



Sufi Newsletter

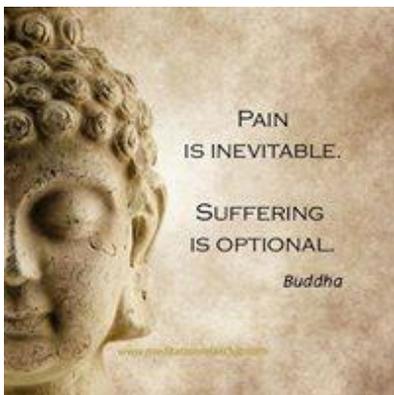
South African Newsletter 018
September to November 2017

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**"Is there any greater helper in
sorrow or misfortune, when every
situation in life seems dark, than
the spirit of optimism that knows
that all will be right?"**

By Hazrat Inayat Khan



A note from the Editor

We are often required to see the good in situations and it is mostly healthy for us to do so.

Sometimes however sad things weigh us down; this edition has been written with love and light in mind and has this gentle reminder from The Sufi Teachings Volume 8:

"The psychological effect of optimism is such that it helps to bring success, for it is by the spirit of optimism that God has created the world.

Optimism comes from God, and pessimism is born from the heart of man. By what little experience of life he has, man learns, 'This will not succeed, that will not do, this will not come right'.

For the one who is optimistic it does not matter if it does not come right in the end; he will take his chance. For what is life? Life is an opportunity, and to the optimistic person this opportunity is a promise, while for the pessimistic person this opportunity is lost.

It is not that the Creator makes man lose it, but it is man himself who fails to seize the opportunity."

Let us be gentle with ourselves!

Caroline

News

From Cape Town

Warm welcome and blessings for:

- ★ Riana Wiechers who was initiated as a Mureed
- ★ Iqram Bux who was ordained as a Cherag



A Reminder:

Family Day is provided on the first Sufi Sunday of every month. All children are welcome to join us in the Sufi kid's room for a service of their own. Children should be in the Temple for the start of the service and will then be called to head out to the kid's room after the announcements and the first prayer.

What do we do?

We do a candle lighting ceremony just like the one in the Temple. We try to involve each child in the ceremony and explain why this ceremony is so important. We will then usually read a story from one of the religions and do a craft activity to make it all come to life. Last Family Day we had lots of fun. We read Noah's Ark and built our very own 'arks' with egg boxes, and play dough animals to go into them. We even tested them out on the pond! *From Lauren Kotzé.*



"Put your trust in God for support and see His hidden hand working through all sources"

The Bowl of Saki • Hazrat Inayat Khan

<http://sufimovement.co.za/>

News

From Knysna

Submitted by Tina & Eugene Weeks:

June 7th 2017 will be remembered for prosperity as the day when the great fires started sweeping through, and decimating the Knysna area beyond belief! The Garden of Eden was burnt to a crisp, dunes and plantations were burnt to the bare soil and many people lost their homes and all their worldly possessions in a matter of hours. Up to six hundred structures were destroyed in the Knysna/Plett area and seven lives were lost in the fires.

There was a great sense of trauma and disbelief but life goes on and by now two months later, already we see green shoots coming through the layers of ash, and a sense of a new beginning.

What was amazing was the amount of aid that flowed into the area, and how people rallied to help each other to provide food and clothing and accommodation and help in searching for lost pets. The word that comes to mind is COMPASSION - there was, and still is, so much compassion for all those in need.

Compassion was also the theme of our next Gathering, which we held shortly after the fires. We also felt blessed that our home, and those of our Sufi friends, remained untouched.

It is so clear that we should not be too attached to our worldly things, as these can be lost in the wink of an eye!

This brings to mind the words of Murshid, from the Gayan:

**"Be contented with what you possess in life; be thankful for what does not belong to you;
But try to obtain what you need, and make the best of every moment of your life."**



Photo: "Flowers from the ashes"
courtesy of the Eco Atlas blog

News

From Holland

Summer School 2017 in Katwijk, Netherlands was highlighted by the blue sky and clouds, so familiar in the paintings of the Dutch Masters. The North Sea breezes, undulating gently through the dune grasses, curling ribbon like waves upon the sea's surface, and drawing moray patterns in the sands – a beautifully, harmonious dance of the elemental world and an atmosphere of Light, Life, and Love. ~ *Karima Gita Erickson*



Top: Murad Hassil, Left: Murshid Nawab Psnak & Murshida Nuria Sabato



Universal Worship Service, Spirit of Guidance

Cherags: Nawab Psnak, Rani McLaughlin & Amin Betcanur

The Gift of Universal Worship

Written by Catherine van Alphen

"Whenever I walk out of a Service of the Universal Worship at the Sufi Temple I feel that I have been given a great gift.

