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1500 Gather in Times Square to Sing, Dance and Show Their Support for Israel

By Uri Shalmon

Shlomo Anapolle was there. Were you? There, of course, refers to the annual Times Square Kumsitz coordinated by the Yeshiva University Israel Club. This year's Kumsitz (song rally), on Sunday the first of November, might have been one of the biggest events in YU history. On Facebook alone, more than eleven hundred people said they would be attending the event and it was estimated that fifteen hundred people came over the duration of the Kumsitz. Naturally, this count doesn't include the dozens of people who joined while they were walking around Times Square.

"The Kumsitz this year was much larger than it had been in the past but we were still able to maintain its traditional fee thanks to Aryeh Tiefenbrunn and the Y-Studs," explained Michael Osborne, former president of the YU Israel Club. "We made a huge Kiddush Hashem and were able to make a statement to the world that we support our state in our indigenous homeland no matter where we may be in the world." Over the course of the next two hours, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, the speakers blasted and students sang their hearts out: for their land and for their brothers.

An anonymous source actually spotted Palestinian flags in the vicinity about an hour before the event started. However, neither protests nor demonstrations were seen or reported while the group sang and danced in front of the Red Steps.

Daniel Lazarev, a member of the YU Israel Club, explained why he feels students gather

each year for this awe-inspiring event: "Ever since I joined YU's Israel Club, I saw the Kumsitz as an opportunity to defend Israel through nonpolitical means because – and I think most people on our board would agree with this – the animosity Israel faces is not rooted in politics



but is instead only disguised as such." He continued "We therefore used song and prayer, the Jew's strongest weapons to display on one of the world's biggest stages some of the key values upon which our nation is founded: the sanctification and love of life, an undying pursuit of peace, and our hope for national self-determination in our ancestral homeland."

SEE ISRAEL, CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Calm Town Hall Meeting Signals Optimism about YU's Future

By David Rubinstein

President Richard Joel held a town hall meeting in the Gottesman Library's Heights Lounge for students on the Wilf Campus on Wednesday, October 24, during club hour. Studded with jokes and delivered in good humor, the tone of the president's address and students' questions was markedly calmer than the tone of last spring's town hall meeting. That event occurred before the closing of the Einstein deal and at the height of uncertainty for YU's financial future and how budget cuts would affect the university experience.

Before commencing with his remarks, President Joel called upon Noam Safier, president of the Yeshiva Student Union, to lead the assembled in the recitation of Psalm 121, on behalf of the terror victims in Israel and those suffering from the threat of terrorism.

Stepping back on to the podium, President Joel explained the Jewish tradition "to reach out to God in times of trouble—on behalf of others, and on our own behalf for a sense of doing something to help." He also said that while it is important to recite a chapter of Psalms, he encourages students to make themselves heard by getting involved with YUPAC and continuing communication with their counterparts in Israel. "In a world that resorts to knives we should not abandon the handshake," he said.

Turning to happenings within Yeshiva University, President Joel first spoke about Karen Bacon, the new Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Scienc-

es: "She is the first step in unifying the two campuses, and she is extraordinary," he said. "She also has extraordinary help," President Joel noted, commending Joanne Jacobson for her work as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Both positions were created this year as part of the effort to synergize the Beren and Wilf Campuses undergraduate faculty. "Dean Bacon is the second Bacon to be a dean here, and we're Yeshiva University," President Joel quipped, referring to a previous Dean Bacon who had worked at Yeshiva University.

Next, President Joel invited people's suggestions on how to strategically cut spending by announcing an email address for that purpose, strategicplanning@yu.edu. "We have a plan to cut spending, but how we do this requires continued strategic planning," the president announced. "Under [Senior Vice President] Josh Joseph's leadership, we have made a committee to make sure we keep moving on."

Facilities improvements were the next topic of discussion. President Joel expressed his hopes that the Gottesman Library's renovations be completed "within the next few weeks, certainly by the beginning of December." He also announced that the Morgenstern basement, "which we can hardly call a shul," will be getting a "modest facelift," which will include cleaning and new carpeting, chairs, tables, and bookcases, "to make it appropriate for learning and davening." The President reflected that "it's a big deal that even as we go through challenging times we always look to the future."

SEE TOWN HALL,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

From Near and Far, International Students Flock to YU

By Benjamin Koslowe

There are currently around 140 international undergraduates at Yeshiva University, 57 of whom are non-native English-speakers. According to Ms. Geri Mansdorf, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, this is "a number consistent with the enrollment we have seen over the last few years." International students have travelled to America to study at YU for many years. Over the past ten years alone, over 500 international students from over 30 countries have attended the undergraduate programs. According to trend charts provided by Rabbi David Pahmer and Ms. Jennifer Golden, the International Student and Scholar Advisor, just under a majority of the international student population consistently hails from Canada. The next-biggest senders are Israel and France at 8% each, and Panama and Morocco at 5% each. Other countries of origin include Chile, El Salvador, Spain, Russia, Belgium, Colombia, Switzerland, and Venezuela, all of which currently have undergraduate students enrolled in YU.

"YU is blessed with dedicated and committed lay leaders," reported Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Community Life. "In multiple conversations with one of them we discussed a unique opportunity for admissions to expand its reach through focusing on certain Jewish communities outside of North America. Thanks to a generous grant from this lay leader, Yeshiva will now be able to more actively recruit in previously untapped international markets." Ms. Mansdorf added that

"the grant developed by Rabbi Brander includes a new recruiting initiative for the undergraduate colleges focused on South America, England, and Australia based on the interest of international Jewish communities. The grant gives us the resources to meet prospective students and their families at their schools and synagogues and discuss the opportunities that come with the education and experience at YU."

"This latest recruitment effort will hopefully yield an increase in our international population," noted Ms. Norma Silbermintz, the Coordinator of Academic Affairs for International Students.

Ms. Silbermintz, who has been working with international students on Wilf Campus for over 30 years as the full-time academic advisor, as well as the ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor for the past eight years, added that the current effort "may warrant the investment of additional funds to aid in these students' academic, social, and religious acculturation."

Indeed, part of the recent recruitment efforts involves the addition of Rabbi Ari Solomont to the team. Rabbi Solomont, the new Associate Director of International Admissions and Recruitment, began his current role just this past September. Based in Israel but traveling worldwide, Solomont explained that "my role is to develop the international recruitment process in communities outside

"I FELT A COMPLETE CULTURE SHOCK AND DID NOT FEEL WELL HERE IN THE UNITED STATES. AFTER A COUPLE OF WEEKS THIS WENT AWAY AND I FOUND MY PLACE IN YU AND FEEL LIKE I FOUND THE PERFECT FIT FOR ME."

-ALEX WASCHER

SEE INTERNATIONAL, CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The EDITORIAL

The Rabbinic Relationship

By David Rubinstein

There is a crisis of rabbinic leadership in our community. Saying so is no longer sensationalism. We can probably all think of at least one man who holds the title of rabbi, but whose guidance, whether halachic or spiritual, lacks the expertise we would expect from someone who has been ordained. Even among rabbis whose scholarship is up to standard, some lack the skills and experience to share their insight with constituents. Most tragically, we recall too well the images of rabbis convicted of criminal activity, abusers of their title who embezzled funds or preyed on congregants' most sensitive vulnerabilities.

On the other side, an increasing number of synagogue-goers are becoming synagogue-defectors. Breakaway prayer groups whose sole distinction is the absence of a rabbi are more common than ever. Fewer halachic inquiries are brought before rabbis for decision, but not because fewer halachic questions arise.

The relationship between the rabbinate and the laity is too often mangled by disconnect, disillusionment, and distrust.

We students of Yeshiva University may soon, if we do not already, find ourselves on one side of the rift between pew and dias. We can and must heal this injured system with one small step: starting a conversation.

Our rabbinate and congregants need a conversation that takes place on two fundamental premises: one, that both parties share the common aspirations of serving God and living meaningful Orthodox Jewish lifestyles; two, that without each other, both parties are doomed to fall catastrophically short of their goals.

As we prepare to assume our individual roles within our communities, we should recognize our distinct responsibilities.

The overwhelming majority of us, who will become lay members of our community, must communicate with our rabbis. We must guide their attention towards the questions in life that are important to us which present Halachic or philosophical uncertainty. We must be expressive not out of contempt or criticism, but out of sincere desire for partnership and counsel. We have to vocalize our

expectations and hopes—not through rants on Facebook posts or via satirical songs on YouTube—but rather face-to-face and in person. We must also recognize that rabbis usually have greater Halachic expertise than we do and that they are entitled to their Halachic opinion, if it is valid and thought out, even if we would have hoped for a different decision.

The few of us who will become professional clergymen have to improve our communication, too. We must be open to hearing what our constituents tell us. If we are surprised by how important a certain issue is to our laity, we should not dismiss it as coming from ignorance. Rather, we must consider the topic until we understand and address the needs of our constituents. We will undoubtedly face communal questions that our teachers did not and we must prepare to answer them with both firm roots in our tradition and faithful eyes on the future. And, out of respect to our followers, we must communicate our decisions in clear, accessible rhetoric, along with rigorous, dispassionate Halachic or philosophic prose.

In a recent resolution, the Rabbinical Council of America's reaffirmed its proscription of female ordination. Correctly or incorrectly, many felt the resolution struck a dissonant chord on two counts. First, it seemed as though

this resolution came from those very rabbis with significant disconnect from their congregants. Second, Halachic considerations notwithstanding, the resolution appeared to be banning an exciting, new attempt at leaders who could be more attuned to their constituents.

Rabbis and their communities can and must be a team. Now is a good moment to call a timeout and have a team huddle.

Let us take this opportunity to start a conversation. Let us stop talking over each other and start talking to each other about how to create an effective, engaging partnership.

A more pertinent resolution would have been a call to resolve our community's crisis in rabbinic leadership. Perhaps that resolution will come once we have initiated the dialogue that is so painfully absent.

"LET US TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO START A CONVERSATION. LET US STOP TALKING OVER EACH OTHER AND START TALKING TO EACH OTHER ABOUT HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE, ENGAGING PARTNERSHIP."

Letter to the Editor: In Response to "Give and Let Live?"

By Ariel Reiner

Is this really the time? Is this really the time for such a negative article, lacking any sense of nuance? If there was ever a time for such an article, it certainly isn't now. At a time when more than ever, Jews must come together to pray and learn, specifically for the city which this article centers around, I am appalled that such a piece was written and published for that matter.

I understand the excitement of controversy. At first glance, a writer would harp on the opportunity to write about one group of Jews, very different from the writer I might add, taking advantage in a sense, of a group they don't consider legitimate, let alone respect. That is the clear premise here. That is the juicy angle as well, no doubt. However, the article is replete with assumptions.

First and foremost, how can anyone psychoanalyze a group of people and stereotype them in such a way to make a sweeping statement and say they would sympathize with Yishai Schlissel, the stabber at a gay-pride parade, whom nearly every Rabbi in the public eye condemned? When the author says "while not intending to stereotype all members of a particular society," I ask, what exactly was his intention? He contemplates how many of "them" came out and condemned the attack. It's funny—the last time I checked, the street beggars in Jerusalem aren't the ones making statements on behalf of their community. Was the pretext of a discussion of Haredi beggars just an avenue to lambast their community as a whole? It sure seems that way.

In Israel there is always an attempt to divide. Why didn't the author question the fact that weekly if not daily, ultra-orthodox Jews show up at the doorstep of Modern Orthodox American homes with a letter from the LOR collecting money? Well it's

simple. That's just not juicy. In America the divide isn't as prevalent; the animosity not on the forefront of people's minds. Why bother widening the discussion when you can stick to the complex divisions in Israeli society?

There is another potential storyline here. It requires a major paradigm shift. It's a paradigm shift I believe many more people in our community need to make. It's the paradigm shift that begs us to stop perceiving that we have more in common with the guy in the Mets hat on the subway, than the Chassid on the light-rail in Jerusalem. What I see here is a storyline of brotherhood. There is no doubt, as the author mentions, that Haredi and Dati Leumi Jews disagree on issues. However, what he misses is that they disagree on specific details, details you can only reach after agreeing on larger, broader issues. All orthodox Jews in Israel are in essence on the same path, just with different goals. Some work, some learn, some defend the country, and while they certainly have their differences, they are all trying to get closer to God.

With that understanding, why wouldn't someone in need instinctively ask his fellow orthodox Jew, who also is financially stable, to help him out? Where else should he go? Whether this Chassid should be working is another question altogether and not a question for now. Once you accept the fact that he needs money this is the most sensible place for him to be. Sure, there may be an example here or there of an ungrateful collector, but citing that as an argument against a movement as a whole is nothing but stereotyping, which the author claims to try to avoid. In fact, based on my two years spent living in a Dati Leumi community while in yeshiva, as long as the collectors were respectful about it,

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The Commentator is the official student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 81 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

The Commentator staff claims students spanning the diverse spectrum of backgrounds and beliefs represented at Yeshiva.

We are united by our passion for living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.



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**1 7 Up/7 Down**

This thing has never been funnier or more relevant! Whoever writes this thing should get a pay raise.

**2 Positivity by Lipa**

I'm not at all kidding when I say that this is the greatest song ever recorded by a Jewish musician. Nega-Nega-Nega-Nega Negativity

3 The Danciger Quadrangle

This place may not be very large and it may look suspiciously like a rectangle but it's all the grass we have.

4 Marco

The king has returned to his castle and our former glory has been restored. God bless.

5 Spotify Playlists

Dear Spotify, thank you for getting me through midterms, and finding new music. You're like the older brother I never had.

6 Bas Kol

What could be better than Chasidim dancing wildly to words from the Talmud set to Fifth Harmony's Worth It?

7 Yeshiva Crushes

The temperature may be dropping, but passions are rising. It only lasted a few days, but romance was in the air with this Facebook page cultivating the mystique of the secret admirer.

7 UP 7 DOWN**1 The Massive Window Shade**

It is far from obvious why this thing is necessary to conceal Nagel Bagel. But the massive YU logo is kinda cool.

2 Attendance at Town Hall Meetings

Whether it was the rain or the lack of exciting scandals to grill the president about, something about this recent event failed to draw the masses.

3 Diet Snapple

Made from the best stuff on earth? I beg to differ. A poor imitation of the real thing.

4 Restaurant Caf Card Machines

You're there already so you might as well get some food and pay out of pocket. Add this to the list of things that often don't work.

5 Explosions at the Wilf Campus

If you hear an enormous explosion tonight and then notice that the city is in ruins with a large mushroom cloud looming over it, DO NOT WORRY.

6 Taylor Swift

Who does she think she is not releasing a new album in over a year! I'm going through a hard time and I need this!

7 Women Looking to Join the RCA

Sorry, applications are currently being accepted only from those with at least one Y chromosome.

porting their "lifestyles and beliefs" as if we would be donating to criminals. How can we ever expect them to be open to our way of life if we lack any degree of nuance or acceptance? Is it not a two way street? And when can we start looking at this as a two lane, one way, street?

We must call this out for what it really is. It's an attempt to divide us and question our generosity towards a sect of our religion, that is already foreign enough to us. The author at the end of his piece says not to take this as a call to action. Rather we should just contemplate the subtext of what we are in essence doing when we give money to ultra-orthodox Jews. If the purpose wasn't to call for the halt of lending a hand to these Jews, I fail to

see the goal here if not to simply put a bad cynical taste in our mouths when we do so.

The Jewish people are facing extremely trying times right now, especially in Israel, and specifically the holy capital of Jerusalem. We should focus on the scenes of the incredible, mostly Ultra-Orthodox I might add, Zaka workers and Hatzolah workers, who are always the first responders to terror attacks running to save Jewish lives no matter what sect they stem from. This is hardly the time to feature a story dividing the city even more than the rest of the world already wishes to do. The way we can help from across the sea is surely with more positivity and acceptance, not more cynicism and ridicule.

News Briefs

By Commentator Staff

Recent Security Issues on Campus

During the past three weeks, the Wilf Campus has been host to some unpleasant disturbances and violent activity. In these past weeks, all students received advisory notices from the YU Campus Security to their student e-mail accounts concerning the recent chaos on campus.

The first incident occurred on October 15th, and featured a pellet shooting at a local street corner here in Washington Heights. At one o'clock in the morning, according to the notice, "a student heard a popping sound and then was hit in the leg by a pellet." Minutes later, a security officer was hit by multiple pellets at the same location.

The second strange occurrence happened Friday night, October 23rd, and involved a group of teenagers breaking windows on campus. After being pursued by security, the offenders fled. This group of boys has also been reported for breaking car windows in nearby areas.

The most recent, and perhaps the most frightening, episode transpired around midnight on Thursday, October 29th. An e-mail from security stated, "three students were sitting on a park bench using their cell phones, when they were approached by three males on bicycles. The males displayed a screwdriver and attempted to steal their cell phones." One of the three reported his phone was stolen. The New York City Police is investigating all three cases.

In light of these incidents, many students, like Sophomore Jacob Furer, have developed a newfound uneasiness about being outside on campus late at night. Furer commented, "My friends and I don't feel totally comfortable outside after eleven o'clock. It just scares me because it happened where I was standing just a couple days ago," regarding the screwdriver encounter.

While these incidents have surely instilled fear into many, no one was injured in any of these occurrences. YU Campus Security encourages anyone outside at night to maintain a constant level of vigilance, and to be cognizant of the current unstable local surroundings.

Renewed Dorm Talks to Invigorate Conversation on Campus

Dorm Talks, an event that once occurred frequently on the Wilf Campus, is back after a fifteen-year hiatus. On Tuesday night, October 20, a panel of faculty discussed "The Right Focus in College Years" in the Rubin Shul over coffee, tea, and dessert pastries. The panel consisted of Rabbi Yaakov Glasser, the David Mitzner Dean, Center for the Jewish Future; Rabbi Ozer Glickman, a Rosh Yeshiva of RIETS; Dean Moses Pava, the Dean of the Sy Syms School of Business; and Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies. University Housing and Residence Life Associate Director Jonathan Schwab moderated.

