



# Tufts

# UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

E-NEWS 3.13.24



*Hamantaschen, triangle shaped cookies, traditionally eaten on Purim and given away as treats*

## A Reflection from your Jewish Chaplain

Dear Tufts community,

This month, Jews celebrate the festival of Purim.

The story behind this festival is recorded in the biblical book of Esther. Set in 5th century BC Persia, it is a story of reversal of fortune. It begins with a dire threat of annihilation of the Jews of the Persian empire and through the courage of its eponymous heroine Esther, the Jews are rescued. Purim is a joyous festival with a carnivalesque atmosphere, largely due to its redemptive message but also as it falls just at the edge of spring with its promise of new beginnings.

One of the important rituals of the day is the public reading of the book of Esther from a parchment scroll called a Megillah. It's a long story, running to ten chapters, and it takes an average forty-five minutes to complete the reading. While the designated reader intones the text with a special cantillation tune, the congregation listens. Their listening, however, is anything but passive as one does not fulfill this ritual obligation unless they hear every single word! Hearing the Megillah is an exercise in deep, active listening and calls for intense concentration.

I wonder if this particular ritual might have a broader universal message -- the importance of context.

Much has been written about the way social media algorithms polarize society by creating narrow echo chambers that only reinforce one's point of view. I think there is another related aspect of social media that is equally concerning and

that is its fragmentation of information.

Lately, at the end of a long day, when I'm too tired to think or read, I've taken to scrolling through YouTube shorts (something I'm not proud of). As I flick through ten second clips of news items, debates, political speeches, interviews, and films, I realize that these juicy tidbits are not just fleetingly short (which makes them so compelling to scroll through) but that they are utterly divorced from their fuller contexts and as such, can be profoundly misleading. Complexity, texture, and context are absent and what one is left with is a fragmented sliver, seductive in its simplicity, designed to trigger emotion rather than deepen understanding.

There are many issues polarizing our society, a polarization exacerbated by an increasing lack of context and a propensity for emotive soundbites. This decontextualization leads us to believe that things are often simpler than they are and that those who disagree with our political/ideological points of view are either mad or bad.

The ritual of Megillah reading is instructive here. There are no shortcuts to acquiring a serious perspective. It requires patience, open-mindedness, and cognitive work. If we want to understand a point of view and get the whole story, let's all listen as patiently and as deeply as we can.

Naftali Brawer

Jewish Chaplain and Neubauer Executive Director of Tufts Hillel

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## Religious and Philosophical Programs

**Our gatherings are open to all members of the Tufts community! Please find more information and more regular weekly programming and events [here on our website](#). If you have any questions, or would like to connect about convening a new gathering, please [reach out to the University Chaplaincy](#).**

# DHARMA COOKING AND DIALOGUE

Wednesday,  
March 13th  
Interfaith  
Center Kitchen



## **Dharma Cooking and Dialogue with the Sangha**

Wednesday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m. to 8:45 p.m., at the Interfaith Center (not Goddard Chapel)

This week, we will be making homemade Kimbap (vegetarian sushi & onigiri) and learning about Jeong Kwan, a Korean Zen Buddhist, and her philosophy of cooking in her feature on Netflix's Chef's Table. Email Buddhist Chaplain [Ji Hyang Padma](#) with any questions.

# INTRO TO BHA KTI Yoga



Wisdom/Food/Music/Fun

Thursday, March 14th from 8-9 pm

Goddard Chapel

Hosted by the Hindu Chaplaincy

## **Bhakti Yoga: An Introduction**

Thursday, March 14, 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Goddard Chapel

Why come to this Bhakti Yoga event? Picture this: calming your mind amid deadlines and stresses, not with just any methods, but with a blend of meditation and ancient yoga techniques – because your mind deserves a break! Meditation made easy, ancient wisdom made fun – and best of all, food! Sponsored by the Hindu Chaplaincy. For more information, please contact Hindu Chaplain [Preeti Banerjee](#). All are welcome.

