **Calendar:** It marks the end of the Jain calendar year.

Appraised by

Sushil Chanodia Jain

Jain Swadhyay Sangh



A Jain Procession

Muslim Festivals

Eid-ul-Fitr (Ramzan Eid) – 1st of Shawwal

Eid-ul-Fitr, commonly known in South Asia as Ramzan Eid, is one of the two major festivals of Islam. It is celebrated on the 1st of Shawwal, immediately following the completion of the holy month of Ramadan, the month of fasting.

Eid-ul-Fitr marks the successful fulfillment of the obligation of fasting (Sawm), which Allah prescribed for believers as a means of attaining Taqwa (God-consciousness): “O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon those before you, that you may attain righteousness.” (Qur'an 2:183)

Institution and Religious Significance

Eid-ul-Fitr was instituted during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ after the migration to Madinah. Authentic narrations record that when the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madinah, he found people celebrating two pre-Islamic festivals. He said:

“Allah has replaced them for you with two better days: the Day of Eid-ul-Fitr and the Day of Eid-ul-Adha.” (Sunan Abu Dawud)

Thus, Eid-ul-Fitr was established as a day of gratitude to Allah, celebration of obedience, and communal joy after a month devoted to fasting, prayer, self-discipline, repentance, and spiritual purification.

Universality of the Festival

Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated by Muslims worldwide, across all schools of Islamic jurisprudence, including Sunni and Shia communities, making it a unifying religious occasion.

In South Asia, it is widely observed in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, and among Muslim communities in neighbouring regions. The festival is known by various cultural names such as Eid-ul-Fitr, Ramzan Eid, Meethi Eid, and Sheer Eid, while its religious essence remains the same.

Rituals and Practices of Eid

The day of Eid begins with ghusl (ritual purification), wearing clean or new clothes, and applying fragrance, following the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

Muslims then gather to offer the special congregational Eid prayer, which consists of two units of prayer and a sermon. This prayer is an emphasized Sunnah and a manifestation of unity and gratitude.

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged joy and openness on this day, while maintaining dignity and remembrance of Allah.

Zakat-ul-Fitr (Charity of Eid)

A central obligation of Eid-ul-Fitr is Zakat-ul-Fitr, a compulsory charity given before the Eid prayer. Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ made Zakat-ul-Fitr obligatory as purification for the fasting person from idle talk and obscenity, and as food for the poor.” (Sunan Abu Dawud)

This ensures that the poor and needy can also partake in the joy of Eid, reinforcing Islam's emphasis on social justice, compassion, and communal harmony.

THE HINDU

Multi-faith festivities in Hyderabad

Published - April 05, 2025 08:39 pm IST – HYDERABAD

[The Hindu Bureau](#)

Hyderabad celebrated unity in diversity on Saturday (April 5) by joining cities across India in a multi-faith celebration, bringing together festivals like Ugadi, Id-ul-Fitr, Ram Navami, Mahavir Jayanti, Baisakhi and Easter. The day began with a blood donation camp, inaugurated by leaders from five major religions, followed by a cultural showcase titled ‘The Stage Awaits Your Soul’, featuring performances by artists across faiths.

A youth panel, ‘My Ideas of Celebrating Festivals,’ emerged as the highlight, where participants reflected on the changing nature of celebrations in the digital age and called for a return to shared, meaningful festivities across communities.

Social and Cultural Celebrations

After prayers, Muslims greet one another, traditionally saying “Taqabbalallahu minna wa minkum” (May Allah accept from us and from you). Families visit relatives, reconcile differences, and strengthen bonds of kinship, which Islam strongly encourages.

Festive foods are prepared according to regional customs. Common dishes include sheer khurma (seviyan), kheer, dates, sweets, and meals such as biryani, kebabs, and curries. While these foods are cultural expressions, they reflect the spirit of joy and generosity encouraged on Eid.