The panelists shared their biographies, each of which include impressive education and some of which include professional success as well. The speakers stressed the value in investing in education and in pursuing academic interests, even if the areas of academic interest are not all coherent with each other. The conversation became particularly interesting when Dean Pava and Rabbi Glickman expressed opposing views on various issues.

Rabbi Glasser told the Commentator that he recalls Dorm Talks from when he was a student at YU as a chance for students and faculty to engage about relevant issues. "Working in an office most of my day," Rabbi Glasser said, he was excited to participate in Dorm Talks because he embraces "every opportunity to discuss and reflect on educational and communal issues with students."

The re-institution of Dorm Talks is part of a larger initiative to make residence life more accessible to Yeshiva students with a wider spectrum of interests. The Shabbat enhancement project is part of this vision, as well. Some have suggested that Dorm Talks take place on Shabbat as well.

SEE BRIEFS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Computer Science: A Flawed Past, A Hopeful Future

By Elie Lipnik

There is a common misconception that virtually every student at Yeshiva University will graduate in pursuit of a degree in medicine, law, or business. Contrary to popular opinion, however, there are many students pursuing undergraduate degrees in things like history, music, English and chemistry, with plans to pursue varying and unique career paths. More specifically, one major that seems to have garnered attention recently is Computer Science. For years, the Computer Science major at Yeshiva University has had a reputation of being weak, and recently students have complained about the major's deficiencies.

According to a fourth-year senior majoring in computer science who wished to remain anonymous, "The main problem with the program is that it only has three professors, two of which do not seem to care about the success of the students." As the major attracts more and more students in an increasingly technology-based world, student frustration has increased over the lack of choice in professors.

Part of that frustration stems from the limited nature of course offerings in a major staffed by just three professors. These issues, combined with the aggressive rigor of the major itself, deter many Yeshiva students from participating in the major. According to a first year student, who wanted to major in computer science but dropped it, and also requested anonymity, he did so because "With so many hours of extra work and so little in-class guidance I felt like it wasn't worth it for another three years." In more extreme cases, students were forced to choose between staying at Yeshiva in a major they didn't see filling their needs, or transferring in pursuit of a computer science education elsewhere.

Thomas Otway, the new chair of the Computer Science Department, has much to say on the matter. According to Otway, the Computer Science major used to be quite small, but very re-

cently "tripled in size at Yeshiva University." Since this growth is quite recent, the University is responding to the best of its ability, but due to financial constraints, the process will most likely take longer than desired. However, according to Otway, more professors will be added to the faculty as soon as Fall Semester 2016. In addition, there are a number of courses that are currently in the development stage, with plans to implement them as soon as they are classroom-ready. Although there may be some quirks in the system, Professor Otway stressed that this did not

"STUDENTS HAVE TO REALIZE THAT WE ARE AT A SMALL LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE RATHER THAN A LARGE UNIVERSITY AND, ACCORDINGLY, THERE WILL BE FEWER COURSES OFFERED"

- PROFESSOR THOMAS OTWAY

deter graduate schools or companies from hiring or accepting Yeshiva graduates. In fact, in the past graduating class, companies such as Google, IBM, AT&T, NASA, and Adobe have extended offers to Yeshiva graduates. In addition, students have been accepted to graduate computer science programs at Yale, Columbia, and University of Pennsylvania.

Professor Otway explained that computer science is truly a discipline of the engineering field, and is therefore considered to be a hard science major, with extremely rigorous courses. "Students have to realize that we are at a small liberal arts college rather than a large university and, accordingly, there will be fewer courses offered." However, Professor Otway recommended a few different courses of action to mitigate the situation. One way to take advantage of Yeshiva's unique opportunities is to

double major in computer science and the Computer Science track of the Math major, which would give a Yeshiva student the background of someone who graduates with a Bachelor of Science from a large university. Otway further suggested enrolling in the graduate-level courses offered by the department to gain a competitive edge. Additionally, students can enroll in the joint five-year program with Columbia University, in which students spend three years at Yeshiva University and then two at Columbia, earning a BA degree from YU and a BS from Columbia.

Professor Otway acknowledges that there are issues to tackle and is in the midst of doing so. Regardless, he firmly believes that if students truly take advantage of all the opportunities presented at Yeshiva University, they will receive a spectacular education; one that is just as good, if not better, than that of a top-notch, large university. If, however, Computer Science majors stay for three years and take only the required courses, they will most likely not have the same success as those who take advantage of the options available at YU.



Professor Thomas Otway, Chair of the Computer Science Department

Medical Ethics Society Hosts Conference on Pediatric Health

By Golda Aharon and Michal Auerbach

On Sunday, October 25th, the Yeshiva University Student Medical Ethics Society and the Center for the Jewish Future held their Ninth Annual Fuld Family Medical Ethics Conference on the Wilf Campus. The Yeshiva University Student Medical Ethics Society is a student-run organization that aims to raise awareness about ethical issues in medicine that relate to both the global and Jewish communities. This year's programming focused on the important and powerful topics of pediatric

their loved ones.

The audience was shocked to learn of the prevalence of depression within the Jewish community. Yitzay Mayefsky, Co-president of the Medical Ethics Society, affirmed saying, "teenage depression is something that people often just label as stereotypical teen 'moodiness' and especially in our Jewish communities, teenage suicide is a topic that is hardly ever acknowledged, let alone discussed."

The second plenary discussed the divergent effects of vaccination and alcohol on pediatric health. Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger, Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS and holder of the I. Meier and Henrietta Segal's Chair in Talmud, presented the halachic views on vaccination and alcohol consumption. Dr. Jay Mayefsky, MD, MPH, FAAP, and Associate Medical Director for Heartland Health Centers, discussed teenage alcohol consumption in the Jewish community and general society. Finally, Susan K. Schulman, MD, FAAP, at the Maimonides Infants and Children's Hospital, discussed the importance of vaccination. As Mayefsky related, "Attendees were left with a newfound sense of understanding and urgency as to how we need to strive more to keep our children safe and healthy."

The third plenary was a joint presentation on ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) by Dr. Glen Hirsch, MD, Medical Director at NYU Child Study Center, and Dr. Yoni Schwab, PhD, Assistant Head of School at the Shefa School. Together, Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Schwab explained the fundamental basis of ADHD, described different approaches to its treatment, and discussed the ethical dilemmas that come with diagnosis. Listeners were appreciative of the plenary's relevance and the openness with which ADHD was discussed. "Our main goal was to find something that both our fellow students and our community members could relate to and find interesting," said Rebecca Garber, Co-president of the Medical Ethics Society. "Once we decided on pediatrics, we tried to focus on the

taboo topics that are usually ignored or, more often, incorrectly understood."

The audience's response to the conference was overwhelmingly positive. "Many people have come up to me and told me how great they thought this year's conference was," said Garber. "Many applauded us for having the courage to openly discuss these topics." Though the attendees came with all levels of familiarity with pediatric health, it appears the conference had something for everybody; students and adults alike felt they learned valuable lessons. "After hearing all the speakers," Garber continued. "The main take away I received was that most things, whether it's ADHD, suicide and depression, or preventative medicine, can be either avoided altogether or minimized if properly dealt with."

As for future events, it seems that the conference was just a taste of what the Medical Ethics Society has in store for the student body. "We have many events planned for the Fall and Spring semesters" Garber added. "In particular, we are working on bringing genetic testing to campus. As for next conference, we can guarantee that whatever topic we decide to present will explore current medical ethics issues, while being both informative and interesting."



mental and physical health.

The first session addressed a sensitive issue: the role of family and friends in confronting adolescent suicide and depression. Dr. Barry Holzer, Director at the Center for Attention Deficit Disorders, and Dr. David Pelcovitz, holder of the Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Chair, Psychology & Jewish Education, and professor at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, discussed signs of depression to help attendees recognize symptoms and take action to support

an honorary degree at the Waldorf Astoria on December 13, 2015. President Joel will also confer honorary degrees upon Dr. Ben Chouake of Englewood, New Jersey; Norman Sternthal of Montreal, Quebec; and Mark Wilf of Livingston, New Jersey. President Joel will also honor Rabbi Dr. Herbert Dobrinsky, of Riverdale, New York, with the Presidential Medallion.

Drawing nearly one thousand of the most influential Jewish leaders and philanthropists from across the country, the annual convocation, heading into its 91st year, has featured other big-name speakers including former President George W. Bush,

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; former Secretary of State and then-Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Vice President Al Gore and Senator John McCain in the past.

In fact, none other than the late Governor Mario Cuomo, the current governor's father, received the same honorary degree from YU President Emeritus Rabbi Lamm, in 1983. "We are thrilled to confer the University's highest tribute on this year's group of honorees who exemplify and are a wonderful reflection of many of our own values," said President Joel.

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Governor Andrew Cuomo to be Keynote Speaker at YU's Hanukkah Convocation

This year's Hanukkah Convocation will feature Governor Andrew Cuomo, who will give the keynote address and receive

Freshman Honors Experience Initiates First Class of Students

By Eitan Lipsky

Starting your college career can be tough. Adjusting to busy schedules, difficult assignments, and a new social environment often make the transition into this new stage of life an arduous one. Students who have achieved excellent marks up to this point in their schooling careers might find that maintaining their previous academic standards is quite daunting. Many of these students attend college on academic scholarships which require taking more difficult courses and maintaining a certain GPA. For this reason, many universities offer programs designed to ease honors students' transitions by providing them with necessary support and community. With the initiation of the new Freshman Honors Experience this year, YU now provides such a program.

The Freshman Honors Experience (FHE) is mandatory for all beginning Yeshiva College honors students. It consists of taking an Honors course that is fairly writing-intensive in their first year on campus, as well as an Honors First Year Writing course in their second semester. These courses, unlike many YU Honors courses, are limited strictly to Honors students. Additionally, the program features several events throughout the semester for all of its students geared towards giving them a taste of New York City culture. These events include museum visits, shows, lectures and a movie screening.

According to Professor William Lee, former head of YU's Honors Program and a current professor of one of the four sections of the FHE, the program was created with four goals in

mind. The first is to provide honors students with a writing intensive course similar to the now defunct First Year Seminar of previous years which would teach specific writing skills not ordinarily taught in a First Year Writing course. Secondly, it is meant to expose students to New York City and its cultural resources. Thirdly, it intends to create a common link among freshman honors students. Finally, it serves as a nice transition for high school honors students into the rigors of a collegiate honors course.

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- DOVID SCHWARTZ

something edifying for everyone. At the end of October, the FHE made its first trip to the Jewish Museum where they saw many Jewish artifacts and an exhibit about Jewish Russian photography in the Bolshevik era. Nearly all of the students were able to attend and enjoyed the outing.

In addition to these FHE-wide events, there is a requirement that each of the program's sections participate in cultural activities that relate to their course topic. Last month Professor Broitman's class on the Spanish Civil War went to the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives in New York City. "It was very interesting to be able to see the diary of people who participated in the war. It really brought our class discussions to life," said Aaron Schwartz-Messing, one of the class' honor students.

Currently in its first year, the program is viewed by the staff as an experiment. Both Professor Cwilich and Professor Lee stressed that the other professors will be meeting together after the semester to evaluate the program and to determine what needs to be improved. They are also very interested in what the students have to say about the program.

Student reactions have been very positive overall according to Cwilich. Dovid Schwartz, a student in World Masterpieces and Cultural Values, reflected, "I like that I can feel what it's like to take a rigorous course, while at the same time being able to be with first-year students so the atmosphere of the class is lighter and more enjoyable." Schwartz continued, "[The program] gives me the incredible opportunity to see many different things and to start taking advantage of opportunities in my first year of college."

ISRAEL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Daniel opened Sunday night with some beautiful words of Torah, to focus our song and prayer and to shed light on the purpose of the gathering. After that, Aryeh Tiefenbrunn brought his guitar out and, with the Y-Studs (YU's Acapella group), set the students' feet into dance and their voices to song. Featuring popular songs such as Mahapecha Shel Simcha, Tov Lehodot Lahashem, and Yesh Tikva, among others, Tiefenbrunn and the Y-Studs performed extremely well.

Shlomo Anapolle led the Mi Sheberach (prayer for blessing) for the soldiers of the IDF and Michael Osborne recited the Mi Sheberach for the state of Israel. Tamar Golubtchik, President of the Israel Club on the Beren campus, shared words of Chizuk (inspiration) with the attendees as well.

Lazarev continued his explanation, "By showing our true colors as a peaceful nation, we hoped to educate those who have been misinformed about our people. But perhaps more importantly, by gathering to sing, dance and pray for our country we were able to foster a sense of confidence, strength and unity in all those who came, and even those who saw the videos and picture afterwards."

Many people from outside the YU sphere attended this event as well. High school students, students from other colleges and random people walking around Times Square joined the students of Yeshiva as they turned the red stairs blue and white. The New York Police Department joined in the festivities as well, taking pictures and soundly enjoying themselves to the tunes and song.

It seemed whether you were observant or not, Jewish or not, Israeli or not, there was place for you. Even a few Sikhs, followers of a monotheistic Indian religion that promotes peace, love and acceptance, joined in the dancing. "The energy was absolutely electric," described Laurel Aaronson, a sophomore at Stern, "The Ruach was pulsing through every person in that square,

whether they were involved in the dancing and singing, or just witnessing the incredible togetherness of Jews and Israel supporters from all throughout New York City."



Campus Historical Society Hosts Event Detailing the Link Between Piracy and Terrorism

By Arthur Schoen

The Yeshiva College Historical Society hosted its first event of the semester this past Tuesday, November 3rd. The event, a lecture by Professor Douglas Burgess, drew students from both the Wilf and Beren Campus as well as guests from outside the University. The lecture, entitled "From Blackbeard to Bin-Laden: Piracy and Its Connection to Modern Terrorism," covered a particular area of expertise for Professor Burgess.

Professor Burgess, who has been teaching in YC, Stern, and Cardozo for the past six years, is a world-renowned expert on piracy and terrorism law. He has published and spoken extensively on the relationship between the two. In this lecture, he traced the development of a legal theory linking the jurisdiction for trying members of international terrorist organizations to the laws developed in the early 19th century that gave a framework for the United States to prosecute the pirates who menaced its coasts.

This pioneering legal theory has been a significant part of Professor Burgess' life work and career. He described to those attending this event how he first thought to link piracy law to terrorism in his third year of law school at Cornell and told them all about the many years of research and publishing that followed.

In addition to the details of this theory, Professor Burgess' presentation was interwoven with personal anecdotes that shed light on why this issue became such a passion of his. He explained how some major world events of the last fifteen years, including 9/11, the Hebrew University bombings, and the court cases deciding the status of the Guantanamo Bay prisoners impacted his development of this legal theory.

After this idea began to germinate, Professor Burgess spent the 2002-2003 academic year researching the topic at the University of British Columbia. As the evidence supporting the linkage between piracy law and international terrorism became more and more clear, Professor Burgess organized the material and began to promulgate this idea through television interviews, public appearances, and articles in prominent newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals. He expounded upon these ideas further in his 2010 book, *The World for Ransom: Piracy is Terrorism, Terrorism is Piracy*. In that same year, the State Department actually adopted Professor Burgess' theory as official policy. This meant that they asserted U.S. jurisdiction over members of international terrorist organizations based on the jurisdiction established by anti-pirate laws and cases more than 150 years ago.

In closing his presentation, Professor Burgess drew some lessons from his story. He talked about the power of tenacity

and sticking to an idea even when it seems inconceivable for it to actually be put into practice. He charged those in attendance to never lose their idealism, to never give up on their dreams to change the world.

The students and guests at this event listened with rapt attention to Professor Burgess' forty-five minute presentation. Afterward, everyone stayed while people asked questions relating to manifestations of this legal theory in current events, asking about such timely topics as ISIS and terrorism against U.S. citizens in Israel.

This first event of the Historical Society was a rousing success, marred only slightly by the fact that the advertised pizza never arrived. Moshe Beiser, a freshman at Princeton University who attended Professor Burgess' lecture while visiting friends in YU, called Professor Burgess' presentation a "story of courage" that bore "inspirational messages."

The newly re-booted Historical Society, led by co-presidents Shai Berman and Yakov Ellenbogen, is excited to host many more such events over the course of the year, stimulating interest in history on both campuses. And for those of our students who wanted to learn more about actual pirates rather than anti-pirate laws, they can check out Professor Burgess' 2008 book *The Pirates' Pact: The Secret Alliances Between History's Most Notorious Buccaneers and Colonial America*.

Calm Town Hall Meeting Signals Optimism about YU's Future

TOWN HALL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

President Joel made more announcements, such as the appointment of Paul Glassman as Director of University Libraries, which is in addition to his current position as adjunct instructor of architecture and advisor to the architecture minor. President Joel also announced the online master's in marketing that Sy Syms School of Business will provide in conjunction with YU Global. Enrollment in the program will be available to "anybody, from within the University and beyond," the President said.

Further initiatives in education include a forthcoming School of General Studies and Continuing Education. President Joel said that the new school will offer "live and online classes to a much broader community in a huge array of quality offerings that will maintain a standard in academic excellence." The hope is that the school will also "make us lots of money so you can continue to come here," President Joel told the students. He said that he will be naming a dean of the school "shortly" and stressed the importance of acting quickly on this initiative despite the tendency for educational institutions to move with deliberate sluggishness.

President Joel's last announcement was the partnership between YU Global and the Avi Chai Foundation to create online Torah education for high school students. He also informed those assembled that this academic year's commencement cer-

emony would take place at Madison Square Garden. "We've been in exile in nice places for a few years but it's time to come home," he said, which received laughter from the audience. After joking about and sharing a note from his personal life, the President opened the floor for questions.

