

## Religion and Belief Toolkit

*For the barrister profession*

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## **Purpose of this document**

This toolkit is intended to provide chambers and entities with practical information and guidance relevant to the most common religions and beliefs in the UK (as per the 2011 census). This toolkit is expected to act as an aid to supporting the profession to increase inclusivity by outlining the various belief and religious customs which may potentially influence members of staff, clients and the wider public. One of the primary purposes of this document is to help promote dialogue between chambers and their members, pupils, staff and clients about their worshipping practices and observances so that the profession can be as inclusive as possible. Although this toolkit tries to provide as much relevant information as possible, it is important to note that this document does not fully reflect the range of differences across various religious and faith groups and so should not be substituted for self-study, further research where applicable or (most importantly) effective dialogue as to how belief practices can be accommodated in the working environment.

Additionally, although not covered in full in this toolkit, under the Equality Act 2010 veganism is considered to be a belief and so members and staff should ensure that different dietary requirements are catered for at all events.

**Summary of key considerations for the most prevalent religions in the barrister profession**

<b>Attire</b>	
<b>Christianity</b>	It is generally unlikely that considerations relating to attire for practising Christian barristers will arise. Some Christians may choose to wear a crucifix (i.e. a cross with an image of Jesus) as a mark of faith, typically as a necklace, which is permitted in Court.
<b>Hinduism</b>	It is generally unlikely that considerations relating to attire for practising Hindu barristers will arise.
<b>Islam</b>	Many Muslim women wear a headscarf when out in public (the hijab) and some Muslim women will also choose to be fully covered with only their eyes and hands showing (niqab). This attire is worn in front of unrelated males. In some cases, female barristers may choose to wear a hijab specially designed for use in court (these will be sober coloured). Muslims who wear headscarves need not wear wigs where Court Dress is required. The practice is considered a religious obligation and understood as a form of modesty. For similar reasons, many Muslims will not wish to touch (unrelated) members of the opposite sex, including shaking their hand.
<b>Judaism</b>	In certain sections of the Jewish community, there are different dress codes for both men and women. Jewish men will wear a head covering ( <b>Kippah / Yarmulke</b> ) during prayer (and often a prayer shawl or <b>Tallis</b> ), and some observant men will wear a head covering all the time. Kippahs may be worn in court (and worn under wigs where Court Dress is required). Orthodox men may also wear a ritual fringe or tassel ( <b>Tzitzit</b> ) under their clothing. Observant married women will often cover their hair during prayers and many Orthodox married women will cover their hair all the time when in public, sometimes with a wig ( <b>Sheitel</b> ).
<b>Sikhism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A baptised Sikh (also known as Amritdhari) is required to have on their person 5 key articles of faith, known as the 5 Ks. These are worn by both baptised men and women. The concept of baptised Sikhs is known as the Khalsa. Not all Sikhs choose to be fully initiated into the Khalsa; but those who are not initiated may still observe some of the 5 Ks. The 5 Ks are: <b>Kesh</b>: Uncut hair. The Kesh is commonly covered by a <b>dastar</b> (turban), which is primarily used to protect the Kesh. The dastar is also considered to be an important part of a Sikh's identity. The dastar may be worn in court but should be sober coloured. Those</li> </ul>