Eid-ul-Azha (10th of Dhu al-Hijjah)

Eid-ul-Azha, also known as Eid al-Adha or the Festival of Sacrifice, is one of the two major religious observances in Islam. It is observed on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the final month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The festival symbolizes principles of faith, moral responsibility, compassion, and social solidarity, emphasizing the importance of placing ethical and spiritual values above individual interests.



The observance commemorates the Qur'anic account of Prophet Ibrahim's unwavering obedience to the divine command. According to Islamic tradition, Ibrahim's readiness to sacrifice his son was divinely acknowledged, and the act was ultimately substituted with the sacrifice of an animal. This event established the ritual of Qurbani, which continues to be observed by Muslims as a symbolic act of devotion and remembrance.

Eid-ul-Azha is celebrated by Muslim communities worldwide, encompassing diverse cultural and jurisprudential traditions, including both Sunni and Shia schools of thought. The festival coincides with the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, one of the central pillars of Islam, thereby reinforcing its global religious significance.

In South Asia, Eid-ul-Azha is observed in countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, Afghanistan, and Bhutan. The festival is known by various regional names, including Eid- ul-Azha, Bakrid, Bakra Eid, and Eid al-Adha, reflecting linguistic and cultural diversity rather than doctrinal differences.

The day typically begins with special congregational prayers held in mosques and open prayer grounds. This is followed by the ritual sacrifice of an animal by individuals and families who meet the prescribed religious and economic criteria. The practice underscores values of generosity, shared responsibility, and concern for social welfare.

The meat from the sacrifice is customarily distributed in three portions—one for the household, one for relatives and friends, and one for those in need. Culinary preparations vary across regions and cultures, while acts of charity, prayer, and community engagement remain central to the observance. Collectively, these practices highlight the festival's broader ethical emphasis on compassion, equity, and social inclusion.

Milad-un-Nabi (12th of Rabi' al-Awwal)

Milad-un-Nabi, also known as Mawlid an-Nabi or Eid-e-Milad, commemorates the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the final Prophet in Islamic tradition. The observance centers on reflection upon his ethical teachings and exemplary character, particularly values such as compassion, justice, humility, integrity, and mercy toward all creation. It encourages adherents to engage in moral self-reflection and to translate these values into social responsibility and community welfare.

According to Islamic historical sources, Prophet Muhammad was born in Makkah in approximately 570 CE, traditionally referred to as the Year of the Elephant. His message contributed to significant social and moral transformation within Arabian society by emphasizing monotheism, social equity,

accountability, and ethical reform. The observance of Milad-un-Nabi developed over time as a means of recalling the Prophet's life (seerah), teachings, and enduring moral legacy.

Milad-un-Nabi is observed by Muslim communities across diverse cultural and geographical contexts. While the commemoration is particularly emphasized within many Sunni Muslim traditions, Shia Muslim communities also honor the Prophet's birth through their own established forms of remembrance and devotional practices, reflecting the plurality within Islamic expression.

BRIDGE BETWEEN ALL FAITHS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Meal at Masjid' to mark Milad-un-Nabi, birthday of Prophet Muhammad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milad-un-Nabi falls on September 28 this year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First time mosque and dargah committees will host meal for people of all faiths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from Hyderabad, initiative to be held across India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Hyderabad, Milad-related public events being held between September 23 & 27 • Bid to avoid clash with Ganesh immersion that falls on September 28 	
7 Nations To Hold Event	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Meal at Masjid' event received good response across the globe • As many as 300 mosques from seven countries to host lunch or dinner on Milad-un-Nabi 	
<p>🌐 About 30 major festivals of eight religions have been identified. Community elders of all faiths will be approached and requested to invite members of other faiths to their celebrations. — Mazher Hussain EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COVA PEACE NETWORK</p>	

In South Asia, Milad-un-Nabi is widely observed in countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, and Afghanistan, and it is recognized as a public holiday in several of these countries. The observance is known by various names—such as Milad-un-Nabi, Eid-e-Milad, and Mawlid an-Nabi—illustrating regional and linguistic diversity.

