Tufts UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 11.18.20

A Diwali Reflection from the Hindu Advisor

Namaste dear friends,

As you read this, in our Tufts community and around the world, we have just celebrated Diwali – one of the most widely observed Hindu festivals. Meaning “a row of lights” in Sanskrit, Diwali is commemorated with the lighting of clay lamps known as diyas. Here, at Tufts, we sent Diwali kits to students containing Rangoli powders, a paper stencil, and an electronic tealight. To celebrate, we met for online Aarti, discussed the Rama Amar Chitra Katha, and ate together virtually.

While considered a world religion, Hinduism does not have a single scriptural text nor a single religious leader. Hinduism includes a spectrum of philosophical, spiritual, and religious practices, beliefs, and traditions. According to our scriptures, in particular the Ramayana, Diwali also commemorates the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after vanquishing the ten-headed Ravana.

We might contemporize the understanding of Lord Rama’s undertaking as that which any human being on the journey to enlightenment needs to undergo to overcome ten steps to Self-Realization. I interpret these ten steps to Self-Realization as related to the ten Yamas and Niyamas (dos and don’ts) of Sanatan Dharma. The five Yamas are 1) Ahimsa (Non-violence), 2) Satya (Truth), 3) Asteya (Non-stealing), 4) Brahmacharya (Behavior as God), and 5) Aparigraha (Non-hoarding). The five Niyamas are 1) Saucha (Cleanliness), 2) Santosha (Gratitude), 3) Tapas (Discipline), 4) Swaddhyay (Study of Self) and 5) Ishvar Pranidhan (Surrender of Self).

In this sense, Diwali is a time for all of us to contemplate our being beyond the egoic domains of existence. I recently read the beautifully written book *The Hidden Life of Trees* by Peter Wohlleben, and learnt that trees live outside of principles of “survival of the fittest.” If one tree suffers, the whole community suffers. Using a complex, interrelated root system, the community sends nourishment to a member in need.

In these times, let us remember that our roots are interrelated. May the lights that illuminate the physical dimension imprint in our emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions. May we embody the diya and find ways to illuminate our own life as well as those around us.

Preeta Banerjee, PhD.
Hindu Advisor

Check in with a Chaplain

Our chaplains and advisors are here for you, no matter where you are in the world or how you are doing in this time. Click on a chaplain's name below to schedule a time for conversation, meditation, prayer, or to check in about anything else on your heart or mind. You can go to the contact page on our website to find bios and additional information, too.

Elyse Nelson Winger, University Chaplain
Preeta Banerjee, Hindu Advisor
Rev. Dan Bell, Protestant Chaplain
Rabbi Naftali Brawer, Jewish Chaplain
Walker Bristol, Humanist Chaplain
Lynn Cooper, Catholic Chaplain
Azmera Hammouri-Davis, Africana Spirituality Advisor
Abdul-Malik Merchant, Muslim Chaplain
Venerable Priya Sraman, Buddhist Chaplain