	<p>who wear a dastar need not wear wigs where Court Dress is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kanga:</b> A wooden comb that is placed in the hair. The Kanga is used to keep one’s hair neat, and thus symbolises neatness and order</li> <li>• <b>Kara:</b> A steel or iron bangle that can be worn on either hand (or both hands). The Kara acts as a deterrent, reminding the Sikh not to commit bad or immoral acts.</li> <li>• <b>Kacherra:</b> A form of undergarment, similar to boxer shorts, that symbolises discipline, self-restraint and chastity.</li> <li>• <b>Kirpan:</b> A sword or usually now a small ceremonial one, that reminds the Sikh that he or she is to always stand for truth and justice and especially aid those who are weak and downtrodden. This is generally worn in a concealed manner It is considered inappropriate to refer to the Kirpan as a knife or dagger.</li> </ul> <p>It is important to be aware of the following points in relation to attire, particularly in the context of attendance at Court:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is legal under the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and Offensive Weapons Act 1996 for a Sikh to carry a Kirpan for religious reasons. At present, HMCTS in England does not permit a Kirpan larger than 6 inches (including the casing and the handle) to be carried into Court buildings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prayers, Religious Days and Festivals</b></p> <p>During the course of the year people of different faiths may appreciate having a space available for prayer, or daily observance during a particular ritual or festival. Best practice would be to maintain a dialogue with members and staff of faith as to when spaces should be made available for prayer or reflection. Chambers and entities should respect the importance of religious days and festivals, taking them into account, and as far as possible accommodating them in relation to work expectations and engagement in activities.</p>	
<p><b>Christianity</b></p>	<p>The three most significant Christian festivals, in most traditions, are Easter, Christmas and Pentecost.</p> <p><b><i>Easter, Good Friday and Lent</i></b></p> <p>Easter, Christianity’s holiest day, marks the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Easter is a joyful occasion in the Christian calendar which celebrates new life and the triumph of Jesus over sin.</p> <p>As to the timing of Easter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easter is not celebrated on the same day every year, but falls on a Sunday between late March and late April. In the UK, bank holidays fall on the Friday before and the Monday after Easter Sunday (as it is celebrated by most denominations).</li> </ul>

- Orthodox traditions celebrate Easter on a different date as the date is based on the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian calendar. This means that Orthodox traditions generally celebrate Easter between one week and a month after most other Christian traditions.

The Friday before Easter is known as “Good Friday” and marks the day on which Jesus was crucified. Christians generally consider Good Friday as a more sombre day than Easter, which encourages Christians to reflect upon their own sin. As noted above, Good Friday is a bank holiday across the UK.

The 40 days preceding Easter are known as Lent. Lent marks the time that, according to the Bible, Jesus spent fasting immediately prior to the start of his public ministry. Many observant Christians will abstain from something or take up a spiritual discipline of some kind during Lent as a means of reflecting on and deepening their own faith. The particular form of abstinence (such as, for instance, abstaining from alcohol during the period of Lent) will be the choice of individual worshippers. Chambers and entities should be aware that in some cases a member or staff member’s way of observing Lent may impact on their participation in events.

### ***Christmas***

Christmas marks the birth of Jesus. Christmas is celebrated by Christians as God’s entry into the world to live with mankind. As is well known, Christmas is marked by the giving of gifts: a tradition that derives from the wise men or kings that, according to the Bible, arrived at the birthplace of Jesus with various gifts.

Christmas is generally celebrated on 25 December each year, with that day and the following day (Boxing Day, is also the Feast of St Stephen, the first Christian martyr, but is of lesser religious significance) being bank holidays in the UK. However, Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on 7 January because, as with Easter, Orthodox traditions use the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian calendar for the timing of Christian festivals. Many European Catholics celebrate on Christmas Eve, which for them represents a more formal part of the celebrations.

### ***Pentecost***

Pentecost, also known as Whitsun, commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles following the death of Christ. Pentecost falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and in the UK is followed by a bank holiday. Although Pentecost is a lesser-known Christian festival, it is observed by all Christian traditions. Orthodox traditions also celebrate Pentecost at a different time to most other traditions, with the date falling seven weeks after Orthodox Easter.