Common observances include gatherings in mosques and community spaces, recitation of Qur'anic verses, sermons, narration of the Prophet's life, and collective prayers. In some regions, homes, mosques, and public spaces may be modestly illuminated as part of the commemoration.

The sharing of food, including simple meals and sweets, is a customary feature in many communities. In South Asian contexts, practices such as niyaz or langar-style food distribution are common. Core devotional and social practices include sending blessings upon the Prophet (salawat), recitation of devotional poetry (naats), charitable giving, feeding those in need, and engagement in community service. Together, these practices emphasize the observance's focus on ethical living, social cohesion, and compassion.

Compiled by:

Dr. Mohammed Irfan



Food distribution for the needy

Blood Donation Camp

Multifaith Celebrations: An opportunity to serve marginalised and be of service to society

Sikh Festivals

Guru Nanak Jayanti – November

Guru Nanak Jayanti commemorates the birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism. The essence of the day lies in equality, devotion to one God, honest living, and selfless service.

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 at Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib in Pakistan). Through his travels, he spread the message of unity, rejection of caste and superstition, and dignity of labor.

It is celebrated by Sikhs worldwide, with participation from people of other faiths.

In South Asia, it is celebrated in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka wherever Sikh communities exist.



It is also known as Gurpurab or Prakash Purab.

Celebrations include early morning prayers, Akhand Path, Nagar Kirtans, and kirtan in Gurdwaras. Langar provides free vegetarian meals to all, emphasizing equality.

Rituals focus on reading from the Guru Granth Sahib, seva, charity, and communal prayer.

Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti

Guru Gobind Singh (December 22, 1666 – October 7, 1708) was the tenth and final human guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh consolidated many elements of Sikhism and declared the Sikh Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, the living guru of Sikhism. Now a copy of Guru Granth Saheb is placed in every Gurudwara and worshipped as the living Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed that all Sikhs were as strong as lions, as powerful as kings, and as self-respecting as kings. He made it compulsory for men to add Singh (Lion) to their names and for women to add Kaur (Lioness) to their names.

He founded the "Khalsa" to end caste, religious, ethnic and gender discrimination.



Khalsa Aid provided relief to victims of earthquake in Turkey

He commanded 5 Ks.

1. Kesa-(long hair, beard) To accept oneself as God created him,
2. Kanga-(Comb) To keep one's mind and soul pure,
3. Kirpan-(dagger) to protect oneself and other people,
4. Kacha-(Underwear) to live a good life with one life partner,
5. Kara-(steel armor) to inspire to do good things

Duties for Sikhs

- 1. He made it mandatory for Sikhs to abstain from drinking alcohol and smoking,*
- 2. To pray every morning, evening and night,*
- 3. To give one-tenth of their income as charity,*
- 4. Not take interest*

He encouraged Sewa to Gurudwara, to family and to society

Now every Sikh does some free service in Gurudwara, however high their rank, and also service to people in distress after earth quake, floods and riots.

So, if any disaster happens anywhere in the world, Sikh community is the first to reach there.



Sikh Faith Leaders Addressing the Community on Guru Nanak Jayanti

Baisakhi – 13 or 14 April

Baisakhi is both a harvest festival and a major religious event for Sikhs, marking gratitude, courage, and collective identity.

commemorates the historic event of 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh founded the Khalsa at Anandpur Sahib.

It is celebrated primarily by Sikhs and culturally by Hindus and others in North India.

In South Asia, Baisakhi is celebrated in India and Pakistan, especially in the Punjab region. It is also known as Vaisakhi or Khalsa Sajna Divas.

Celebrations include prayers in Gurdwaras, Nagar Kirtans and Gitaka plays.

Langar meals and kada prasad are prepared and shared.

Rituals include Akhand Path, Amrit Sanchar, seva, and community prayers.

