

MULTI-CULTURAL AND DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER



March 2024

Shivratri (Hindu)

March 8- On Shiva's night, the Hindu deity Lord Shiva performed the Tandav, the cosmic dance of creation and destruction. A 24-hour fast is kept and devotees make pilgrimages to major shrines for worship.



Eostre (Wicca)

March 20- A fertility festival celebrating the birth of spring. The word Easter is derived from the Maiden Goddess. Celebrations including lighting fires at sunrise, ringing bells, and decorating hard-boiled eggs, an ancient Pagan custom associated with the Goddess.



Ramadan (Islam)



March 11- This is the holiest month in the Islamic Year and begins at the sighting of the new moon. It commemorates the period during which Prophet Muhammad received divine revelations. Observing Muslims fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset during the entire month, read the Quran and worship in the mosque or at home. The dates vary by a day depending on the whether the Saudi Arabia or the North American Calendar is being observed.

Shunki-Sorei-Sai (Shinto)

March 20- On this day, ancestors are given reverence at home altars and considered active members of the living family. Gravesites are cleaned and purified.



Shunbun No Hi (Japan)

March 20- During the time of Spring Equinox, Buddhists meditate on the harmony in the universe.

Now Raz, New Year (Afghanistan, Iran-Bahá'í, Zoroastrian, Islam)

March 20- Nowruz means 'New Day' and is the traditional celebration of the ancient Persian New year. Iranians

celebrate it on March 20th. It is also a holy day for Zoroastrian, Sufi, Ismaili and the Bahá'í faiths. Persians (Iranians, Afghans, and Tajiks) and other Indo-Iranian groups (Kurds, Armenians, Azarbaijanis and Balochs) start preparing for the Nowruz with a major spring-cleaning of their houses and the purchase of new clothes to wear for the new year. They visit the elders of their family, then the rest of their family and their friends. On the thirteenth day, families leave their homes and picnic.



Palm Sunday (Christian)

March 24- Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and was cheered by crowds who strewed palm branches in his path. It is observed by worship services and parades using palm branches.

Purim (Jewish)

March 24- Purim is known as the Feast of Lots, which celebrates the deliverance of Jews in Persia from the machinations of Haman. Jews dress in costume and give gifts of food to each other.



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Holi (Sikh, Hindu)



March 25- According to myth, a tyrannical king's son, Pralad, refused to worship his father as God and was condemned to death by burning. However, the boy's aunt, named Holika, transferred her own immunity from fire to Pralad, and burned to death in his place. This festival of colour celebrates Spring, where people play with liquid and powdered colours, light bonfires and blow horns to celebrate the destruction of Holika.



Hola Mohalla, Bikarami (Sikh)

March 26- On this day, mock battles are fought and martial arts are displayed in honour of Guru Gobind Singh, who took to armed struggle against tyranny.



Easter (Christian)

March 31- This day celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from his grave. Christians celebrate the day with family meals and attending religious services, some as early as sunrise.



Birth of Prophet Zarathustra, Fasli (Zoroastrian)

March 26- Zarathushtra (Zoroaster in Greek; Zarthosht in India and Persia) is the founder of the Zoroastrian religion dating back to sometime between 1500 and 1000 BCE. He lived in Persia, modern day Iran. Zoroastrianism became the state religion of various Persian empires, until the 7th Century CE. When Arabs, followers of Islam, invaded Persia in 650 CE, a small number of Zoroastrians fled to India where most are concentrated today.



Reference

Khanna, A., Mody, P., Powers, S., Raza, R. (2024). Multicultural Calendar 2024. Toronto:)