Tufts UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 9.21.22

A Reflection from your Jewish Chaplain

Next week Jews will celebrate the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. This festival inaugurates an extended period of ten days, culminating on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). This extended period is known as the Ten Days of Teshuvah, which in Hebrew means Return.

What does "return" in this context mean? On the most basic level it means a return to God. On a deeper level, it speaks of a return to oneself.

Many of us live fragmented lives. Rushing about, our focus tends to be on output with little time left for meaningful input such as personal learning and development, cultivating relationships and just thinking and reflecting. As a result, we can lose touch with who we really are, what we are truly capable of and what matters most in life. This tragic fragmentation of self can lead to behavior that conflicts with one's deepest principles. Return then is a process of returning to one's deepest self and rediscovering the moral bedrock of one's value system.

But how does one begin to put together a fragmented life? How does one recover the lost inner self? The answer is by contemplating higher-order questions. The types of questions we routinely contemplate in the course of our busy lives are what can be termed as lower-order questions. These are questions that begin with ‘what’ and ‘how’ and that have relatively clearcut, straightforward answers.

Higher-order questions on the other hand begin with why. Why am I here? Why do I have the gifts and talents that I do? While the answers to such higher-order questions can be deeply subjective, Judaism at least provides a framework for considering them by asserting that every single life is imbued with unique purpose. The following passage from the Talmud illustrates this, saying "A human being creates many coins from the same die and they are all identical; the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One blessed is He, coins all people from Adam's die and not one looks like another. This is why every person must say 'The world was created just for me'."

The Talmud is not encouraging narcissism. On the contrary, identifying that which is unique in us leads us to think less about what we need and more about what we are needed for. The text calls on each individual to recognize their uniqueness and as a result to make a distinctive contribution in life. It is not a lesson about taking; it is a lesson about contributing.

Returning to one's true self through higher-order questioning is what the process of Teshuvah-Return is all about, and builds the world well. One needn't be Jewish to appreciate its importance and recognize its potential positive impact on our lives and society.

Wishing you Shana Tova (a sweet new year), and a good returning,

Rabbi Naftali Brawer
Jewish Chaplain and Neubauer Executive Director, Tufts Hillel

For information about services and events hosted for the High Holidays, please see the Hillel website.

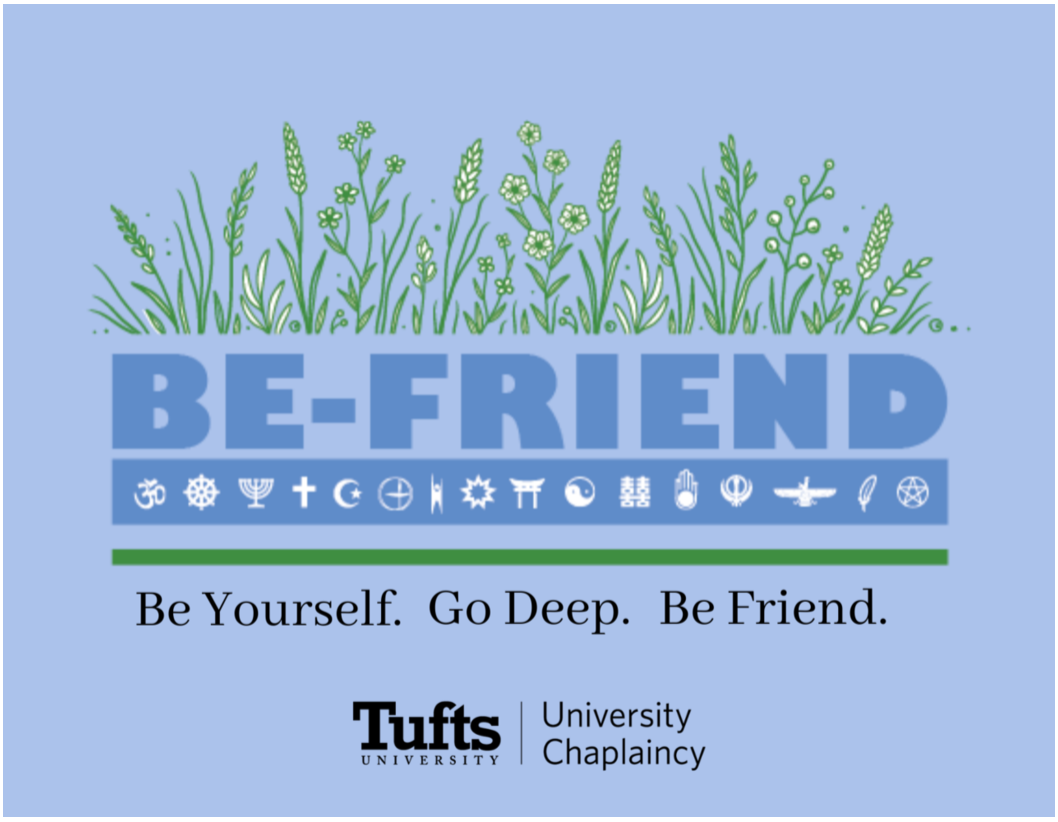
Welcome to our Graduate Student Intern!

