

## Interfaith Dates for 2009 – By Reverend Jonathan Ludd

### Religions included:

Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Gnosticism, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Rastafari, Shinto, Sikh, and Zoroastrian

#### Thursday 1 January

##### Christian

**Circumcision** Marks the day when Jesus was circumcised.

##### Secular

**New Year's Day** The start of the Gregorian Calendar (Western calendar year)

##### Shinto

**Oshogatsu (or Shogatsu)** Shinto New Year, one of the most popular occasions for shrine visits.

##### Christian

**Festival of St Basil the Great** St Basil is one of the great fathers of the Orthodox Church.

##### Gnosticism

**The Goddess Festival of Amalug** A time of reflection and considerations

#### Sunday 4 January

##### Christian

**Epiphany (Catholic Church in England and Wales)** The Catholic Church in England and Wales moves this festival to the nearest Sunday if it falls on a Saturday or Monday.

#### Monday 5 January

##### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) was the tenth and last of the Sikh Gurus. He instituted the Five Ks and established the Order of the Khalsa.

#### Tuesday 6 January

##### Christian

**Epiphany** Celebrates the visit of the wise men (the magi) to the infant Jesus. In the East, where it originated, the Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. (Catholics and Episcopalians celebrate this separately: see Baptism of the Lord) Also known as Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day).

##### Christian

**Christmas Day (Armenian Orthodox)** Armenian Christians celebrate Christ's birth at Epiphany, except for Armenians in the Holy Land, who celebrate Christmas on January 19th.

## Christian

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**Theophany** Orthodox churches mark the baptism of Jesus on this day.

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## Jewish

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**10th Tevet** An important Jewish fast day.

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## Wednesday 7 January

### Rastafari

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**Christmas Day (Ethiopian)** Rastafarians believe Ethiopia to be their spiritual homeland, and a place to which they want to return.

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### Christian

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**Christmas Day (Orthodox)** Most Orthodox churches use the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar. As a result, they celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches.

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### Muslim

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**Ashura** Islamic holy day observed on the 10th of the Islamic month of Muharram. Shi'ite Muslims regard it as a major festival marking the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Hussein..

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## Sunday 11 January

### Christian

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**First Sunday after Epiphany** Epiphany takes place on the 6th of January, but most Christians celebrate it on the first Sunday after that date.

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### Christian

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**Baptism of the Lord** Commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John the Baptist. Occurs on the first Sunday after Epiphany. Catholics and Episcopalians celebrate this holy day, but Eastern Christianity celebrates the baptism of Jesus at Epiphany.

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## Tuesday 13 January

### Christian

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**St Hilary's Day** According to tradition, "St. Hilary's is the coldest day of the year." St. Hilary was a fourth century Bishop of Poitiers.

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## Wednesday 14 January

### Hindu

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**Makar Sankrant** Makar Sankrant is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu calendar and celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere.

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## Thursday 15 January

### Shinto

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**Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day)** Japanese who have reached legal adulthood (20 in Japan) in the previous year attend a shrine to give thanks.

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## Sunday 18 January

### Christian

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (start)** First celebrated in 1908. The days of 18-25 January (regardless of the days of the week involved) were originally chosen because they covered the days between the feast of St Peter and the feast of St Paul. Some churches and regions use a different week.

### Baha'i

**World Religion Day** World Religion Day was instituted by the Baha'i community in 1950 to help foster interfaith understanding and harmony.

### Multifaith

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## Wednesday 21 January

### Christian

**St Agnes** Patron saint of girls, martyred at the age of 13.

## Sunday 25 January

### Christian

**St Paul's Day** Anglicans and Catholics celebrate St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus.

## Monday 26 January

### Chinese

**Chinese New Year**

## Tuesday 27 January

### Buddhist

**Losar (start)** The most important holiday in Tibet, marking the Tibetan New Year. The celebration lasts three days from today.

### Jewish

**National Holocaust Memorial Day** The UK Holocaust Memorial Day was first held in January 2001. The date was chosen as the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

### Multifaith

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## Wednesday 28 January

### Christian

**St Thomas Aquinas** Doctor of the Church and patron saint of students and theologians.

## Saturday 31 January

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Har Rai (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Har Rai (1630-1661) was the seventh of the Sikh Gurus.

### Hindu

**Vasant Panchami** Dedicated to Saraswati, the goddess of learning and Brahma's wife. The festival marks the beginning of Spring.

## Sunday 1 February

### Pagan

**Imbolc** Also called Oimelc, Imbolc celebrates the awakening of the land and the growing power of the Sun. Celebrated from the eve, into the 1<sup>st</sup> February

### Gnosticism

**Imbolc** A celebration of understanding of the Goddess 'Amalug', celebrated from the eve, into the 1<sup>st</sup> Feb

## Monday 2 February

### Christian

**Candlemas** This is often called The Presentation of Christ in the Temple and commemorates the day Mary took Jesus to the Temple at Jerusalem to present him to God. Coincides with Groundhog Day (USA)

## Tuesday 3 February

### Shinto

**Rissun (Setsubun)** A Spring festival that marks the division between Winter and Spring and is celebrated with beans.

## Sunday 8 February

### Buddhist

**Parinirvana - Nirvana day** Mahayana Buddhist festival marking the anniversary of Buddha's death. Pure Land Buddhists call the festival "Nirvana Day". Parinirvana is celebrated by some Buddhists on February 8th.