My first feeling is that of being surrounded with a wonderful atmosphere of peace and harmony, something that is not easily found in today's busy and tumultuous world. It reminds me that I should cultivate this peace in myself by slowing down and finding space and time to go within. But, in looking more deeply at our beautiful Universal Worship Service, I see many gifts hidden in this sacred hour that I would like to share with you.

Having taken part in the service for many years, I also recognize the opportunity that it offers each one of us who attend, especially if we ponder the meaning of the various aspects of the service.

We begin with the Invocation, "Towards the One..." showing our intention of seeking the experience of unity with God. Similarly we aim to create a unity between peoples of all nations, all cultures and all religions: a "Brotherhood of Man in the Fatherhood of God."

In the lighting of the candles we call on the angels of each of the main religions of the world, honouring each in turn, not placing one above another, but acknowledging the unity that binds them all together as a whole. We also acknowledge the unknown spiritual seekers after truth when lighting the Sufi candle. In lighting the candles, we not only invoke the spiritual power and quality of each religion, we kindle the spiritual light of each person in the congregation too.

If we observe the symbolism of the candle, we realize that only by being burnt down can the candle give light to the room. In the same way if we surrender ourselves to any task, we can give it our full attention and do our best. This makes the act sacred, whole and therefore holy.

In reading the texts chosen from the holy scriptures of the world, we honour the wisdom that has inspired millions of souls on their journey towards God. Each text highlights enlightened thoughts about the spiritual life that will be discussed in the sermon. When read slowly, clearly and with an imagination of what lies behind the words, the reader creates a spiritual context or image that raises the listener's understanding to a higher level of perception that is beyond the intellectual. One may have a sense of knowing what has been said without necessarily being able to express the meaning verbally.

In the outer world the chairman or guest speaker at any event is given great importance and honour, but in the Universal Worship Service it is the humility of surrendering ourselves for the service of humankind that is all-important. With regard to the sermon, it is necessary to recognize that however much one has thought, digested and prepared what is to be said, the speaker is really just a mouthpiece for the "Message" and the words spoken or read are flowing through them as water through a pipe.

Many a speaker has found a book opening at a specific page while preparing the talk, an unexpected thought popping into their mind and even different words coming out of one's mouth while speaking the sermon. There is no doubt that we are guided all the way. The more we can surrender ourselves to the service of the "Message" of God, the more we can become "Messengers". The three aspects of the service support each other and are thus united in a whole. Not one part is greater or more important than the other because the purpose of the service as a whole is to become a channel for Divine Love, Harmony and Beauty that flows through us and out to the world.

Even those who listen and partake seemingly passively or those who prepare the flowers, the tea or who wash the cups also contribute to the Universal Worship Service. And the more conscious we can become of the importance of every little aspect of life done in love, gratitude and mindfulness, the more we can learn to make every moment sacred. Every aspect is a vital part of the whole service with its outpouring of peace and harmony that is such an essential gift to the world."

Sufi Inner School

From The Teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan:

An excerpt from Volume 1 - The Soul, Whence and Whither?

"Life is interesting in every phase; on the journey towards manifestation as well as on the soul's return towards the goal. Every moment of life has its particular experience, one better than the other, one more valuable than another. In short, life may be said to be full of interest. Sorrow is interesting as well as joy; there is beauty in every phase, if only one can learn to appreciate it.

What dies?

It is death that dies, not life. What then, is the soul? The soul is life, it never touches death. Death is its illusion, its impression; death comes to something which the soul holds, not to the soul itself.

The soul becomes accustomed to identify itself with the body it adopts, with the environment which surrounds it, with the names by which it is known; with its rank and possessions which are only the outward signs that belong to the world of illusion. The soul, absorbed in its child-like fancies, in things that it values and to which it gives importance, and in the beings to which it attaches itself, blinds itself by the veils of its enthusiasm. Thus it covers with a thousand veils its own truth from its own eyes.