Francesca Rubinson, A20
Graduate Student Intern

Francesca Rubinson, A20 is a second-year student at Harvard Divinity School, pursuing a Master of Divinity degree with a focus in Jewish Studies. This year, she will be our Graduate Student Intern at the University Chaplaincy.

Francesca is a proud Jumbo and feels honored to return to campus. In the academic world, she brings feminist and queer lenses to the study of Jewish history and identity. As a chaplain, she is passionate about providing spiritual care to all, fostering interfaith connections, and building inclusive communities and ritual spaces. After graduating from Tufts, Francesca served as member of the Avodah Jewish Service Corps, working with DACA recipients and providing legal services to the immigrant community in Washington, D.C. Francesca has also worked as an interfaith chaplain at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Francesca is trained as a mikveh guide and volunteers at Mayyim Hayyim, the community mikveh (Jewish ritual bath) in Newton, MA. In her spare time, Francesca loves to ride her bike, play pick-up basketball, engage in creative writing, watch sketch comedy, and host potlucks for her friends.

Upcoming Signature Programs



Be-Friend - last week to sign up!
Sign up by Friday, September 23

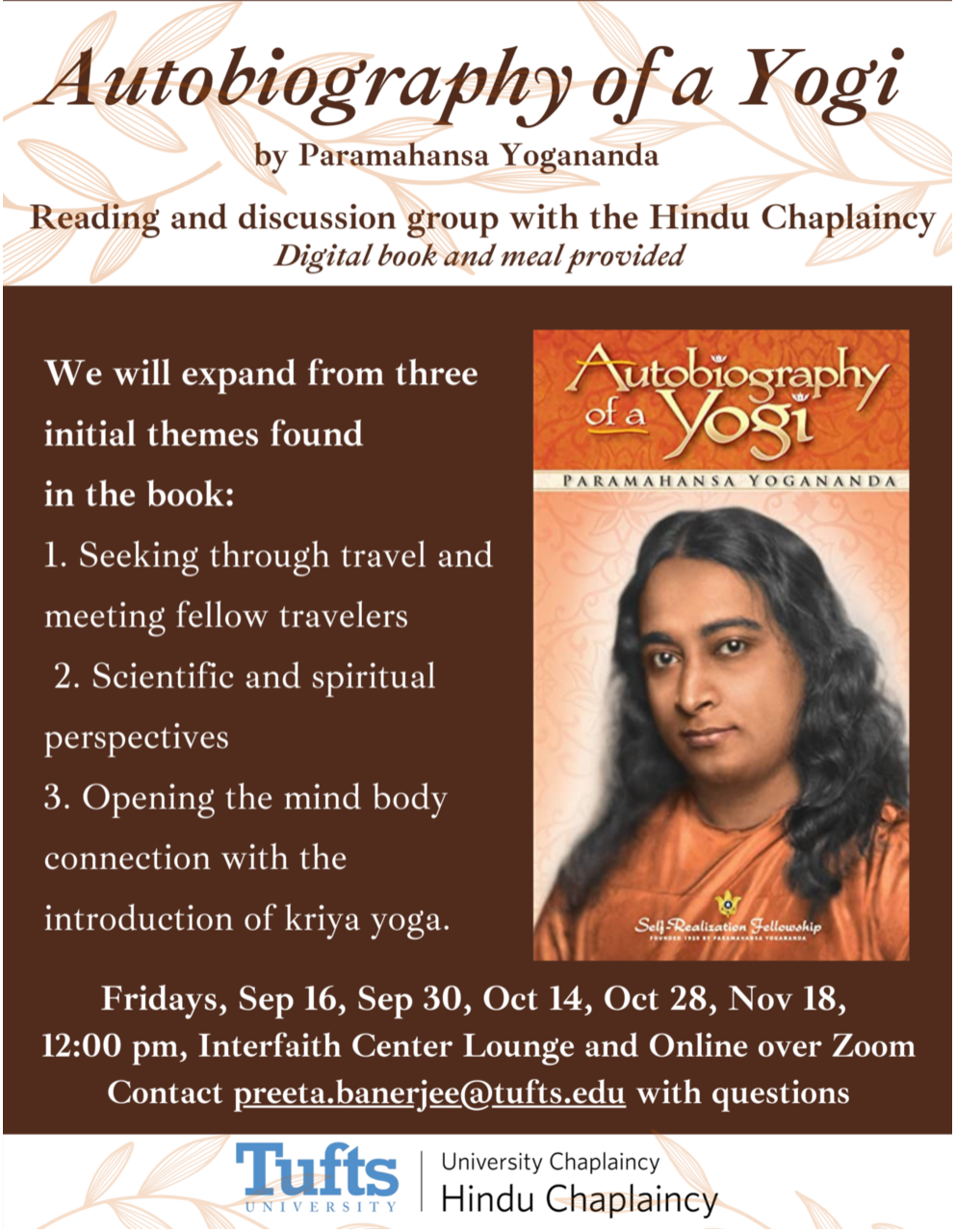
This semester-long interfaith friendship project is designed for participants to go deep and to talk about the things that matter like our values, our sense of purpose, and our questions about life. You will hone the skills of active listening while experimenting with shared spiritual practices from different religious and philosophical traditions. Our multifaith chaplains have contributed to the program, offering a diverse array of spiritual practices including nature walks, meditation exercises, listening to music, and deep reading—of poetry, art, the world, our lives and one another. Participating students, graduate students, staff, faculty and alumni will be paired and will commit to spending an hour together each week. Students will be paired with other students, and the same for staff/faculty and alumni. The program will begin the first week of October, and all are welcome!

You can learn more about the program here, and you can sign up here by September 23. Contact Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper if you have any questions.

Religious and Philosophical Programs

Muslim Grad Student Social Gathering
Thursday, September 22, 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p,m., Interfaith Center

The Tufts Muslim Chaplaincy invites you to the Fall 2022 Muslim Graduate Student Social Gathering. Join the Muslim Chaplain and your fellow Muslim Tufts Graduate Students for an afternoon of casual social time and discussion over tea and snacks



***Autobiography of a Yogi* Reading Group**
Next session Friday, September 30, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m., Interfaith Center

Join for a session with the Hindu Chaplaincy to discuss *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. Each session will explore the contemporary life lessons from this sacred story of a spiritual seeker. The sessions will be thought-provoking and interactive, and you can also attend virtually. Please email Hindu Chaplain Preeta Banerjee to sign up for a session and receive the digital book.