	<p><b>Sundays</b> Most Christians observe Sundays as the “Sabbath”, a day of rest. Many observant Christians will attend church on a Sunday.</p> <p>For members of the ‘Seventh Day Adventists’ church, Saturday is their holy day – a day for church attendance and meditation, and a day when many would not use a computer, watch television or listen to the radio.</p> <p>Christian observance of the Sabbath varies widely between Christians. While many Christians will work on a Sunday, some will not do so out of religious observance.</p> <p><b><i>Other significant events in the worshipping life of a Christian</i></b> In addition to the annual and weekly events set out above, there are other events that will carry a particular spiritual significance for a worshipping Christian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Baptism</i></b>: Baptism is an act, generally carried out in a church or other place of worship, which marks the start of a Christian’s journey of faith. In some traditions infants are baptised (also referred to as a christening), while in others a person will only be baptised during adolescence or adulthood once they have made a decision to follow a Christian life of faith. Family and friends will often be invited to a baptism.</li> <li>• <b><i>First communion and confirmation</i></b>: An important part of Christian worship in most traditions is taking bread and wine during a church service (most commonly known as “Mass”, “the Eucharist” or “Holy Communion”). Most Christian traditions have a ceremony which marks the point when a child (who often will not take communion) will start to take communion in Church. In Catholic traditions this is known as a first communion, while in the Church of England this is generally known as confirmation. In most traditions, this involves confirming promises that were made at baptism (if the person was baptised as an infant).</li> </ul> <p>In most worshipping traditions, both of the events above will usually take place during a church service on a Sunday. Given that baptisms and first communions/confirmations are likely to happen on a Sunday, they are unlikely to impact on a Christian’s working life. However, sensitivity towards these events may be required if a barrister is expected to work over a weekend.</p>
<b>Hinduism</b>	Worship takes place in the home and the Temple. There are a variety of holy days and festivals and those that are given

	<p>prominence in a Hindu person's calendar will depend upon family tradition, community and / or region of origin. Those that are universally given high prominence include:</p> <p><b>Diwali</b> Usually celebrated around October/November, Diwali is the celebration of light over darkness, and festivities will include making special food, lighting lamps, family gatherings, fireworks and conducting prayers.</p> <p><b>Holi</b> Usually celebrated around March. Holi is the celebration of colour, and it is common to celebrate by holding parties where the participants wear white or other plain clothes and throw coloured powder at each other.</p> <p>Individuals are left free to choose which types of rituals they wish to follow on a daily basis though specific events such as marriage and death have more elaborate and prescribed rituals. The three main rites of passage are birth, marriage and death. Arranged marriages with the exchange of 'gifts' (not dowries, as this is illegal in India) do happen, but it would be wrong to assume that your Hindu colleague will have had or will be planning to have arranged marriages, especially those based in the UK. That, again, depends on particular family tradition and the individual's preference.</p>
<p><b>Islam</b></p>	<p>One of the most important religious practices for Muslims is the five daily prayer (Salat). The prayer times are derived from the position of the sun during the day. They are therefore subject to daily, predictable changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dawn (Fajr)</li> <li>• just after noon (Zuhur)</li> <li>• afternoon/evening (Asr)</li> <li>• following sunset (Maghrib)</li> <li>• night time (Isha)</li> </ul> <p>These prayers can be performed individually and in congregation. On Fridays, the noon prayer is prayed in congregation in the mosque, known as 'Jummah' prayer. It is compulsory for men to attend and optional for women. Those that cannot attend Jummah prayers in congregation would be required to perform the noon prayer individually.</p> <p>The daily prayers are always done while facing Mecca, which is southeast (119°) in London. Before a Muslim can pray, they must be in a state of ritual purity, which is achieved either through minor (wudu) or major (ghusl) ablution. Wudu is achieved by washing the hands, rinsing the mouth, cleaning the nostrils, washing the face, washing the arms up to the elbows, wetting the hands and running them through the hair, cleaning inside and behind the ears, and</p>

lastly washing the feet up to the ankles. It is considered part of the Sunnah to do these acts each three times. Ghusl involves a similar process but also includes washing of the whole body.

### **Ramadan**

Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan, which is determined by the lunar calendar so that the exact date moves a few days each year. Moreover, there are different views on how the start of the month is determined (e.g. by sighting in specific locations). This means that the holy month may start and finish on different days for different Muslims, though always within a small timeframe of 1 or 2 days.