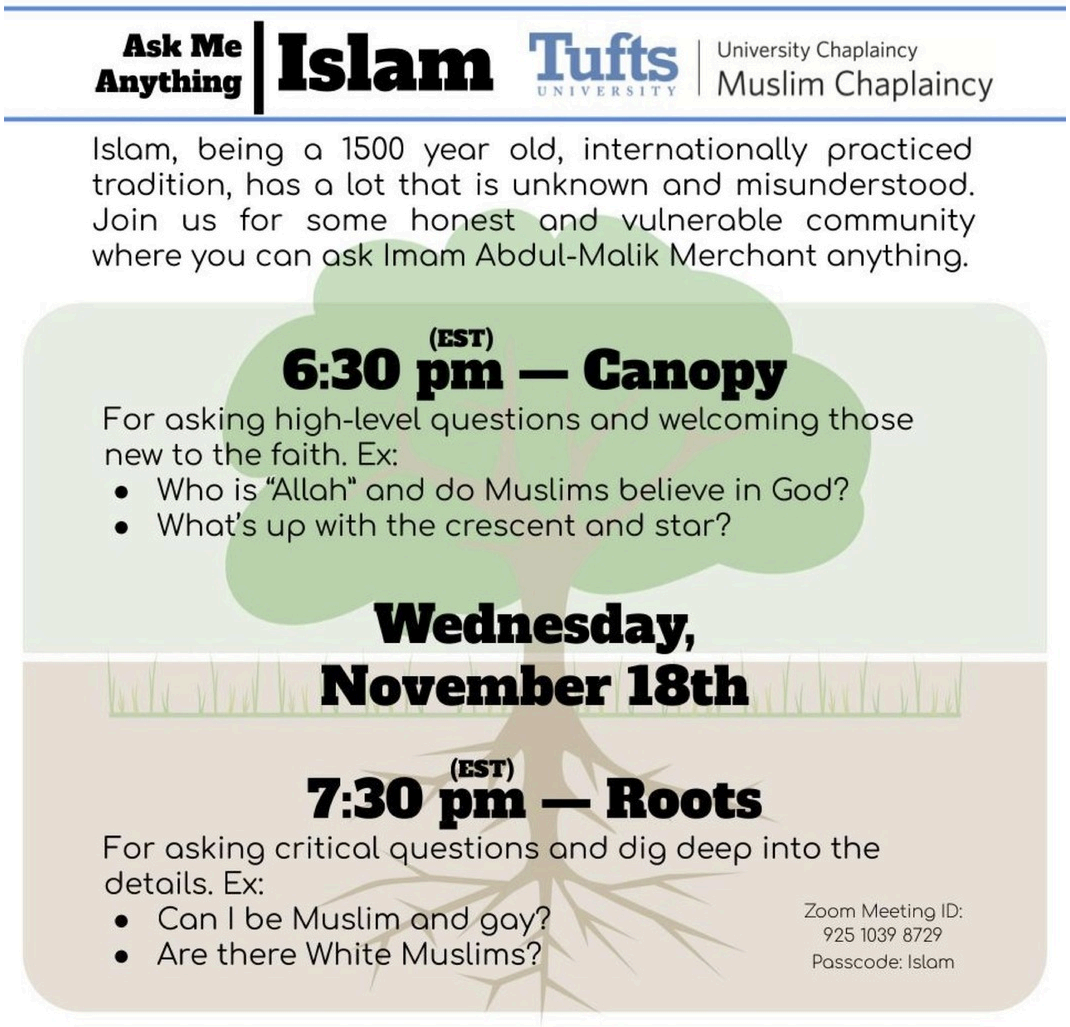
#TuftsGivingTuesday: Help Us Build a Brighter World on December 1

This year marks the 115th anniversary of the Tufts University Chaplaincy founding. Join us in celebrating the growth and vitality of our multifaith community through these years as we commemorate our past, celebrate our present, and creatively envision our future. On #TuftsGivingTuesday, we will share stories that highlight our commitment to creating an interdependent, brighter future together--across faiths, traditions, and worldviews. Our main goal is participation and gifts of any size are most welcome! Your generosity to the Friends of Goddard Fund will enhance our dynamic, multifaith programs and increase our capacity to serve all members of the Tufts community. We would be deeply grateful to see your gift on December 1.

Please visit our donation page to give today. If you have any questions, please email University Chaplaincy program coordinator Shelby Carpenter.

Religious and Philosophical Life Programs

You can find more information about our weekly gatherings and student group meetings on our website. You can also find the Zoom links for each event there. If you have an idea for how University Chaplaincy programming can better



Ask Me Anything: Islam
Wednesday, November 16, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. ET

Islam, being a 1500 year old, internationally practiced tradition, has a lot that is unknown and misunderstood. Join Muslim chaplain Imam Abdul-Malik Merchant for Ask Me Anything: Islam. This event is intentionally for anyone who has ever had a question - big or small - about the practice, theology, or lived experience of being Muslim. Who is Allah? How old is the faith? Are there white Muslims? Join us for an enriching conversation. You can find more information and the Zoom link on our website and Facebook page.

