

Growing up in a household that holds closely to Jewish tradition, light, especially that of a candle, has always been for me the physical centerpiece of much of my life's spiritual warmth. Every Friday night I am accustomed to sitting around a table with either family or friends with a pair of candles burning in the center to celebrate Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath. The smell of matches and the sound of my mother's voice singing the traditional blessing comforts me spiritually and centers my week on the light flickering before us.

To me, light represents the familial and friendly bonds created, developed, and maintained over a home cooked meal. Just as the light from the Shabbat candles only exists in the space between the people gathered around the table, so too do the bonds of warmth, family, and friendship exist in the connections between those gathered. Gathering with others around light adds love to my experience as a human being. I strive to bring that warmth, that light, that fire to others so that light can exist between everyone.

My Jewish tradition tells me to be an example for others, an *Or Lagoyim*, a *Light Among Nations*. To me, Tufts creates unlimited opportunity for all of us to be the light upon the hill, to extend our light to all others. As unique individuals, we all have a special hew of light to share. Like the Shabbat candles, we can all create the love that bonds people in different ways. We are lucky to go to a school with not only an acute awareness of the social injustice in our society, but with the drive and mission to go out and do something about it. From the Tufts Labor Coalition's sensitivity to the voices of real people affected to the Engineers without Borders' awareness of the needs of the world community. From the love felt between the amazing individuals on the CAFE pre-orientation to Tufts Climate Action listening to the call of science with a sensitivity to the communities affected most by our changing climate.

I try to nurture this light in my work on Visions of Peace. The amazing people I work with and I try to listen to the voices of Palestinians and Israelis affected by their political conflict to create a sensitivity to the needs of the human beings on the ground. By allowing for every individual to shed their own light into the world, to make the space for every voice, experience and value, the world can gain infinitely more light.

The light that exists between all of us is humbling to me. When all of you light your candles, the overwhelming number of small lights creates one large light on the hill. You can see each other, the person sitting next to you or near you through a reflection of light. When I see others as reflections of light, of the love and warmth that can exist between all of us, I am excited. I am so excited to watch all of you light your candles as a welcome into the Tufts community. I hope that every individual can bring the light that we create tonight into their lives at Tufts and beyond.

Eitan Bloostein