Inquiries for the President were generally mild and interest-specific. One student, for example, asked why Yeshiva has a 17.5-credit limit per student per term. Another asked whether it would be possible to schedule a midterm examination week, similar to the way final examinations are scheduled.

When one student asked for the President's short list of candidates to fill his position when he retires at the completion of his current term, President Joel said he doesn't have one but joked that if the asker wants to see guesses he can reference the "fiction section of Tablet or The Jewish Week." In a more serious vein, the President expressed his hopes for qualifications of his successor: "The first and most important qualification of my successor is that he be a serious Ben Torah (a Torah-minded person), who recognizes that Modern Orthodoxy is a big tent with boundaries, and that this is a movement of people who care for who they are." President Joel assured students that he is not leaving; "I'm being elevated to faculty," he said.

President Joel gave a lengthy response to a question about Montefiore's portion of the Einstein deal. The deal, President Joel said, is a "win-win-win." He reassured the inquirer that "Einstein will always be an affiliate of YU, just like RIETS is an affiliate, leolam vaed (forever and ever)." President Joel

stressed that the deal stipulates that the college of medicine "always have: high standards of quality, governed by halacha under guidance and supervision of YU; lots of areas for faculty collaboration; and always a special relationship between YU undergraduates and Einstein. Our undergrads are looked at favorably. In the contract, that is mandated with numbers. There will continue to be that."

The calm and light tone of this town hall meeting is a departure from previous similar events, in which tensions ran high and smiles graced the faces of neither speaker nor audience. The positivity at this semester's meeting signals, perhaps, that the leadership and students of YU have a newfound anticipation of a bright future.

"Let's keep doing good things," President Joel said as he descended the podium.



From Near and Far, International Students Flock to YU

INTERNATIONAL, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

North America and work with these same yeshiva high schools, parents, and communities to introduce the benefits of a Yeshiva University education to prospective students."

"The global community needs more YU graduates," described Rabbi Solomont regarding what he feels the goal is in reaching out to overseas students. His feeling is that the program can "provide the unique education that only YU can offer to students beyond our traditional markets. If you look at communities across North America and across the globe, you will find YU graduates at the helms of leadership positions and making a difference in the Jewish world and in every industry." Much of Solomont's job involves building global partnerships created by the CJF (Center for the Jewish Future), developing meaningful connections with schools and communities, and even meeting personally with students and their communities. In the next few weeks alone, he will be developing such connections on trips to Panama and England. "The best spokespersons for YU," though, as Solomont noted, "are our current students and alumni and they are capable and willing to lend their enthusiastic voices to the process of introducing YU to their communities. We'll need to reach out to communities and develop a similar admissions process that we have in North America and learn the needs of each country and how we can best serve their academic aspirations."

"It varies from country to country," answered Ms. Silbermintz when asked why she thinks non-American individuals decide to spend their college years in Yeshiva University. "In some countries, it's impossible to function as a religious Jew in a university. The political or social climate on some campuses also may not be conducive to an observant life. Many, though, are drawn to the synthesis of Torah and madda that YU represents." Ms. Golden similarly explained that international students, much like domestic students, are attracted to YU for "top notch Torah learning and a great Jewish environment." She added that "for many international students, a U.S. education is still considered the 'gold standard,' especially at the graduate level. International students also want the experience of living in the U.S. and many believe that a U.S. diploma from an excellent school, such as YU, will give them the upper edge in the job market once they return home."

"Many international students never had a Jewish experience or haven't had the chance to go to a Yeshiva," said Alex Wascher. Wascher, who is from Vienna, Austria, and is currently a Yeshiva College senior majoring in economics and sociology, is the head of the International Student Committee at YU. "Here in YU," explained Wascher, "international students have the chance to get [a Jewish experience and a yeshiva] and on top a great education that prepares them for their professional endeavors." Melanie Hes from Chile, who discovered YU on an NCSY trip when she was 16, related similarly that she "chose YU/Stern because it is a small 'family-like' Jewish school located in the middle of New

York City. It is my last semester in Stern and although I am excited to start a new stage, I am clearly going to miss this place."

Being an international student is certainly not without its challenges. "These students don't necessarily need ESL instruction," said Ms. Silbermintz. "Most are mainstreamed into First Year Writing, but they do sometimes experience some challenges in terms of language and background." Wascher described how in his first few weeks at YU, even though native students were very friendly and outgoing, "I felt a complete culture shock and did not feel well here in the United States. After a couple of weeks this went away and I found my place in YU and feel like I found the perfect fit for me." Rabbi Solomont also conveyed that "navigating the various language barriers can be challenging, but at the end of the day, we have the collaborative support of Rabbi Brander and the Office of Admissions, who have been working with international applicants for decades. All of our prospective students share a common interest in pursuing an unmatched aca-

"AT A CERTAIN POINT, THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE BECOMES LESS OF AN ISSUE OF WHERE YOU ARE COMING FROM AND MORE OF AN ISSUE OF WHERE YOU ARE HEADED"

- MS. NORMA SILBERMINTZ

demic and Jewish experience."

"All international students are required to be proficient in English to qualify for a student visa," said Ms. Golden by way of comparing outreach techniques for students who don't speak English as a first language, with those who do. "English language capability plays less of a factor in how I reach out to students. In fact, I find that Canadian students are often the most difficult to reach because they do not necessarily consider themselves international by definition." "In my opinion," she added, "cultural adjustment issues, such as helping students become more comfortable with U.S. teaching styles, fast-paced lectures, living in Manhattan, and understanding U.S. cultural nuances, play a much larger role in shaping international student outreach strategy."

The goal of the International Student Committee, according to Wascher, "is to give the students a sort of guidance and community. Many are fortunate to have distant family here, but most do not. So we try to make them part of our big community. Also, we try to give the international students a voice and represent them to the best of our abilities." Of course, the community of international students interacts all the time with the American students. "Students are very helpful to us," expressed Wascher, "and are positively intrigued by having us around. It is

great to see when they build friendships and become one of them, almost."

"The international students are fortunate to be part of multiple communities," remarked Ms. Silbermintz. "Unlike the domestic students, the international students are not coming with a chevra of camp and yeshiva friends. They do, however, form mutually supportive groups on the basis of country of origin and native language. The international undergrads as a whole are a wonderful group. Whether a student is from Panama or Morocco, all international students face similar challenges in terms of language and acculturation, and they often serve as resources for one another. After the first one or two semesters, the international students are able to intermingle quite well with the domestic students. At a certain point, the college experience becomes less of an issue of where you are coming from and more of an issue of where you are headed; a pre-med student from Paris and another pre-med student from Chicago have a great deal in common!"

"International students need to continue to feel valued for the unique perspectives they bring to campus and the community," offered Ms. Golden. "Student Life is very committed to these ideals." Inversely, Ms. Silbermintz commented that "inasmuch as internationals benefit from YU, without a doubt, the YU community benefits from having the international students who contribute a wonderful diversity in terms of language, culture, history, and minhag. Having these students as part of the YU community brings that diversity out of the textbook and into the classroom."

"It has been one of my greatest privileges in life," mentioned Rabbi Solomont, "being part of a team that introduced non-yeshiva high school students to YU. I've been able to play a small role in the admission of several exceptional students who may have otherwise never considered attending YU. I have subsequently watched these students build inspiring Jewish lives and become role models for others. It is without a doubt that many students that I'll meet during my travels will never believe at first that a YU education is possible. I hope to slowly change that paradigm and welcome these students to YU."

The only concern for Wascher is that "it is hard when YU goes through the financial troubles and has to reduce the resources. It is a tough time for the University right now and we can just feel that. I'm just hoping and waiting for the time that it gets better again." But his overall sentiment about YU and its environment for the international community is ultimately optimistic. "The University really is doing a lot for us and is helpful on many different levels."

"I hope that YU continues to actively work to attract students from around the globe," concluded Ms. Golden. "This is precisely the purpose of this new initiative. International students are able to bring a fresh perspective to the classroom and hopefully become advocates for both YU and the United States once they graduate and return home."

A Despondent Celebration for Jonathan Pollard

By Dani Weiss

On November 21, 2015, Jonathan Pollard will be released from federal prison, according to the US Parole Commission. His release marks the end of a 30 year incarceration, much of which he spent in solitary confinement, that resulted from charges of passing sensitive intelligence information to Israel.

Those who maintain Pollard's guilt cite a number of factors to justify his punishment: The law doesn't distinguish between the allies and non-allies with respect to espionage, much of the intelligence data supposedly handed to Israel ended up in the Soviet Union's possession, Pollard's services were motivated by greed rather than Israeli security interests, and the information was given to Israel only after attempting to sell information to several other countries that certainly couldn't be considered allies.

To be sure, I've read countless articles, attended lectures and protests, and even watched documentaries about Pollard's case. I grew up around individuals engaged in pro-Pollard activism, and can coolly recite the list of grievances that Pollard supporters cite in his defense. I can tell you that Pollard provided an ally with information vital to its security, the government's prosecutor failed to uphold his end of a plea bargain, other convicted spies' whose damage appears to have far surpassed Pollard received comparatively light sentences, bombastic statements by then Secretary of State Casper Weinberger suggested an anti-Semitic bias, and the imprisonment of Anne (now his ex-wife) was uncalled-for and unprecedented. These arguments suggest, compellingly in my opinion, that - independent of his guilt or innocence - Pollard's trial was hopelessly biased, and his sentence outrageous.

But I wasn't alive when Pollard was originally imprisoned. My opinions and perceptions related to the case were formed relatively recently. Articles bolstered by evidence that has emerged over the last three decades, I suspected, don't tell the full story of Jonathan Pollard. Controversies, especially those thrust into the international spotlight, develop over time as tempers cool and more information becomes

available. To develop a nuanced understanding of the origins of the controversy, reading the facts and opinions from the 1980's - when Pollard was originally arrested and tried - would be absolutely essential.

In pursuit of some type of context, or perhaps my own version of closure as a tumultuous three decades comes to an end, I sifted through dozens of articles and publications appearing since 1985, including decades-worth of articles appearing in The Commentator, looking for some type of insight into the development of the controversy.

My findings (which are by no means based on exhaustive research) surprised me: The reasoning and rhetoric from



three decades ago maintains an extraordinary degree of similarity to what is written nowadays. In 30 years, the arguments against the length of his imprisonment have not changed, and the competing accusations haven't developed a bit.

Certainly, new documents and interviews have emerged throughout the years, but positions of political import had already been staked, and, in defense of those positions, interpretations of new evidence became a predictable give-and-take of unrestrained vitriol. At a certain point, what may have started as a legitimate investigation of a man who passed sensitive intelligence to another government became

a vicious battle of egos to be fought on an international stage.

Even without the surfacing of new information, Pollard made headlines every few years in the context of presidential commutation or the possibility of securing his release as a bargaining chip in some ongoing negotiation. Half-healed wounds were torn open, with one side crying accusations of anti-Semitism and the other responding with charges of dual loyalty. Over time, Jonathan Pollard became more an object of controversy than a human being.

So I've never known Jonathan Pollard as a human being. Nor have most in my generation. When I was born, he had already spent several years decaying in federal prison. To me, he's a picture of desperate eyes staring from behind bars, a poster at a rally calling for Justice, or a flyer advertising one of many lobbying efforts to secure his release.

For those who have sought to justify his imprisonment and his status as a traitor to the United States, November 21 will provide a resolution. Through constant pressure - most notably when George Tenet, the CIA director, threatened to resign his post during the Wye negotiations - they ensured that he completed his sentence. Those people can sleep with the smug satisfaction that justice has been served to a deserving criminal.

But for those who supported Pollard, whether by maintaining his innocence or by protesting the degree of his punishment, his release provides no closure whatsoever. The underlying trope of government-sponsored anti-Semitism will not abate with his release. Charges of American Jews' dual national loyalties will manifest themselves in other issues. The political fights surrounding Pollard will likely relocate to new battlegrounds and find fresh blood to spill. They will seek other humans and objectify them.

Though Pollard might resume something that resembles normal life, his name will forever be associated with political conflict and he will never truly shed his status as an object. The only celebration appropriate for the release of Jonathan Pollard, then, is one tempered by a deep sense of despondency for the loss of his humanity.

from the Archives...

Pollard Unjustly Sentenced

By Josh Fruchter

The following is a summarized form of an article of the same title appearing in The Commentator on December 6, 1988

On November 21, 1985, Jonathan Pollard, a US Navy counterintelligence analyst was arrested by the FBI on charges of spying for Israel. To avoid a public trial, the government offered a plea bargain, promising leniency in exchange for full cooperation and a confession. On March 4, 1987, after pleading guilty to the single count of passing classified information to an ally, i.e. Israel, Jonathan received his "reward" - life imprisonment. The government had totally reneged on the agreement which, as Jonathan soon realized, "wasn't even worth the paper it was written on."

Jonathan's sentence is outrageous compared to previous espionage cases. Even Soviet Spies have received lighter prison terms. Adding insult to injury, Jonathan has been held in solitary confinement throughout his imprisonment. He was confined for 10 months to a psychiatric ward populated by "raving paranoid schizophrenics and mental deficient," despite a public statement by a top prison official that Jonathan "is not a mental patient."

It should be noted that Jonathan was never charged with compromising American security in any manner, shape or form. In fact, most of the information Jonathan passed to Israel should have been transferred through legal channels under the US- Israel intelligence agreement of 1983.

So why did Caspar Weinberger call Pollard "the worst spy in over 200 years of American history? Why did Weinberger... request the death penalty for Pollard? Obviously there are no grounds for the US government's hyperbolic as-

sertions.

Jonathan Pollard has stated, "I do not consider myself above the law and fully appreciate the fact that I should be punished for my activities." The outrage lies in the severity of Jonathan's sentence and his treatment in prison.

For those of us claiming adherence to the Torah and its precepts, it is only consistent that we accept the challenge of Pidyon Shevuyim. A fellow Jew is in need, a Jew who sacrificed his freedom for the survival of Israel.

Still No Justice for Pollard

By 1990 Editorial Board

The following article appeared in The Commentator on May 2, 1990

The United States prides itself on the individual rights entitled to every man. Our Bill of Rights and Constitution defend these rights. A judicial system, basing itself on the concept of justice, exists to insure that these rights are not violated.

But the system fails. Political influence does still blind justice. Jonathan Pollard was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. To further escalate the punishment, he must spend his perpetual incarceration in solitary confinement. He was convicted of spying for an ally, giving over information that was vital to that country's security and that the country was already entitled to by treaty. In no way did the information compromise the security of the US.

These facts made no difference in the sentencing. Neither did a plea bargain agreement with the Prosecution. Nor does the fact that J. Walker, who caused immeasurable amounts of damage when he passed on vital information to an enemy of the United States, received a considerably lighter sentence.

It makes no difference to the world that the country he was found guilty of spying for was Israel and that the information he passed on potentially saved scores of Israeli lives. But it should make a difference to us.

The students who attended the demonstration outside the gates of the Federal Penitentiary in Marion are calling for Justice. In the opinion of The Commentator, that is certainly a reasonable request. But action should not end there. The American Jewish community should make itself aware of the issue and examine the complicated questions involved in the case. As loyal Americans, we have the right to demand justice. As loyal Jews, we owe Jonathan Pollard a debt which we are all obligated to pay.

Anne Pollard Speaks at Stern

By Daniel Oshinsky

The following is an excerpt an article of the same title appearing in The Commentator on February 14, 1990

Mr. Henderson (Jonathan's father in law) said a clear contradiction exists between US law and the moral principles laid out in the Nuremberg laws. Jonathan Pollard was obligated by the Nuremberg Laws to provide Israel with information vital to her citizen's safety. Mr. Henderson also claimed that US Prosecutor Joseph Digenova used the Jewish community's fear of being accused of dual loyalties to undercut support for the Pollards.

Jonathan Pollard decided to spy for Israel after learning that the US was compromising Israeli security by withholding vital intelligence information. This information included the construction of a Nerve gas plant in Syria, large scale purchases by the Syrians of Mig fighter planes, bombs, and missiles, and information on terrorist activities.

Chabad Club Continues to Inspire Students All Over

By Shmuel Grossman

On any given Thursday night from 10:15-11:15pm a constant stream of noise flows throughout the Klein Beit Midrash and the Muss dormitory situated right on top. This noise is not some blaring music coming from a party around the block, but the sound of one hundred students learning Torah. Every week the Chabad Club of YU hosts the Thursday Night Chassidus program, a long standing program in YU that brings together YU students and yeshiva students from the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidic community in Crown Heights to learn Chassidus together. Walking into the cramped Beit Midrash it is hard to find an empty seat once the program begins. The room is full of beards and black hats along with a palpable feeling of warmth and genuine excitement. Students from varied backgrounds, spanning all of the morning learning programs make their way to Thursday Night Chassidus. This is not a program that students can take for credit or something that will boost a business resume, but nevertheless, it's packed. Raphy Sasseini ('16) is quick to greet students. He says, "'The Chabad Club has afforded me the opportunity to grow in my relationship to Hashem in a warm and friendly environment very conducive to growth.' Building its way up to an average of fifty chavrutot, this program is the largest weekly program run by any club in YU history.

The origin of the Chabad Club dates back to Wednesday, January 17, 1951 when Rabbi Alter Ben-Zion Metzger, beloved professor of Judaic Studies at Stern College brought students to the Chabad-Lubavitch headquarters located at 770 Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. What made this trip to "770" special was that on this date, the 10th of Shevat 5711 on the Hebrew calendar, the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), of blessed memory, officially accepted the mantle of the Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidic community. It was on this day the seeds of the Chabad Club were planted and now, in 2015 - 5776, these seeds have not only grown, but they have flourished.