What is the return journey?

Where does one return to? When does one return? The return begins from the time the flower has come to its full bloom, from the moment the plant has touched its summit; from the time that the object, the purpose for which a soul is born upon earth is fulfilled. For then there is nothing more to hold it, and the soul naturally draws back as the breath is drawn in. But does man die by drawing in his breath? No. So the soul does not die owing to this drawing in, though it gives to the dying person and to those who watch an impression of death.

The physical body may be likened to a clock; it has its mechanism and it requires winding; and this winding keeps it going. It is the healthiness of the physical body which enables it by its magnetic power to hold the soul which functions in it. As this body for some reason or other, either by disorder or by having been worn out, loses that power by which it holds together; it gives way, and the soul naturally departs, leaving the material body as one would throw away a coat which one no longer needs.

The connection of the body and the soul is like man's attachment to his dress. It is man's duty to keep his dress in good order, for he needs it in order to live in the world; but it would be ignorance if he thought his dress to be himself. Yet as a rule this is what man does; how few in this world stop to think on this subject, whether this body is myself, or whether I am apart from this body; whether higher or greater, more precious or longer living than this body!"



The Sufi Volumes

The 13 Volumes Of The Sufi Message plus the Bowl of Saki and one or two other books contain a large part of the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan who poured out all this Divine wisdom not from the East to the West but from God to man.

Volumes I through XIV are the teachings of Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan as transcribed by his students from his lectures and talks given between 1914 and 1926. These are the books which have been most widely circulated.

These books were first published in England and later by a well-known printer in India for economic reasons. The books that have been available in South Africa over the last years were all printed in India.

With the weaker Rand however and the increase in costs from India including shipment, it has now become more economical to have them printed in South Africa. This job is ongoing and thankfully most of the volumes are now again in full supply.

This work has been greatly assisted by a generous donation by a very committed member of the Sufi community, for which we are very grateful.

The Sufi Volumes are available for purchase at the Sufi centres around the country.



"The Message is the awakening of humanity to the divinity of mankind."

By Hazrat Inayat Khan

VOLUME I – The Way of Illumination

The Traditional Sufi outlook on life's values and purposes is re-expressed by Hazrat Inayat Khan in universal and contemporary concepts.

VOLUME II – The Mysticism of Music, Sound and Word

Sufism traditionally used music as a means of transmitting the essence of mystical insight. Hazrat Inayat Khan integrates this concept of music with elements like sound and silence, vibration and the word, thoughts and inspiration, creating new dimensions for our lives, and thereby recomposing a musical concept extending beyond the tradition of time and culture.

VOLUME III – The Art of Personality

This volume contains the substances of Hazrat Inayat Khan's teaching on our Divine heritage and human relationships, including the science of life's forces. He suggests that the art of personality is the completion of nature and the culmination of heredity. Development of the personality is taken from before birth to the deepest aspects of consciousness.

VOLUME IV – Mental Purification and Healing

In this volume the Sufi principles are explained concerning the influence the mind may exert on the body, in relation to the spiritual power within us, and concerning the possibilities of spiritual healing in conjunction with modern science.

VOLUME V – Spiritual Liberty

This volume contains a wealth of information about different aspects of Sufi mysticism.

VOLUME VI – The Alchemy of Happiness

Hazrat Inayat Khan always insisted that spiritual or mystical aspirations are of no avail if one's life is not lived as it should be. Under this title, forty lectures are collected that deal with life in all its aspects.

VOLUME VII – In and Eastern Rose Garden

Talks given by Hazrat Inayat Khan on a variety of Subjects. His ability to communicate the unity and relativity of his view point on diverse subjects illustrates the essence of his mystical perception of life.

VOLUME VIII – Sufi Teachings

A collection of talks on various practical and esoteric aspects of traditional Sufi teaching developed by Hazrat Inayat Khan in a modern universal context.

VOLUME IX – The Unity of Religious Ideals

A systematically arranged collection of Hazrat Inayat Khan's addresses on what is perhaps the most important part of his teaching: the underlying unity of all religious thought and experience.

VOLUME X – Sufi Mysticism

Hazrat Inayat Khan situates the traditional concepts of initiation, discipleship, spiritual teaching and other esoteric aspects of Sufism in today's world.