During Ramadan, many Muslims will not eat or drink between dawn and sunset. Generally, those that are intending to fast will have a meal before sunrise ('suhoor') and the evening meal ('iftar') after sunset. The sick, infirm or very old need not fast. Fasting is also excused during menstruation, for 40 days after childbirth, while breastfeeding, during a long journey, or if considered harmful for medical reasons.

Special prayers are read in the mosque after sunset ('taraweeh') and those who are able are encouraged to attend. Ramadan in the summer months can be particularly challenging with hot weather and long days. Fasting and lack of sleep can impact on energy and concentration in court. The holy month ends with festivities on **Eid al-Fitr**.

The second Eid (or celebration), **Eid al-Adha** happens later in the lunar year and commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.

Both Eid festivities involve a special 'Eid prayer' in congregation in the morning.

### **Hajj**

Muslims with the available means are obligated to participate once in their lives in the yearly ritual pilgrimage. The Hajj takes place between 8th and 12th day of Dhu'l Hijjah, the last lunar month of the year. It involves various rituals in and around Mecca. On the 10th, both pilgrims and Muslims generally celebrate Eid al-Adha. Some Muslims may choose to go on the 'smaller pilgrimage', the Umrah, which can take place at any time other than during the Hajj. It is sometimes done in preparation for the Hajj itself.

### **Other important dates for Muslims are:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Muharram which marks the start of the lunar calendar as well as the end of the migration of the Prophet Muhammed from Mecca to Medina in 622.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Day of Muharram, known as Ashura. Sunni Muslims mark it as the day God saved the Prophet Moses and his



	<p>people from Pharaoh by parting the sea. Shia Muslims commemorate the martyrdom of Husayn Ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammed. Muslims observing these dates may fast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 27<sup>th</sup> Day of Rajab, which celebrates the Night Journey of the Prophet Muhammed.</li> <li>- 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Rabi' al-Awwal (this year falls around 8 October 2022), known as the Mawlid. This day marks the birthday of the Prophet Muhammed. There is some disagreement about the date (some say it is the 17<sup>th</sup> Day) and only some celebrate it.</li> <li>- 9<sup>th</sup> Day of Dhu'l Hijjah, marks the second day of the (annual) Hajj Pilgrimage. Pilgrims travel to Mount Arafah in Mecca to commemorate the Prophet's farewell sermon and reflect and pray for forgiveness. Muslims elsewhere may fast that day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Judaism</b></p>	<p>There are three daily prayer services (four on the Sabbath). These prayers can be performed individually and in congregation in a synagogue (<b>Shul</b>) or elsewhere. For certain prayers a quorum of ten is required (<b>Minyan</b>).</p> <p>The Sabbath (<b>Shabbat / Shabbos</b>) commences one hour before sunset on Friday and until sunset on Saturday. It is a day of worship and rest and, as a general rule, activities such as turning on electricity, working and business are prohibited although there are differing views and practices in respect of the extent of such prohibitions. Many observant Jewish people will have a family meal at home on Friday night lighting candles and saying prayers.</p> <p>There are various major festival days, when no work can be done (depending on levels of observance) and minor festival days when some activities are permitted. The most important days, which are observed by the vast majority of Jewish people, are:</p> <p><b>Rosh Hashanah</b> This is the Jewish New Year. Traditions include eating apples dipped in honey and blowing the shofar (ram's horn). This is the first of the two 'High Holy Days' and few Jewish people who follow their religion will be prepared to work or go to court on these days. The date is governed by the Hebrew Calendar but will generally fall in September in the Gregorian Calendar.</p> <p><b>Yom Kippur</b> This is also known as the "Day of Atonement" and is considered by Jews to be the holiest and most solemn day of the year. Fasting begins at sundown and ends after nightfall on the following day. It is the second of the two 'High Holy Days' and will also generally fall in September or the beginning of October.</p> <p><b>Sukkot</b> This is a seven-day festival, sometimes known as the Feast of Tabernacles. It is celebrated by the building of a sukkah, or temporary dwelling, outdoors. It will generally fall in September or October.</p>