Tracing its roots back to White Russia during the mid to late 18th century, the Chabad-Lubavitch community was founded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), a leading disciple of Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch (?-1772), successor to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), founder of the Chassidic movement. Chabad is an

acronym for Chochmah (wisdom), Binah (understanding) and Da'at (knowledge), the three intellectual faculties that everyone possesses. Lubavitch, Russian for brotherly love, is the name of a White-Russian town that made its name

"WHAT CHASSIDUS ULTIMATELY COMES DOWN TO IS REVEALING THE ESSENCE OF EVERYTHING... TO BRING OUT THE G-DLY PURPOSE OF EVERYTHING AND THIS IS FOR EVERYONE, WITHOUT EXCEPTION."



as the capital for the Chabad-Lubavitch community starting with Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch, son of and successor to Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. While several factors make Chabad Chassidus unique from other leading Chassidic groups, one of the most fundamental differences lies in the very name "Chabad." Unlike all other Chassidic groups, Chabad prides itself on being intellectually based, not emotionally based.

My quest to learn more about the Chabad Club took me to my next stop, a meeting with the club president, Danny Fordham ('16). "I hear all the time that Chassidus is about

miracle stories and getting a warm, fuzzy feeling and that Chassidus is only for the religiously struggling individual or for someone seeking inspiration, but this is wrong. What Chassidus ultimately comes down to is revealing the essence of everything...to bring out the G-dly purpose of everything and this is for everyone, without exception." says Fordham. "To put it simply," Fordham adds, "a Chassid is a lamplighter and everyone must be a lamplighter."

Additionally, the Chabad Club also hosts a weekly class in the Tanya given every Monday night. The shiur is given by sought after educator Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer, Director, Chabad of Queens College. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's magnum opus, the Tanya, is the most fundamental Chassidic text outlining who we are – our internal spiritual makeup, our goal in this world, and how to go about achieving this goal. In fact, the Tanya and Chabad Chassidus in general always maintained a warm spot in the heart of the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Growing up and being educated in a town consisting mainly of Lubavitch Chassidim, Chabad Chassidus played a crucial and important role in the thought of Rav Soloveitchik. Not only was he close with Chabad Chassidus, but he was close with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. While some have tried to dispute this, the evidence remains irrefutable with testimony from several leading students and confidants of the Rav.

Throughout the year, the Chabad Club hosts several large-scale events including the "Yud Tes Kislev Farbreng" an annual farbreng held by the Chabad Club to celebrate the day on which Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was freed from prison in 1798 marking the watershed event for the spreading of Chassidus.

Another popular event is the annual Crown Heights Shabbaton. Students from YU take to Crown Heights every year to gain further insight into this powerhouse organization and Chassidic community. On the bus returning to YU after last year's Crown Heights Shabbaton, Fordham thanked one student for attending, but the student was adamant that it really should be him thanking Fordham. After the amazing learning, inspiration and motivation gained from the Shabbaton, this student told Fordham that he now has the strength and courage to be fully shomer Shabbat (observant of the Sabbath), something that had been previously challenging for him. This student is one of many to be inspired as a result of the Chabad Club's love every Jew as yourself mentality and eagerness to spread the light of Chassidus.

From the President's Desk - SOY President Tuvy Miller

Hi everyone. My name is Tuvy Miller and I'm the President of SOY (Student Organization of Yeshiva) this year. I wanted to write about a new initiative that we've started this year. Several weeks ago, you might've seen signs around campus about a Community Shabbat. Many people were confused. Is this the "In-Shabbos" from past years? A project of the Shenk Community Shul or Mount Sinai? I'd like to take this opportunity explain the thinking behind the new Community Shabbat.

Traditionally, Shabbat programming on campus has successfully served the portion of the student population that prefers a Yeshiva-style Shabbat. Inviting Roshei Yeshiva, holding tisches, arranging shiurim and eating meals in the Caf - all of these were components of the In-Shabbos program which helped foster a Yeshiva feel on campus for Shabbat. Fundamentally, for many of these students, their YU experience revolves around the Beit Midrash and they feel that YU is in many ways a continuation of their time in an Israeli yeshiva. We value this sentiment and work hard to ensure that these students have the experience they've come to enjoy.

However, a large number of students at YU feel that they are primarily attending college, not yeshiva. Many of them either leave campus for Shabbat or stay and have meals with their friends off campus. They would prefer more student generated Shabbat programming and that includes more of a variety of intellectual and social offerings. Essentially, a Shabbat that is much more similar to the way it occurs on other campuses.

The shift to the Community Shabbat name is indicative of a deeper shift that we are orchestrating in the campus

Shabbat experience. The "Community" name means that Shabbat is being geared towards the entire undergraduate community here on the Wilf Campus. The longer term goal is that on most Shabbatot, if not all, there should be at least one program that speaks to the different pockets in our diverse student body. The Community Shabbat is the way of kicking that off and presenting the new concept to the student body. In an effort to utilize their input and empower

"THE LONGER TERM GOAL IS THAT ON MOST SHABBATOT, IF NOT ALL, THERE SHOULD BE AT LEAST ONE PROGRAM THAT SPEAKS TO THE DIFFERENT POCKETS IN OUR DIVERSE STUDENT BODY!"

students, a Shabbat Committee has been formed with SOY VP Shua Brick taking the lead on our overhaul of Shabbat on campus. Working together with the Office of Student Life, this committee has been brainstorming and will begin implementing some of their ideas in the near future.

I'd like to give you a sense of some our new ideas. This year we are privileged to have Dr. Esty Rolhaus and Jonathan Schwab (Associate Director of University Housing and Residence Life, Wilf Campus) living on the YU side of the Heights. They were previously the Campus Couple on the Beren Campus and did a tremendous job of enhancing Shabbat programming there. In addition to their day jobs, they have both been heavily involved with the planning and

implementation of some of our new programs. They are working together with Ephi Strazynski, Assistant Registrar, who is doing his Wurzweiler field work to help enhance our Shabbat community. One such program that's already been implemented has been the Schweoparty game that they've run several times this semester. A variation of Jeopardy, this exciting trivia game, often held parallel to the weekly Parsha shiur, has attracted significant crowds and has been a great way for guys to have fun together over Shabbat. This kind of parallel programming is exactly the model that we're beginning to implement.

There is also an effort in motion to expand the range of speakers who we invite to campus for Shabbat. The Roshei Yeshiva who've been coming for years will continue to be warmly received here and the programming that revolves around them still remains in full force. The Shabbat Committee has been putting together a list of speakers, from within YU and beyond, who will be able to provide a range of

Torah perspectives, as well as perspectives on politics, Israel and contemporary medicine. This will be complemented by efforts to allow students to share their own thoughts on the Parasha and contemporary issues. This past Community Shabbat, Rabbi Yaakov Glasser, Dean of the CJF, held an informal discussion at Esty and Jonathan's apartment that was well attended and the hope is that this will morph into a student-led discussion going forward.

All in all, the Shabbat programming that many have come to love is here to stay. This new Community Shabbat effort will hopefully make YU a place where more guys feel at home and can find meaningful religious experience in an organic and authentic way.

The Transparency of the Student Government

By Shlomo Friedman

On each student's bill from Yeshiva University, right below the \$37,930 tuition, lies the smallest of the fees, a comparatively trivial \$150 allocated for student activities. This seemingly small sum comprises the budget for all clubs and events, over \$300,000. To put this number into context, it can purchase 20,000 Lake Como pizza pies, enough pizza to give a slice a day to 2000 undergrads for 80 days in a row. To borrow from Stan Lee, with great pizza comes great responsibility. Who is responsible for allocating the pizza for clubs and activities and how does the allocation process work?

One of the main jobs of student leaders is to allocate funding for events around campus with the money that comes from the \$150 student activity fee. When wanting to plan an event, the club head submits to the student council (either SOY, TAC, YSU, SCWSC, YCSA, or SYMSSC) associated with that club a projected cost of event which takes into account food, drinks, busses, cost of the speaker, and the number of students projected to attend. Then that council approves the event, deciding how much of their own budget they want to contribute, with multiple clubs occasionally contributing money. This signals to the Office of Student Life (OSL) to book a room and to order the food using the funds of that council.

However, this budget allocation process remains private. During their training, student leaders do not undergo any kind of finance or budget training to aid them in their allocation decisions. Also, no standardized policies currently exist across the councils to help determine the sum events receive or whether councils should inform student leaders of the cost of event. Each council president acts as he/she sees fit. Some councils inform club heads of changes, others do not. Moreover, no person outside of the student presidents and the OSL, not even some vice presidents or secretaries on the council, know how the different councils' budgets are spent and distributed among the different events and clubs throughout the year. Both SCWSC President Rachel Rolnick and YCSA President Josh Nagel confirmed the lack of transparency policies in student government, with Rolnick noting "we don't typically think of anything we do as confidential."

Universities Moving towards Transparency

However, other colleges trumpet the fiscal transparency of their student councils. A recent resolution passed by The Johns Hopkins University Student Government Association (SGA) writes that "the SGA members and the student body as a whole reserves the right (emphasis mine) to know how SGA members spend and distribute money allotted to the SGA," invoking transparency for student council spending as a student right in itself. Entire websites exist to helping college students create policies that lead to more economically transparent student councils. Interestingly, Landers College for Men Vice President Mendy Eisenberg promised in a campaign speech to improve the transparency of the student government. Institutions such as University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University contain detailed, publicly available budget breakdowns (to the dollar) of each club's spending, an impressive feat considering Penn and Columbia boast large student populations and millions of dollars in available funds for student activities.

These publicly available documents show funding for clubs across several academic years, giving reasons for increasing or decreasing a given club's budget. For instance, the Activities Board at Columbia (ABC), one of the councils responsible for allocating funding, decided for the 2014-2015 academic year to decrease funding from the Ko-

rean Students Association from \$6239 to \$5890 (although they requested \$7030) because the club "has been spending unnecessarily on their events,[and] need to spend more responsibly." ABC also released "Allocation Discussion Guidelines" in which they spell out policies for allocation decisions.

In addition, the documents contain impressive scope, showing every cost involved in the event, from large costs, such as the \$250,000 the SPEC (Social Planning and Events Committee) at Penn spent on the production of a concert, to small costs, such as the \$250 they used to advertise for the concert. In contrast, the student government at Yeshiva lacks the same fiscal transparency, allocation policies, and attention to detail found in other universities.

It is important to note that public budget allocations for student clubs cannot be found at many other universities. Student governments at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and NYU do not present any publicly available budget allocations to their different clubs.

Yeshiva Differs

Yet, when considering the significant differences between Yeshiva and other colleges, Yeshiva's current system succeeds in preventing misuse of funds. First, Penn and Columbia are large universities with hundreds of clubs, which necessitate larger, more complex, and completely transparent policies to prevent abuse of funds. Yeshiva's smaller size does not require the same level of transparency to pre-

different activities and events that they run for their own club's activities.

At Yeshiva though, the student presidents themselves allocate funds per event to each club, instead of giving each club the discretion to use the money as they see fit. In this respect, the Yeshiva mechanism for funds approval is more efficient and less prone to waste than the system found in other universities, like the problem Columbia had with giving "too much" to the Korean Student Association. However, the Yeshiva model takes fiscal responsibility away from club heads and shifts it towards the council presidents.

Rolnick believes that while "transparency is a generally good idea, there would have to be a greater understanding among the student body about how student government functions and how they reach certain decisions." Nagel went further, saying, "I've never been asked to provide a financial breakdown of how much we spend because club heads don't seem to care about that. They just want to have the best events for their clubs and our current system still promises to do that."

Other Forms of Transparency

However, fiscal transparency is not just about preventing abuse of funds, but can also be used to increase student confidence in the student government. President of the ABC Tony Lee CC '15 said that "Increased transparency, we hope, will lead to better quality allocation decisions, better quality allocation packets, and people's confidence in student representatives in doing their jobs to help the people that elected them." Informing students and club heads of costs gives students a better perspective and appreciation for the hard work of student leaders.

There is good reason why student leaders do not release information relating to budget allocation. Club heads may complain to student leaders about the funding they receive. Nagel said that "it gets complicated when clubs think 50 students will attend their event while we think only 20 may come. The downside of transparency is that clubs can argue about how a different club got more food, even though we know that event would get more people." Rolnick believes that Yeshiva's small student body may even exacerbate this problem since "student council leaders aren't elusive figures here. We are your classmates, roommates, and friends. It could cause unnecessary confrontation."

Yet, other forms of transparency can increase the confidence of the student body in their student leaders, and even get students more engaged and involved in student leadership roles. For example,

student governments at other universities publish the minutes of the student government meetings and hold "town-hall" style meetings to interface with the student body to get a sense of students' concerns. Moreover, a closer relationship between the club heads and their student council liaison can help clubs improve the quality and scope of their events.

Indeed Rolnick said, "On the Beren campus, we try to make ourselves as accessible as possible to have open communication with all of the students. Talia (TAC), Alexa (SYMS), and I are planning a town hall meeting next month, and we hope to see many students there, to discuss student life and changes we might want to make to existing policy, or just to get to know us better."

Nagel added that "Transparency is generally beneficial. It might be time to create new policies to help club heads make smarter decisions for their events. If students are curious to know more about budget allocations, just find us—we're around."

"THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT AT YESHIVA LACKS THE SAME FISCAL TRANSPARENCY, ALLOCATION POLICIES, AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL FOUND IN OTHER UNIVERSITIES."



A recent MES conference partially sponsored by several student councils, though the sum remains unknown.

vent abuse of funds. Also, according to Nagel, the OSL acts as "supervisors to ensure there is no corruption."

A second major difference is the disparity in budget size. For example, as mentioned above, the budget for all clubs and events at Yeshiva is around \$300,000. Comparatively, the aforementioned concert at Penn brought in over \$300,000 in revenue this past year alone. Furthermore, the budget of all the Penn student councils was projected to be over \$2,000,000 for the academic year of 2015-2016. The student councils' budgets at Yeshiva pale in comparison to the massive and complex budgets of other universities, which makes oversight of Yeshiva's student council budget much simpler.

Finally, another important difference between Yeshiva and other universities is the method of allocation. Clubs in other universities submit a specific sum at the beginning of the semester to student government and receive an approved lump sum for all their expenses for the year. The club heads themselves decide how best to allocate those funds among

Students Take Back Computer Science at YU

By Binny Lewis

On the heels of last year's successful Hackathon, the computer science club is ramping up its game for this coming semester. With a new and talented board, the computer science club is preparing some amazing events this year. These events seek not only to strengthen the currently defunct computer science department (the Computer Science Major exists within the Math Department), but to make available resources for all students on both campuses. We hope to empower everyone with the ability to learn coding and computer programming. In today's day and age these skills are becoming more and more essential for nearly every industry from the bio student studying the human genome, to the marketing student wishing to understand big data. Here's a list of what's in store.

Computer Science Facebook Group

As its first initiative, the Computer Science Facebook Group was made public giving comp sci students the means to socialize with one another, talk about current classes and discuss class material. The Facebook group will also serve as a resource for non comp sci majors to learn more about technology, computers, and programming in general.

Reaching Non-Coders

In line with this idea, the club will be bringing another new idea to campus. In many colleges and high schools across the country, a campaign called the Hour of Code has spearheaded the effort to bring our generation up to speed with the tech of our time. As it says on its wiki page, "The Hour of Code is designed to introduce people to coding, and

get familiarized with coding". During the Hour of Code, students and professors will be encouraged to join YU on code.org to take a one hour gamified course to learn coding.

Mini hackathon

In conjunction with the team that put together last years incredible and successful Hackathon, the comp sci club will be organizing a mini hackathon around the time of reading week. This event will be a composite of coding challenges not on the same large scale as the 24 hour, all-night,

"WE HOPE TO EMPOWER EVERYONE WITH THE ABILITY TO LEARN CODING AND COMPUTER PROGRAMMING."



event, but will engage students to compete and write code on the fly. Competing with their fellow hackers to win prizes, gain experience, and become better programmers

Code slams

Those familiar with programming will have access to code slams, where coders in training gather to practice their skills and get help on projects from their peers. These bi-monthly events will be a great way to collaborate with experienced comp sci students and advance their coding skills. Join comp sci peer tutors and your fellow coding students to work on projects and homework with free swag and refreshments.

Startup++

A big concern for comp sci students in the past has been the inability to gain experience with real world projects. In an attempt to solve this issue and in response to the many clubs and startups on campus that have reached out to us for coding help, we will be working together with Startup YU, and Dean Strauss as well as other related clubs on campus for an event we're calling Startup++. It will be an opportunity to join fellow entrepreneurial minded students in networking with programmers, marketers, graphic designers and comp sci majors, to discuss, plan and form the team of their dreams. This event will yield better club websites, more coding tools for on campus startups and greater experience that comp sci students want and need.

Binny is the President of Yeshiva College's Computer Science Club.

Book Review: The Nightingale

By Rachel Okin

"If I have learned anything in this long life of mine, it is this: In love we find out who we want to be; in war we find out who we are." So begins Kristin Hannah's emotional novel *The Nightingale*, a moving story about two women in Nazi occupied France. The novel follows the lives of sisters, Vianne Mauriac and Isabelle Rossignol, whose personalities could not be more different. Isabelle is a rebellious and impulsive eighteen year old girl. Vianne is older, was married at the age of sixteen to Antoine Mauriac, and has a young daughter, Sophie, whom she looks after at all costs.

In the novel, both women face daunting circumstances as the threat of Nazis invading France looms nearer. Tending to her small farm, Le Jardin, in the Loire Valley and teaching at the local school, Vianne refuses to believe that Nazis will invade. But when Antoine is sent off to war, and the Nazis do invade France, bringing with them starvation, destruction of property and discrimination, Vianne and Sophie are forced to submit to the new way of life the Nazis inflict on France. Vianne must endure having a Nazi captain board in her very own home. While Captain Wolfgang Beck shows signs of kindness, providing Vianne and Sophie with food, news, and medicine, Vianne's neighbors grow suspicious as they witness her and the Captain growing closer.