## Thursday 5 February

### Gnosticism

**Ilu Festival** A celebration of the God 'Ilu' and recognition of the universe in motion

## Monday 9 February

### Jewish

**Tu B'Shevat** The Jewish New Year for trees - For religious accounting purposes all trees have their anniversaries on this festival, regardless of when they were planted.

## Wednesday 11 February

### Christian

**Our Lady of Lourdes** Marks the day in 1858 when St Bernadette had her first vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## Saturday 14 February

### Christian

**St Valentine's Day (Lupercalia)** Now more a secular festival than a religious one. There are at least three different saints named Valentine.

## Sunday 15 February

### Buddhist

**Nirvana day (alternative date)** Nirvana Day is also known as Parinirvana and is celebrated by some Buddhists on February 8th. Nirvana Day is the celebration of Buddha's death when he reached total Nirvana, at the age of 80.

### Gnosticism

**Amalug Festival** A celebration of Love and Honour

## Monday 23 February

### Hindu

**Mahashivratri** Mahashivratri is a Hindu festival dedicated to Shiva, one of the deities of the Hindu Trinity.

## Tuesday 24 February

### Christian

**Shrove Tuesday** Also called Pancake Day and Mardi Gras. The British name of "Pancake Day" comes from the tradition of making pancakes to use up all the food that could not be eaten during Lent.

## Wednesday 25 February

### Christian

**Ash Wednesday** The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches. Lent is the season marking the time Jesus spent in the wilderness.

## Sunday 1 March

### Christian

**St David's Day** Saint David, or Dewi Sant as he's called in the Welsh language, is the patron saint of Wales.

### Gnosticism

**Feast of Amalug** A celebration of the fruits of the land

## Monday 2 March

### Bahai

**Nineteen Day Fast (start)** Ends 20 March. During this period Baha'is go without food or drink from sunrise to sunset.

### Christian

**Clean Monday - Beginning of Lent (Orthodox)** The start of the "Great Lent" for Orthodox Christians. This day is called Clean Monday, and occurs seven weeks before the Orthodox Easter

## Tuesday 3 March

### Shinto

**Hina-matsuri - Festival of Dolls** Celebrates daughters in the family

## Thursday 5 March

### Christian

**St Piran's Day** Piran is regarded as the patron saint of Cornwall and tin miners. He was born in Ireland. The Cornish flag may have been inspired by the legend that Piran discovered the process for smelting tin: black rock with a white cross of pure metal.

## Friday 6 March

### Multifaith

**Women's World Day of Prayer** This dates from 1887 and is celebrated on the first Friday of March

## Monday 9 March

### Jewish

**Fast of Esther (Taanit Esther)** A three day fast in commemoration of the fast of Mordechai and Esther. This is not a major Jewish fast.

### Muslim

**Milad un Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad)** Shia Muslims celebrate this 5 days later. Some Muslims do not approve of celebrating the birthday, and regard doing so as a religious innovation.

## Tuesday 10 March

### Jewish

**Purim** Purim commemorates the time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination by the courage of a young Jewish woman called Esther.

## Wednesday 11 March

### Sikh

**Hola Mohalla (Lunar Calendar)** Hola Mohalla is three day festival of military exercises and mock battles, together with religious discussions and devotional music, at Anandpur Sahib on the day after Holi.

### Jewish

**Shushan Purim** In some places Purim is celebrated one day later. In this case it is called Shushan Purim.

### Hindu

**Holi** The Hindu spring festival.

## Saturday 14 March

### Muslim

**Milad un Nabi (Shia)** Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunni Muslims celebrate this 5 days earlier. Some Muslims do not approve of celebrating the birthday, and regard doing so as a religious innovation.

## Monday 16 March

### Gnosticism

**Amalug Intoxication** A celebration of the Elixir of Life, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March

## Tuesday 17 March

### Christian

**St Patrick's Day** St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland.

## Thursday 19 March

### Christian

**St Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

## Friday 20 March

### Pagan

**Ostara** Spring Equinox celebrates the renewed life of the Earth that comes with the Spring.

## Saturday 21 March

### Bahai

**Naw-Ruz** Baha'i New Year

### Gnosticism

**Ansar** A celebration of the Spiritual Warrior, varying dates yearly between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March

### Zoroastrian

**Jamshedi Noruz (Fasli)** Zoroastrian New Year's Day in the Fasli calendar.

### Shinto

**Shubun-sai - Equinox day** A day for visiting graves. Also associated with Buddhism in Japan.

## Sunday 22 March

### Christian

**Mothering Sunday** Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Not the same as Mothers' Day in the USA.

## Wednesday 25 March

### Christian

**Annunciation** Marks the angel Gabriel's message to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the incarnation of Christ. It also celebrates the incarnation itself as the date falls 9 months before Christmas.

