

Major Religious Observances 2019-2020

(Last updated September 2019)

This list, although not exhaustive, represents some of the major religious observances with brief descriptions to foster an understanding of the significance each symbolizes for members of our College community. As our community grows and evolves, what constitutes a “major” religious observance may change. Referring to this list when scheduling events is encouraged so any potential conflicts may be avoided.

*All Jewish and Islamic holidays and specific Hindu holidays listed below begin at sundown on the previous day. Some dates may vary based on interpretations of the lunar calendar.

July 2019

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Martyrdom of the Báb	Bahá'í	7/9/19	The Báb was executed by firing squad on this date in 1850.

August 2019

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Eid al-Adha*	Islamic	8/10/19	Eid al-Adha is a major festival that celebrates the willingness to make sacrifices in the name of one's faith. This holiday celebrates Ibrahim's total faith in God, and Muslims view this holiday as an important annual reminder.
Janmashtami	Hindu	8/23/19	This two-day festival celebrates the birth of Krishna, a widely-worshiped Hindu god.
Muharram (Al Hijrah – New Year)*	Islamic	8/31/19	Many Muslims in countries such as the United States observe the start of the Islamic New Year on the first day of Muharram, which is the first month in the Islamic calendar.

September 2019

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Ganesh Chaturti	Hindu	9/2/19	Ganesha Chaturthi, is the day when all Hindus celebrate the birthday of Lord Ganesh.
Rosh Hashanah*	Jewish	9/29/19 – 10/1/19	Start of the Jewish New Year.
Navaratri/Dassehra	Hindu	9/29/19 – 10/8/19	During Navaratri, Goddess Durga (the mother goddess, who is an aspect of Goddess Parvati), is worshiped in each of her nine forms. Each day has a different ritual associated with it. The dates of the festival are determined according to the lunar

			calendar, the festival may be held for a day more or a day less.
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October 2019

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Yom Kippur*	Jewish	10/8/19	Yom Kippur is often considered the holiest day of the year for Jews, and the day is dedicated to atonement and abstinence. During Yom Kippur, Jews fast from before sundown until after sunset, and light a Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on the night of Yom Kippur.
Sukkot*	Jewish	10/13/19 – 10/20/19	Sukkot is named for the huts Moses and the Israelites lived in as they wandered the desert before reaching the promised land.
Diwali	Hindu	10/27/19 – 10/31/19	Diwali—the Hindu “festival of lights”—is an extremely popular holiday for multiple religions throughout Southern Asia. Diwali extends over five days, and celebrates the victory of good over evil.
Birth of the Báb*	Bahá'í	10/28/19	This holiday commemorates the birth of the Báb.
Birth of Bahá'u'lláh*	Bahá'í	10/29/19	This holiday commemorates the birth of Bahá'u'lláh

November 2019

Maulid al-Nabi*	Islamic	11/9/19	Mawlid is the observance of the birthday of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.
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December 2019

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Hanukkah*	Jewish	12/22/19 – 12/30/19	Hanukkah is the Jewish festival of lights, and lasts for eight days. The celebration commemorates a miracle in which a sacred temple flame burned for eight days on only one day's worth of oil.
Christmas	Christian	12/25/19	Christmas is an annual celebration commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah whose message and self-sacrifice began the Christian religion.

February 2020

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Maha Shivaratri	Hindu	2/21/20	Mahashivaratri Festival or the 'The Night of Shiva' is celebrated in honor of Lord Shiva, one of the deities of Hindu Trinity

Ash Wednesday	Christian	2/26/20	This is the first day of Lent, the period of forty days before Easter in which many Christians sacrifice ordinary pleasures to reflect on Christ's sacrifice.
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March 2020

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Purim*	Jewish	3/9/20	Purim commemorates the time when the Jews were living in Persia and were saved by the courage of a young Jewish woman called Esther.
Holi*	Hindu	3/9/20	Also known as the "Festival of Colors," this holiday can be traced to Hindu scriptures commemorating good over evil. This date is also a celebration of the colorful spring and a farewell to the dull winter.
Bahá'í New Year	Bahá'í	3/19/20	Bahá'ís celebrate New Year's Day on March 21, the vernal equinox. This date has been celebrated as the New Year in Persia for thousands of years.

April 2020

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Rama Navami	Hindu	4/2/20	Rama Navami is a spring Hindu festival that celebrates the birthday of god Rama. He is particularly important to the Vaishnavism tradition of Hinduism, as the seventh avatar of Vishnu.
Passover*	Jewish	4/8/20 – 4/16/20	Pesach is a week-long observance commemorating the freedom and exodus of the Israelites (Jewish slaves) from Egypt during the reign of the Pharaoh Ramses II (one of three pilgrimage festivals). Family gatherings, ritualized meals called Seders, reading of the Haggadah, lighting of Yahrzeit memorial candle at sundown on the last night of Passover.
Good Friday	Christian	4/10/20	Friday before Easter, commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ; among some sects of Christianity and in many countries marks a day of fasting.
Easter	Christian	4/12/20	Annual commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
First Day of the Ridván Festival	Bahá'í	4/19/20	The Festival of Ridván is a 12-day period commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his mission on the eve of his departure from Baghdád for Constantinople in 1863. The

			first day commemorates his arrival in the Najíbíyyih Garden, where his declaration took place.
Ramadan* (beginning)	Islamic	4/23/20	Ramadan is an occasion to focus on faith through fasting and prayer, and is one of the most important Muslim holidays. Ramadan is notable because the Qur'an was first revealed during this month, and Muslims see the Qur'an as the ultimate form of guidance for mankind. The night that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad is called Lailat ul Oadr, and standing in prayer this one night is thought to eclipse months of worship. <i>General Practices:</i> Fasting is required during the entire month of Ramadan. Muslims refrain from food and beverages during the daylight hours. Worshipers break the fasting each night with prayer, reading of the Qu'ran, and a meal called the iftar. In addition, many Muslims also attend night prayers at Mosques.
Ninth Day of the Ridván Festival	Bahá'í	4/28/20	This holiday commemorates the arrival of members of Bahá'u'lláh's family in the Najíbíyyih Garden.

May 2020

Name of Holiday	Religion	Dates	Description
Twelfth Day of the Ridván Festival	Bahá'í	5/1/20	This holiday commemorates the departure of Bahá'u'lláh for Constantinople and brings to a close the Festival of Ridván.
Vesak Day	Buddhist	5/7/20	Internationally recognized day of Vesak to acknowledge the contribution of Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world. Vesak is celebrated by millions of Buddhists around the world on the day of May that occurs the first full moon.
Laylat al-Qadr*	Islamic	5/19/20	Laylat Al Qadr, also known as Night of Power or Night of Destiny, is considered the holiest night of the year for Muslims. It commemorates when Koran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad and is traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan.
Declaration of the Báb	Bahá'í	5/22/20	The Báb declared his mission to Mullá Husayn on this day in 1844, marking the inception of the Bahá'í era.
Eid al-Fitr*	Islamic	5/23/20	Eid al-Fitr means "break the fast", and is the last day of Ramadan, marking the end of a month of fasting. Eid al Fitr is a three day celebration and begins at sundown.

Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	Bahá'í	5/27/20	Bahá'u'lláh passed from this life on this date in 1892.
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