Assessed by:

Rachhpal Singh Khalsa

Chairman, Gurudwara Saheb

Vanasthalipuram

Zoroastrian Festivals



Parsi Priest Evard Mehernosh Bharucha speaking at a Multi Faith Celebrations

Khordad Sal

On Zoroastrian Roj Khordad & month Farvardin, Parsis celebrate a very important event- the birthday of the holy Prophet Zarathustra.

This auspicious day is also called “Khordad-Sal”. It is a day of rejoicing and Parsis offer their grateful thanks to God, “Ahura-Mazda”, for having sent this Prophet, approx. 8000 years ago.

Ushvano Zarto Atharva yo Spitamo Zarathushtra: Our thanks to the Almighty & Athravan for a prophet is born for us!

On this very pious occasion, Zoroastrians clean their houses & decorate their homes with garlands & flowers, a ceremonial lamp (Divo) in the house is lit and then head to place of worship where they bow to the holy fire, offer sandalwood etc., along with prayers.

The rest of the day is spent with family & friends.

Jamshed-I-Navroze

Jamshed-I-Navroze is the Iranian New Year, which is celebrated around March 21st. It happens to be the day of Spring Equinox, when the day & nights are equal. It is one of the most ancient, festivals celebrated. A “Haft-Sheen” table is laid, which has seven items with their names beginning with S or Sh.

Consists of:

Sabzeh – Green sprouts

Serkeh –Ginegar *Seeb* –

Apple *Seer*–Garlic

Sojee –Rava

Sherbath – Sugar syrup

Shahad – Honey

Apart from the above items, we have:

- ❖ Gold fish swimming in water bowl. This is to record the exact moment the sun enters the Spring Equinox. It is said that the currents in the waters change and flow faster and in a circular movement, indicating the exact moment of the arrival of Spring. Looking at the goldfish at the turn of the year is also believed to bring good luck & fortune.
- ❖ A picture of Prophet Zarathushtra, the messenger of Ahura Mazda, who gave the world an ethical and excellent religion of Hope & Optimism.
- ❖ A Divo representing Ahura Mazda, who is All-Light.
- ❖ A mirror placed next to the picture of the prophet and facing the divo, signifies that like the mirror, we should reflect the light of righteousness and truth.

- ❖ The holy book Khordeh Avesta.
- ❖ A few silver coins on the open pages of Khordeh Avesta, signifying that wealth should be attained and spent by righteous means.
- ❖ A partially split pomegranate with silver coin wedges in between shows immortality and abundance.
- ❖ Dry fruits, apples represent friendship & sharing.
- ❖ Pod of garlic is kept to ward off evil.
- ❖ Milk stands for goodness.
- ❖ Sweetened curd reminds us that sourness in life can be sweetened with the right attitude.
- ❖ Eggs stand for fertility.
- ❖ Vinegar stands for cleanliness and spiritual purification.
- ❖ A reel of thread and needle is symbolic of hard work and industriousness.

The festivity continues for 12 days. This festival is not only celebrated in Iran and India but also across many other Middle Eastern countries and some Western countries too now.

Jamshed -/- Navroz Mubarak to all of you.

Navroze 📖 Parsi New Year

Navroze means New Roz = New Day. This is the start of the Parsi calendar year, which usually starts in the month of August.

On this auspicious day, houses are decorated, torans are applied, flowers are offered. Divo is lit & prayers are offered for universal happiness & well-being of all.

Then the Parsis go to fire temples & offer sandalwood & prayers. Divos are also lit in the holy places. The rest of the day is for family & friends.