VOLUME XI – Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism

These later talks by Hazrat Inayat Khan, given during the last two years before his death, contain a clear overview of these topics in terms of his Sufic vision. This series of lectures may be considered his magnum opus. The Aphorisms at the end are sayings noted down by his pupils which Hazrat Inayat Khan expressed at different times and places to soothe or clarify the seeker.

VOLUME XII - The Divinity of the Human Soul

The first part of this volume deals with the relationship of man and God. The second part is autobiographical. The third part contains four short plays written by Hazrat Inayat Khan for his pupils.

VOLUME XIII – Sacred Readings: The Gatha’s

This volume contains the teachings derived from classes given by Hazrat Inayat Khan to his pupils at the earlier stages of their training.

VOLUME XIV – Index to Volumes I – XIII**The Dance of the Soul**

This collection of aphorisms is just a gem of wisdom and mysticism with a touch of humour. It helps you to discover your very being at the same time as hinting practical solutions for your daily life: feeling, thinking, speaking, and acting.

Bowl of Saki (1994)

Wisdom for every day. The book contains one saying for each day of the year. Space is left open to accommodate the signatures of your friends.



Universal Worship Dates for Cape Town

10h30 to 11h30

The Sufi Temple

183 Campground Road, Newlands

| Intended speaker: | September 2017 | | | | | | |
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| | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Louis Gerke | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| Natalia Baker | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

| | October 2017 | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Pauline De Villiers | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| Nisa Hendricks | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

| | November 2017 | | | | | | |
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| | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Penny Gaines | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Catherine Van Alphen | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | |



Religious holidays and festivals during September, October & November include:

"We as Sufis have the great privilege of being able to respect and honour the special days of all religions, and in particular those days that are honoured by religious communities in our own surroundings. Some of these special days coming up in the next few months include:"

01 September – Eid-al-Adha

Eid-al-Adha is one of the most important Islamic holidays and commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son to God. According to Islamic tradition, God ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, as a test of his faith. However, just as Ibrahim was about to kill Ishmael, God instructed him to sacrifice a ram in his place. At Eid-al-Adha Muslims celebrate Ibrahim's obedience to God and vow to be like him.

08 September – Nativity of Mary

The Nativity of Mary, or Birth of the Virgin Mary refers to the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Tradition celebrates the event as a liturgical feast in the Roman Catholic calendar of saints and in most Anglican liturgical calendars on 8 September, nine months after the solemnity of her Immaculate Conception, celebrated on 8 December.

The Eastern Orthodox equivalent, the Nativity of the Theotokos pertains to the birth of the Virgin Mary in the Orthodox perspective. This feast, like that of the Assumption of Mary, originated in Jerusalem.

20 – 22 September - Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival and commemorates the creation of the world.

Rosh Hashanah is also a judgement day, when Jews believe that God balances a person's good deeds over the last year against their bad deeds. God records the judgement in the Book of Life, where he sets out what kind of year each person will have. According to Jewish tradition, the book is finally sealed at Yom Kippur. One of the synagogue rituals for Rosh Hashanah is the blowing of the Shofar, a ram's horn trumpet. A hundred notes are sounded in a special rhythm.

21 September - Al-Hijra - Islamic New Year

Al-Hijra is the first day of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, and the first day of the Islamic New Year. Al-Hijra marks the day in AD622 when Muhammad and the first Muslim community migrated from Mecca to Medina.

20 – 30 September - Navaratri

Navaratri is a nine day festival of music and dance when Hindus worship the female expression of the divine.

During Navaratri the creative power of the Goddess is celebrated, personified in the forms of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The festival culminates on the 10th day, known as Dussehra, when Hindus celebrate the God Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana, symbolising the triumph of good over evil. In the state of West Bengal Navaratri culminates in the Durga Puja, when Durga idols are carried in procession and immersed in a river or other water bodies.

30 September – Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur translates as the Day of Atonement and is the holiest date in the Jewish calendar. The central themes of Yom Kippur are atonement and repentance. It's observed with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer. Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days or sometimes 'the Days of Awe', which begin with Rosh Hashanah.

29-30 September – Ashura

Ashura is the tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar. For Shi'a Muslims, Ashura marks the climax of the Remembrance of Muharram and commemorates the death of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad at the Battle of Karbala on 10 Muharram in the year 61 AH.