## Thursday 26 March

### Zoroastrian

**Khordad Sal (Fasli)** The birthday of Zoroaster, celebrated on this date in the Fasli calendar. Also known as the Greater Noruz

## Friday 3 April

### Hindu

**Rama Navami** Birthday of Lord Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu and the hero of the Ramayana

## Saturday 4 April

### Gnosticism

**Amalug Rites** A time for high-installation of the Sacred Rites of Passage, 4<sup>th</sup> through to 6<sup>th</sup> April

## Sunday 5 April

### Christian

**Palm Sunday** The sixth and last Sunday of Lent. Marks the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the start of Holy Week.

## Tuesday 7 April

### Jain

**Mahavira Jayanti** The birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankar and the "founder" of modern Jainism

## Wednesday 8 April

### Jewish

**Fast of the Firstborn** Observed only by firstborn males, on the day before Passover. This fast celebrates the survival of Jewish firstborn sons from the 10th Plague of Egypt.

## Thursday 9 April

### Hindu

**Hanuman Jayanti** This festival marks the birth of Hanuman, the Monkey God.

### Jehovah's Witnesses

**Memorial of Christ's Death** The only religious festival marked by Jehovah's Witnesses.

### Jewish

**Passover (1st day)** The start of the season of Passover when Jews commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses. Work is not permitted on the first two and the last two days of Passover.

### Buddhist

**Theravada New Year** New Year festival for Theravada Buddhists, celebrated for three days from the first full moon day in April

### Christian

**Maundy Thursday** Christians remember Maundy Thursday as the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist.

## Friday 10 April

### Christian

**Good Friday** Good Friday is the Friday before Easter. It commemorates the execution of Jesus by crucifixion.

## Sunday 12 April

### Christian

**Easter Sunday (Western)** Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - his return from death after the Crucifixion. The most important Christian festival. Most years Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter on a different date.

## Monday 13 April

### Sikh

**Vaisakhi** The Sikh New Year Festival, which also commemorates the founding of the Khalsa by the tenth Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) in 1699. Also spelled Baisakhi.

## Tuesday 14 April

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Nanak (Nanakshahi calendar)** The founder of the Sikh religion was born on 14 April 1469. This festival is also currently celebrated according to the Lunar Calendar, but this may change.

### Sikh

**Hola Mohalla (Nanakshahi Calendar)** Hola Mohalla is currently celebrated according to the Lunar Calendar, but this may change.

## Friday 17 April

### Jewish

**Passover (final day)** The eighth and final day of Passover. Note that Passover lasts for seven days in Israel.

## Saturday 18 April

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) was the ninth of the Sikh Gurus.

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Angad Dev (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552) was the second of the Sikh Gurus.

## Sunday 19 April

### Christian

**Easter (Orthodox)** Orthodox Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ - his return from death after the Crucifixion. The most important Christian festival

## Tuesday 21 April

### Bahai

**Ridvan - first day** The start of a 12 day festival when Baha'is celebrate the day when Baha'u'llah said that he was the prophet predicted by the Bab. The most important Baha'i festival.

### Rastafari

**Anniversary of Haile Selassie's visit to Jamaica** Marks the date Haile Selassie I visited Jamaica in 1966. Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastas believe Haile Selassie is God, and that he will return to Africa members of the black community who are living in exile.

### Jewish

**Yom Hashoah** The Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day. The date is chosen as the closest date (in the Jewish calendar) to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

## Thursday 23 April

### Christian

**St George's Day** Saint George is the patron saint of England.

## Tuesday 28 April

### Jewish

**Yom Hazikaron** A day of remembrance on the day preceding Israel's Independence Day.

## Wednesday 29 April

### Jewish

**Yom Ha'atzmaut** Israel's Independence Day

### Bahai

**Ridvan - ninth day** Marks the arrival of Baha'u'llah's family at the Ridvan garden.

## Thursday 30 April

### Gnosticism

**Nammu Festival** A time for High Rituals and awareness

## Friday 1 May

### Pagan

**Beltane** Pagans celebrate Beltane with maypole dances, symbolizing the mystery of the Sacred Marriage of Goddess and God. Celebrations occur on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

### Gnosticism

**Hidden Knowledge Rite** A time for awareness of the past

## Saturday 2 May

### Bahai

**Ridvan - twelfth day** Marks Baha'u'llah's departure from the Ridvan garden.

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) was the fifth of the Sikh Gurus

## Saturday 9 May

### Buddhist

**Wesak or Buddha day** The most important of the Buddhist festivals. It celebrates the Buddha's birthday, and, for some Buddhists, also marks his birth and death. Pictures of Wesak celebrations in Manchester

## Tuesday 12 May

### Jewish

**Lag B'Omer** A minor holiday on the 33rd day of the Omer commemorating a break in the plague during the lifetime of Rabbi Akiva.

