

# Cultural News

Volume 15, Issue 9  
September 2017



## Islamic New Year 2017

The Islamic New Year happens on the first day of the Muharram, which is the first month of the Islamic calendar. The Islamic Calendar is a lunar calendar. Hijri New Year is what the Islamic New Year is also known as. This first auspicious day is what marks the beginning of the Islamic New Year.

The Islamic New Year along with being the beginning of another chain of months is also laden with lot of cultural reference and enigmatic sagas. Some believe that the Islamic New Year or the Al Hijra more of a historic and literary anecdote than a religion laden one.

The Islamic New Year is never celebrated on fixed dates. The dates of the Islamic New Year differ each year according to the Gregorian calendar. The reason for the dates varying each year is because the Islamic year is always shorter by more or less at an approximation of 10 to 12 days than the western Gregorian calendars. In 2017, the Islamic New Year or the Al-Hijra will be joyously celebrated on the September 20th Wednesday and September 21st Thursday specifically and consecutively.

The Al-Hijra or the Islamic New Year celebrates and talks about a momentous journey which is written down in history. The occasion upholds the great prophet Muhammad's migration and journey from Mecca to Medina. In June 622 CE from Mecca to Yathrib this migration took place. Yathrib later on came to be known as Medina. This migration was made under duress. It was forced to be made to get away from the tyranny and coercion along with extreme violence set on them by the Quraish, who were the non Muslim tribes, who were then residing in Mecca.

The Quraish then were dominant. Being the pre dominant tribe they would in no way let Muhammad and his ardent group of followers not only propagates but also practice their religion. Thus the Prophet Muhammad was forced to take flight from Mecca with only his best friend and his closest aide Abu Bakr on the back of camels.

They went and reached Medina in Saudi Arabia, where they could finally practice and also propagate their religion independently without hindrance and in peace.

Thus the coinage of the word al Hijra is from the saga of this escape of Muharram, which is known as Hijra.

The first month of the Islamic calendar and also the first day of that month is known as the Al-Hijra or Muharram or the Islamic New Year. This is the month that is most recommended by the Prophet Muhammad for fasting.

The Islamic calendar is a lunar based calendar and has 354 days in all which are again divided in 12 months.

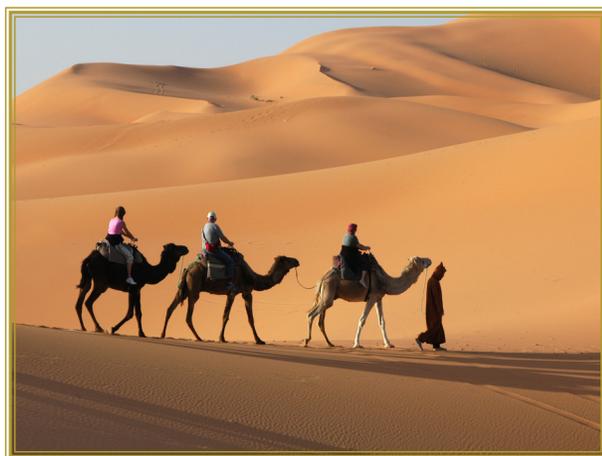
### Some Islamic New Year Facts:

- Muharram is the holiest month after Ramadan as per the beliefs of the people of Islamic faith.
- This is the month that Muhammad recommended for fasting
- The Islamic method of counting dates and days was initiated by Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was a friend of the Prophet Muhammad.
- The Islamic calendar is based on lunar calculations.
- There are similarities between this celebration and the Day of Ashura.
- The Muslim parents recount the tale of Muhammad's escape to their children on the New Year evening.

### The Al-Hijra or the Islamic New Year is different from Shia and Sunnis

There are two sects prominently prevalent amongst the Muslims in the world. These are the Shis and the Sunni. the significance of The Al-Hijra or the Islamic New Year vastly varies from the Shia and the Sunni Muslims one sect it is a joyous occasion and for the other a moment of sadness.

*(continued on the next page)*



## SEPTEMBER 2017 CALENDAR

WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH  
NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH  
NATIONAL CHILD AWARENESS MONTH

- 1-4- Eid al Adha (Islam)
- 4-10- Suicide Prevention Week
- 8- Nativity of Virgin Mary (Christian)
- 9- Farmers' Consumer Awareness Day (US)
- 11- Miss America Pageant (US)
- 16- National Stepfamily Day (US)
- 17-23- Constitution Week (US)
- 18- Air Force Birthday (US)
- 21- Islamic New Year (Islam)
- 24-30- Remember to Register to Vote Week (US)
- 25- Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)
- 26- World Contraception Day (International)
- 27- Meskel (Ethiopian Christian)
- 30- St. Jerome's Day International Translation Day

(continued from previous page)

The Shia Muslims spend the first 10 days of the New Year in mourning that is almost half the month there is no festivity. They only don outfits in the color of black. During this phase, visit the mosques to offer their prayers and participate in gatherings. They remind themselves of the tragic life and sorrowful death of Muhammad's grandson. They grieve for the death of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad and who was brutally killed in 680CE at Karbala. The tenth day of this incident and this month is known as the Ashura.

For the Sunni Muslims on the other hand, it is the tenth day of the New Year which is the most important. It is on this day that Moses is believed to have led the ancient Israelites in a flight out of Egypt in his ark. Amongst the Sunni communities, there are some people who keep a fast during this specific period and also fast in the hours when the light of the day is about to end.