04 October – St Francis Day

Many Catholics worldwide celebrate the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4 each year. The feast commemorates the life of St Francis, who was born in the 12th century and is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment. The feast of St Francis of Assisi is the most important festival of the Franciscan calendar in Assisi, Italy. It commemorates the saint's transition from this life to the afterlife, according to the Catholic Church. For two days, starting on October 3, the town of Assisi is illuminated by oil lamps burning consecrated oil brought from a different Italian town each year.

Many children in countries such as the United States bring their pets to the church to be blessed on St Francis' feast day because of his love for animals as expressed in his Canticle of Creatures. People may also plan a nature walk and teachers, caregivers or parents may spend time helping children write about plants, insects and animals that they see. For many educators, caregivers and animal rights organizations, this day is an opportunity to teach children about endangered or abused animals and what can be done to help save these animals. This feast coincides with World Animal Day.

05 – 11 October – Sukkot

Sukkot or Succot (Hebrew: סוכות or סוכוֹת, sukkōt), in traditional Ashkenazi pronunciation Sukkos or Succos, literally Feast of Booths, is commonly translated to English as Feast of Tabernacle.

Sukkot has a double significance. The one mentioned in the Book of Exodus is agricultural in nature – "Feast of Ingathering at the year's end"– and marks the end of the harvest time and thus of the agricultural year in the Land of Israel. The more elaborate religious significance from the Book of Leviticus is that of commemorating the Exodus and the dependence of the People of Israel on the will of God.

11 – 13 October Shemini Atzeret

A Jewish holiday which coincides with the eighth day of Sukkot outside of the Land of Israel, leading to sometimes involved analysis as to which practices of each holiday are to apply.

The celebration of Simchat Torah is the most distinctive feature of the holiday, but it is a later rabbinical innovation. In the Land of Israel, the celebrations of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are combined on a single day, and the names are used interchangeably.

13 October – Simchat Torah

Simchat Torah, also known as Simḥath Torah and Simkhes Toreh, is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the end of the annual cycle of public Torah readings. It is a component of Shemini Atzeret, a Jewish holiday that follows from the Sukkot (or Sukkoth) festival.

Simchat Torah, which follows Sukkot, celebrates when the Torah's public reading is complete for the year. It also marks the start of a new reading cycle. It is a time to rejoice by singing, dancing and processions led by a rabbi who carries the sacred Scrolls of the Law. Hand-lettered Torah scrolls are removed from an ark (a box-like container) during this event. These scrolls are paraded around the synagogue – and sometimes through the streets – amidst singing and dancing.

It is observed on the 22nd day of Tishri, concurrently with Shemini Atzeret in Israel and among many Reform Jewish groups. Many other Jewish groups celebrate it separately on the 23rd day. Many people in Israel also hold a second hakkafot (procession around the synagogue) on the night after Simchat Torah, frequently accompanied by bands and choirs.

Simchat Torah customs vary from country to country. For example, in the United States the Indian Jewish Congregation of USA and the Bene Israel Women's Group jointly celebrated the Simchat Torah festival in previous times.

18 October – Saint Luke Feast Day

Christians since the faith's early years have regarded him as a saint. The Roman Catholic Church and other major denominations venerate him as Saint Luke the Evangelist and as a patron saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students and butchers.

20 October – The Twin Holy Birthdays

The Festivals of the Twin Birthdays or the Twin Holy Birthdays refers to two successive holy days in the Bahá'í calendar that celebrate the births of two central figures of the Bahá'í Faith. The two holy days are the birth of the Báb on the first day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar (20 October 1819) and the birth of Bahá'u'lláh on the second day of Muharram (two years prior, on 12 November 1817).

The notion of "twin Manifestations of God" is a concept fundamental to Bahá'í belief, describing the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Both are considered Manifestations of God in their own right, having each founded separate religions (Bábism and the Bahá'í Faith) and revealed their own holy scriptures. To Bahá'ís, however, the missions of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are inextricably linked: The Báb's mission was to prepare the way for the coming of Him whom God shall make manifest, who eventually appeared in the person of Bahá'u'lláh. For this reason, both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are revered as central figures of the Bahá'í Faith. A parallel is made between Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb as between Jesus and John the Baptist.