## Thursday 21 May

### Christian

**Ascension Day** Ascension Day marks the last earthly appearance of Christ after his resurrection. Christians believe Christ ascended into heaven. It is celebrated 40 days after Easter.

## Friday 22 May

### Jewish

**Yom Yerushalayim** Jerusalem Day

## Saturday 23 May

### Bahai

**Declaration of the Bab** The Bab was the Forerunner of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith. His mission was to prepare the world for the coming of Baha'u'llah and he declared it in the evening of May 22 1844.

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Amar Das (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) was the third of the Sikh Gurus.

## Sunday 24 May

### Christian

**Ascension Day (Catholic Church in England and Wales)** Ascension Day is normally celebrated 40 days after Easter. The Catholic Church in England and Wales celebrates it on the following Sunday instead.

## Friday 29 May

### Jewish

**Shavuot (1st day)** Shavuot is a two-day festival that marks the time when the first harvest was taken to the Temple. Also known as the Festival of Weeks. Work is not permitted for the duration of the festival.

### Bahai

**Ascension of Baha'u'llah** Anniversary of Baha'u'llah's death in in 1892 near Akka, Israel.

## Sunday 31 May

### Christian

**Pentecost - Whitsun** The seventh Sunday after Easter, commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples and the birth of the Christian Church.

## Sunday 7 June

### Christian

**Trinity Sunday** The first Sunday after Pentecost. Christians meditate on the nature of God as "Three in one".

## Thursday 11 June

### Christian

**Corpus Christi** Roman Catholic festival celebrating the "real presence of Christ in the Eucharist". The festival falls on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

## Sunday 14 June

### Christian

**All Saints' Day (Orthodox)** This day honours all saints, known and unknown, of the Christian church. Western churches celebrate All Saints Day on November 1.

### Christian

**Corpus Christi (Catholic Church in England and Wales)** Corpus Christi falls on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. The Catholic Church in England and Wales celebrates it on the following Sunday instead.

## Tuesday 16 June

### Sikh

**Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Arjan Dev was the fifth Sikh Guru and the first Sikh martyr. He also compiled all of the past Gurus' writings into one book, which is now the Sikh holy scripture: the Guru Granth Sahib.

## Sunday 21 June

### Pagan

**Litha (Summer Solstice)** Longest day of the year. Celebrations occur from 20<sup>th</sup> June, overnight into 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Gnosticism

**The Raising of Amalug** A celebration of the Goddess energy

## Sunday 28 June

### Christian

**St Peter's Day (Catholic Church in England and Wales)** The Catholic Church in England and Wales moves this festival to the nearest Sunday if it falls on a Saturday or Monday.

## Monday 29 June

### Christian

**St Peter's Day** Observed by Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran churches. One of the oldest saints' days.

## Saturday 4 July

### Gnosticism

**Mulan** The celebration of the future star, a time of forward thinking and realisation, 4<sup>th</sup> through to 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Sunday 5 July

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Hargobind (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) was the sixth of the Sikh Gurus.

## Tuesday 7 July

### Buddhist

**Asala - Dharma Day** The anniversary of the start of Buddha's teaching - his first sermon, "The Wheel of Truth", after his enlightenment.

## Thursday 9 July

### Jewish

**17th Tammuz** An important Jewish fast day.

### Bahai

**Martyrdom of the Bab** Anniversary of the Bab's execution in 1850 in Tabriz, Iran.

## Wednesday 15 July

### Christian

**St Swithin's Day** Swithin (or Swithun) was a Saxon bishop in the 9th century. Legend has it that the weather on his feast day, 15 July, will determine the weather for the next 40 days.

### Gnosticism

**Rituals to Amalug** A time of focus and inspiration of the Goddess energy, 15<sup>th</sup> through to 16th

## Monday 20 July

### Zoroastrian

**Jamshedi Noruz (Qadimi)** Zoroastrian New Year's Day in the Qadimi calendar.

## Thursday 23 July

### Rastafari

**Birthday of Haile Selassie** Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastas believe Haile Selassie is God, and that he will return to Africa members of the black community who are living in exile.

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Har Krishen (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664) was the eighth of the Sikh Gurus.

## Friday 24 July

### Mormon

**Pioneer Day** Commemorates the arrival in 1847 of the first Latter Day Saints pioneers in Salt Lake Valley.

## Saturday 25 July

### Zoroastrian

**Khordad Sal (Qadimi)** The birthday of Zoroaster, celebrated on this date in the Qadimi calendar.

## Thursday 30 July

### Jewish

**Tisha B'Av** A solemn day that commemorates a series of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the years, many of which have coincidentally happened on this day.