Africana Spirituality Chaplaincy

Rhythm and Rituals: Sound Healing
Tuesdays, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET
Please note: there is a gathering on Tuesday, November 24

Azmera Hammouri-Davis
Africana Spirituality Advisor

African religious traditions vary by ethnic group, in custom, practice and language. Widely speaking, a common factor that weaves such heterogeneity together is a commitment to rituals that often manifest through song and dance. Join the Africana Spirituality Community for close-textual analysis of the wisdom within poems and lyrics by Black writers, artists and storytellers. We will explore the text of different authors within African religious traditions writ-large

expressive culture. All genres are welcome including music reflected in the traditions of Hip-Hop, Funk, Jazz, Soul, Blues, Afro-Beat, Afro-futurism and any other Afro-Diasporic sounds across time and space. Please email Africana Spirituality Advisor Azmera Hammouri-Davis with any questions, or schedule a meeting with her on her Calendly.

To hear about upcoming programs for the community, you can sign up for the new Africana Spirituality elist. For Zoom links to any offering listed above, please visit our website.

Priya Sraman, Buddhist Chaplain

Buddhist Chaplaincy

Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha Meditation and Reflection
Mondays and Fridays, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ET
Please note: there are gatherings on Monday, November 23 and Friday, November 27

This semester, Sangha will meet on Mondays for a discussion and shorter meditation, and on Fridays for a full hour of meditation. Please connect with Buddhist Chaplain The Venerable Priya Sraman for more information. All are welcome.

For Zoom links to any offering listed above, please visit our website.

Catholic Chaplaincy

Catholic Virtual Mass Gathering
Sundays, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. ET
Please note: there are gatherings on Sunday, November 22 and Sunday, November 29

The Catholic community will not be offering in-person worship this year, but will be gathering virtually at 5:00 p.m. ET each Sunday to watch and celebrate Mass together. Throughout the course of the semester, they will "visit" the parishes of different members of the Catholic Community at Tufts by watching that week's previously recorded Mass. All are welcome.

Confession by appointment
For more information please connect with Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper.

Catholic Spirituality Hour
Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET
Please note, there will not be a gathering on Wednesday, November 25

Join us as we gather mid-week to experiment with spiritual practices from the Christian tradition. We will dive into scripture, gaze upon art, write letters, and expand our understanding of what is prayer. All are welcome and as always, come as you are.

For Zoom links to any offering listed above, please visit our website.

Lynn Cooper
Catholic Chaplain

Humanist Chaplaincy

Weekly Gathering
Fridays, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. ET
Please note: there will not be a gathering on Friday, November 27

Join the Humanist Community at Tufts for their weekly moment of connection and reflection by candlelight. Each week, they explore questions of philosophy, language, art, and meaning, drawn together by a shared concern for the goodness of humanity and our shared natural world. For more information, contact Humanist Chaplain Walker Bristol.

Walker Bristol, Humanist Chaplain

Jewish Chaplaincy

Naftali Brawer
Jewish Chaplain
Executive Director of Tufts Hillel

Visions of Peace Movie Screening
Thursday, November 19, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. ET

Join Visions of Peace for a virtual screening of the documentary Disturbing the Peace. The screening will be held on Zoom. Watch the trailer here and register for the screening here.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services
Friday, November 20, 5:30 p.m. ET

Join us on zoom for a short service, followed by a chance to hang out with friends and play games. Register for services here.

Shabbat Dinner and Schmooze
Friday, November 20, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. ET

Pick up a delicious Shabbat dinner and stay for a socially distanced schmooze. Relaxing vibes and cozy armchairs guaranteed. Pre-order your dinner by November 18 at 11:45 a.m. ET to secure your meal.

You can always find more information about events on the Hillel website and sign up for their newsletter here.