In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh wrote that his birthday and that of Báb "are accounted as one in the sight of God".

21 October – Diwali

Diwali (Deepavali or Deepawali or Dipawali) is one of the India's biggest festivals. Diwali means rows of lighted lamps. It is a festival of lights and every Indian it with joy. During this festival, people light up their houses and shops. They worship Lord Ganesha for good welfare and prosperity and Goddess Lakshmi for wealth and wisdom.

Deepawali is an official holiday in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore & Malaysia.

This festival is celebrated in the Hindu month of Kartika which falls sometime during October or November. It is celebrated to mark the return of Lord Rama from 14 years of Exile and his victory over the Demon Ravana. In many parts of India, Diwali is celebrated for five consecutive days and is one of the most popular festivals in India. Hindus regard it as a celebration of life and use the occasion to strengthen family and relationships. In some parts of India, it marks the beginning of the New Year. It is celebrated not only in India but also abroad. The Hindus worship the Lord Ganesha and Goddess Laxmi during Diwali.

21 October – Jain New Year

Jain festivals occur on designated days of the year. Jain festivals are either related to life events of Tirthankara or they are performed with intention of purification of soul. After celebrating Diwali at the end of Ashwina, Jains celebrate New Year on the first day of the following month of Kartika. Ritual of Snatra Puja is performed at the temple. Mahavira's chief disciple Gautama Swami attained keval gyan on this day.

28 October – Milvian Bridge Day

Christian day of solemn reflection on the relationship of the spiritual community and the powers of civil government. On Oct 28, 312 C.E., Emperor Constantine prevailed in a battle and proceeded to make Christianity the legal religion of the Roman Empire.

31 October – Reformation Day

A Protestant religious holiday celebrated on October 31, alongside All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) during the triduum of Allhallowtide, in remembrance of the onset of the Reformation.

Traditionally, 31 October 1517 is widely held to be the day German monk Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Electorate of Saxony within the Holy Roman Empire. The holiday is a significant one for both Lutheran and Calvinist churches, although other Protestant communities also tend to commemorate this day. The Catholic Church recognized it only recently, and often sends its official representatives in ecumenical spirit to various commemoration events held by Protestants. It is lawfully recognized in parts of Germany, Slovenia and Chile. In addition, countries like Switzerland or Austria provide specifics in laws pertaining to Protestant churches, while not officially proclaiming it a nationwide holiday.

31 October – All Hallow's Eve

All Hallow's Eve or Halloween, is a yearly celebration observed in a number of countries on 31 October, the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallow's Day and Reformation Day. It begins the three-day observance of Allhallowtide, the time in the liturgical year dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallow's), martyrs, and all the faithful departed.

It is widely believed that many Halloween traditions originated from Celtic harvest festivals that may have pagan roots, particularly the Gaelic festival Samhain, and that this festival was Christianized as Halloween. Some academics, however, support the view that Halloween began independently as a solely Christian holiday.

Halloween activities include trick-or-treating (or the related guising), attending Halloween costume parties, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, lighting bonfires, apple bobbing, divination games, playing pranks, visiting haunted attractions, telling scary stories and watching horror films. In many parts of the world, the Christian religious observances of All Hallow's Eve, including attending church services and lighting candles on the graves of the dead, remain popular, although elsewhere it is a more commercial and secular celebration. Some Christians historically abstained from meat on All Hallow's Eve, a tradition reflected in the eating of certain vegetarian foods on this vigil day, including apples, potato pancakes, and soul cakes.

01 November – All Saints Day

All Saints' Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1. The day is dedicated to the saints of the Church, that is, all those who have attained heaven. It should not be confused with All Souls' Day, which is observed on November 2, and is dedicated to those who have died and not yet reached heaven.

Although millions, or even billions of people may already be saints, All Saints' Day observances tend to focus on known saints --that is those recognized in the canon of the saints by the Catholic Church. All Saints' Day is also commemorated by members of the Eastern Orthodox Church as well as some protestant churches, such as Anglican, Lutheran and Anglican churches. Generally, All Saints' Day is a Catholic Holy Day of Obligation, meaning all Catholics are required to attend Mass on that day, unless they have an excellent excuse, such as serious illness.