Compiled by:

Evard Mehernosh H. Bharucha

Ex Head Priest, BMNC Parsi Fire Temple, Hyderabad



Multifaith Celebrations: Children and Youth
Participating in Dance, Singing, Drawing Events and
Receiving Awards

Multi Faith Celebrations Partners List

South Asia Networks: Centre for Peoples Foreign Policy in South Asia, SAPAN, SAPA

National Organisation: All India Secular Forum; Arya Samaj; Bharatiya Sarva Dharma Sansad; EKTA Parishad; Jal Bradry; Jain Acharya Sushil Muni Mission; Jamiat Sadhbhavana Trust; Satya Dharma Samvad; Society for Communal Harmony; World Humanist Forumz.

States

Telangana- COVA Peace Network; Montfort Social Institute; Peace Initiatives Foundation; Sikh Heritage Foundation; Gandhi Gyan Mandir, Gurudwara Sri Akalsar Saheb, Hindu Muslim Ekta Committee, Mahavir Hospital and Research Center, Blood Bank Narayanguda -Rubaroo, Sri Ajit Parshawa Yuva Sanghatan., Tameer E Millat Tehreek Khair E Ummat, Youngistan Foundation Kurmaguda DPG Groups Old kurmaguda - Bharat Nagar - Erukala basthi-Chandraiah Huts; Jangammet DPG Groups Laxmi Nagar - Shiva Ganga Nagar - Naik Nagar - Bhoiguda - G.M Chowni - Jangammet; Beda (Budga) Jangam Samkshema Kendram Sangam - Bharath Nagar Youth Association - Samaja Seva Sangam - Kurma Sangam - Arya Samajam - Ganga Puthra Sangam - Fatima Masjid - New St Maria School - Javeed High School - Integral Foundation School - Basti Dawakhana - Banjara Community Hall -; z

Karnataka- Fireflies; GAMANA; Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru; Bahutva Karnataka; Ashirvad; Sieds; Vrikshabandhan Abhiyan; Kathputhiyan Theatre; News Trail Daily; Focolare; The Suniti Soloman Foundation; Kathputch; Don Bosco College; Deccan Herald; Ymca; Slum Development Federation; Prema Mandira; Brahma Kumaris; Active Bengaluru Foundation; Mep; Irhm; Sjim, Blore; Smi; Aasara; Bahai Community; Dalai Lama College; Vishwaneedam Center; Amd; Ruth Foundation Charitable Trust; Sadbhavana Centre, Sadbhavana Manch/ Talent Search/ Karnataka Praja Rajya;z

Maharashtra - Centre for Study of Society and Secularism; Bharat gaurav shraddhey shri devendra brahmachari, Kishan depala, Abhishek Mishra, Kishor khabiya ji;Terapanti Sabha Jain Samajh Mumbai; Koli Samaj Buddhist Samaj; Sufi Board; Mahim Dargah; Haji Ali Dargah Trust; Maharashtra for Serv Dharma Parishad, ASANAJ Healthcare Education and Research Foundation;

Jammu & Kashmir- Kashmir Concern Foundation; Islamic Relief and Research trust; Sikh Coordination Committee, Kashmir; Christian Association, Baramulla; Islamic Mantaqi Academy; Care Foundation; Bishop of Church of Srinagar; Rehtan lil Alameen Foundation;

New Delhi- Global Peace Forum, Temple of Understanding; Global Peace Forum, Temple of Understanding Society for Communal Harmony- Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies - Interfaith Peace Foundation - Khudai Khidmatgar Hind - Peace Gong – World Humanist Forum

Uttar Pradesh- Ayodhya: Sarva Dharma Sadhbhavana Trust; Varanasi: Centre for Communal Harmony and Peace; Vishwa Jyoti Communications; Souhard Peace Centre;Manav Rakt Foundation; Veer Abdul Hameed Trust, Manav Rakt Foundation; Veer Abdul Hameed Trust.