	<p><b>Shemini Atzeret</b> This holiday immediately follows the conclusion of Sukkot.</p> <p><b>Simchat Torah</b> This holiday immediately follows Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret. It concludes and begins anew the annual reading cycle of the Torah, the Five Books of Moses that make up a portion of the Jewish bible.</p> <p><b>Chanukah/Hanukkah</b> This is an eight-day festival marked by the lighting of candles using a special candle holder called a menorah or chanukiah. It will generally fall in December.</p> <p><b>Purim</b> This festival commemorates the events that took place in the Book of Esther and is seen as one of the most joyous holidays. It will generally fall in February/March.</p> <p><b>Passover</b> This commemorates the liberation of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt. A feast called a Seder is held on the first two nights and sometimes on the final two nights of this eight-day holiday. No leavened food (such as bread) is eaten, and Matzah is consumed instead. It will generally fall in late March/April.</p> <p><b>Shavuot</b> This festival celebrates the day on which the ten commandments were given, it is traditional to eat meals containing dairy during this festival. It will generally fall in May/June.</p>
<p><b>Sikhism</b></p>	<p>Sikhs observe several festivals, including Vaisakhi (usually 13 or 14 April), Bandi Chhor Divas/Diwali (October/November – dates vary according to the lunar calendar) and several Gurburabs (key dates marking events in the Gurus' lives) throughout the year. These are not occasions for which individuals would necessarily need or expect to take time off, though whether or not this is the case may vary between individuals.</p> <p><b>Vaisakhi</b> This is one of the most celebrated days in the Sikh calendar. It was on this day that Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, created the Panj Pyare (5 Beloved Sikhs) and the order of the Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh Ji stated that his form would be represented by the Panj Pyare and Khalsa. It was prior to Vaisakhi that Guru Gobind Singh Ji proclaimed that the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the most sacred of Sikh scriptures, would be the eternal Guru of the Sikhs.</p> <p><b>Naam Japna</b> (Meditation on the name and qualities of God) is a practice that is encouraged at any time. However, many Sikhs recite three particular sets of prayers daily, namely Nitnem (morning), Rehras (evening) and Kirtan Sohila (before going to sleep). Practically this</p>

	<p>means the times at which prayers are recited may vary between individuals. When praying, Sikhs who do not already wear a Dastar must ensure that they cover their head.</p> <p>Accordingly, a multi faith room should be made available to Sikhs. The provision of head coverings for use in such spaces would be a particularly thoughtful gesture.</p>
<p><b>Diet and attitudes towards alcohol</b></p> <p>Dietary choices and attitudes towards alcohol of people of faith and non-religious conviction will often be down to a question of individual observance. Practice will differ (sometimes substantially) between different people of the same faith or belief. Best practice, as ever, will be for the profession to maintain a dialogue in order to ensure that catering provision is made for people of faith or belief at events.</p>	
<p><b>Christianity</b></p>	<p>There are many differences of beliefs and practices between Christians: care should be taken to avoid making assumptions and risking offence by presuming that all Christians behave or believe in a particular way. For instance, some people of Christian faith will refuse to eat pork or shellfish (observing the food laws of the Jewish Bible) – which is not necessarily widely known.</p> <p>Most Christians are unlikely to have any particular dietary needs as a result of their faith, although some do as a matter of personal conviction. As noted above, some Christians may decide to abstain from a particular food or drink during Lent, and there is an established practice in some Catholic traditions of not eating meat on Fridays. Dietary abstinence will typically be a matter of personal choice.</p> <p><b>Attitudes towards alcohol:</b> this varies among Christians, and most observant Christians will be mindful of the Bible’s teaching that drunkenness is a sin. Some observant Christians will therefore feel uncomfortable about events which are structured around drinking.</p>
<p><b>Hinduism</b></p>	<p>Dietary observations are variable, but the vast majority of Hindus will not eat beef, as the cow is seen as a sacred animal. Beyond that, observations can vary from strict vegetarianism (which includes not eating eggs) to non-vegetarianism. Some Hindus do not eat garlic or onion. Diet is generally dependent on family tradition, community and / or region of origin.</p> <p><b>Attitudes towards alcohol:</b> Some Hindus do not consume stimulants such as tobacco, alcohol, and in some cases tea and coffee.</p>
<p><b>Islam</b></p>	<p>Muslims will eat only permitted food (halal) and will not eat or drink anything that is considered forbidden (haram). Animals such as lamb, beef, goat and chicken, that are lawfully slaughtered in accordance with Islamic rules are considered <b>halal</b>. Fish and eggs</p>