02 November – All Souls Day

All Souls Day is a holy day set aside for honoring the dead. The day is primarily celebrated in the Catholic Church, but it is also celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and a few other denominations of Christianity. The Anglican Church is the largest protestant church to celebrate the holy day. Most protestant denominations do not recognize the holiday and disagree with the theology behind it.

According to Catholic belief, the soul of a person who dies can go to one of three places. The first is heaven, where a person who dies in a state of perfect grace and communion with God goes. The second is hell, where those who die in a state of mortal sin are naturally condemned by their choice. The intermediate option is purgatory, which is thought to be where most people, free of mortal sin, but still in a state of lesser (venial) sin, must go. Purgatory is necessary so that souls can be cleansed and perfected before they enter into heaven. References are found in Zechariah, Sirach, and the Gospel of Matthew. Jewish tradition also reinforces this belief as well as the tradition and teaching of the Church, which has been affirmed throughout history.

Consistent with these teachings and traditions, Catholics believe that through the prayers of the faithful on Earth, the dead are cleansed of their sins so they may enter into heaven.

0-4 November – Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib

Nanak was a Guru (teacher), and founded Sikhism during the 15th century. The fundamental beliefs of Sikhism, articulated in the sacred scripture Guru Granth Sahib, include faith and meditation on the name of the one creator, unity of all humankind, engaging in selfless service, striving for social justice for the benefit and prosperity of all, and honest conduct and livelihood while living a householder's life.

The festivities in the Sikh religion revolve around the anniversaries of the 10 Sikh Gurus. These Gurus were responsible for shaping the beliefs of the Sikhs. Their birthdays, known as Gurburab (or Gurburb), are occasions for celebration and prayer among the Sikhs. The celebrations are especially colourful in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh and many more locations.

15 November – 24 December - The Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast is a period of abstinence and penance practiced by the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic Churches, in preparation for the Nativity of Jesus (25 December). Through the discipline of fasting, practiced with humility and repentance, it is believed that by learning to temper the body's primary desire for food, that other worldly desires can be more easily tempered as well. Through this practice one is better enabled to draw closer to God in the hope of becoming more Christ-like.

23 November – Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated in Canada, the United States, some of the Caribbean islands, and Liberia. It began as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and of the preceding year.

Every year Thanksgiving Day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. This day was historically a religious observation to give thanks to the almighty God. The occasion traditionally celebrates the arrival of the first pilgrims to America.

Thanksgiving Day is a time to feel gratitude for the good things in life. This is a day of festivity, family reunions and lavish feasts. In the USA this day is considered as one of the major family celebration generally celebrated at home with family and friends. The traditional dishes like Roasted turkeys, Cranberry sauce, Corns, Potatoes and Pumpkin pie are included in the Thanksgiving meal. People celebrate this day with a great enthusiasm with their family and friends and sometimes give gifts like flowers, jewellery, baked cookies, chocolates etc. to their near and dear.

24 November – The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

Guru Tegh Bahadur revered as the ninth Nanak, was the ninth of ten Gurus of the Sikh religion. The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur is remembered as the Shaheedi Divas of Guru Tegh Bahadur every year on 24 November, according to the Nanakshahi calendar.

26 November - The Feast of Christ the King

The Feast of a King is, as Catholic feasts go, a relatively recent one. It was established by Pope Pius XI in 1925, to remind Catholics (and the world generally) that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Universe, both as God and as Man.

26 November – Day of the Covenant

The Day of the Covenant is the day when Bahá'ís celebrate the appointment of `Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of Baha'u'llah's Covenant. The holiday was originally known as the Jashn-i-A'zam in Persian (The Greatest Festival), because `Abdu'l-Bahá was known as the Greatest Branch; in the West, the holy day became known as the Day of the Covenant.

28 November - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Members of the Baha'i Faith throughout the world commemorate the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the eldest son and successor of Baha'u'llah, 83 years ago. Baha'is observe the Holy Day of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha at 1:00 a.m., about the time of His death. There are no prescribed ceremonies but gatherings usually involve prayers and devotional readings.

30 November – Saint Andrews Day

Saint Andrew's Day is the feast day of Saint Andrew. Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Cyprus, Scotland, Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, San Andres Island, Colombia, Saint Andrew, Barbados and Tenerife. In Scotland, and many countries with Scottish connections, Saint Andrew's Day is marked with a celebration of Scottish culture with traditional Scottish food, music and dance.