The basic difference in the beliefs of the Shias and the Sunnis are that the Shias believe that these New Year celebrations are of somber in nature as Muhammad had to slightly flee from Meccas. But To the Sunnis, the Muharram is not a sad and serious occasion at all, as they on this date celebrate Moses' departure from Egypt with everyone for a calm and peaceful life.

Most of the Muslim families as per traditions recount to all their young children the tales about the terrible journey and risks undertaken by Muhammad while he escaped from his followers and those who coerced and tortured him.

The Al-Hijra or the Islamic New Year is till date not generally celebrated in a formal manner as a holiday, but various communities have their own set of rituals and celebrations to go with it and observe the day.

<http://www.123newyear.com/2017/islamic-new-year/>

## Korean-American Health Care Beliefs and Practices

Authors: Tanya Beller, Michelle Pinker, Sheila Snapka, Denise Van Dusen

**Diet and Nutrition.** Among Koreans the typical (traditional) diet is mostly vegetables, with rice the main staple along with vegetables and small amounts of meat. The sugar, fat and caloric intake are usually lower than other groups in the U.S. Three meals per day are usually eaten in silence, with breakfast viewed as most important. Ginseng, a common additive, is seen as possessing healing and other powers. Common seasonings include garlic, ginger, red and black pepper, soy sauce, green onion, and sesame oil. Kimchee, a hot, fermented cabbage, is eaten as a condiment. It is common to offer food and drink to visitors but important for visitors to not accept upon first asking; respect is shown by allowing several offers before accepting.

**Health Care Beliefs and Practices.** Among older or tradition-minded Koreans, illness is often seen one's fate and hospitalization may be seen as sign of impending death. Illness is sometimes attributed to disharmony in the natural forces, e.g., yin and yang. Yin gives way to "cold" illness such as depression, hypoactivity, hypothermia, abdominal cramps and indigestion. Yang guided health includes hyperactivity, hyperthermia, stroke and seizures. Treatment of hot/cold illnesses is through the use of the opposite force to achieve balance. For example, the common cold is treated with hot soup made from bean sprouts. Congestion is cleared by adding dried anchovies, hot spices and garlic to this hot soup. Another health concern is the kior chi force, which is the life-force of the body. Withdrawing blood, sweating and sex are seen as reducing of this force.

Common health related practices include the use of herbs, acupuncture, cupping and moxibustion which is the burning of a soft material at specified spots (corresponding to internal energy channels) on the skin. In Korea and in large Korean communities elsewhere there are herbalists and herb shops. Traditional medical treatment is based upon physical assessment and observation of behavior; then utilizing metaphysical and cosmological means of treatment. Medical treatment addresses curative aspect more than preventive practices, although health promotion is becoming more encouraged. The physician is seen as powerful and very trustworthy.

DNR orders would be common since prolonging life is seen as unacceptable. On the other hand, discussing a person's terminal status is resisted. Organ donation and transplantation is seen as a disturbance in the integrity of the body. Much of a patient's care is provided by the family while hospitalized. Pain responses vary from openly expressing to stoicism. Family and friends can provide a great deal of information on how the patient copes with illness and pain.

There is much stigma attached to mental illness. Hwanbyung is a traditional illness that arises from suppressed anger or emotions that usually stem from conflicts with the family. Symptoms include headache, decreased appetite, insomnia, and decreased energy. This illness is seen as fate and the cure is

more management and treatment of the symptoms only.

### Pregnancy and Childbearing Practices.

The South Korean government requires that households limit their number of pregnancies to two children. This is promoted through the use of contraception which is taught by and available through government agencies. Another method of maintaining this restriction is through the use of abortion which is legal, practiced and accepted in Korea. Obtaining an abortion is not difficult and permission does not have to be obtained from a husband or a minor's parents. Children receive minimal teaching about sexual practices. The only formal instruction received concerns the menstrual cycle, which is taught to the females only.

During pregnancy women are taught to avoid certain foods and smoking. Introversion is common during pregnancy. The woman begins pregnancy with the Tae Mong, a dream about the conception of the child. The woman focuses on Tae Kyo during pregnancy and avoids unpleasant thoughts. This practice is believed to be the education of the fetus and during this time the woman focuses on art and beautiful objects. Women usually give birth in the supine position much like the Western methods.

**Death Rituals.** Traditional Korean belief values dying at home. If the person has died in the hospital, it is considered a misfortune to bring that person's body back to the home. However, death at home includes keeping the body present for at least several hours for viewing and showing respect. Korean-Americans are more accustomed to reserving a place in the home where pictures of the deceased may be looked upon. Cremation is typically performed on those who do not have relatives and their ashes are usually dispersed over a body of water. Respect for the dead is shown by an outward display of grief which is expressed through moaning and rituals with crying. It is an obligation of the eldest son to remain near the deceased and to moan to display his emotion. He must also hold a cane to signify his need for emotional support during this time.

**Folk Practices.** In addition to practices discussed above, a shamanistic health practice for healing the body and soul is hanyak, which is the use of herbal medicine to create personal harmony. Shamans are consulted as a last resort for treatment or spiritual option. Although shamans provide profound spiritual services to people, they are considered part of the lowest class by Koreans.