## Friday 31 July

### Pagan

**Lughnasadh** - A harvest festival and one of the Pagan festivals of Celtic origin which split the year into four. Celebrations occur on the evening of 31<sup>st</sup> July.

## Gnosticism

**Nabu** A celebration of the Sacred Hawk and the Green Man

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## Wednesday 5 August

### Hindu

**Raksha Bandhan** Raksha Bandhan is the Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love. "Raksha Bandhan" means a thread for protection.

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## Thursday 6 August

### Christian

**Transfiguration** Orthodox Christian feast commemorating the sudden emanation of radiance from the person of Jesus that occurred on the mountain.

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## Thursday 13 August

### Gnosticism

**Amalug Prayers** A time of thought, to enhance the life of others

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## Friday 14 August

### Hindu

**Janmashtami - Krishna Jayanti** The Janamashtami festival marks the birth of Krishna, the most highly venerated God in the Hindu pantheon.

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## Saturday 15 August

### Christian

**Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** A largely Roman Catholic festival celebrating their belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken body and soul into heaven.

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### Christian

**Dormition of the Theotokos** An Orthodox festival that commemorates the death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ's mother. Dormition means "falling asleep".

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## Sunday 16 August

### Christian

**Assumption of Mary (Catholic Church in England and Wales)** The Catholic Church in England and Wales moves this festival to the nearest Sunday if it falls on a Saturday or Monday.

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## Monday 17 August

### Jain

**Paryushana** The most important Jain festival, it consists of eight (Swetambara) or ten (Digambara) days of intensive fasting and repentance. A time of reflection.

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## Rastafari

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**Birthday of Marcus Garvey** Commemorates the Birthday of Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican politician born in 1887 who predicted the crowning of a King in Africa, and instigated the 'Back to Africa' movement.

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## Wednesday 19 August

### Zoroastrian

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**Jamshedi Noruz (Shenshai)** Zoroastrian New Year's Day in the Shenshai calendar.

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## Saturday 22 August

### Muslim

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**Ramadan (start)** Ramadan is the Muslim month of fasting.

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## Sunday 23 August

### Gnosticism

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**Day of Amalug** A celebration of the Goddess in nature

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## Monday 24 August

### Zoroastrian

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**Khordad Sal (Shenshai)** The birthday of Zoroaster, celebrated on this date in the Shenshai calendar.

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### Gnosticism

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**Day of Ilu** A celebration of the universe as a complete ideal

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## Tuesday 8 September

### Christian

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**Nativity of the Theotokos** Orthodox Christians celebrate the birth of the Virgin Mary

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### Christian

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**Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary** Roman Catholics celebrate the birth of the Virgin Mary.

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### Christian

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**Feast of the Birth of Mary** Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches celebrate the birth of Mary, mother of Jesus.

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## Friday 11 September

### Rastafari

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**Ethiopian New Year** The start of the New Year in Ethiopia is recognised because Rastafarians believe Ethiopia to be their spiritual homeland, and a place to which they want to return.

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## Saturday 12 September

### Gnosticism

**Feast of Nabu** The Green Man celebration of life and riches of the Earth

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## Saturday 19 September

### Hindu

**Navaratri (start)** Navaratri (nine nights) symbolises the triumph of good over evil and marks the start of autumn.

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### Jewish

**Rosh Hashanah (1st day)** Jewish New Year. A two-day festival during which work is not permitted.

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## Monday 21 September

### Jewish

**Fast of Gedalliah** Fast in memory of the assassination of Gedalliah Ben Achikam, the Governor of Israel during the days of Nebuchadnetzar, King of Babylonia.

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### Muslim

**Eid-UI-Fitr** The end of Ramadan when Muslims celebrate the end of fasting and thank Allah for His help with their month-long act of self-control.

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### Gnosticism

**Mulan** A celebration of the cycles of the universe and the future to come

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## Tuesday 22 September

### Pagan

**Mabon (Autumn Equinox)** this day is celebrated when day and night are of equal duration.

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## Monday 28 September

### Hindu

**Dussera** Celebrates Lord Rama's victory over the evil demon Ravana.

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### Jewish

**Yom Kippur** Day of Atonement - the most solemn day of the Jewish year.

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## Tuesday 29 September

### Christian

**Michaelmas/ St Michael's Day** A feast day in honour of the archangel Michael. Michael is one of only two angels mentioned by name in the Bible (the other being Gabriel.)

## Saturday 3 October

### Jewish

**Sukkot** Sukkot or The Feast of Tabernacles, commemorates the years that the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, and celebrates the way in which God took special care of them under impossible conditions. Sukkot lasts for seven days, and work is not permitted on the first two days.

## Friday 9 October

### Jewish

**Hoshanah Rabbah** The 7th day of Sukkot.

### Sikh

**Birthday of Guru Ram Das (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Ram Das (1534-1581) was the fourth of the Sikh Gurus.