Meanwhile, shunned by her uncaring father, a Great War veteran, and struggling to connect with her estranged sister, Isabelle tries to stay alive when France is invaded. She soon meets and falls in love with Gaeton, a rakish man freed from prison to fight the Nazis. But when Isabelle is betrayed, she joins the French Resistance in an act of rebellion, ushering downed Allied airmen across the Pyrenees to Spain. Dubbed with the code name "the Nightingale", Isabelle delivers anti-Nazi handbills, risking her life repeatedly in order to save others.

The novel shifts among three points of view, that of Vianne and Isabelle, both in 1940, and also that of an unnamed, elderly widow living in Oregon in 1995. It is clear throughout the novel that the elderly woman is one of the two sisters, but her identity is not revealed until the end. The Nightingale tells the stories of the two women separated by their conflicting world views, each on her own path toward survival and freedom during the war. Hannah's novel flu-

idly executes the women's point of view and showcases their strong and clashing personalities. Isabelle is active from the start, risking her life to save others as a rebel, while Vianne starts out a non-believer, but is thrust into the war once she realizes that her life and the lives of the ones she loves are in danger.

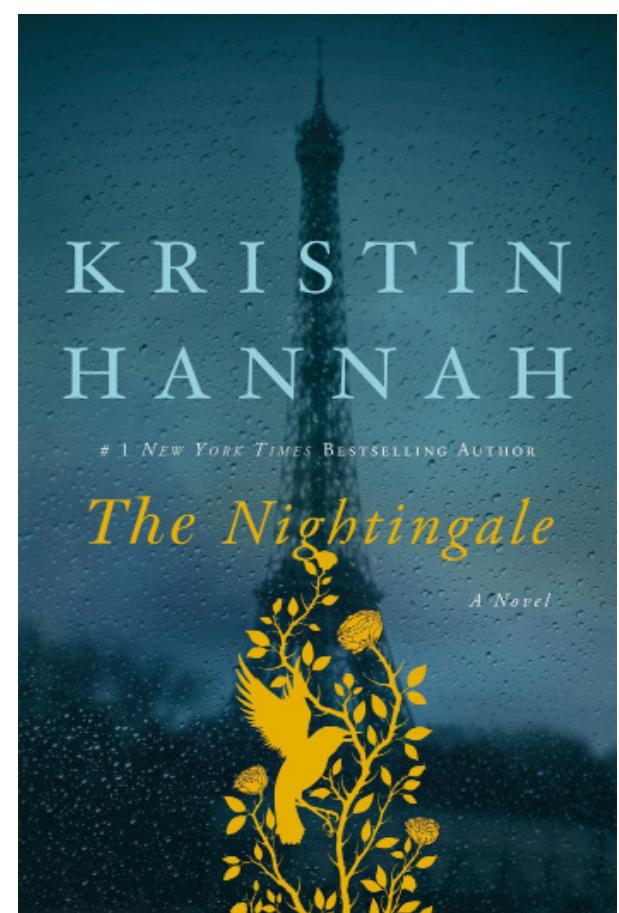
Kristin Hannah has built a name for herself as a best-selling romantic fiction novelist, but *The Nightingale's* marketing emphasizes the historical fiction aspect of the book. Interested in women's untold stories, Hannah searched historical documents to find evidence of women who made a difference during World War II, even if they had to pay a terrible price for their heroism. On her website, Hannah describes *The Nightingale* as "her favorite" book among those she's written to date, and the work of which is most proud.

Despite its historical nature, *The Nightingale*, while not exactly maudlin, still reads like a romance novel. With its character development and scene descriptions managing to evoke emotion at every turn, it's clear that *The Nightingale* was written by someone whose background is deeply set in romance. While the horrific events that took place in France during that time are not underplayed and are certainly shocking to read about, the romance aspect of the book might be seen by some to detract from the weight of the subject matter. However, for those who take the book as a romantic novel set in a historical time, and not a historical account, this book holds its own.

The elderly woman's point of view in the novel, set in the United States in 1990s, brings the reader a quiet and "safe" breather to the highly intense lives of the younger characters. The female character who is at the end of her life and now going back to a place that once held horrors for her, adds a measure of relatability and connectedness to the characters and the story set in the past.

The sisters in *The Nightingale*, as different as their personalities may be, nevertheless both read as "ordinary" young women faced with "extraordinary" circumstances and decisions to make. Rising to the occasion because there is simply no other alternative, these young characters portray how an average young person may find a way to navigate through incomprehensible adversity using their own fortitude and intuition. Each sister's personal character evolution from beginning to end of the war also adds an interesting element to the story.

The novel's two sisters show only a glimpse of the determination and danger faced by millions of women who kept their families alive during the Occupation and made sacrifices to save others. The story tells about the ravages of war from a woman's point of view as opposed to that of the soldier in the trenches and deals with certain issues that are unique to women. Skillfully written, Kristin Hannah emotionally describes the hardship and heartache experienced by the characters. Despite a bit of formulaic romance-novel style, *The Nightingale* is a good read.



By Doron Levine

Watching all six Paranormal Activity films in less than two weeks was no simple task. These films had been on my To Watch List for some time already, so when the most recent installment in the series, called Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension, was released on October 23, I decided to take the plunge; it was now or never. Currently playing in theaters (near you!), the film is being advertised as the final installment of a series that, over the past few years, has taken the horror genre by a tropical storm.

Released in 2007, the first film in the franchise received rave reviews and overwhelmed the box office, earning back over twelve thousand times its budget. The subsequent films have been greeted with some negative reviews, but, overall, the series remains a smashing success. Four out of the six films grossed over fifty million dollars, with the first and the third films grossing over one hundred million dollars. The series has managed to gain widespread popularity despite its relatively small budget – the first film in the series had a minuscule budget of an estimated fifteen thousand dollars.

Why were these films so successful, especially in a movie market packed with poltergeists and often disenchanted with desperate sequels? Because, as many have pointed out, Paranormal Activity so effectively executed the unique cinematic style colloquially called Found Footage Film. The premise behind each movie in the series is that the characters shown in the film had, at some earlier point, videotaped events in their house with a camera. Each movie is presented as a series of shots that were later discovered, either by authorities in their investigation of some horrific crime scene or by relatives of the videographers. The footage was then supposedly edited and organized by Paramount Pictures and released for the public to enjoy over Coke and popcorn.

The first movie in the series is the most straightforward. It begins with Micah experimenting with his new camera, videotaping his camera-shy girlfriend Katie in their new house in San Diego. Katie expresses her suspicion that strange supernatural events have been occurring in their house so Micah decides to set up the camera in their bedroom to investigate this paranormal activity. We see the footage from each night in sequence, and we watch as the supernatural events in their bedroom become increasingly bizarre and eventually culminate in murder.

This style has great appeal. Crucially, it proves that there is something more to our fascination with horror than the cheap thrill of seeing characters chopped up, eviscerated, or otherwise injured in shockingly grisly ways (more on this later). But, though somewhat less sanguinary than other horror flicks, Paranormal Activity is not entirely wanting for the thrill of the kill.

Though perhaps not humanity's proudest quality, this dark curiosity is undeniable. People are transfixed by the demise of a stranger – when seeing someone else dying a painful death, many people cannot avoid experiencing, to quote Tolstoy, "the complacent feeling that 'it is he who is dead and not I.'" The human fascination with the downfall of others is clear to anyone who emerges from a long stretch of highway traffic to discover that he has been moving at a snail's pace because his fellow commuters have a seemingly irresistible compulsion to gawk at the wreckage of some terrible accident. As they approach the scene of the crash, they hit the brakes in order to survey the carnage out of their driver's side window (a phenomenon somewhat dreadfully known as rubbernecking). You step on the gas, cursing the drivers around you for delaying your commute, but, despite your righteous frustration, you cannot stop yourself from shooting a sideways glance of your own.

Tolstoy may be correct that witnessing others' misfortune gives us a comforting sense of security – we are safe and sound even as what used to be that fellow is sadly strewn over a stretch of asphalt. But this sort of experience also gives rise to the somewhat contradictory sobering thrill of knowing that it could have been you. Seeing others butchered forces us out of our habitual illusion of immortality, reminding us that we, too, will die.

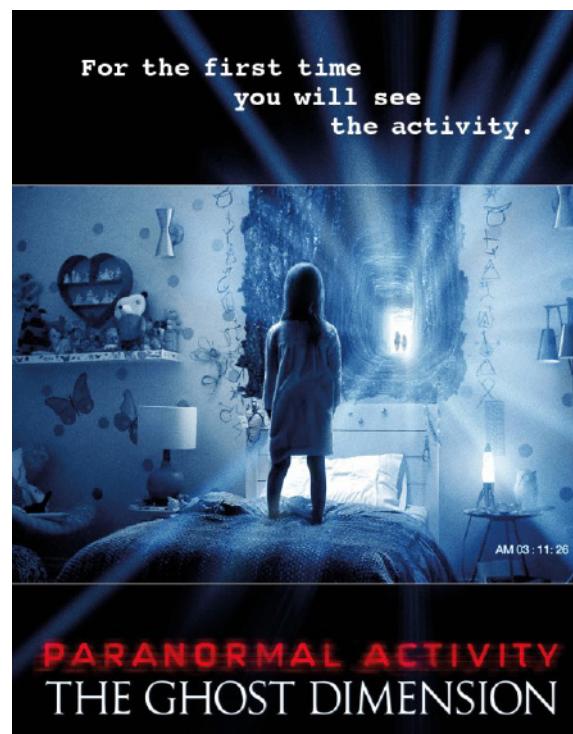
Horror also has a stark moral dimension to it. Films from other genres might convey mixed moral messages, depicting conflicted characters who toe the line between good and

Normal Activity

evil. But horror films usually revolve around an antagonist that can be uncontroversially classified as pure evil. Whether it's a person, a monster, a demon, or some formless sinister force, the instigator of the horror is almost never morally complex.

In Paranormal Activity, the line between good and evil is unambiguous. The viewer is several times reminded that the supernatural force is a demon, not a ghost, and throughout the series the characters learn from books, preachers, and other sources of supernatural lore that, while ghosts are disembodied souls of dead humans, demons are independent forces with no connection to the human realm. Thus the films set up a clear contrast between people and this evil disembodied demon. Every character in the film is either a cruel perpetrator of evil or an innocent victim. Characters can transition from one side to another; Jesse becomes violently demonic in Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones, but the moment of his transition from good to evil is unmistakable: he wakes up one morning with bite-marks on his side and the attentive viewer instantly knows that he is marked for demonic possession.

"SEEING OTHERS BUTCHERED FORCES US OUT OF OUR HABITUAL ILLUSION OF IMMORTALITY, REMINDING US THAT WE, TOO, WILL DIE."



This strict moral dualism appeals to the viewer's basic sense that there exists such a thing as pure evil. Moral relativism may try to rid us of our belief in the distinction between good and bad. Pop psychology may tell us that context and upbringing can explain away even the most terrible people. But horror teaches otherwise. Freddy Krueger from A Nightmare on Elm Street is pure evil. Halloween's Michael Myers is pure evil. The alien in Alien is (revolting and) pure evil. And the inhuman apparition that haunts Katie and Kristi in Paranormal Activity is pure evil.

Some horror films are entirely naturalistic, but, as its name suggests, the entire series of Paranormal Activity assumes the existence of supernatural forces. Some have suggested that the supernatural subset of the horror genre plays on our subliminal doubts about the prevalent attitude towards superstitions. Most of us are quite sure that tales we hear about ghosts and haunts and witches and exorcisms are just a lot of hooey. But we cannot be absolutely certain. There have been too many stories, too many purported testimonials and documentations of the supernatural for us to totally dismiss our nagging doubts. When first confronted by strange events in their house, the characters in Paranormal Activity act as we would if placed in a similar situation – they initially laugh off the possibility of a supernatural explanation. But eventually even the most incredulous char-

acters are unable to ignore the mounting evidence.

Perhaps the most prevalent criticism of Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension targets its predictability and failure to provide any truly new elements that the first five movies had not already incorporated. This is a standard criticism of horror flicks. Critics of the newest monster movies and slasher films love to point out their predictability, noting that these films conform to relatively uniform plotlines and select from a small pool of traditional scares.

But some horror movie enthusiasts actually delight in their genre's grim predictability. Horror has generated a recognizable world of alternative possibilities where all of the familiar things have gone familiarly rotten. The dominant horror themes are all inversions of the most commonplace aspects of reality. Possessed children turn on their parents. Dolls are creepy portents. Cohabiting couples are disemboweled. Mothers mutilate their families. Houses terrorize their inhabitants. This is the bread and butter of horror – taking the most normal, mundane elements of reality and consistently inverting them. Horror holds a mirror up to nature.

Some of the most popular horror films actually gained popularity by taking ownership of these stereotypes. Famously, the characters in The Scream explicitly joke about hackneyed horror elements. At one point, one of the characters lists "rules that one must abide by in order to successfully survive a horror movie." For example, rule number three is "Never, ever, ever, under any circumstances say 'I'll be right back'—because you won't be back." Of course, another character jokingly says, "I'll be right back" as he leaves to get another beer and is soon killed. The Scream's popularity showed that identifying the platitudes doesn't eliminate the fear; critics may create an illusion of safety by turning horror into an item for objective scrutiny, but their world is no less treacherous.

Paranormal Activity managed to do something similar, in that it demonstrates the continuity of possibility between our world and situations of terrible torment. The appeal of Paranormal Activity is not the blood and gore (there isn't much of it) but its ability to expand our horizons, exposing the terrifying limits of human experience. As much as we would like to deny the possibility of actual paranormal activity, the scenes are uncomfortably realistic. Even if the situations are far out, you can't help but squirm as you sit in class the day after witnessing them and realize that you and the people around you exist on a continuum of possibility with such extreme horror. Once you see those situations lived out on screen, the possibilities loom like a dark storm cloud.

With this in mind, we can identify a critical flaw in the recently released sixth movie. The film was advertised with the tagline "For the first time you will see the activity." A character in the film discovers a camera that can record supernatural beings and the footage shows the demonic forces in much more detail than any of the previous films. But something important is lost here. By showing us the demon, the film loses some of the element of the unknown that was so powerful in the earlier films and puts some comfortable distance between its world and ours. Whereas the world of the first five films is strangely close to our own, the explicitly fantastical scenes of the sixth have too much "para" and not enough "normal."

But when people criticize the later Paranormal films for their repetitiveness and similarity to the earlier films, they miss the point. The beauty of the series is that it creates a complete and consistent alternative world of horror that is eerily consistent with our own experience. By the end of the sixth movie, this alternative reality becomes so familiar to viewers that its regularities can even faintly permeate the way they see reality. At one point soon after I had finished the series, I actually imagined I heard the characteristic low rumbling that always precedes an appearance of the demon. I half expected that doors would slowly creak open and chandeliers would sway softly, and I clutched my blankets in case something came tugging at them in the night. The paranormal had become normal.

But, thankfully, sanity quickly took back the reins. I'm back to conducting my daily activities without the faint fear of a demonic presence. Those eerie experiences were mere byproducts of an overactive mind, a manifestly outlandish illusion, a childish conflation of fantasy with reality. I think.



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Regarding the Imposition of a Theology

By Shai Berman

Author's note: This article is a response to a pieced title "Regarding the Building of Bridges," which appeared in the October 2015 issue of The Commentator. All references in this article to "the article," "the piece," and "the author" refer to that article and its author. Further, the first 6 paragraphs of the article presented here draw heavily on the language and formulations of the first 6 paragraphs of "Regarding the Building of Bridges," and thus, for full comprehension, readers should familiarize themselves with the first 6 paragraphs of that original piece, if not the entire piece, before reading further.

Peace is unsettling; quiet is disquieting. We students are so comfortable, so at ease in our environment, that we yearn for discontent, for something to mutter about. Towards the middle of October 2015, a student took it upon himself to compose and publicize an article in the Commentator in response to frightful mischaracterizations visited six months ago by last year's Yeshiva College Student Association upon the helpless student body. That article was essentially an attack on the Judaic Studies faculty at Yeshiva College – the writer demanded that they, the Jewish Studies faculty, heed his understanding of Orthodox theology's voice when constructing their curriculums. The author was successful, not necessarily in influencing curricular decisions, but in creating the impression that he at least pretends to represent the true Torah values of this university and its students.

Towards the beginning of the article the author sets out his plans for his piece, to analyze the perceived failure of the Academic Jewish Studies in creating some sort of confluence between the Yeshiva and the University. To frame the analysis, the piece is titled: "Regarding the Building of Bridges." I myself have a tendency to assume that articles which involve architectural analogies and spiffy phrases such as "hermeneutics of suspicion" and "Franciscan University of Steubenville" are of significant merit, but when I inspected this one I was surprised to discover that it was false.

Contrary to the author's claims, if a Yeshiva College student feels a separation between our morning Torah studies and our afternoon secular classes, Academic Jewish Studies can certainly be the bridge linking the two. Academic Jewish Studies conducted in our university classes operates under modern academic norms but also within the confines of the traditional orthodox assumptions of the professor (all of whom, I may add, are practicing Orthodox Jews). When religious assumptions are put into play in the classroom, they are analyzed alongside other extant information which relates to that assumption rather than glossed over with a lackadaisical nod to their hallowed status. Unfortunately, this quest to try to come to a more informed understanding of elements of Jewish texts and history, sometimes involving a willingness to understand certain elements of our tradition in a non-literal sense, as serving a purpose other than a simple historical account from our forefathers is sometimes flatly rejected by our institution's yeshiva component.