# Ramadan Iftars

March/April 2024

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13

**Note: All iftars will be held at the Tufts Interfaith Center (IFC) located at 58 Winthrop St. with the exception of Interfaith Iftar on 4/12 which will be held in Breed Hall (51 Winthrop Street - across from IFC). On all nights, prayer space will be available at IFC for *Maghrib*.**

## Community Iftars on Campus

Join the Muslim community for our open iftars! See image above for exact dates and locations (marked in red on the calendar). Most iftars will be held at the Interfaith Center at 58 Winthrop Street. Prayer space for maghrib and Isha/Tarawih will be available at each iftar. We will not be distributing single-use water bottles so if possible please bring your own reusable water bottle to iftar. This will help us eliminate waste during Ramadan. Find more information about Ramadan at Tufts below.

# Spring Break!

## Staying on campus...?

*Please see our Shabbat info and building hours.*

### **Staying on Campus for Shabbat? Contact Hillel**

Spring break starts on Friday! Are you staying on campus for Shabbat? If you're staying on campus and would like to have or host a subsidized Shabbat meal, please email [Katie Hamelburg](#) for details. Please note that we close at 3:00pm on Friday, March 15, so there will be no services or dinner in the Hillel building. We look forward to seeing you again on Friday, March 29 for Faculty Shabbat!

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## **Partner Programs**



**Solomont Speaker Series: Nora McInerney**

Wednesday, March 13, 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

How are you, really? Award-winning podcast host and bestselling author, Nora McInerney, wants to know the truth. Drawing on her personal experiences with grief — Nora lost her husband, second pregnancy and father within weeks of each other — and her years of interviewing people struggling with trauma and change, Nora is known for taking on topics often avoided — death, loss, illness, mental health, trauma and change — with disarming humor and candor. Join Tisch College for a refreshingly honest and surprisingly funny talk with Nora called “How Are You? (No, Really.)” Register below!

Register for How Are You? (No really)

## 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](#).

### **Nineteen Day Fast**

Thu., Feb. 29 – Tue., Mar. 19, 2024

Tradition: Baha'i

A designated 19-day period of fasting each year immediately before the Bahá'í New Year. The fasting is seen as a period of spiritual preparation and regeneration for the new year ahead.

### **Ramadan**

Mon., Mar. 11 – Wed., Apr. 10, 2024

Tradition: Islam

The Holy Month of Ramadan is the month of fasting during which Muslims who are physically able do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Muhammad. The evening meal is celebrated with family.

### **Ghambar Hamaspahmaedem**

Sat., Mar. 16 – Wed., Mar. 20, 2024

Tradition: Zoroastrianism

Celebrates the creation of human beings and honors the souls of the deceased.

### **Great Lent**

Mon., Mar. 18 – Sat., May 4, 2024

Tradition: Christianity-Orthodox

In Orthodox churches, the first day of Lent marks the beginning of the Great Fast, the final six weeks of a 10-week period leading up to Holy Week and Easter (Pascha). In the churches that follow the Gregorian calendar, Lent is a six-week observance (40 days excluding Sundays) beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating in Holy Week. It is a time of repentance and sacrifice in preparation for Easter.

### **Naw Ruz**

Tue., Mar. 19, 2024

Tradition: Baha'i

The seventh greatest festival, "New Day" is the first day of the Zoroastrian/Persian and Baha'i New Year. It falls on the spring equinox and symbolizes the renewal of the world after the winter. For Zoroastrians, Naw Ruz also celebrates the creation of fire that is symbolic of Asha, or righteousness. It is also the day on which Zarathustra received his revelation.

### **Ostara**

Tue., Mar. 19, 2024

Tradition: Wicca/Paganism

Vernal Equinox, celebrating the equivalence of light and dark and the arrival of Spring.

## Naw Ruz

Thu., Mar. 21, 2024

Tradition: Zoroastrianism

The seventh greatest festival, "New Day" is the first day of the Zoroastrian/Persian and Baha'i New Year. It falls on the spring equinox and symbolizes the renewal of the world after the winter. For Zoroastrians, Naw Ruz also celebrates the creation of fire that is symbolic of Asha, or righteousness. It is also the day on which Zarathustra received his revelation.

## Purim (Feast of Lots)

Sat., Mar. 23, 2024

Tradition: Judaism

Celebrates the rescue of the Jews of ancient Persia from a plot to destroy them as related in the Book of Esther, which is read at this time. Purim is a joyous holiday, celebrated by wearing of costumes, giving gifts to friends, giving to the poor, and socializing. Preceded by the Fast of Esther, Purim is a day of feasting. Begins at sundown.

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## 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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