## Saturday 10 October

### Jewish

**Shemini Atzeret** Shemini Atzeret can be translated as "the assembly of the eighth (day)." In Israel the festival is combined with Simchat Torah.

## Sunday 11 October

### Jewish

**Simchat Torah** Simchat Torah means "Rejoicing in the Torah." This holiday marks the completion of the yearly cycle of weekly Torah readings.

## Tuesday 13 October

### Christian

**St Edward's Day** Edward the Confessor was King of England 1042 - 1066. He built Westminster Abbey where there is a shrine to him - and where the saint is also celebrated on January 5 each year, the anniversary of his death.

## Saturday 17 October

### Hindu

**Diwali** Diwali, the festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia. It is an occasion for celebrations by Hindus as well as Jains and Sikhs.

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## Jain

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**Diwalin** Diwali, the festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia. It is an occasion for celebrations by Hindus as well as Jains and Sikhs.

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## Sikh

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**Diwali** For Sikhs, Diwali is particularly important because it celebrates the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, and 52 other princes with him, in 1619.

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## Tuesday 20 October

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### Bahai

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**Birth of the Bab** Celebrates the birth of the precursor of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

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## Saturday 31 October

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### Christian

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**Hallowe'en (All Hallows' Eve)** The night before All Saints' Day (All Hallows' Day). Its origins date back over 2000 years to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. It was celebrated as a Christian festival by the 8th Century.

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### Pagan

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**Samhain (Hallowe'en)** Samhain (pronounced 'sow'inn') marks the Feast of the Dead. Many Pagans also celebrate it as the old Celtic New Year (although some mark this at Imbolc).

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### Gnosticism

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**Nammu Eve** The night of the 'Veil', the reality of the universe is thinnest at this time

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## Sunday 1 November

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### Christian

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**All Saints' Day (Hallowmas, All Hallows')** All Saints' Day (also known as All Hallows' Day or Hallowmas) is when Anglicans and Roman Catholics honour all saints, known and unknown, of the Christian church. Orthodox churches celebrate it on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

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## Monday 2 November

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### Christian

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**All Souls' Day** All Souls' Day is an opportunity for Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic churches to commemorate the faithful departed. They remember and pray for the souls of people who are in Purgatory. All Souls' Day is celebrated on 3 November if the 2nd is a Sunday.

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### Rastafari

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**Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie** Haile Selassie was the Emperor of Ethiopia. Rastas believe Haile Selassie is God, and that he will return to Africa members of the black community who are living in exile.

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## Sikh

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**Birthday of Guru Nanak (Lunar Calendar)** This festival may be celebrated by some on the date fixed by the Nanakshahi calendar: April 14

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## Sunday 8 November

### Multifaith

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**Remembrance Sunday** The second Sunday of November is marked by ceremonies at war memorials and cenotaphs to remember those who gave their lives in conflicts.

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## Wednesday 11 November

### Multifaith

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**Armistice Day** Marks the end of the First World War on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. At 1100 on this day people in the UK pause for 2 minutes of silence to remember those who gave their lives in past conflicts.

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## Thursday 12 November

### Bahai

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**Birth of Baha'u'llah** Celebrates the birth in 1817 of the founder of the Baha'i faith.

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## Sunday 15 November

### Shinto

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**Shichigosan (7-5-3 festival)** A festival to give thanks for children. Often celebrated on the nearest Sunday to the 15th to allow working parents to take part.

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## Monday 23 November

### Shinto

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**Niinamesei** Labour Thanksgiving Day, a national holiday in Japan and originally a harvest festival.

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## Tuesday 24 November

### Sikh

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**Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Nanakshahi calendar)** Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth Sikh Guru and is honoured as a champion of religious freedom. He was executed in 1675 for refusing to convert to Islam.

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## Thursday 26 November

### Bahai

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**Day of the Covenant** This minor festival celebrates the covenant of Baha'u'llah. Baha'is also mark the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on this day.

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## Saturday 28 November

### Bahai

**Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha** Marks the death of the son of Baha'u'lláh. This is a minor holy day and work is not suspended.

### Muslim

**Eid-UI-Adha** Festival of Sacrifice marking the day after Arafat. The Day of Arafat is the most important day in the Hajj ritual. This is a four day holiday

## Sunday 29 November

### Christian

**Advent Sunday** The beginning of the ecclesiastical year on the Sunday closest to November 30. Advent is the season before Christmas - In Western Christendom, four Sundays are included. In Eastern Christendom, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November

## Monday 30 November

### Christian

**St Andrew's Day** Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece and Russia. The flag of Scotland is the Cross of St. Andrew. St Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was originally a fisherman and became the first Apostle.

## Tuesday 8 December

### Christian

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception** Celebrated by Roman Catholics who remember Mary's conception as being without sin, therefore, immaculate.

### Buddhist

**Bodhi Day** On Bodhi day some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, India.

## Saturday 12 December

### Jewish

**Hanukkah** Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights and marks the restoration of the temple by the Maccabees in 164 BCE. Hanukkah is celebrated at roughly the same time as Christmas, but there is no connection at all between the festivals.