Illustrations of this sad phenomenon in the Bible department have reared their heads before, perhaps most strongly by a fellow who published an article in Kol Hamevasser two years ago entitled "Shut Down the Bible Department." I will not discuss here the assertion to eliminate the Bible department, but in his response to this article, Nathan Hyman makes a basic observation

that has merit. Many critics of Bible teachers at Yeshiva University base their criticism on a their own specific notion of what is traditional and what is nontraditional, a notion which sees whatever students "grew up believing" as the standard against which the Bible department be assessed, regardless of the fact that many of these beliefs do not meet with the unanimous (and sometimes even majority) consent of Orthodox Jewish scholars throughout the ages.

This attitude can impact students' perception of reality, even to the point that the author can hurl grave accusations at his peers and professors. In one Bible class, the author understood collective nervous chuckling from other students as an indication that they believe that, when subjected to rigorous scholarly analysis, the doctrine of divine authorship does not hold water. Moreover, he contends that Yeshiva College's academics and students refuse to take a bold stance on certain issues which the author considers authentic Jewish principles because they fear being sidelined by the larger academic community.

Cylinder, Cyrus speaks about how he restored various cults' sanctuaries and gave the peoples under his rule the ability to return to their lands. With this in mind, Sefer Ezra's description of the impetus of the Jews' return from Babylon, God's "stirring up" Cyrus's spirit, is all the more interesting. Perhaps Ezra was choosing to interpret the current events, i.e. Cyrus' policy of allowing people to return to their homelands and worship freely, as an indirect communication from God that the Jews should return to Israel. An alternative (and perhaps more "kosher") understanding is that God's stirring up Cyrus caused Cyrus to adopt this new policy, not only for Jews, but for all the peoples in his kingdom as well. Either way, with this in mind, one can more easily understand why most Jews did not heed this divine message and return to Israel; if Cyrus' policy was directed, not just at Jews, but at many other people as well, it is less obvious that God is sending a message to the Jewish people.

Another, perhaps more acute example, is the comparison of Torah laws to other ancient near-eastern laws carried out in most Intro to Bible classes. Professors work

with students to discern how Torah law was similar to the law of the surrounding cultures and in what ways it differed. This in-class analysis can shed light on the ways God intended His nation to be different from other nations and also illuminate the messages He hoped His people would be able to impart to the rest of world, topics which may be of central importance to Yeshiva College students who are trying to better understand the relationship between their modern society and both their Jewish identity and Torah observance.

To return to the original issue, can academic Jewish studies, as taught in Yeshiva College, serve as a bridge between our daily dual religious and secular focus? Yes. As explained above, one can effectively make use of modern scholarship in the quest to try to come to a more informed understanding of elements of Jewish texts and tradition. But does academic Jewish studies play this role for everyone? Not necessarily. For the author, his study of philosophy serves as the bridge. For some, perhaps, the study of literature can serve this purpose, and others may still be searching for this link. In the end, however, the importance of Academic Jewish Studies at Yeshiva College need not, and should not, be tethered to its ability to bridge the gap between morning and afternoon. The document which the article referenced perhaps erred in its

implication that the need for Academic Jewish Studies requirements at Yeshiva College rests in its capacity to "serve as the bridge between our Torah study and our analytic methodologies of scholarship." Perhaps that document should have continued to state that, in order for Yeshiva College to ensure it meets its goal of producing graduates who are well rounded not just in secular realms, but in Jewish ones as well, it must provide a Jewish education which provides access to our tradition with the greatest feasible breadth and depth. While a plurality of students use the morning program solely to study Talmud, and others also explore Jewish thought as well as Bible through the lens of medieval commentaries, Academic Jewish Studies provides students with some foundation in Jewish history, a deeper understanding of some of our canonized texts, and a familiarity with our nation's language. To have allowed these elements of a Yeshiva College education to become the latest casualties in the recent wave of cuts within the university would have been to sacrifice a core element of the mission which drives this institution.

"CONTRARY TO THE AUTHOR'S CLAIMS, IF A YESHIVA COLLEGE STUDENT FEELS A SEPARATION BETWEEN OUR MORNING TORAH STUDIES AND OUR AFTERNOON SECULAR CLASSES, ACADEMIC JEWISH STUDIES CAN CERTAINLY BE THE BRIDGE LINKING THE TWO."



This phenomenon is not limited to Bible classes. In Jewish History classes as well, some students react adversely to the presentation of historical evidence or analysis which clashes with accounts found in the Talmud or even Second Maccabees. I wonder, from where did this tendency to disparage those who do not assign undeniable historical veracity of these sources come from? Who engraved the precept "Thou shall absolutely believe all the words of Chazal and Jason of Cyrene as accurate historical fact" onto the Stone Tablets of Orthodox theology?

If one takes the author's opinion on the limits of Orthodox theology as fact (which is certainly how the author presents it), then, yes, the academic Jewish studies faculty at Yeshiva College, as well as many students, have some serious introspection to do. However, those who do not view Orthodox Judaism as confining its adherents to the strict boundaries the author imposes can certainly gain a significant amount from exploring the intersection between Torah and modern scholarship. For example, I found that learning about the Cyrus Cylinder gave me deeper understanding of Sefer Ezra. In the

The Man Behind the Incitement

By Michael Osborne

Recently, at his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Mahmoud Abbas, President of the PLO, opened his speech ‘raising the alarm’ to the world as to his version of the facts on the ground as they stand in relation to the most disputed piece of real estate in the world.

The Temple Mount. Al Haram Al-Sharif. Har Habayit.

The fact of the matter is that this man, a terrorist and tyrant who has held his democratically elected position long after its expiration, has a point. The greatest perpetration of human rights in all of Israel occurs on the Temple Mount. It forbids Jews from praying at their own holiest site. The rights of speech, expression and religion are all obstructed to preserve the ‘status quo’.



The status quo, as it is called on the Temple Mount, leaves the administration of the site to a Muslim trust left over from the Jordanian days, called the Waqf. Under the current racist agreement, Muslim worshipers have full rights while others receive none. Although the Mount is revered as the holiest site in Judaism as well as a holy site in Christian-

ity and Islam, access to it for non-Muslims is restricted to a few hours a day, excluding Fridays or Muslim holidays in which access is banned completely for them. The site can additionally be closed for security concerns, which tend to be riots designed to prevent Jewish ascension to the holy site on the Mount during Jewish and Israeli holidays. Additionally, non-Muslims may only enter the site through one of the 11 gates and are forbidden any form of religious expression. This, despite the numerous Israeli Supreme Court rulings demanding all must be allowed religious freedoms at the holy site.

Over the past year Abbas has upped his inflammatory rhetoric in relation to the Temple mount, culminating with his statement in September on official PA TV:

"The Al-Aqsa [Mosque] is ours... and they have no right to defile it with their filthy feet. We will not allow them to, and we will do everything in our power to protect Jerusalem."

He went further to bless all the blood spilled in Jerusalem in the name of Allah. These statements were made in response to Israeli police forces being forced to enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque to blockade Muslim rioters inside after they had attempted to start a riot that would force the Jewish visitors from the Mount for the day.

During his UN address, Abbas went on to threaten that if Israel continued this use of brutality, the Palestinians would turn this from a political conflict to a religious one. This man is parading to the world that his peaceful people are being persecuted and their holy places desecrated, and he has been doing this for years. The truth is that Abbas is inciting Palestinians to violence using the places his people claim as holy as their battleground.

This is not the first time that Abbas and his organization have acted duplicitously. In 2000, Abbas’s predecessor and mentor, the terrorist Yassir Arafat, used similar claims of Jews trying to take over the Temple Mount. Those claims led into the second intifada. All this was in the name of ‘changing the rules of the game,’ as his advisor admitted in an Arabic language interview in October of 2000.

Today, as well, Abbas’s goal continues to be to undermine any negotiation with the Jewish State. In one language he speaks of peace, and in another he incites death. He sneaks around trying to create a history that doesn’t exist. Abbas tries to turn the Western Wall into a Muslim site, but the fact is that when it was under Islamic rule, it was a garbage dump. The Waqf has spent years trying to remove all evidence of the existence of two Jewish Temples and now tries to claim more sites for themselves in a further attempt to re-

"ABBAS, YOU WILL FAIL, AND EVENTUALLY THE WORLD WILL CATCH ON."

move the Jewish history in the indigenous Jewish homeland.

No matter how easy peace is for Abbas, he instead chooses to go asking for more, continuing to destabilize the status quo. The reason for this is simple, yet the world is too blind to see. He is a fraud. He does not want peace. His goal is drive the Jews into the sea. This incitement has led to a movement whose goal is just that.

This #INTIFADA (the name being used by the Palestinian side), much like its historical precedent, is wreaking havoc in the streets. This is to be expected when teenagers are attempting to stab Jews and their children in broad daylight. However, we have a message for you. Abbas, you will fail, and eventually the world will catch on. You claim it’s about control over Judea and Samaria, yet you stab innocents in Ra'anana and Beit Shemesh. Continue to incite your violence if you wish, but we will defend ourselves and we will be victorious. We are here in our indigenous homeland and we are not going anywhere.

Michael Osborne is the CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America) Fellow on campus and is responsible for monitoring and maintaining accuracy in Middle East reporting on campus and for calling out bias in relation to the narrative of the Israeli conflict.

FIFA: Time to Change

By Joey Cheshire

As many soccer fans across the globe are aware, FIFA, soccer’s worldwide governing body, is no stranger to allegations of corruption. Many examples of FIFA’s questionable decision-making indicate an urgent need to revamp its leadership. Under a cloud of suspicion, FIFA awarded the hosting rights of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar, a small, Middle Eastern country that has almost no soccer background. FIFA’s awarding of the World Cup, the greatest competition in worldwide soccer, to a country whose national team is currently ranked 92nd in the world left a lot of people scratching their heads.

Many practical issues with Qatar’s hosting of the World Cup exist as well. For example, because of the brutal heat in Qatar, FIFA has considered moving the tournament from the traditional months of June and July to November and December. For those who aren’t familiar with the scheduling of worldwide soccer, a winter World Cup would essentially ruin the season for domestic soccer clubs in Europe, such as FC Barcelona, Manchester United, or Bayern Munich, because their players would be unavailable during their commitment to playing in the World Cup. Additionally, because of the brutal climate, special climate-controlled stadiums need to be built in Qatar, so the playing conditions remain safe. In addition to the practical issues with the Qatar World Cup, almost every aspect of its preparation has been under suspicion of corruption and dishonesty. In order to build the previously mentioned stadiums, the Qatari government has employed the services of migrant workers, many of whom have been denied food, water, and wages. Some have estimated that many migrants have actually died as a result of the conditions imposed on them by Qatar’s government, though

Qatar denies that claim. To summarize, there is very little that actually makes sense about Qatar hosting the World Cup, which is why many people are under the impression that Qatari officials bought votes during the selection process. If these bribery allegations are proven true, the 2022 World Cup’s host country could be changed.

Controversy is nothing new to FIFA. Sepp Blatter, the recently-ousted president of FIFA, was arguably the most infamous sporting figure on the planet during his tenure, offending everyone from Real Madrid legend Cristiano Ronaldo, about whom he said “has more expenses for the hairdresser than Leo Messi” to homosexual soccer fans, whom he told to “refrain from any sexual activities” during the World Cup in Qatar, where homosexuality is banned. He insulted many South Americans



"FOR THE SAKE OF BOTH SOCCER AND ITS FANS, FIFA NEEDS TO BE REFORMED WITH LEADERS WHO ACTUALLY HAVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH THE SPORT AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

when he claimed that one English player’s adultery with a teammate’s partner “would have been applauded” in Latin America, and female soccer players as well, whom he implored to create a more “feminine aesthetic” by wearing tighter and more revealing clothing during games. Even without considering his various derogatory comments, the numerous allegations of corruption against Blatter should have been enough to remove him from office a long time ago. Unfortunately, Blatter and the rest of FIFA wield an unprecedented amount of power compared to other figures in sports, because soccer is the world’s game. Soccer is the most popular sport in places as different as Brazil and England, Italy and Mexico. Even with the corruption allegations regarding the World Cup’s placement, the World Cup remains arguably the most important sporting event on the planet, with players vying their entire careers for the opportunity to play in a single one. Because of soccer’s unprecedented popularity, its governing body has a more powerful influence than any other sporting organization may

SEE FIFA, CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Why I'm Right and Everybody Else is Wrong

By Etai Shuchatowitz

Recently, I've been reading lots of Op-Ed pieces, both professionally written and not, and I've noticed a trend. It pops up in all sorts of pieces all across the spectrum, and I find it troubling. It's the arrogant prose that pervades many pieces which reflects the authority with which an author writes. This happens in the New York Times (I'm looking at you, Thomas Friedman), as well as in the Commentator, and I'd like to address this frustrating style as both a reader and a writer. I want to then conjecture as to why I think it might be prevalent now, and argue why this is ineffective thinking and writing.

Let me start with an example from the latest issue of the Commentator. There was a piece entitled "Regarding the Building of Bridges" which talked about being unafraid to shun academic ideas such as documentary hypothesis in YU's academic Jewish Studies classes. I'm not super interested in tackling the issue itself or the arguments he presented - the author is more than entitled to take this stance regardless of how I feel about his arguments. However, what bothered me tremendously was the manner in which it was presented.

At one point, the author brought up, what in my mind, is a totally valid counterargument. He said, "I have heard people claim that Judaism does not require its adherents to believe in any specific doctrines or creeds. I have heard defendants of this claim point out that medieval rabbis sometimes strongly disagreed about which principles should be considered core beliefs of Judaism." At the very least, it's an interesting claim to make which requires a counterargument. However, the only sentence the author wrote in response was, "Setting aside the clear fallaciousness of this argument (in fact, a precondition for this type of dispute to arise is belief on both sides in the importance of doctrine), the example itself demonstrates the difference between our mindset and the medieval mindset."

This tactic is both counterproductive and, quite frankly, mean. What he's done is claim that the question is so stupid that it requires no comment. In effect, he's just sidestepped the entire argument entirely without any reason for doing so. What exactly is the clear fallaciousness of this argument? More importantly, why is any fallacy clear? It's obviously not clear because I don't see it. I'll concede that this line of reasoning assumes that I'm at least intelligent enough to reject obviously foolish arguments - which is an arrogant assumption to make. But, this is exactly what bothers me about the piece. The author, by backhandedly rejecting a line of thought, has insulted me personally. He has condescendingly marginalized any counterarguments that I may bring because I'm too stupid to see the "clear fallaciousness of this argument".

I don't think the author intended to do this. I don't think he said, "Etai is definitely not worthy of entering this debate at my level". But, that's the problem. It's one thing to take a stance. It's another thing entirely to take an absolute stance. It's a whole other level to take the stance that anybody who disagrees with you is a moron incapable of discourse. This intellectual bullying is just not good writing.

Another example of this type of writing came from a recent New York Times Online piece entitled, "The First Year College Reading List". In it, a few different people from different backgrounds offered their opinions of what should be on a freshman reading list. One of these people studies at Columbia. Her opinion was entitled, "It's Not Just the Books, It's the Discussion". In it she argues that in the name of reading all of these classics her voice is being lost. She wrote, "I quickly found the discussions were centered more on the preservation of old ideas than the progression of new ones. I was discouraged from asking the most difficult questions, especially when it came to the role of women and working people in the literature."

This is a very legitimate question and debate, and I concede that her voice may very well be lost in academic discussions which are framed in white male dominant history. However, she throws around the phrase early on, "The euro centrism and misogynistic nature of Columbia's infamous core curriculum came as no surprise to me." She then goes on to cite, "I knew that Genesis would tell me Eve was crafted from Adam's rib, and that "Pride and Prejudice" would conclude with wifedom as the greatest feat a woman can achieve." This blasphemous rejection of classics is a problem.

Here are texts that have spoken to people for centuries. Whether it speaks to you or not does not reflect the im-

portance both literally and otherwise that these texts present. Furthermore, as soon as you use these sweeping reductionist claims of "euro centric" and "misogynist", it's like you've removed any and all merit from the works. It's frankly hard to take anything else seriously.

Please do not think that I reject her argument wholly. I think she, like the writer of "Regarding the Building of Bridges," has a valid point. I'm just very irked by the style in which they chose to present it.



"IT'S A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL TO TAKE THE STANCE THAT ANYBODY WHO DISAGREES WITH YOU IS A MORON INCAPABLE OF DISCOURSE. THIS INTELLECTUAL BULLYING IS JUST NOT GOOD WRITING!"

Here comes the most conjecture filled part of the whole piece (and I'm well aware of that fact). I think this writing style boils down to two mistaken assumptions. Firstly, it relates to a current "me-centric" obsession that has taken over. There's this prevalent "you do you" mantra that is barked about in this strangely cultic fashion. The one thing that this mantra doesn't take into account is that "you doing you" totally disregards the existence and importance of other people. If you only "do you", then you're just being selfish. You'll live in this weird solipsistic life where you don't care about other human beings and their wants and needs.

I like not "doing me". This is what allows me to function in normal everyday society. If I just did what I wanted without any regard for anybody else, I would be (a) a jerk (b) a weirdo. These societal norms and conventions are not only helpful, but really important for coexistence purposes.

This could come back to Facebook and Twitter (and I know, I sound like a crotchety old man bemoaning the youth of today)

FIFA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

have. Yet, unfortunately for soccer, FIFA has simply never given proper respect to the game, instead using soccer and its events as tools for bribery, corruption and other crimes when it could have been fostering collaboration between its international constituents.