Gujarat- Bunyad; Jan Vikas; Conflictorium; Young Experiments group, Ahmedabad WeTheYuva, Ahmedabad SMET Social Movement for Educational Thinking,

West Bengal- Greater Kolkata Welfare Society; Greater Kolkata Welfare Society, Paschim Bengo Hindi Bhasa Samaj, Rehnuma e Niswaan & Jeet Sporting

Manipur- The Devine Life Society; Healthy Environment Foundation

Andhra Pradesh- SEEDS- **Assam-** ANT- **Bihar-** Pragati Gram Vikas Samiti – **Goa-** Goans for Global Peace-

Kerala- Peoples Movement for Peace - **Madhya Pradesh-** Samarthan - **Tamil Nadu-** SIPA Fair Trade -

Orissa- Civil Society Forum for Human Rights



Communal harmony, equity and global peace through sensitization of all sections of society and empowerment of the poor and marginalized.



COVA (Confederation of Voluntary Associations), is a national network of voluntary organisations working for communal harmony and community empowerment in India and peace in South Asia. COVA is also engaged with multipateral bodies like the United Nations Organisation, G20, BRICS, SAARC and others for structural transformations of the world order to make society more equitable, sustainable, just and peaceful.

MAJOR INITIATIVES IN THE JOURNEY OF COVA

PEACE INITIATIVES : Riot Prevention in 42 communally sensitive localities of Hyderabad Formed Peace and Development Networks in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Partnering to facilities Citizens Action for Manipur
Multhi Faith Celebration of All Festivals : By inviting our neighbours of different communities to share a meal, share about our core values and share our understanding of the Almighty to create the magic of mutual respect and harmony in society.



Intra Faith Initiatives : All Religions are being weaponized for vested interests resulting in antagonism and violence between communities. Intra Faith Program involves Faith Leaders of different religious critiquing misuse or abuse of their own religion to ensure it is not weaponised to promote violence in society.

Inter Faith Forum (IFF) : COVA has leaders of different faiths who collectively work for prevention of violence in localities and propagation of useful messages on different social issue like Pulse Polio, HIV, RTE, Accessing services from Government departments etc.

Initiatives in Kashmir : Proposed the idea and facilitated the meeting between Indian Parliamentarians and Hurriyat Leaders in October 2010 that reduced violence in the valley for 4 years.

Peace in South Asia : Flags for Peace Campaign by COVA stands out by setting the trend of spectators waving flags of both India and Pakistan at Cricket matches to communicate message of peace and goodwill in the stadium and to the world through TV channels!

Peace through Cyberspace

- a) COFI (Cyber Operations for Fraternity and Integration) Networks to secure cyerspace for peace.
- b) #CHECKIT - Offers training in decoding and exposing Fake News.

Work with Refugees : There are 8000 refugees in Hyderabad from 9 countries. COVA provides subsistence rations and support for education, livelihood and medical emergencies to the most destitute.

Structural Transformations :

Compassionate Citizenship and Responsible Activism Program

Objective : To take students beyond classroom and textbooks for experiential learning of social issues to make them sensitive human beings and responsible citizens.

Outcome : Students are enable and motivated to live as responsible citizens and Change Champions of their communities. Education Department of the Government of Telangana has incorporated this program in the school curriculum for classes 7th to 9th as part of Moral Education.

Financial Inclusion : Finance Ministry of Government of India incorporated 9 of 12 recommendations of COVA in the banking Sector. Five of these recommendations are included in the MUDRA Scheme. Idea of eMudra was proposed by COVA



Research and Advocacy for Policy Transformations : From Job Seekers to Job Creators : HRD Ministry accepted to include 3 recommendations of COVA in college curriculum to orient students accordingly.



Awards for COVA & Partners: State- National - South Asia - International

THE MAGNIFICENT COALITION OF SOUTH ASIA

"South Asian Coalitions, are not easy to come by and coming together on a rainbow of issues in welcome. I have the privilege of cooperating with COVA on issues concerning peace, Justice Human Rights and good neighborly relations. The contribution of Dr. Mazher Hussain has been simply outstanding. One can only wish them well."

Admiral L. Ramdas.

Former Chief - Indian Navy

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