



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

December ushers in a season of festivities, offering opportunities for reflection and rejoicing.

Earlier this week, those in our community who observe Chanukah (or Hannukah) began lighting menorahs, marking the miracle that occurred more than 2,000 years ago, when oil lit to mark the Jewish people's rededication of their destroyed temple—only sufficient for one night—miraculously burned for eight. It also celebrates the victory of the much smaller Maccabean army, which rose against a force greater than their own to persevere, earning the right to retain their traditions and way of life. Chanukah is Hebrew for “dedication” and the victorious Maccabees cleaned their temple and lit the oil available to commemorate their beliefs and customs.

Our Own Dedication and Rededication

As we face news of yet another variant of COVID-19, there are lessons from the Maccabees that could serve us well. The emergence of Omicron should remind us of our need for renewed commitment, in the form of patience, perseverance, and vigilance to prevent or limit the spread of whatever variants come our way. We can accomplish this through vaccination, booster shots, mask wearing, safe social distancing, and the patience of another Biblical character, Job.

A Trifecta of Inspirational Sources

Later this month, there are several more observations offering inspiration for reflecting on the past year, making improvements for the new year, and exulting life's blessings: the Hindu holiday, Pancha Ganapati (December 21 through 25); Christmas (December 25); and the African American cultural celebration of life, Kwanzaa (December 26 through January 1).

Pancha Ganapati is a Hindu festival celebrated over five days in honor of Lord Ganesha, Patron of Arts and Guardian of Culture. Many observers refer to this Family Festival of Giving as the Christmas of Hindus. It shares many similar traditions with both Christmas and Kwanzaa. Each holiday focuses on valuing relationships and thinking of others, striving for harmony and being one's best self, and offering charity or giving gifts. They remind us that we are at our best when we seek unity, we think beyond ourselves, and we maintain our faith in spite of difficulties.

So, let's harness the good energy provided by these observances and devote ourselves to making improvements where we can, and remember that kindness, dignity, and respect can be offered to anyone throughout the year.

Wishing you happy celebrations and good health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

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