FIFA's latest crimes, however, transcend more than mere offensiveness. The next two World Cups are scheduled to take place in Russia and Qatar, in 2018 and 2022, respectively. Frankly, neither of these countries are appropriate to host an event that is meant to foster worldwide unity and international cooperation, which is what the World Cup should be. Russia, under Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, has become infamous for its recent invasion of Ukraine, and more recently by involving itself in the conflict in Syria on behalf of brutal dictator Bashar Al-Assad. Russia simply should not be hosting an international sporting event when its ruler is sending military to fight on behalf of one of the most violent dictators in the world. Meanwhile, Qatar's hosting of the 2022 World Cup might be the most controversial choice of a venue for a sporting event in recent memory. Sharia law, the legal code of the Islamic religion, plays a strong role in Qatari government. Homosexuality is illegal, and punishable by

which continue to reinforce the idea that you matter. People follow your everyday activities and emotions granting your life some weird unreal intrinsic significance. You get likes and shares and retweets which seem to validate all of your intelligent thoughts that nobody has ever thought before.

But, here's the thing that nobody wants to tell you: you don't matter. There are seven billion plus people today. There are millions of people graduating this year with the exact same hopes, dreams and fears as you. There are billions of people who all feel the same emotions as you. Hell, as much as I hate to admit it, I don't matter. At least not intrinsically. There's a key part of the phrase missing. You matter only inasmuch as you're doing something for a cause greater than yourself. But, this is always missing from the popular idea.

This brings me to the second point. Writing is a very introspective process. When you're writing, you're typically not thinking of others. You're (and, in this case, me) just putting your own thoughts on paper and basking in their obvious brilliance. There's no way to think that your words are engaging in a larger discourse because they're just yours. But, the written word has been, and will continue to be a very powerful tool for at least the foreseeable future (and probably the unforeseeable also, but, by definition, I can't say anything about that). Your writing and your opinion are simply one more link in the chain of discourse. Therefore, it's easy to reject out of hand any counterarguments as there's nobody present to offer them. But, just because it's easy doesn't make it right.

I'm not writing because I think the rest of the world is wrong. I'm not writing because I feel like getting up on my high horse and telling you to become a better writer. I'm writing this because reading these pieces makes me feel uncomfortable. I don't like being told that my thoughts and opinions are not as valid as yours. It not only makes me feel bad as a reader, but it undermines your whole point. I stop reading when I get the sense that you think you're better than I am. When I open up the New York Times now and see that a piece was written by Thomas Friedman, I don't read it because his prose are unbearable to get through. It's like sludging through a parade of condescending quips masquerading as intellectual novelty. Reading should open up the world. At the very least, reading should be fun. And, when you're saying things in this 'holier than thou' way, it's not fun at all to read. It's frustrating, annoying and worst of all, self indulgent.

Here's my plea to those of you writing an opinion piece: take a second and read over your thoughts. Are you writing to have yourself and your potentially valid opinion heard? Or are you writing to enter a larger discourse? If it's the former, stop. Seriously, stop. Because I don't care about your opinion. I don't care what you have to say. I don't care how many likes, comments or shares you get on Facebook. I don't care how many psychological experiments or statistics you bring to make your piece seem less like an experiment in indulgent self-expression. I only care about the larger discussion.

the death penalty. That's not exactly the best news for gays in soccer, about whom French legend Thierry Henry said that their coming out would be "great for the game... great for anyone, for any human being." In Qatar, punishments such as flogging and stoning are legal, and its government is an absolute monarchy. Simply put, Qatari society has a lot of policy changes to do before it's ready to host a massive celebration of international unity like the World Cup.

Equally shocking as the decisions to give the World Cup to Russia and Qatar is the failure of FIFA to grant the World Cup to a country with a prominent soccer background. Countries such as England, Italy, Spain, or Argentina, all of whom have won World Cups in the past, would make excellent choices to host the tournament, because of their respective soccer prowess and their strong fan bases. FIFA's decision to grant the World Cup to two countries that have soccer backgrounds that pale in comparison to the major footballing powers shows how far off FIFA is from acting in the best interests of the game. For the sake of both soccer and its fans, FIFA needs to be reformed with leaders who actually have the best interests of both the sport and the international community. Countries with questionable governments that deprive citizens of human rights cannot be handed control over the biggest sporting event in the world.

Social Stratification: A Damaged, Yet Rectifiable, State of Affairs

By Josh Blicker

After spending one or two years studying in yeshiva in Israel, coming to Yeshiva University can be a daunting experience for students. The cultural differences between the two institutions can be vast. Some students feel the need to isolate themselves from others to preserve their new habits and values. Although these students may feel that this practice is beneficial for them, others may disagree. For example, a few days ago, I was talking to someone who went to a different yeshiva than I did. I was taken aback when he said that I seem so down to earth in comparison to my aloof friends from yeshiva. After carefully observing the behavior of my peers, I realized that his comment may have been a result of the negative, judgemental environment that is caused by the social fragmentation at Yeshiva University.

The religious tensions and divisions that exist between the various groups are pernicious for the members within each group and for the Jewish collective. They can be the impetus for hatred and fighting within the Orthodox world. These societal divisions are apparent in many areas of Jewish life and are, unfortunately, noticeable in Yeshiva University as well. Most saliently, the rift between religious groups manifests itself in the student dining hall. Students who view themselves as more shtark, or more serious Torah scholars, tend to shy away from those who are not a part of their group, appearing cold, selfish, and aloof. Consequently, they are avoided by their outwardly less religious peers. In reality, the former group may be purposefully more introverted in order to create a community of like minded individuals dedicated to achieving the goals of serious Torah study. While the so-called "less religious" individuals may harbor ill feelings towards these other students as a result, they too hold some culpability. For the behavior of the "less religious group" can indeed have negative effects that only creates further distance between them and their fellow students. Evidently, the religious divisions in YU are symptomatic of those outside of YU, for almost all of the students belong to a segment of the Orthodox community that, to a certain extent, is involved in a similar religious struggle as well. The judgemental behavior in which students engage will only increase the likelihood of

their involvement in possibly more damaging activities upon their graduation of YU.

One could argue that the interaction between these two groups does not relate to the damaging inter-community relations that take place off the grounds of the university. The ostensible religious stratification in YU, so the argument goes, may simply be a result of students wanting to asso-

"WE NEED TO EXPAND OUR SOCIAL CIRCLES AND INTERACT WITH THOSE WHO WE PERCEIVE AS DIFFERENT!"



ciate with the people with whom they attended yeshiva in Israel. Sadly, the divisions that exist in the dining room, for example, are indicative of religious divisions that run much deeper than friends from yeshiva eating together. For example, on Shabbat in the student dining room, there are tables where only students wearing specific attire—such as a suit, a hat, or lack thereof—are welcome. However, the students

who sit at the other table are also religious, as evidenced by the lively discussions of Torah that can be overheard from both groups in various different settings, such as the Beit Midrash and the dormitories.

Granted, the various elements within Orthodox society tend to hold differing opinions and world outlooks. However, there are also many areas where our groups agree rather than disagree. For example, a few weeks ago, YU students from across the board were able to come together and recite Tehillim as a collective student community for the benefit of our brethren in Israel. The sense of unity demonstrated by the two groups at the Tehillim event indicates that the divisions perceived between the groups are not as large as they appear. Additionally, the recent kumzitz that took place in Times Square in support of the State of Israel indicates the commitment of both groups to the Jewish collective regardless of the existent social and religious divisions. Such displays of cooperation are both heart-warming and optimistic. The behavior that took place at these events exemplifies ideal behavior for our students as well as the communities outside of YU. But it should not take a national Jewish crisis to force us to stop the damaging social interactions between the groups.

In order to mitigate the judgemental views that can be a source of friction between our groups, we need to expand our social circles and interact with those who we perceive as different. Focusing on our similarities through conversation will enable us to shorten the distance between us. For example, almost all of the students at YU have a common interest in the development of the nation of Israel. Also, both groups value religious study, for many students spent a year (or two) studying Torah in Israel and all of the students have chosen to attend a university where they spend the first part of their day studying Torah. Most importantly, we must learn to view our peers as more than the political and sociological ideologies to which they subscribe. Doing so will allow us to forge relationships with those beyond our current social boundaries. If we can improve our views of our peers and positively change our attitudes towards them, it is my belief that YU will serve as an ideal model for social interaction for the Jewish community as well as the world at large.

Is Money Really Everything?

By Jonathan Livi

During the CNBC Republican debate on October 28th, presidential nominee Donald Trump said the following: "SuperPacs are a disaster. They're a scam. They cause dishonesty. And you better get rid of them because they are causing a lot of bad decisions to be made by some very good people." As we've all come to expect, his rhetoric was unexpected for a Republican presidential candidate. In general, Republicans favor removing campaign finance regulations, rather than strengthening them. But what can we say, Trump is Trump.

Just a few moments later, a rather insightful comment was made. After being referenced obliquely by one of the moderators, Marco Rubio jumped into the discussion to say: "I know the Democrats have the ultimate SuperPac. It's called the mainstream media!" The crowd went wild, and while the comment was intended to be more witty than intellectually profound, it in reality contained as much profundity as wit. His statement revealed the greatest flaw with the argument for campaign finance regulations, which, due to the fanfare surrounding the statement, was almost entirely missed.

Presently, the law forbids an individual to contribute any more than \$5000 to a presidential campaign. The reason for this regulation is simple. It is not fair and it is certainly not democratic for wealthy individuals to have undue influence on political campaigns. By limiting the amount that an individual could contribute to a campaign, one limits the amount of influence that wealthy individuals can have on campaigns, and ultimately, on policy. Ostensibly, the argument sounds reasonable and fair, but does it hold water? With a little bit of scrutiny, it becomes clear that it does not.

Money does not win presidential campaigns. Why not? Because money does not directly affect people's opinions. Speech affects people's opinions, not money. People get influenced by the things that they hear and the things that they

see. That is it. So where does money come into the picture? Money is merely a means to have your speech heard. If you want somebody to listen to your opinion, you can pay him so that he listens. If you want many people to hear your opinion, you can pay for an advertisement on TV. Thus, while money doesn't actually talk, it does help you talk. In essence, money is a medium through which we speak. If you limit money, you limit speech.

But the key point is this. Money is not the only thing that enables us to speak. In fact, there are a myriad of things that enable us to speak, of which money is only one. An eloquent speaker can change minds with well-articulated arguments. A talented writer can change minds with elegant

"WHY IS IT NOT A VIOLATION OF FREE SPEECH TO FORBID SOMEBODY FROM CONTRIBUTING MONEY TO A CAMPAIGN, IN ORDER TO HAVE HIMSELF HEARD?"

prose. A famous person can change minds by simply using his fame, and a businessman can change minds by paying to have people listen. None of the things mentioned above are actual speech, but they are intimately related to it. They are so much part and parcel of speech, that for practical purposes they are indistinguishable from it. Just ask yourself the following. Would it not be a violation of "free speech" to forbid a writer from writing convincingly? Would it not be a violation of "free speech" to forbid a speaker from speaking articulately? So why is it not a violation of free speech to forbid somebody from contributing money to a campaign, in order to have himself heard?

This is why Marco Rubio's statements were so insightful. By equating the mainstream media to a SuperPac, he essentially equated two forms of speech: direct monetary contributions to a political campaign, and direct rhetorical contributions to a political campaign. There is no difference between the two, and limiting one is as much a violation of "free speech" as limiting the other.

So why are politicians, primarily Democrats, so eager to limit the amount of monetary speech people can expend during the political process? Perhaps, it is because Democrats are fixated on money, and this is not as pejorative as it is descriptive. Democrats tend to explain problems in pecuniary terms. It is why a White House spokesperson recently claimed that a lack of jobs is responsible for fostering radical Islamic ideologies in the Middle East. It is also why Democrats believe that our inferiority in education is due to a lack of education spending, despite the fact that we spend more per student than any other country in the world. In the same way, Democrats greatly exaggerate the effects of money on the political process, and it is what leads them to fear this kind of political speech over others.

But there is good news for proponents of campaign finance regulations. They may not be all that necessary anyways. Jeb Bush, the Republican candidate with the most money, is practically out of the race. Donald Trump, on the other hand, has barely spent a penny, and has led in the polls for months. Perhaps money doesn't really influence the political process that much after all. In an era where information is free and easily accessible, perhaps you can say that monetary speech has lost its value. What matters most in an era where information is free is ideas, and money is becoming increasingly unnecessary for their dissemination. The famous idiom, "Money isn't everything," has never been more true.

By Benjamin Zirman

Is your phone always on low battery? Do you feel glued to outlets because of your need to charge your phone constantly? A recent poll conducted in New York showed that most people charge their phones 2.6 times a day, while 84% experienced anxiety about having anxiety over low-battery on their phone. Even crazier, a 2012 study shows that 77% of Americans are nomophobes – a real condition documented as a fear of having no mobile battery or coverage. The symptoms for nomophobia include feelings of desperation or panic when separated from your smartphone, not being able to focus on work or conversations, and regularly checking your phone for notifications. A more extreme condition called cellphone vibration syndrome is where some people may think their phone is ringing when it's not. But even those who don't suffer from cellphone vibration syndrome are constantly looking at their phone as 67% of cell phone owners find themselves checking their phone for messages, alerts, or calls — even when they don't notice their phone ringing or vibrating. Yet when people were surveyed at 6 pm New Yorkers' average battery life was at 38.93% and that number dropped to 23.13% by 10 pm. Clearly so many people are on their phones and want them to be charged but most don't have the time or resources to constantly charge their phones. So while people always want to be connected, the biggest obstacle is their phone's battery life.

"STOREDOT'S NOVEL TECHNOLOGY HAS OPTIMIZED CAPACITY, FAST CHARGING, AND EXTENDED BATTERY-LIFE... AND ABSORBS ENOUGH POWER IN JUST 1 MINUTE THAT IT CAN LAST AN ENTIRE DAY."

A new Israeli startup called StoreDot has come up with an innovative battery and charger that might be the next biggest thing in cell phone technology. This has led to StoreDot being named Globes most promising startup of 2015. StoreDot was started in 2012 and was born out of the nanotechnology department at Tel Aviv University. It was founded by Doron Myersdorf (the current CEO) and Tel Aviv University professors Simon Litsyn and Gil Rosenman. Myersdorf has a Ph.D. in industrial engineering and management, and two other degrees from the Technion. Before StoreDot, Myersdorf founded and managed two Silicon Valley startups, and worked for SanDisk earning over \$100M in revenues. The first prototype was for the Samsung's Galaxy 4 but since has been expanded to many other products. The professors stumbled upon the battery compounds while experimenting with flash memory for Alzheimer's research. StoreDot currently has 47 employees and has plans to grow to 60 employees by the end of 2015. The company has raised \$66 million from backers including Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich and Samsung Ventures. StoreDot plans on revolutionizing the current cell phone battery market as well as expanding to other applications of their nano-technology.

Warning: Low Battery!!

The newest product set to hit the open markets in 2016 is the FlashBattery for smartphones. StoreDot's novel technology has optimized capacity, fast charging, and extended battery-life, in addition to enhancing its safety. The FlashBattery is such a quick charging battery that absorbs enough power in just 1 minute that it can last an entire day. Compared to the hour and a half it usually takes for the average device to recharge, these results are revolutionary. Using a unique hybrid multifunction electrode (MFE), the FlashBattery combines two types of energy storage

electric vehicles in 5 minutes, which will go a long way towards solving people's "range anxiety" fears. StoreDot also developed new organic materials that make very little heat. This change improves the original amount of cycles almost four times to around 1500-2000 charges.

Another potential issue with StoreDot's model is that you clearly need a powerful electrical infrastructure to produce the energy for this super quick charge so it's unlikely that people will have them at their personal homes. In StoreDot's own



solutions. It takes the high-power and quick charging speed of a supercapacitor (SC) with the battery storage ability and low battery usage rate of a Lithium-Ion battery (LiB). In addition, StoreDot uses groundbreaking organic compounds made in its labs, to reduce charging time while increasing power capability.

This new battery will have to replace pre-existing batteries as most phones would be fried by the large amount of electricity the current version of the charger supplies. StoreDot plans to enter the phone, tablet, and laptop market but will have to ensure that the battery is small enough to fit into all phones, as prototype models have been bigger than current phone batteries. Unfortunately for consumers, even though StoreDot raised 42 million dollars in recent months for their prototype, they don't plan on having their battery hit the market before 2016. The FlashCharger will be available in pocket, standard, and car sizes, and is said to cost 30 percent more than today's versions, which will add as much as \$100 to a phone's retail price. That being said, since charging is so fast, a home or office would only require one FlashCharger to charge all the family members and co-workers' devices.

Other products that feature a rapid charging option usually shorten overall battery life. By contrast, FlashBattery can withstand thousands of charge/discharge cycles and extend battery life to 3 years of operation. The materials and battery structure increases charge cycles from the standard 500 in LiBs to 2,500 cycles in FlashBattery, which is a 500% increase! Additionally, the FlashBattery cannot overcharge which is a common problem in the current batteries leading to shorter battery lives.

These breakthroughs inspired StoreDot to expand its applications to electric cars. One of the biggest problems for electric cars is how long it takes to fill up the battery and it is a big contribution to "range anxiety" fears. It would make a huge difference to drivers if they were confident in the knowledge that they could get a five minute fill up. Another huge problem was the heat the current electric car batteries produce. With the intense heat battery lives are shortened in half reducing the usual 500-600 charges to 200-300. In May 2015, StoreDot announced at the Microsoft ThinkNext Contest in Tel Aviv that it had started working on a technology that will fully charge

words, their solution is that people will make "a 5-minute stop at a local refueling station for a full tank that can last for three hundred miles." But to obtain this high amount of energy in these charging stations the company will need government support. The cost of a StoreDot car battery will be about 20 to 30 percent higher than the current lithium-ion batteries mainly because of the expensive organic materials. However, for electric vehicle owners the cost could go down nearly 50% per mile over the electric vehicle's lifetime. The first important improvement is it will require much fewer battery replacements as these new batteries don't deteriorate as quickly and have three times the amount of life cycles. StoreDot expects that we will see the first product late in 2016 and be ready for the commercial market by 2017.

