

What is Christmas?



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- The annual Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ which is held on 25th December in the Western Church



When was Jesus born?

- No-one knows!
- Christians themselves admit they don't know!
 - Bishop Barnes writes: "There is, moreover, no authority for the belief that December 25th was the actual birthday of Jesus ... Our Christmas Day seems to have been accepted about 300 AD."
- The Encyclopaedia Britannica informs us:
 - "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church, and before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come into the calendar. The exact day and year of Christ's birth have never been satisfactorily settled."

What we do know is that...



It probably wasn't December!

- The Bible mentions that shepherds were watching their sheep at the time of Jesus' birth
- It is incredibly cold in December in Judea where Hazrat Jesus^{as} was born!
- So he could not have been born in December!



It probably wasn't December!

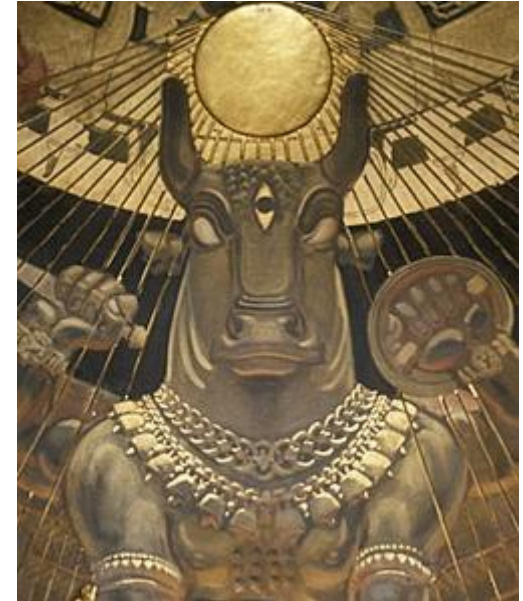
- According to the Holy Qur'an after giving birth to Hazrat Jesus^{as}, an angel spoke to his mother, Hazrat Maryam and said
 - “And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree; it will cause fresh ripe dates to fall upon thee.” (Chapter 19:Verse 26)



- So the birth of Hazrat Jesus^{as} took place at a time when fresh dates are found on palm-trees in Judea
- This is certainly not in the icy cold month of December!

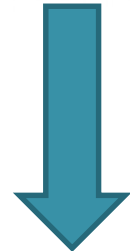
Where does 25th December come from then?

- Before the time of Hazrat Jesus^{as} people use to worship pagan gods and held many festivals for these pagans.
- For example in ancient Babylon “The feast of the son of Isis” was celebrated on 25th December, where there was lots of eating, drinking and gift-giving.
 - Same date as Christmas....Same activities!
- In ancient Rome there was a tradition where people would dress up and go door-to-door singing.
 - Carol singing?!



All sounding rather familiar?

- It is widely accepted that Christmas arises from these pagan traditions.
- Indeed it was only in 350AD (350 years after the crucifixion of Hazrat Jesus^{as}) that Pope Julius I, declared that the birth of Jesus would be celebrated on 25th December
- This date is likely to have been deliberately chosen to make conversion of the majority pagan followers to Christianity easier.



Conclusion

- 25th December is not the actual day of birth of Hazrat Jesus^{as}
- Rather, it was a day chosen deliberately to coincide with pagan festivals
- As Muslims we are fortunate to have been allocated days of celebration by Allah Almighty which hold great importance and where we have a reason to be truly grateful and happy.

الله