Muslim Chaplaincy

Islam at Sea Level: Foundational, Practical Islamic Theology
Thursdays, 8:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. ET
Please note: There is a gathering on Thursday, November 26

Exploring foundational Islamic theology through a practical lens using a short 18th century poem. Though the class will be intentionally catering to the Muslim community, attendance is completely open to everyone. For more information, contact Muslim Chaplain Abdul-Malik Merchant. On Thursday, November 26, the topic will be the spiritual practice of gratitude in Islam.

Ask Me Anything: Islam
Wednesday, November 18, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. ET

Islam, being a 1500 year old, internationally practiced tradition, has a lot that is unknown and misunderstood. Join us for some honest and

Abdul-Malik Merchant
Muslim Chaplain

anything. For the Zoom link to the offering listed above, please visit our website.

Protestant Chaplaincy

Dan Bell, Protestant Chaplain

Protestant Evening Worship (PEW)
Sundays, 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET
Please note: There will be gatherings on Sunday, November 22 and Sunday, November 29

Join the Protestant student community and Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell for worship through prayer, song, sermon, and reflection over Zoom. While we cannot be together in person right now, Christ is still present among us and the Spirit draws us together as God's people. After the service, everyone is welcome to stay and hang out. All are welcome, no matter who you are or where you find yourself in your journey of life and faith. You can also always email Dan or visit his Calendly to set up a time to meet.

The Breakfast Club: Faculty/Staff Bible Study and Prayer Group
Wednesdays, 8:00 a.m. - 8:50 a.m. ET

You are warmly invited to “The Breakfast Club,” a contemplative Bible study group for faculty and staff led by Tufts’ Protestant Chaplain, the Reverend Dan Bell. We gather every Wednesday morning over Zoom to read Scripture, check in, and pray together. All are welcome, regardless of faith background, and various Christian traditions are represented. Feel free to have your breakfast as we meet, and step away when you need to. If you have questions or would like to learn more, please email Protestant Chaplain Dan Bell to learn more.

For Zoom links to any offers listed above, please visit our website.

Partner Programs

Comedy Night with Zainab Johnson
Wednesday, November 18, 8:00 p.m. ET

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) Community Fellows invite you to a night of community and conversation but with a twist: comedy! Over the last several months we realize that diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and belonging have been at the forefront of many conversations. While these conversations are important and needed, they often come at an emotional cost. One aspect of underrepresented groups is their ability to overcome pain and find joy in the midst of it. Join the GSAS Community Fellows as they create a space to bring awareness about DEI issues, and create a space where the Tufts community can laugh and vibe. The event will welcome comedian Zainab Johnson, and you can register for the event here.

'Ecologies of Acknowledgement' Calls for Recognition of Occupied Land
September 8 - March 2021

This fall, the Tufts University Art Galleries (TUAG) is showing “Ecologies of Acknowledgment,” a collaborative project between writer and interdisciplinary artist Sarah Kanouse and researcher and writer Nicholas Brown. The exhibition, which opened on Sept. 8, 2020, and will remain until March 2021, features a video installation and a framed letterpress print that consider the process of writing an impactful and lasting land acknowledgment. For more details, read this Tufts Daily article.