	<p>are always halal and do not require any rituals to be performed to render them so.</p> <p>All products from pork, carrion and blood are forbidden (haram). They cannot be made halal through ritual slaughter. A Muslim does not eat generally available meat or food that contains animal fats, in case it contains pork fat or fat from other animals not ritually slaughtered.</p> <p><b>Attitudes towards alcohol:</b> Consumption of alcohol is forbidden. It is important to ensure that a range of non-alcoholic drinks are available at all events. Some Muslims may wish to avoid altogether events where alcohol is served.</p>
<p><b>Judaism</b></p>	<p>Dietary rules and observances vary enormously but as a general rule the consumption of meat from pigs, shellfish, game and domesticated animals is prohibited as is the mixing of meat and milk. Some observant Jewish people (including all Orthodox Jewish people) will also only eat permitted animals that are ritually killed (often marked with a seal from the Beth Din or other supervisory authority). The dietary rules are known as <b>Kashrut</b> and food that falls within the rules is referred to as <b>Kosher</b>.</p> <p><b>Attitudes towards alcohol:</b> There is no prohibition on consuming alcohol in the Jewish religion (and it forms part of many rituals) although Orthodox Jewish people will usually only drink wine that is marked with a seal from the Beth Din or other supervisory authority and, in some cases, is untouched by those who are not Jewish.</p>
<p><b>Sikhism</b></p>	<p>When it comes to dietary requirements in Sikhism, practices vary between individuals who are initiated and those who are not; and in any event interpretations differ as to what the religion permits and prohibits. The key point is that some Sikhs have dietary requirements, so it is always worth checking. Many Sikhs are vegetarian and also do not consume fish and eggs. Sikhs do not consume Halal or Kosher meat.</p> <p><b>Attitudes towards alcohol:</b> Strictly observant Sikhs will not consume tobacco or alcohol. There is a misconception that all Sikhs drink, however, this can be attributed to Punjabi culture which is distinct from Sikh faith. It should not be assumed that all Sikhs drink.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bereavement</b></p> <p>Across different faiths, death is typically marked by a period of grieving or a religious ceremony that is likely to mean that a barrister or staff member will be unavailable to work. Details of religious practice is detailed below in order to allow the profession to understand differing practices.</p>	