The two biggest problems for batteries have been the size and the time needed to recharge and amazingly StoreDot has found solutions for both. Current electric vehicle technology has maxed out in range with the Tesla Model S 85 kWh, which can go 265 miles. Only one other electric vehicle, the Toyota's RAV4 EV, can go more than 100 miles on one charge. If StoreDot is successful they could create the greatest electric car to date which could greatly affect the current electric car market and popularity.

After all this groundbreaking work, StoreDot has a future goal of using its technology to enhance various electronics areas such as superfast Flash memory and bio-lasers. An even bigger impact could be made in an area called "nano-medicine" improving significantly drug delivery, food security, bio labeling and more. The applications of this nano-technology do have their downsides as people might become even more addicted to their phones and other electronic devices.

Looking back at StoreDot's core competency, their battery technology, it's clear that they are on the verge of something special. "Battery technology is the single biggest challenge holding back the consumer electronics industry right now," says Ben Wood from the CCS Insight Consultancy. If StoreDot is able to crack battery technology and make substantial improvements, it could change the way we use our cellphones, cars, and other technological devices as well, and will potentially save people time, money, and energy in the process.

What do Corporate Scandals Mean for Investors?

By Elie Sundel

It seems that with every passing day another corporate scandal pops up. Today it was Valeant acknowledging "fake sales" on their accounting books; yesterday it was Volkswagen installing "defeat devices" to bypass emission tests in their cars; tomorrow it will be different characters but the same plot. The murky divide between Main Street and Wall Street is without a doubt ever-present. Investors' minds are consumed with visions of CEO's traveling the world in luxurious yachts and employees taking limousines to and from work. So how do we, as investors, move past such scandals and feel comfortable investing our hard-earned money in the stocks of these companies? To many, finding an undervalued investment is harder than finding a needle in a haystack and

that is prior to the added potential of corporate manipulation of the stock price. How can it be, that even after finding that elusive "needle," a person could have been looking in a faulty haystack the whole time and really found a manipulated stock? Before answering, it's important to take a step back, look at some cases and differentiate between them.

In 1982, after the death of seven people who had taken Tylenol Extra Strength tablets made by parent company Johnson & Johnson, it was discovered that someone had laced them with cyanide. Although the company wasn't actively in the wrong, a scandal like this still had the potential to devastate their brand and cripple their ability to generate sales. This almost happened, as their stock fell 15% in the following days. As touched on earlier, a little over a month ago, Volkswagen was discovered to have installed "defeat devices," a software

that detects when a car is being tested, thereby producing inaccurate emission levels and bypassing inspections. Volkswagen could then advertise their cars as a never-before-seen combination of fuel efficiency and high-speed capabilities. To many of the close to eleven million consumers, such a feat seemed inexplicable, but they had faith in the system.

"We've totally screwed up." "Broken the trust of our customers and the public." "My most urgent task is to win back trust for the Volkswagen." These are just some of the remarks that current and recently-fired Volkswagen upper management publicly professed. However, to the people who lost millions of dollars after the stock fell from about \$38 to \$23 in the following days, not to mention the scores of consumers

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The Dark Side of Entrepreneurship

By Etan (Alex) Neiman

You decide to submit yourself to the hours, sweat, and unrelenting stress. This is not a light choice, but it is the choice you know is right. Starting a business or a company is in your blood. You are an entrepreneur. The seventeen hour workdays and extreme financial risk which you are welcoming with open arms are merely means to a greater good. There is, however, a problem. You may have made a severe miscalculation; a miscalculation which could cost you far more than your business or company. This miscalculation could cost you everything.

When my parents decided to walk down the road of entrepreneurship, they felt they were ready for the extreme hours and inherent risks. After all, how could they pass up the opportunity to live out their dream of opening a gourmet bakery? This may be their only chance to find that true fulfillment which had been eluding them all of their professional careers. It would be irresponsible of them not to chase their dream.

So many good people ask and answer all of the right questions before turning to entrepreneurship. All of the right questions except for the most important one: is your family ready for your entrepreneurship? For anybody considering joining the class of entrepreneurs, what absolutely must be considered is that every minute into the night which you spend at your business is a minute your spouse spends at home without you, alone. Every Sunday you work tirelessly to finish that presentation is a Sunday your daughter will be the only player without her father or mother at her basketball game. If you have an order due in five hours and need ten hours to complete it, your family will be the ones to halt their lives and come to your aid. A husband and wife team working those excruciatingly late hours means that their son will have to do his homework by himself or take care of his own meals. Consider all of these realities and then ask yourself again, is your family ready for your entrepreneurship?



I was certainly not ready. I was not ready to fix my own dinner or put myself to sleep. I wasn't ready for the loneliness. Staying up until 3:00 AM on any given Saturday night packing bakery orders may have thrilled some kids but not me. Going straight from school to a candy store for hours is most boys' dream, but it was my nightmare. I was not ready for the hours or the stress. How could I have been? I was ten.

It is imperative that I take a step back at this point and make clear that there are many practically identical stories

"NOT CONSIDERING THE DIRECT IMPACT WHICH YOUR ENTREPRENEURSHIP WOULD HAVE ON YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE A POTENTIALLY FATAL MISCALCULATION."

to mine which I could have shared. I just have always found it easier to interview myself than to interview others. This article should in no way be construed as any type of judgement or disparagement of decisions made by my particular family. The generalizations discussed in this piece are just that, generalizations, and should absolutely not be automatically assumed to be in reference to my family or their entrepreneurship.

It is too easy to wonder if things would have been different had my family's entrepreneurship never been. Would I have had a less stressful childhood or would stress have just come natural to me by a different means? It is a tempting line of thinking but one which is irrelevant. Relevancy is something which is found in present and future decisions, not past decisions. When I am sitting in my sixth year at an accounting firm and deciding if I should stick with the firm or perhaps go out on my own, then I will have some relevant questions to ask. Are my wife and kids going to be fine spending practically the whole week without seeing me? Is my son going to be ok with me missing his baseball games? I'm pretty confident I know my answer.

I implore every single Syms student who is contemplating entrepreneurship not to fall into the trap which so many entrepreneurs fall into of not considering their family's readiness. The only practical way to do that is probably to include your family in the conversation from day one. Not considering the direct impact which your entrepreneurship would have on your family would be a potentially fatal miscalculation. All many people want is for their family to be happy. Miscalculate this decision, and it could cost you everything. It could cost you your family's happiness.

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who now possess cars they didn't intend to buy, this is hardly consoling. It doesn't put money in their bank accounts nor does it buy them a new car.

Although it is still too early to pass judgement on Volkswagen, it is important to note that there is consensus on appropriate ways of dealing with such scandals. Many laud Johnson & Johnson's response to their Tylenol scandal and frame it as the textbook example. It immediately recalled \$100 million worth of medications from store shelves, offered to replace already purchased ones, and were, most importantly, fully transparent throughout the investigation. Their stock was thus able to recoup these temporary losses. This directly contrasts with the behavior of many other companies, including Enron that artificially produced sales and maintained their deceit until bankruptcy, and GM that knowingly sold cars with "faulty ignition switches" resulting in an estimated 124 deaths.

"HOW DO WE, AS INVESTORS, MOVE PAST SUCH SCANDALS AND FEEL COMFORTABLE INVESTING OUR HARD-EARNED MONEY IN THE STOCKS OF THESE COMPANIES?"

As an investor, it is easy to come to the conclusion that anyone who has any affiliation with Wall Street is corrupt by default and will do anything to make an extra buck. However, operating under such a belief could result in losing out on a potential money-generating opportunity. I think that it is important to take a step back and look at several factors when dealing with such a scenario. The first is to assess the company at fire and determine whether or not what has happened is a harbinger of more scandals, or just a one-time speed bump along an otherwise smooth path. Sometimes, it only takes one person to taint and even ruin the reputation of a company. On the flip side, the stock could deviate from its underlying value by plummeting in the interim and therefore be a stock to potentially purchase since it could eventually rebound. Additionally, an investor with a well-diversified portfolio isn't susceptible to one company ruining his/her investments as a whole. This only goes so far though. As much as this may pain some, there is a leap of faith that an individual must take. You must put your faith in the accountants, the SEC, and the company's own management. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that despite the seeming rampancy of such actions, this is not the case; the media are just good at making it seem like these scandals are more prevalent than they actually are. But at the end of the day, one could just stick to the sidelines and not participate in the stock market altogether, as his/her odds are higher in rocks-paper-scissors.

Developments in the Sy Syms Jewish Curriculum

By Jacob (Avishai) Cohen

The academic Jewish studies requirements for YU undergraduates are among the most contentious issues impacting student experience at the University. Sy Syms, perhaps in recognition of this, has recently made adjustments to the academic Jewish studies courses for its students. For new students, the University's traditional offerings of Bible and Jewish History have been scrapped. New Sy Syms students find themselves with a brand new buffet of Jewish courses, including Jewish Engagements, taught by University Professor Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, as well as a course with Dr. Daniel Rynhold and another, designed by Dr. Saul Berman. Pava said that in development of the curriculum, he worked with Karen Bacon, Dean of Undergraduate Arts & Sciences, and Rabbi Schacter who Pava said was "instrumental in putting this together." According to the dean, new Sy Syms students will retain the option of fulfilling the Yeshiva College Jewish studies requirements.

"NEW SY SYMS STUDENTS FIND THEMSELVES WITH A BRAND NEW BUFFET OF JEWISH COURSES, INCLUDING JEWISH ENGAGEMENTS, TAUGHT BY UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR RABBI DR. JACOB J. SCHACTER."

been largely dedicated to the study of business ethics and he holds the Alvin Einbender Chair in Business Ethics at Sy Syms. Pava said that he wanted students to be aware that there is a Jewish approach to business and that he sees ethics as key to a business education. Pava noted student complaints about "the bible courses" and thought it would be an opportunity to change course, and said that the YU faculty were among "the best in the world on these topics." He went on to say he wanted to offer courses more relevant to the education of a business student, and that the University has worked to tailor these courses to a budding business professional.

Rabbi Shachter described his course as "dealing with the relationship between Judaism and the culture around it." The course touches on the "notion of commitment to Judaism and the challenge of choice, major issues that traditional Jews face in Western culture which emphasizes personal choice." The course has included guest

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By Adam Kramer

Yeshiva University's Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) enters its fourth year, which presents a perfect opportunity to take stock of this unique program—to look back on the first two graduating classes and track their success upon graduation and to assess the future plans for the EMBA.

The Syms EMBA's fourth entering class, or cohort, began the two-year program this past summer. Looking closer at the program's enrollment numbers, the first graduating cohort had fifteen students, followed by six in both the second and third cohorts, with nine in the most recent cohort. Commenting on the slightly larger number of students in the most recent cohort, Professor Andrew Geller, Director of the Syms EMBA, thinks that nine students gives the program a more solid base, and provides more diversity in the types of people who are in the program. Looking forward, Professor Geller would like to at least double the enrollment from nine to 18 for next year's fifth cohort.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Commentator, Professor Geller spoke about the delegation of responsibility in the Syms EMBA administration. Margie Martin, Associate Director of Masters of Science in Accounting and Executive MBA Programs, handles all administrative tasks. Professor Geller's tasks fall into one of the two categories. The first is academic tasks, such as ensuring that the program is set up the right way and that professors are teaching the correct material and at the correct level. In Professor Geller's own terms, this is the "most important part of my job. This is what I want to focus on." The second category of task is recruiting students. Professor Geller admits that YU's financial constraints have impacted his ability to market the EMBA, and may have contributed to the smaller number of students in the second, third, and fourth cohorts, but he believes they'll have more money this coming year for their marketing efforts.

One of the biggest adjustments Professor Geller will make going forward is how the EMBA is brought to market. Initially, Syms primarily advertised in Jewish newspapers, with the goal of inviting potential EMBA candidates to information sessions where they could learn more about the program. Moving forward, Professor Geller will implement a digital media driven strategy whereby he will put more of a focus on continuing to upgrade the EMBA website and setting up social media pages to interact with potential students.

Over the coming weeks, Syms will finalize a formal budget and plan for how best to approach digital marketing to recruit a significantly larger group of students for next summer's incoming cohort. The EMBA program will work with a consulting firm to contemplate how to position their social media campaign. The use of social media, however, will serve the additional purpose of providing the EMBA program with the analytics necessary to better understand their target market. Syms will use Google analytics to track who is visiting their website, and more specifically, to find out which pages within the site were visited, what their bounce rate was and other such metrics.

One of the primary reasons why people attend an EMBA

Syms EMBA Update

program is to advance in their careers in a way that without an MBA degree wouldn't have been possible. As a result, one of the key performance indicators of the success of an EMBA program is how alumni are faring in terms of promotions at companies they already worked for or elsewhere.

Although the second cohort graduated this past spring, Professor Geller cautioned that it's too soon to really gauge the utility of the EMBA program for them in their career. The first cohort graduated 1-1.5 years ago, so we can tell a little more by looking at their career advancements. Among the students in the first cohort was someone who worked for a large company and needed to have an MBA next to her name to get to the next level professionally. Through matriculating in the EMBA program, she was able to get a promotion within the same company. Other EMBA gradu-

current job but felt that they learned valuable skills that will help them in their current job, and can certainly help for future possibilities as well.

Perhaps more impressive than the stories about alumni receiving promotions and new job offers is the following story that Professor Geller told involving a student from the fourth cohort. "One of our students who just started the program at the end of August this year has already received a better, higher paying job at a bigger company with a lot more room for career advancement, in part because he was able to tell his prospective employer that he was now in an EMBA program. That was enough to make a real difference for him."

Professor Geller commented that students have greatly benefitted from the relationships they were able to develop in the Syms EMBA. Additionally, even though the first two cohorts had a substantial difference in number of students (fifteen in the first and six in the second), each cohort liked the groups that they had. Professor Geller remarked that he knows of many students who have continued these relationships and in many cases, have conducted business together since leaving the EMBA program.

Among the kinks that the EMBA program is still working out is the ideal way to conduct classes. In the first and second years, the EMBA program was traditional, in the sense that students met every Sunday, in person, in YU's Beren Campus. The feedback on this style of program was that it was difficult for people who kept Shabbos to have to give-up their only free day on the weekend each week, for classes. As a result, in the third year of the program, the Syms EMBA cut back on their in-person classes so that now they meet on three out of every four Sundays. With the fourth cohort, the program is designed so that they have in-person classes every other Sunday.

The EMBA program has been able to make this shift by utilizing blended courses, as in courses that meet both in person and online on different days. The third cohort actually liked meeting in person better and didn't want as many online classes, so Professor Geller stressed that the program will continue with some "brick and mortar" courses, along with blended courses.

On a more macro level, the value of the EMBA program for YU is that once you have a business school, an MBA program of some kind is critical. While YU and Syms do have other masters programs, Professor Geller believes that Syms needs to offer an MBA of some kind since it's the archetypical degree of a business school. Syms currently has plans to create a traditional MBA program; as well, Syms and YU's Cardozo School of Law are in the process of collaborating on a joint JD/MBA degree. Since it's still quite early in the process, a lot of the details including the when the new program will start and which faculty members will be involved, are yet to be determined.

People looking at Syms from the outside are able to see a business school with a strong graduate program, including an EMBA program. Professor Geller is proud that the school is offering an EMBA because there's no other way to have this kind of EMBA program without having classes on Shabbat. For Orthodox Jews this is important, and it's important for YU to provide this service as well.

"...FOR A MUCH SMALLER PRICE, ANYONE CAN ACTUALLY PURCHASE THEIR OWN PIECE OF A COMPANY, ALBEIT A SMALLER SHARE OF A COMPANY, BY INVESTING IN A COMPANY'S STOCK. STOCK INVESTING... SHOULD HAVE A PLACE IN EVERYONE'S LIFE AS A CHANCE TO INCREASE ONE'S WEALTH."

ates were able to obtain better jobs in other companies, in industries including professional services and communications. Lastly, a former administrative staff member in the Syms office enrolled in the EMBA program and now works at another university in New York where she has over 20 people reporting to her.

Many have found that the EMBA provides the type of preparation that engenders promotion and leadership positions in their respective fields. In terms of current students, there are three physicians in the program who have enrolled in order to gain the experience necessary to have oversight, or be responsible for running a service or division in a hospital.

Professor Geller doesn't see a potential promotion as the only reason for why one should enroll in the program. He added that other people didn't have a reason to leave their

taught by Rabbi Emanuel Z. Feldman, a RIETS Rosh Yeshiva and Robert Greenberg, professor of Business Law and last year's Sy Syms professor of the year. Pava described the Business & Jewish Law course as a great success and said that it would continue and complement the new line of course offerings. Pava noted that redeveloping the Jewish offerings wasn't the most pressing issue for the faculty, but that they were very supportive of the change.

Ben Fried, a Sy Syms student in the Jewish Engagements course, told The Commentator "The class is vital to every YU student. We all should understand why such

a rarity exists." Fried said that he found Rabbi Schacter to be "an amazing lecturer" and thought the course was well organized. "What I really enjoy about this class is that it is not based on a one sided approach but rather Rabbi Schacter shows the students both sides to the argument of Torah u'Maddah should co-exist," Fried said. He went on to say that he thinks the course helps many students understand YU's place in the world.

Echoing these sentiments, Pava said "This is the first course in the history of Yeshiva University that really deals with Torah u'Maddah. We should all be proud of that."

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lecturers such as University Professor David Shatz who spoke about non-Jews in the Jewish perspective. Israel, Christianity and tikkun olam are on the agenda for the semester. Rabbi Schacter said that his goal for the course was to spur students to think and avoid a superficial presentation of these key issues. Pava said that the course would also address Torah u'Maddah, the motto of the University.

The Ethical & Legal Environment of Business course has also been infused with Jewish ethical values and is

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