Partner Programs

Latinx Heritage Month
Celebrated September 15 - October 15

Latinx Heritage Month is a time to appreciate and celebrate the colorful cultures, rich histories, and diversity of the Latinx community in the United States. It recognizes and honors the enduring contributions and importance of Latinx Americans to the U.S. and celebrates the many heritages and cultures of Americans from or with ancestors from Central and South America and the Caribbean. Lastly, it is made to pay tribute to the generations of Latinx Americans who have positively affected our historical, political, economic, and/or social context in the U.S. Follow the Latinx Center on Instagram or their newsletter to learn more about the celebrations and gatherings happening at Tufts.

Tisch College Fall 2022 Speaker Series
See link for times and locations

This semester, Tisch College is thrilled to host a diverse group of speakers who are grappling with their theme for the semester: the fight for democracy. Join in-person for conversations with civic leaders like NAACP Legal Defense Fund's Sherrilyn Ifill, local co-director of the Cambridge Health Alliance Center for Health Equity, Education, and Advocacy Dr. Gaurab Basu, and many more, to explore topics ranging from misinformation to abortion in America to paid family leave to how libraries can save democracy. Check out the complete list of events and register for all of these opportunities and more on the Tisch College website.

Resources, Scholarships, and Opportunities

Become a FIRST Center Intern
Application due Friday, September 23

The FIRST Center is now looking for a social media intern, a programming intern, and a FIRST Seminar TA. The FIRST Resource Center was founded to create a community of support and to develop a network of resources for Tufts University's first generation, low-income, and undocumented populations. FIRST welcomes any student who self-identifies with the first generation college student experience. By strengthening the bonds between our community members and bridging the gap between Tufts' resources and first generation students. FIRST aims to ensure that first gens are empowered in, and prepared to reach their full social, professional, and academic potentials. You can find more information and apply here.

Climate Preparedness Week
September 24 - September 30

Since 2018, CREW has hosted Climate Preparedness Week, marking a week of learning, service, and actions to better prepare our communities for extreme weather events and the effects of climate change. With a diverse variety of community-oriented groups coming together to host events and raise awareness of extreme weather threats, they provide the resources and space to think about how climate change impacts everyone, and how it disadvantages some communities more than others. This year, from September 24th-30th, they are highlighting these disparities through the theme of Climate Prep Week 2022. You can find more details on Climate Preparedness Week events here.

Tufts University Green Fund
Application are due Saturday, October 1

The Tufts Green Fund is an opportunity for students, faculty and staff from across Tufts to receive funding and support for sustainability-related projects at the university. They are soliciting proposals of up to $40,000 for projects such as solar installations, art shows, social justice lectures, and so much more. The initial application consisting of five short answer questions is due on Saturday, October 1.

The Office of Sustainability is hosting info sessions and drop-in hours to explain the application process and answer questions. The application and more information about this opportunity can be found here. You can directly contact the Green Fund here.

Upcoming Religious Celebrations and Observances

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.

Mabon
Thu., Sep. 22, 2022
Tradition: Wicca/Paganism
Autumnal equinox and the second harvest festival, celebrating the equivalence of light and dark, the arrival of Autumn, and thanksgiving for the Earth's bounty. (Begins at sundown)

Rosh Hashanah
Sun., Sep. 25 – Tue., Sep. 27, 2022
Tradition: Judaism
The Jewish New Year and the anniversary of the creation of the world, Rosh Hashanah is the first of the Ten Days of

Awe (also known as the Ten Days of Repentance) that conclude on Yom Kippur. It marks the beginning of the holiest time of the year for Jews.

Navaratri
Mon., Sep. 26 – Tue., Oct. 4, 2022
Tradition: Hinduism
A nine-night (nav-rat) celebration of nine auspicious forms of Shakti/Devi (feminine divine power/the Goddess).

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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