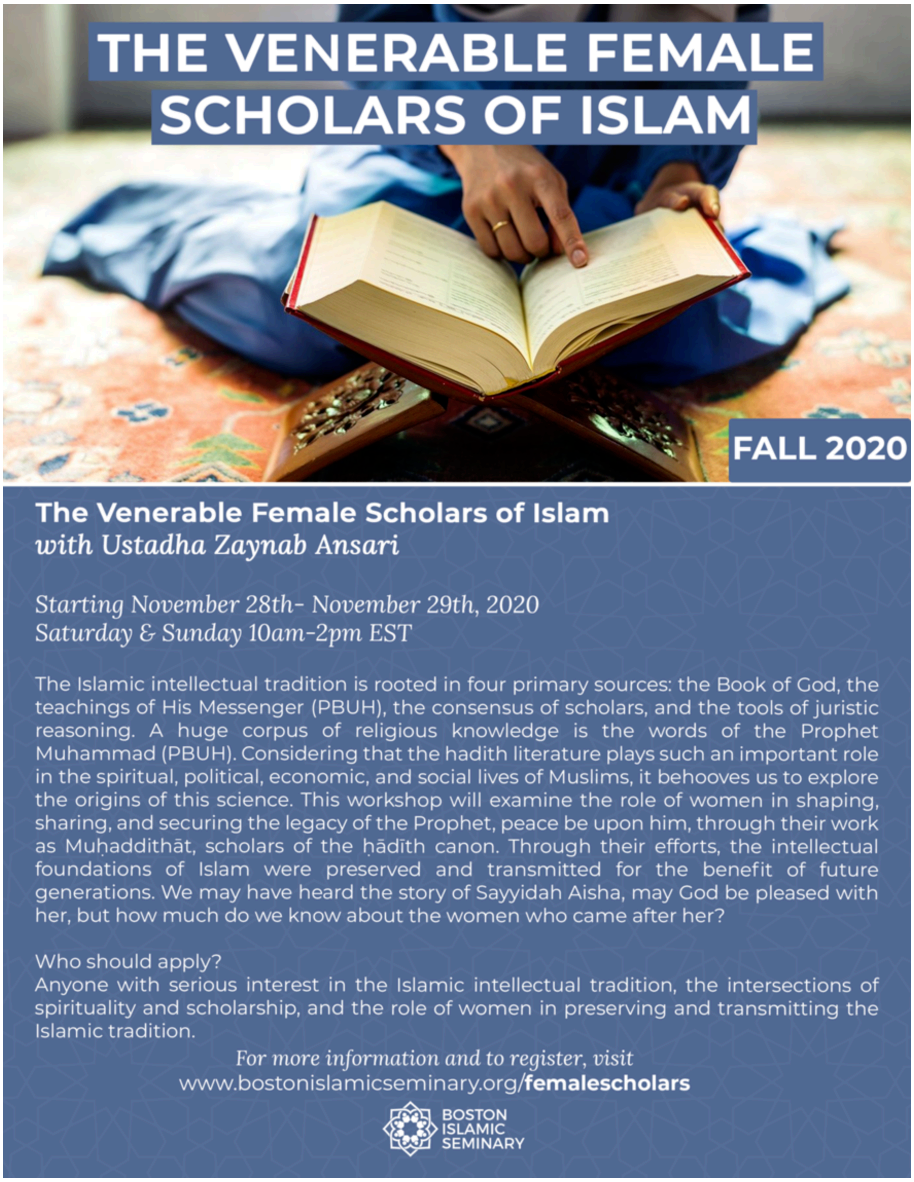
Resources, Scholarships, and Opportunies

Black Wellness in Higher Education: 3-part series
Mondays, November 16, 23, and 30, 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. ET

The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, Stanford University's Office for Religious and Spiritual Life, and Boston University School of Theology welcome a panel of university spiritual care providers and scholars to discuss Black wellness in higher-education in this 3-part series. For more information, please visit the website. Register for the event here.

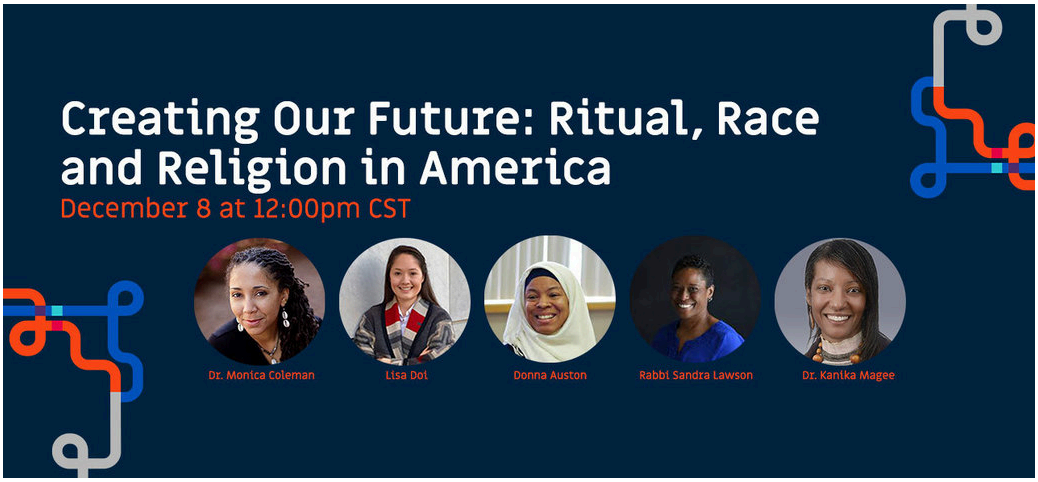
The Progress Network - Healing the Nation
Thursday, November 19, 8:00 p.m. ET

