

## Festivals of Pakistan

A festival is a public celebration of an event to create a sense of brotherhood, selflessness, peace and sacrifice among the people. The celebrations allow the people to rejoice by breaking the monotonous routine that has made their life dull and boring. They bring the people of different areas closer to create a cultural harmony among them. Some of the festivals are religious while others commemorate the deeds of national heroes and political events.

The Shab-e-barat, a night of blessings, is celebrated on the 15th Shabaan, the eighth month of the Islamic Calendar. The Muslims illuminate their houses and masajid. Special "nawafil" are offered throughout the night to seek the blessings of Allah.

After the fasting in the month of Ramadan, the Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwal. The Eid prayer, held mostly in the open areas, is offered after sunrise. After the prayer, the Muslims greet one another. They spend the whole day enjoying and sharing Allah's blessings with fellow Muslims.

Hajj is one of the greatest events. Millions of Muslims from all over the world gather at Arafat on the 9th Zilhaj to bow before Allah. Those who cannot go there, offer a special prayer after the sunrise on the 10th Zilhaj and celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha. After the prayer, the Muslims greet one another and sacrifice a goat, sheep, cow or a camel to honour the sacrificial tradition of the Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام). The meat is divided into three parts: one for the family, other for the relatives and the other for the poor.

Eid Milad-un-Nabi is celebrated on the 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal, the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The buildings and bazaars are illuminated. Seminars are conducted to induce the devotees to follow the life of Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ).

Some festivals are celebrated to refresh the memories of great saints. These are held at their shrines. The Mela Chiraghan is held at the shrine of Hazrat Madhu Lal Hussain (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ): The "Urses" of Baba Farid, Hazrat Data Gunj Bukhsh, Imam Bari, Saachal Sar Must and Abdul Latif Bhitai (رحمۃ اللہ علیہم) are held at their shrines. The people from far off places gather at the shrines to pay homage to them.

The Pakistan Resolution Day (23rd March, 1940) and the Independence Day (14th August, 1947) are the most remarkable days in the history of Pakistan. The nation as a whole celebrates these occasions every year to refresh the greatness of these events. They also give us the knowledge and information related to the freedom movement of Pakistan and the hardships faced by the leaders in getting a separate homeland for the Muslims of the South Asia.

These festivals also provide opportunities to the artisans to display their handicrafts, that depict their cultural heritage. They attract tourists from all over the world. Lok-Melas are also arranged along with these exhibitions to enable the people to develop a sense of brotherhood among themselves. They are necessary to keep the people united and to honour the cultural activities of the people of different areas.

Words	Meanings
festival	a day of celebration
celebration	large scale rejoicing
illuminate	light up
induce	persuade
shrine	tomb /
remarkable	notable
handicrafts	hand made things
artisan	workman

### EXERCISES

#### 1. Answer the following questions:

- i. How would you describe the word "festival"?
- ii. What is the purpose of celebrating a festival?
- iii. When does Shab-e-barat take place? What is the importance of this blessed night for the Muslims?
- iv. Name the religious festivals of the Muslims.
- v. When and how are the national events celebrated in Pakistan?
- vi. What is the importance of a Lok Mela?
- vii. What important religious event took place on the 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal?
- viii. What is the importance of the 14th August in the history of Pakistan?
- ix. What kind of opportunities do these festivals provide to the artisans?
- x. Write an account of a religious or any other festival that you might have seen in your own village or town.

2. Choose the correct answer from the following:

- i. The eighth lunar month is  
 a) Ramadan.                      b) Rajab.  
 c) Shabaan.                      d) Safar.
- ii. Sacrifice is offered to honour the sacrificial tradition of  
 a) Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ).      b) Hazrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام).  
 c) saints.                      d) the people.
- iii. Shab-e-Barat is celebrated on the  
 a) 15th Shabaan.                      b) 1st Shawal.  
 c) 10th Zilhaj.                      d) 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal.
- iv. Mela Chiraghan is held at the shrine of  
 a) Hazrat Data Gunj Bukhsh.      b) Abdul Latif Bhitai.  
 c) Bari Imam.                      d) Madhu Lal Hussain.

3. Write down the following sentences in the past tense.

- i. Festival is a public celebration.  
 ii. They bring the people closer.  
 iii. They illuminate their houses.  
 iv. After the prayers, they greet one another.  
 v. Lok-Melas are arranged to create sense of brotherhood.

4. Connect the part of the sentence in column I with the relevant part in column II.

Column I	Column II
Shab-e-barat is	on the 1st of Shawaal.
The Shabaan is the	the sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (عليه السلام).
The Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr	on the 9th Zilhaj.
Eid-ul-Azha commemorates	eighth month of the Islamic calendar.
The great event of Hajj is performed	a night of blessings.
The 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal	on the 23rd March 1940.
The Pakistan Resolution was passed	is the birthday of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

5. Change the following sentences into passive voice.

- i. Ayesha made a cake.
- ii. The secretary typed a letter.
- iii. Ali drove the car..
- iv. Aaliya did the homework.
- v. The motorcyclist injured the child.