## Sunday 13 December

### Christian

**St Lucy's Day** Saint Lucy's feast day is marked by Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox. Lucy is the patron saint of the blind. She was a virgin martyr who lived in Sicily during the third century.

## Thursday 17 December

### Jewish

**10th Tevet** An important Jewish fast day.

## Friday 18 December

### Muslim

**Al-Hijra** Islamic New Year. Marks the migration of the Prophet Mohammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina

## Monday 21 December

### Pagan

**Yule (Winter Solstice)** Yule is the time of the winter solstice, when the sun child is reborn, an image of the return of all new life born through the love of the Gods. Within the Northern Tradition Yule is regarded as the New Year.

### Gnosticism

**Yule: Ilu** A time of recognition of the cycle of the Green Man, a time for sharing life with others

## Thursday 24 December

### Christian

**Christmas Eve** The day before Christmas Day

## Friday 25 December

### Christian

**Christmas Day** The day when Western Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

## Saturday 26 December

### Secular

**Boxing Day** The day after Christmas Day. A secular festival.

### Christian

**St Stephen's Day** St Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is celebrated on this day by Roman Catholics. The day is also called the Feast of Stephen.

## Sunday 27 December

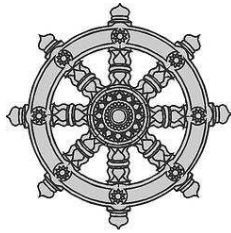
### Muslim

**Ashura** Islamic holy day observed on the 10th of the Islamic month of Muharram. Shi'ite Muslims regard it as a major festival marking the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Hussein.

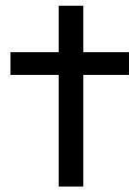
## Religious Symbols



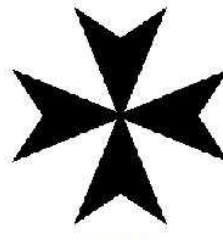
Baha'i



Buddhist



Christian



Gnostic



Hindu



Jain



Jewish



Muslim



Pagan



Rastafarian



Shinto



Sikh



Zoroastrian

## General Religious Information

**Baha'i** - The **Baha'i Faith** is a monotheistic religion founded by Baha'u'llah in nineteenth-century Persia, emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind. There are an estimated five to six million Baha'is around the world in more than 200 countries and territories. Baha'i teachings emphasize the unity of the major world religions. Religious history is seen to have unfolded through a series of divine messengers, each of whom established a religion that was suited to the needs of the time and the capacity of the people. These messengers have included Abraham, the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad and others, including most recently Baha'u'llah. In Baha'i belief, each messenger taught of the next, and Baha'u'llah's life and teachings fulfill the end-time promises of previous scriptures. Humanity is understood to be involved in a process of collective evolution, and the need of the present time is for the gradual establishment of peace, justice and unity on a global scale.

**Buddhist - Buddhism** is a family of beliefs and practices, considered by many to be a religion. Buddhism is based on the teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, known as 'The Buddha', who lived in the region of the Indian subcontinent and likely died around 400 BCE. Buddhists recognize him as an awakened teacher who shared his insights to help sentient beings end their suffering and escape the cycle of rebirths (saṃsāra). Among the methods various schools of Buddhism apply towards this goal are: ethical conduct and altruistic behaviour, devotional practices, ceremonies and the invocation of bodhisattvas that help them achieve Nirvana, renunciation of worldly matters, meditation, physical exercises, study, and the cultivation of wisdom. Buddhism is composed of two branches: Theravada, which has a widespread following in Southeast Asia, and Mahayana (including Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren and Vajrayana), found throughout East Asia.

**Christian** - A **Christian** is a person who follows Christianity, a monotheistic religion centered on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the New Testament and interpreted by Christians to have been prophesied in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

**Gnosticism** – Gnosticism (meaning knowledge) refers to a diverse, religious movement (referred to as a Gnostic Priesthood) consisting of various belief systems generally united in the teaching that humans are divine souls trapped in a material world created by an imperfect universe. In order to free oneself from the inferior material world, one needs gnosis, or spiritual knowledge available to all through direct experience or knowledge (gnosis) of the universe, within the sects of Gnosticism however only psychics (Craft) obtain gnosis. Jesus of Nazareth is identified by some Gnostic sects as an embodiment of the Supreme Being who became incarnate to bring gnosis to the earth, and that he was 'equal to' the Divine Intelligence of Mary Magdalene – The Patron of many Gnostic Orders.

**Hindu - Hinduism** is a religion that originated in the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is often referred to as Sanātana Dharma by its practitioners, a Sanskrit phrase meaning 'the eternal law'. Among its roots is the historical Vedic religion of Iron Age India, and as such Hinduism is often stated to be the 'oldest religious tradition' or "oldest living major tradition. It is formed of diverse traditions and types and has no single founder. Hinduism is the world's third largest religion after Christianity and Islam, of whom the majority live in India. Other countries with large Hindu populations can be found across southern Asia.