Recently the United States has felt anything but united. After an especially contentious election, what paths can we take that will help heal a divided nation? Join the founder of The Progress Network, Zachary Karabell, with On Being's Krista Tippett and Interfaith Youth Core's Eboo Patel as they discuss the role of spiritually-based solutions to moving forward together. Register for the event here.



The Venerable Female Scholars of Islam
Saturday and Sunday, November 28 - 29, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m EST

Join the Boston Islamic Seminary for a weekend workshop intensive focusing on the importance of women scholar in our faith. It is important to highlight that contributions from women scholars were integral to the preservation of religious tradition, such as the intellectual foundations of Islam, as we know it. The workshop will examine the role of women shaping, sharing, and securing the legacy of the Prophet (PBUH) through their work as Muhaddithat, scholars of the hadith cannon. Everyone with a serious interest in the Islamic intellectual scholarship, and the role of women in preserving and transmitting the Islamic tradition is encouraged to attend the workshop. Click here to RSVP for the event as well as learn more about the program's specifics.



Creating Our Future: Ritual, Race and Religion in America
Tuesday, December 8, 1:00 p.m. EST

Ritual helps us as humans mark a moment, make meaning amidst complexity and take time to express the fundamental values that anchor our lives. Join us for a rich conversation, moderated by Dr. Kanika Magee, with Dr. Monica Coleman, Donna Auston, Lisa Doi, and Rabbi Sandra Lawson to address the role of ritual in this moment. Register for the event here.

Upcoming Religious Holidays and Festivals

These events are drawn from the multifaith calendar maintained by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at Harvard Divinity School. To see more upcoming religious holidays and festivals, please follow the link to the Harvard Divinity School calendar.

Day of the Covenant
Tuesday, 11.24.2020
Tradition: Baha'i
Celebrates the anniversary of the appointment of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the son of Baha'u'llah, as the Center of the Covenant. Work is not suspended on this day. Begins at sundown.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
Tuesday, 11.24.2020
Tradition: Sikhism
This day commemorates the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji (1621-1675), the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered not only for his defense of the Sikh faith, but also of Hinduism and of religious liberty.

Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha
Thursday, 11.26.2020
Tradition: Baha'i
Commemorates 'Abdu'l-Baha's death. Begins at sundown.

Advent
Sunday, November 29 – Thursday, December 24
Tradition: Christianity-Protestant, Christianity-Roman Catholic
Period of four weeks in which Christians prepare for Christmas and meditate on the end of all time. In Western churches, the first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian liturgical year.

Bodhi Day

In the northern tradition, this is the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment, ca. 596 BCE. In the southern tradition, the Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated during Wesak. The dates and names of Buddhist celebrations vary significantly among cultures and communities.

Support the University Chaplaincy

Supporting dynamic programs at Tufts University in religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life is easy and vital to our work. To donate, please click on the button below. Thank you for your generosity.

Give Today

ABOUT US

The University Chaplaincy is a dynamic hub supporting religious, spiritual, ethical, and cultural life for all members of the Tufts community. We provide pastoral care, support religious and philosophical communities, educate about spiritual and ethical issues in society and the world, and promote multifaith engagement.

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