<b>Christianity</b>	Christians generally mark death with a funeral service or a memorial service. Practice differs substantially between different denominations and cultural traditions as to the content of a funeral or memorial service. There is generally no set time for when a funeral or memorial service should take place, although typically a service will take place within three weeks of death. Christians may opt for burial or cremation.
<b>Hinduism</b>	<p>The body is cremated after death, usually within a day or two. The ashes are usually scattered into a body of water. The body of the deceased is displayed in an open casket at the crematorium for people to pay their respects. The immediate family may be involved in preparing the body for cremation.</p> <p>There follows a period of mourning which can continue for 30 days, the first 13 days of which are intense. Some Hindus will not wish to undertake any of their normal work during those 13 days; some may not wish to undertake any of their normal work for a period of 30 days. The immediate family of the deceased will continue to mourn for one year, though less intensely, and will often hold a memorial service in the family home on the one-year death anniversary.</p> <p>Whilst practice varies depending on family tradition, caste and region, some Hindus are forbidden from attending temples, other people's homes and other public places where they will come into contact with people for two weeks. Those working with Hindu colleagues should be aware that they may not be available at all for the two weeks following the death of a loved one.</p>
<b>Islam</b>	It is an important religious duty to visit the sick and dying. The next of kin will want to arrange to wash the body before burial. In Islam the body must be buried as quickly as possible (cremation is forbidden). Funerals should take place within 24 hours of death. Some sects have very austere funeral rites with varying periods of mourning.
<b>Judaism</b>	Funerals take place usually within 24 hours of death. It is common for Jewish mourners to 'sit <b>Shivah</b> ' for seven days following the burial; the first three days are particularly intense. During Shivah, first-degree relatives (son, daughter, brother, sister, father, mother, and spouse) take an almost complete break from the routines of everyday life with a prohibition on working and doing business. The mourners will usually sit together in one of their homes and receive visits from friends and relatives, who drop in and out, as well as saying prayers at specific times. In some traditions, more general mourning practices can last up to one year.
<b>Sikhism</b>	There is no specific period of mourning in Sikhism. However, upon a death, prayers will be commenced and continue until the day of cremation. The usual practice is for cremation to take place as soon

	<p>as possible after the death (but this is of course subject to being able to make such arrangements, and in recent times delays have been experienced).</p> <p>The funeral customs usually culminate in a service at the deceased's home followed by services at the <b>Gurdwara</b> (Sikh temple) before and after the crematorium. Attendance by some family members (and accordingly periods of leave) may be required on other days in advance of this for important practices – for example to commence and continue prayers, and to bathe and dress the deceased.</p>
<b>Taking the oath</b>	
<b>Christianity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christians may choose to swear an oath or affirm.</li> <li>• Their holy scripture is the Bible; most usually the part that is known as the New Testament will suffice. However, there are many versions of the Holy book, the Bible, and a common error is to ask a person to swear an oath on a version of the Bible that they do not accept.</li> <li>• Some Christians consider it profane to swear an oath on their Holy Book.</li> <li>• Quakers are likely to wish to affirm, rather than swear on the bible.</li> </ul>
<b>Hinduism</b>	<p>Hindus may choose to affirm or swear an oath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many Hindu scriptures, but the 'holy book' used in Court is the <b>Bhagavad Gita</b> simply called the <b>Gita</b> upon which Hindus will swear the oath.</li> <li>• The Bhagavad Gita may be kept in a covered cloth, the suggested colour of which is red. There is no requirement that it not be touched by hand, however.</li> <li>• Questions of taking steps for ritual purity may arise.</li> </ul>
<b>Islam</b>	<p>Muslims may choose to affirm or swear an oath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe that the Qu'ran is divine speech. The mushaf (or codex) is universally agreed and contains 114 chapters.</li> <li>• The pages of the Qu'ran should only be touched by those in a state of ritual purity. It should at all times be treated with the utmost respect.</li> <li>• Some Muslims believe that they cannot take an oath on the Qu'ran because it is not permitted. They may choose to swear by Allah or affirm.</li> </ul>
<b>Judaism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jewish people may choose to affirm or swear an oath.</li> <li>• Oaths are sworn on the <b>Torah / Pentateuch</b> (the first 5 books of the bible) or on the Hebrew Bible (which will contain these). Sometimes the Hebrew Bible is referred to by Christians as the Old Testament, although strictly speaking the latter refers to something slightly different.</li> <li>• The Hebrew Bible may be kept in a covered cloth, the suggested colour of which is black.</li> <li>• Questions of taking steps for ritual purity may arise.</li> </ul>