**Jain – Jainism** is one of the oldest religions that originated in the Indian subcontinent. Jainism believes that every soul is divine and has the potential to achieve God-consciousness. Any soul which conquered his own inner enemies and achieved the state of Supreme Being is called Jina. The path to achieve this salvation is called 'Jainism'. Jainism is often referred to as Jain Dharma or Shraman Dharma or the religion of Nirgantha by ancient texts. Jainism was revived by a lineage of 24 enlightened ascetics called tirthankaras culminating with Parsva (9th century BCE) and Mahavira (6th century BCE). In the modern world, it is a small but influential religious minority.

**Jewish** – A Jew is a member of the Jewish people, an ethno religious group originating from the Israelites or Hebrews of the ancient Middle East. The Jewish people and the religion of Judaism are strongly interrelated, and converts to Judaism have been absorbed into the Jewish community throughout the millennia. Jewish history began during the second millennium BCE with the Biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Jews enjoyed two periods of political autonomy in their national homeland, the Land of Israel, during ancient history. The first era spanned from 1350 to 586 BCE, and encompassed the periods of the Judges, the United Monarchy, and the Divided Monarchy of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, ending with the destruction of the First Temple. The second era was the period of the Hasmonean Kingdom spanning from 140 to 37 BCE. Since the destruction of the First Temple, the diaspora has been the home of most of the world's Jews. Except in the modern State of Israel, established in 1948, Jews are a minority in every country in which they live and they have frequently experienced persecution throughout history, resulting in a population that fluctuated both in numbers and distribution over the centuries.

**Muslim** – A Muslim is an adherent of the religion of Islam. The feminine form is Muslimah; the word means 'one who submits (to God)'. Muslim is the participle of the same verb of which Islam is the infinitive. Muslims believe that there is only one God, translated in Arabic as Allah. Muslims believe that Islam existed long before Muhammad and that the religion had evolved with time from the time of Adam until the time of Muhammad and was completed with the revelation of verse 3 of Surah al-Ma'eda: This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. Most Muslims consider making ritual prayer five times a day a religious duty (fard).

**Pagan** – Paganism (from Latin *paganus*, meaning 'country dweller, rustic') is a word used to refer to various religions and religious beliefs from across the world. It is a term which, from a Western perspective, has modern connotations of spiritualist, animist or shamanic practices or beliefs of any folk religion contemporary. It has also been used as an equivalent term for polytheistic religions. The term has been defined broadly, to encompass the faith traditions outside the Abrahamic monotheistic group of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The group so defined includes many of the Eastern religions, Native American religions and mythologies, as well as non-Abrahamic ethnic religions in general.

**Rastafarian** – The Rastafari movement (also known as Rastafari, Rastafarianism or simply Rasta) is a monotheistic, Abrahamic, new religious movement that accepts both Jesus Christ and Haile Selassie I, the former Emperor of Ethiopia, as incarnations of God, called Jah or Jah Rastafari. Haile Selassie is also seen as part of the Holy Trinity and as the returned messiah promised in the Bible. Other characteristics of Rastafari include the spiritual use of cannabis, rejection of western society (called 'Babylon'), and various Afro centric social and political aspirations.

**Shinto** – Shinto is the native religion of Japan and was once its state religion. It is a polytheistic and animistic faith, and involves the worship of kami, or spirits. Some *kami* are local and can be regarded as the spiritual being/spirit or genius of a particular place, but others represent major natural objects and processes; for example, Amaterasu (the Sun goddess), or Mount Fuji. The word Shinto, from the original Chinese, combines two kanji: 'shin', meaning gods or spirits; and 'tō', meaning a philosophical way or path.

**Sikh** – Sikh is the title and name given to an adherent of Sikhism. The term has its origin in the Sanskrit 'disciple, learner' or 'instruction'. According to Article I of 'Sikh Rehat Maryada' (the Sikh code of conduct & conventions) a Sikh is defined as 'any human being who faithfully believes in One Immortal Being; ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Sahib; the Guru Granth Sahib; the utterances and teachings of the ten Gurus and the baptism bequeathed by the tenth Guru; and who does not owe allegiance to any other religion'.

**Zoroastrian** – Zoroastrianism is the religion and philosophy based on the teachings ascribed to the prophet Zoroaster, after whom the religion is named. The term 'Zoroastrianism' is in general usage essentially synonymous with Mazdaism, i.e. the worship of Ahura Mazda, exalted by Zoroaster as the supreme divine authority. Zoroastrianism was once the dominant religion of much of Greater Iran, and was a formative influence on that region's history and traditions. The religion was marginalized following the Islamic conquests of the mid-7th century, after which the number of adherents dwindled significantly, and there are less than 20,000 Zoroastrians left in that region today.