

**From:** James Page [mailto:vpdiversity@jhmi.edu]

**Sent:** Monday, August 28, 2017 2:40 PM

**To:** 'recipients@lists.johnshopkins.edu'

**Subject:** Observing Rosh Hashanah, Navratri, Al-Hijra/Muharram, Mabon, Taoist Festival, Yom Kippur and Ashura

*To the Johns Hopkins Medicine community*

Dear Colleagues,

Understanding each other's differences makes us stronger. We are continuing our education about the upcoming cultural and religious observances of our patients, faculty members, staff members and students to help in our efforts to foster a climate of respect and a spirit of inclusion.

Please take the time to become familiar with the following days of observation in September and how they may affect interactions with colleagues, students, and patients and their family members. The information is from the Religious and Cultural Observances Toolkit, provided by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Department of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy. Some observances have approximate dates as they depend on lunar citings or other variables.



Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 20-22)—Literally translated as “head of the year,” Rosh Hashanah is the religious new year for Jewish people around the world. It is the beginning of the Ten Days of Repentance or High Holy Days in Judaism.



Navrati (Sept. 20-30)—Navratri is a multiday Hindu festival that honors Shakti (energy or power), also known as the Divine Mother, and celebrates the victory of good over evil.



Al-Hijra/Muharram (Sept. 21-Oct. 19)—Al-Hijra is the new year in Islam. It is celebrated on the first day of Muharram, the month when Muhammad immigrated from Mecca to Medina.



Mabon (Sept. 22)— Mabon or Autumn Equinox is the midharvest festival that honors the changing of the seasons and celebrates the second harvest. For many pagan and Wiccan traditions, it's a time to give thanks and to share abundances with the less fortunate.



Taoist Festival Honoring Shen of Winds, West, and Autumn (Sept. 23)—The Taoist Festival Honoring Shen of Winds, West, and Autumn gives thanks for the summer harvest and honors the balance and unity of Yin (Eternal Feminine) and Yang (Eternal Masculine).



Yom Kippur (Sept. 29-30)—Yom Kippur is the most solemn and holy observance of the Jewish calendar. It means “day of atonement,” and it is the day on which Jewish people ask forgiveness for their sins.



Ashura (Sunset Sept. 30-sunset Oct. 1)—Ashura commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, and the early differentiation between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Please keep in mind that these summaries are intended to provide a general overview, and the information may not apply to everyone in any given culture or faith. You can also access information on other religious and cultural observations this year at [hopkinsmedicine.org/diversity/observances.html](http://hopkinsmedicine.org/diversity/observances.html).

Sincerely,

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