**BAR  
STANDARDS  
BOARD**

REGULATING BARRISTERS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Jewish people will decline to swear on the Torah in a non-religious context.</li> <li>• If wearing a head covering, Jewish people should not be asked to remove it in court.</li> </ul>
<b>Sikhism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sikhs may choose to affirm or swear an oath.</li> <li>• It is not appropriate to present the sacred Sikh Scriptures (Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji) to Sikhs for the purpose of swearing oaths. The Sikh Council UK advises that their storage and use in a court is highly offensive and hurtful to Sikhs, as these scriptures should only be placed within a Gurdwara.</li> <li>• The Sunder Gutka may be suitable for the purposes of swearing an oath in court proceedings. This should be kept in a covered cloth (the suggested colour of which is orange or yellow) and should be stored on a raised shelf.</li> <li>• Sikhs should not be asked to remove their head coverings in court.</li> <li>• The form the Oath may take when sworn by a Sikh (taken on the Sunder Gutka) is: 'I swear according to the Sunder Gutka (or by Almighty God) that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.' The form of the oath which stipulates swearing by Waheguru is not recommended.</li> </ul>

## Annual Calendar

The calendar below aims to set out the key dates for each major religion as a guide. Some festivals vary year to year, e.g., according to the lunar cycle - for these the range of months in which they are likely to fall is indicated. It is recommended that you consult with individuals you work with to determine the most current dates of festivals and how this may impact, if at all, their work.

	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism <sup>1</sup>	Sikhism
January	Christmas (orthodox traditions)				Guru Gobind Singh Ji Prakash Purab (20 <sup>th</sup> ) Lohri (varies)
February		Maha Shivaratri (varies)		Purim	Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji Prakash Purab (25 <sup>th</sup> )
March	Easter (varies)	Holi (varies)	Lailat al Miraj (varies)		Nanakshahi New Year (14 <sup>th</sup> ) Hola Mahalla (varies)
April	Easter (varies)	Ram Navami (varies)	Start of Ramadan (varies)	Passover (may begin in March)	Vaisakhi (varies – usually 13 <sup>th</sup> or 14 <sup>th</sup> )

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew calendar is a lunisolar calendar, and the dates of these festivals are not consistent on an annual basis using the Gregorian calendar.



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		Hanuman Jayanti (varies)			
May	Pentecost (varies)		Eid Al Fitr (varies)	Shavuot	Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Prakash Purab (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Guru Arjan Dev Ji Prakash Purab (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) Guru Angad Dev Ji Prakash Purab (12 <sup>th</sup> ) Guru Amar Das Ji - Prakash Purab (25 <sup>th</sup> )
June					1 <sup>st</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup> Shaheedi week.  3 <sup>rd</sup> Martydom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji.  Guru Har Gobind Ji Prakash Purabi (15 <sup>th</sup> ) Varies
July		Rath Yatra (varies) Guru Purnima (varies)	Day of Arafah (2nd Day of Hajj Pilgrimage - varies)  Eid Al Adha (Holiday of Sacrifice – varies)		22 <sup>nd</sup> Prakash Purab Guru Harkrishan Ji
August		Raksha bandhan (varies) Krishna Janmashtami (varies)	Al Hijira (Start of Lunar Year/End of Prophet's Migration – varies)		28 <sup>th</sup> First Prakash of Guru Granth Sahib Ji

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September		Ganesh Chaturthi (varies)		Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah	20 <sup>th</sup> Joti Jot Diwas Guru Nanak Dev Ji
October		Navratri (varies) Diwali (varies)	Mawlid (Prophet's Birthday - varies)		Guru Ram Das Ji Prakash Purab (11 <sup>th</sup> ) Bandi Chhor Diwas/Diwali (24 <sup>th</sup> - Varies)
November					1984 Remembrance Days (1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> )  Guru Nanak Dev Ji Prakash Purab (8 <sup>th</sup> - Varies)  Shaheedi of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (28 <sup>th</sup> - varies)
December	Christmas (25 <sup>th</sup> )			Chanukah	Shaheedi of Chaar Sahibzaadey (Four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji) (22 <sup>nd</sup> - 27 <sup>th</sup> )